

Handbook of Research on

Interdisciplinary Reflections of Contemporary Experiential Marketing Practices



Gökhan Akel

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Handbook of Research on Interdisciplinary Reflections of Contemporary Experiential Marketing Practices

Gökhan Akel
Antalya Akev University, Turkey

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MISSION

Business processes, services, and communications are important factors in the management of good customer relationship, which is the foundation of any well organized business. Technology continues to play a vital role in the organization and automation of business processes for marketing, sales, and customer service. These features aid in the attraction of new clients and maintaining existing relationships.

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Experience Economy, Experiential Management, and Experiential Marketing

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Due to the changing consumer expectations and the driving force of technology towards innovation, there have been radical changes in products and services. Today, in addition to products and services, experience has changed the direction of consumption towards experiential consumption. The change in the understanding of consumption in the postmodern world causes experiential economy and experiential marketing to be a strategic understanding. Beyond meeting basic needs with products and services, it focuses on providing benefits to consumers with an unforgettable and magical experience. This chapter mainly focuses on the experience economy and experiential marketing. Moreover, this chapter focuses on post-experience behaviors such as experiential satisfaction and loyalty intentions. Experience economy and experiential marketing practice areas will be mentioned and suggestions will be made for future studies.

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The importance of providing an experience that will make the customer feel special is better understood by businesses today. It is essential for businesses to consider customer experiences, experiential value, and experiential quality with a strategic management approach focused on market success, target profitability, and global brand image. In this chapter, the concepts of experiential value, experiential quality, and the relationship between experiential value and experiential quality are examined. The chapter aims to reveal the role and importance of experiential value and experiential quality in achieving a competitive advantage for businesses. Studies in the literature show that experiential value and experiential quality reveal that it is effective in consumer decisions such as customer satisfaction, repurchase, and recommendation. Hence, businesses need to determine their marketing strategies by taking into account what kind of experience their customers want to have with their products and services.

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The growing attention to the customer experience is the result of the increasing complexity of channels, interactions, choices, and customer journeys. Businesses try to overcome these challenges by increasing their efforts comprehensively. Organizations depict and manage customer experiences through customer journeys (including multiple touchpoints representing direct and indirect customer interactions with the organization). Businesses need to plan and manage the elements that will arouse curiosity and interest and direct them to purchase behavior. This chapter explains almost all concepts related to customer experience management such as customer experience, classification of customer experience, digital customer experience, luxury customer experience, and customer experience control, and offers suggestions to businesses within these concepts.

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In the 21st century, online shopping has grown heavily, with the global online commerce volume increasing significantly due to the COVID-19 crisis. The rapid development of technology has greatly changed the way customers shop. The transition of the customer shopping model from physical stores to online shopping has led many companies to create effective online systems to retain their existing customers and acquire new customers. With the internet becoming the main channel for product and service delivery, the online shopping experience has become vital. This study covers how the latest and notable technological innovations are shaping the customer online shopping experience, advancing customer adoption, and e-commerce success. Online customer experience is an extremely important issue for companies today. In this context, the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), blockchain, and metaverse technologies play an important role in the success of online customer experience.

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Customer experience is defined as the customer's perceived overall quality of all interactions and relationships that the customer has with a company's products and services. Business leaders have increasingly begun to attach importance to the role of customer experience in helping companies gain competitive advantage. Also, the advantages and disadvantages of digitalization affect the customer experience process. In this respect, companies and brands that try to offer a unique experience for their customers need to prioritize the customer experience. So, in this chapter, the contributions of digitalization to customer experience are investigated. First, the theoretical infrastructure of customer experience and the creation of customer experience are examined. Afterward, customer journey and customer experience are discussed, and customer experience, touchpoints, and mapping of the customer journey are discussed. After that, digitalization and customer experience and the creation of the digital customer experience have been examined, and the conclusion has been reached.

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Advancements in digital areas resulted in an opportunity for consumers to share their experiences in easy, quick, and through various means. Experiential marketing research focuses on how to get consumer insights from product and service experiences of consumers on social media and how to transform these insights into profits for companies. This chapter discusses the netnography technique based on the gathering and interpretation of posts of consumers shared about their product/service experiences in digital environments and the marketing practices of this technique. On the other hand, considering the volume and variety of data that are increasing in digital areas, it also dwells on the practical benefits of the use of mixed research models that would allow getting benefit from both the in-depth information potential offered by the lithography technique and the dynamic structure of quantitative data analysis techniques.

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Selçuk Efe Küçükkambak, Aydın Adnan Menderes University, Turkey

The purpose of introducing the attractions of destinations, making them known to tourists, determining the brand elements specific to the holiday region, and creating associations in the consumer over time is to attract a certain number of visitors to the holiday destination every year. The aim of local governments in tourism destinations, associations or organizations that carry out tourism and promotion activities, and tourism operators is to attract a certain number of tourists to the region every year, to provide them with a good holiday experience, to satisfy them during their stay, and to create an attitude towards revisiting the area. The most important achievement in this process is to develop loyal tourists to the tourism destination. This chapter examined the importance of brand loyalty in destinations based on brand management principles and experiential marketing. By giving place to the results of various researches carried out in this field in the world, gaps in the literature have been identified, and it is aimed to make inferences that will guide future studies.

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Talha Bayır, Şırnak University, Turkey

Experiential marketing creates lasting happiness and satisfaction by influencing the desires and emotions of consumers at the point of transforming the product or service into utility and symbolic value. This study aims to look at the examples and outputs of experiential marketing, which is one of the important marketing approaches to achieving customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. For this purpose, the concept of experiential marketing, dimensions of experiential marketing, stages of customer experience management, experiential marketing practices (Starbucks, IKEA, Nike Town, Disneyland, and Abercrombie & Fitch) customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty are discussed theoretically in this study. Then, the effect of experiential marketing practices on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is presented. Finally, theoretical information is presented that experiential marketing application examples are an important tool in creating permanent happiness and satisfaction by influencing the sense of pleasure of consumers in the conclusion part.

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Flow Experience in Tourism Activities 166

Ece Armağan, Aydın Adnan Menderes University, Turkey

Eren Temel, Aydın Adnan Menderes University, Turkey

Since tourism is an experience-intensive field, the experiences offered by tourism activities to individuals are very important. Understanding the psychological processes underlying the experiences of the individuals is essential for the effectiveness of tourism activities. An important phenomenon that explains the internal processes experienced by individuals in tourism activities is the flow experience originating from positive psychology. Flow experience is the individual's intense focus on the activity he/she is performing with his/her own inner will, without any external reward, and integrates with the activity by being isolated from the environment. Also, the flow experience can be expressed as an internal process that includes losing the perception of time and feeling happiness. Today, some research shows that the flow experience can be experienced in many areas of daily life and tourism activities. In this chapter, the flow experience has been discussed with its various dimensions, and evaluations have been made in the context of examples of some tourism activities.

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Ayşe Şengöz, Akdeniz University, Turkey

Tourism is an important sector due to its contribution to the economy and employment. Despite the decreasing tourism activities under pandemic conditions, positive effects can be mentioned for all countries of the world. While tourism has an effect on all stakeholders, time also has various effects on tourism. Tour guides who try to act in accordance with these effects have to improve and transform themselves. A tour guide who can keep up with innovations can only benefit his country and provide satisfaction to the customer. Therefore, in this chapter, the development and usability of information and communication technologies, socio-demographic trends, the changing profiles and preferences of tourists, the expectations of tourists regarding social and environmental responsibility, and the implications and reactions of the guided tour industry will be examined. Moreover, escaping from overcrowded destinations, guides, and tourists who are prone to smart tourism, the changing nature of tour guide communication, and changing travel models and approaches will be examined in detail.

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Yenal Yağmur, Siirt University, Turkey

Altan Demirel, Antalya Akev University, Turkey

Global competition conditions in the tourism sector are getting more intense day by day, and tourist behavior is changing in many ways. In this respect, the ability of businesses to adapt to these situations is a prerequisite for their survival in the future. Businesses in the tourism industry need to develop strategies and understanding that will emphasize the uniqueness of the products they offer and highlight the difference of products from others. Also, businesses need to develop a different strategy or understanding to provide tourists with an unforgettable experience and competitive advantage. The facts that the basic component of the experiential marketing paradigm is experience and that experience is the essence of tourism products have led this paradigm to come to the fore in terms of tourism businesses. This study aims to reveal how businesses can adapt themselves to this new paradigm by emphasizing the importance of experience marketing for businesses in the tourism industry.

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Şükran Karaca, Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Turkey

Zuleyhan Baran, Duzce Universtiy, Turkey

The tourism experience can drive the behavior of the contemporary tourist who travels to experience unique, extraordinary destinations and events. The concepts of tourism and hospitality are often described as a concept related to gastronomy, which is closely related to culture. Gastronomy tourism has become an important concept in attracting tourists to specific destinations and offering tourists interesting, new, and unusual experiences with the spread of global travel in the 20th century. Therefore, more attention is paid to the behavioral consequences of this situation for tourists and their role in tourism and accommodation marketing and branding. In this context, experiential marketing and management issues in tourism and gastronomy are examined in this chapter. Thus, by providing a better understanding of tourism experiences, some suggestions have been presented to destination marketers and managers and businesses that provide tourism services.

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Theme Park Experiences in the Tourism Industry 264

Begum Dilara Emiroglu, Sirnak University, Turkey

Today, high product and service quality is no longer valid for consumers to choose them. Consumers look for unique experiences beyond services and products. Customer experiences are highly related to the tourism industry. Tourism is a service sector with intense experience. Customers not only buy products but also gain experience. Theme parks are star players in the tourism industry. In the tourism industry context, theme parks are places of entertainment where visitors experience mostly hedonic goods and services and thus are characterized as real pioneers of the experience economy. Therefore, theme park experiences are of great importance to the tourism industry. Therefore, in this chapter, the concept of experience, its importance in the tourism industry, and theme park experiences will be included, and some suggestions will be made for future research by giving solutions and recommendations in terms of managerial implications.

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Bilgen Akmermer, Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey

Over the past decade, the swift pace of digitalization and the pressure of new era technologies have not only transformed the perception and expectations of new generations but also completely created a new world of experiences. Today, the new generations are ready to experience a hybrid world described as phygital that combines digital and physical spaces. This new phygital world also provides unique value for the tourism industry to establish a new channel of interactivity with its consumers. This chapter examines the phygital concept and its impact on tourism experiences and tourism destination management. Therefore, a conceptual framework is given to deeply understand the state of the phygital. Firstly, the chapter explores augmented reality and virtual reality technologies triggering this concept, and afterward, the chapter cites the phygital-based experiential marketing practices for tourism pioneers.

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Evaluation of the Experiences in the Restaurants With Multi-Criteria Decision-Making

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Ayşegiül Tuş, Pamukkale University, Turkey

Esra Aytaç Adalı, Pamukkale University, Turkey

The restaurant selection is an important multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) problem. Because many conflicting criteria affect the customers' restaurant selection, there are many alternatives to meet the customers' different and changing needs. The focus of this chapter is to search the criteria that influence the customer decisions to select a restaurant and evaluate the restaurants by utilizing the experiences of the customers. For this purpose, the restaurants located in Istanbul with online reservations that offer first-class dinners are considered as a sample case. The importance of the criteria is defined with the IVIF-CRITIC method, and the restaurants are ranked with the IVIF-CoCoSo method. IVIF sets are used to overcome the uncertainty due to the involvement of human judgment. It can be stated that the proposed methodology can be useful to analyze the human judgments in MCDM problems and develop the weak criteria for the restaurant managers and decide on restaurant choices for the customers.

Chapter 16

An Experiential Investigation on Product Sampling in Retail Stores 334

Mustafa Atahan Yılmaz, Pamukkale University, Turkey

Nurettin Parilti, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Turkey

In-store product sampling is one of the most effective sales promotion tools by creating an impulsive urge to buy and interacting with the potential consumers at the point of purchase; however, it remains an understudied area for the academy. This study aims to investigate the difference in the purchase decision of the demographic/behavioral variables such as previous experience, gender, and age groups. In addition, the effects of in-store product sampling on sales are also examined. The findings demonstrated that the significant difference in purchase decisions is only between age groups. Furthermore, it is observed that the sales volume of the sampled product increased 10.8 times during the research week; however, the effect has not lasted long.

Chapter 17

Customer Experience Management in the Digital Marketing Era: An Omnichannel Retailing

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Umit Basaran, Zonguldak Bulent Ecevit University, Turkey

Developments in digital marketing technologies have caused the channels in which retailers communicate and interact with their customers to be fragmented. Retailers provide products, services, and information to their customers by using traditional, digital, and social media along with sales channels such as physical stores, websites, and mobile applications. In this context, it is necessary to create integration and synergy between all these channels and touchpoints interacting with the customer. The omnichannel retailing strategy helps companies create a seamless customer experience by addressing all channels and touchpoints within a unified approach. Therefore, in this chapter, the customer experience and omnichannel strategy are defined, and the applications, attributes, or components that should be provided in the omnichannel environment for a comprehensive retail customer experience are discussed with a literature-based exploratory research approach.

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<i>Mısra Çakaloğlu, Antalya Akev University, Turkey</i>	

The integration of environmental factors and the total output of products and services demanded by the customer constitute the concept of customer experience. Due to the intensity of competition, banks' adaptation to technological innovations to meet customer expectations increases the sustainability of banks. This process must be compatible with the existing infrastructure and activities of the bank to meet customer experiences. Moreover, increasing the service quality of banks based on customer experiences depends on proactive solution proposals. This chapter discusses digital transformation in the banking industry, ICTs for strategic management, and the opportunities that marketing presents to customer experiences. The main purpose of this chapter is to focus on the development of proactive digital applications in the industry in explaining the concept of customer experience. Therefore, it is thought that this chapter will make an important contribution to the literature.

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The fact that businesses begin to reach consumers through online media and digital channels triggers consumers to experience new experiences. Therefore, creating new experiences for consumers in the online environment and determining which factors affect consumer experiences in the online environment gain importance for marketing managers in determining forward-looking strategies. With the digital transformation experienced, the game industry's becoming an increasingly important market has enabled the concept of games to become a marketing tool. This affects consumer behavior, experience, and satisfaction. So, one way to create new experiences for consumers online is to use games and new digital marketing tools integrated into the game concept. From this point of view, in this chapter, game market, game concept, game experience, gamification, product placement advergame, flow theory, and motivation theory will be discussed in terms of experiential marketing.

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Video games have become one of the most prominent leisure tools in today's society. As individuals with an intense association with games, they expect a game-like experience in shopping or other areas. Hence, brands face a "gamer consumer" audience. Also, for the long-standing customer-brand relationship, the importance of customer engagement is increasing; gamification offers an excellent opportunity to involve consumers in the activities of the brand. The contribution of gamification to marketing efforts is highlighted in two forms: the first is that it provides customers gameful experience in non-gaming environments, and second, it encourages engagement by integrating game elements into non-game areas. In this chapter, it is theoretically explained how customer engagement in gamification occurs in two dimensions over a proposed model. Then, through successful marketing gamification examples (Adidas, Alipay, MINI, the Karl Lagerfeld, Subway), it is presented how customers are connected to both the gamified system and marketing purposes.

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Design, technology, and communication are facts that can't be separated from each other. Because in the process of communication and processes from the technology bar, each one is a design process. Just as with design, ideas are generated from a problem in the process of communication and technology. Actions are being taken to bring the ideas produced to live. Communication processes and technology are the intertwined design of products. Visual communication design has an effective expression. From the design in the packaging of a product to the logo of a company and the colors used in the advertisement created for service to the symbol of a brand, the role of the design is high in communication between the customer who is the target audience. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on slogans and visuals in advertisements. This chapter will consist of the title introduction, background, main focus of the chapter, solutions, recommendations, future research directions, and conclusion.

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In the postmodern era, competition in the retail sector has increased, and it has gained importance to be in the minds of the target audience as a result of the changing consumer profile, technological developments, and product diversity. This change has also affected retail formats, and pop-up spaces have become one of the marketing methods of businesses. Brands that want to stand out from the competition try to create memorable customer experiences with a new reality and a different perception environment, as well as an immersive atmosphere in the commercial space. Given the role of presentation and special effects, the interior becomes an exciting scene that strengthens the brand image. The study aims to examine the brand image-space relationship in the postmodern era within the framework of the different experiences offered to the customer through the metaphor of theater and to reveal the spatial elements that affect the customer's perception of space in pop-up spaces. As a result of the study, it is aimed that the elements will be a guide for pop-up retail design.

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Preface

Experience has provided a difference in the development, management, and promotion of organization and functioning in many disciplines. Relating and interacting experiences with many disciplines have revealed new research areas. Experience researches in areas such as tourism, gastronomy, banking, and online gaming show that experience is a highly interdisciplinary concept. Incorporating experience elements into the process, which improves and enhances customer, tourist, and user experiences maximizes the effects of the experience. The diversity of personal needs and motivations is a very effective integration with the customization feature of the experience. The differentiation of the experiences according to the person and the differentiation according to the fields of activity has enabled them to be included in the workflows in many areas. The introduction of digital transformations along with experience contributes to sustainability.

The chapters cover key subject areas such as tourism and tourist experience, gastronomic experience, online shopping experience, mobile advertising experience, theme park experience, digital transformation and customer experience, banking experience, online game experience, and brand experience. This book is designed as a tool to facilitate future research in disciplines such as management, economics, marketing, consumer behavior, advertising, gastronomy, tourism, and informatics. Therefore, this book serves as a contemporary resource for academics, marketers, application developers, students, tourism, and destination managers, and planning and project managers.

Technology, which affects all aspects of our lives, has brought some innovations and changes in experiential design and experiential products and services. In the postmodern era, digitalization acts as a framework for various services, media and communication, mobile games, and physical spaces. The digital transformations brought about by technology have led to problem-solving, creative functioning, and unique improvements along with experiences. Digital and experience orientation did not emerge in just one area. Human-digital-experience interaction prevails in many areas of modern society. To evaluate this interaction, a more balanced understanding of digital and experience processes is required. Therefore, the research to be done in this book will gain creativity with interdisciplinary diversity and cooperation.

Properly designed experiences, when properly managed and effectively marketed, will bring competitive advantage and success in the age of digital and transformation. So, *Interdisciplinary Reflections of Contemporary Experiential Marketing Practices* is a book that aims to develop research on experiential marketing as well as to evaluate the interdisciplinary reflections of practices from different perspectives. The book explores how the concept of experience is developed, managed, and marketed according to current consumer needs and motivations.

The literature does not offer a broader analysis of all fields of the experience economy and experiential marketing. This book intends to bring together these highly interrelated concepts, including several chap-

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ters that address the broad concept of experiential marketing and its application to the many dimensions of tourism, shopping, retailing, and online game bringing together theoretical and applied perspectives.

The book is organized into three sections and 22 chapters. A brief description of each of the chapters follows.

SECTION 1: EXPERIENCE ECONOMY, EXPERIENTIAL MANAGEMENT, AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Chapter 1, “Experiential Marketing: Post-Experience Behaviors,” introduces post-experience behaviors taking into account different fields of study. The chapter examines the change in consumption understanding in the postmodern world and the transformation of the experiential economy and experiential marketing into a strategic understanding. The chapter describes the industry’s focus on providing an unforgettable and magical experience to consumers, beyond meeting basic needs with products and services. Also, this chapter examines post-experience behaviors such as experiential satisfaction and loyalty intentions, giving consumers an unforgettable and magical experience. Moreover, attention is drawn to various studies in the industry on experience research. Finally, the chapter mentions the application areas of the experience economy and experiential marketing and makes suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2, “Experiential Value and Experiential Quality,” examines the concepts of experiential value, experiential quality, and the relationship between experiential value and experiential quality. The purpose of this chapter is to reveal the role and importance of experiential value and experiential quality in gaining a competitive advantage for businesses. This chapter provides several recommendations to businesses and guides future work.

Chapter 3, “Customer Experience Management,” introduces concepts related to customer experience management, such as customer experience, customer experience classification, digital customer experience, luxury customer experience, and customer experience control. Also, this chapter examines customer experiences in the operation of experience-oriented businesses with a strategic management approach. Finally, this chapter examines the concepts of customer experience and offers suggestions for providing a better experience to businesses within the framework of these concepts.

Chapter 4, “Customer Online Shopping Experience,” introduces how current and notable technological innovations are shaping the customer’s online shopping experience, improving customer adoption and e-commerce success. The chapter expresses the increasing importance of the Internet for the delivery of products and services and the vital importance of the online shopping experience. Also, the chapter examines the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), blockchain, and metaverse technologies that play an important role in the success of the online customer experience.

Chapter 5, “Digital Transformation for Improving Customer Experience,” states that the customer experience is at the forefront of businesses and brands trying to offer a unique experience to their customers. The chapter introduces the contributions of digitalization to the customer experience. Also, digitalization and customer experience have been reviewed and recommendations for future work have been presented.

Chapter 6, “Practices of Netnography and Mixed Quantitative Data Analysis Methods in Experiential Marketing,” introduces the netnography technique based on gathering and interpreting the posts that consumers share about their product/service experiences in digital environments. Also, the marketing

applications of netnography technique are discussed. Finally, this chapter offers business advice on experiential consumer insights, taking into account developments in the digital space.

Chapter 7, “Creating Brand Experience Based on Brand Equity in Tourism Destinations,” has examined the importance of brand loyalty in destinations based on brand management principles and experiential marketing. By giving place to the results of various researches has made in this field in the world, gaps in the literature have been identified and it has aimed to make inferences that would guide future studies.

SECTION 2: EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING PRACTICES

Chapter 8, “Experiential Marketing and Practices: The Perspective of Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty,” examines the examples of experiential marketing, which is one of the important marketing approaches in ensuring customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Also, the chapter examines concepts such as experiential marketing dimensions, customer experience management, experiential marketing practices, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Moreover, it is stated that experiential marketing application examples are an important tool in creating lasting happiness and satisfaction by influencing the sense of pleasure of consumers. Finally, the chapter recommends businesses in terms of experiential functioning, taking into account experiential marketing and practices.

Chapter 9, “Flow Experience in Tourism Activities,” evaluates the flow experience in the context of examples from some tourism activities by considering various dimensions. This chapter reviews the literature that includes a large number of flow experience studies in the context of tourism activities. This chapter provides important information in terms of experiences related to flow experience that can be used in various fields of tourism. Also, it is thought that various quantitative and qualitative research to be conducted in the future in the context of different derivatives and stages of tourism activities will make significant contributions to the flow experience under the influence of various conditions, variables, and factors.

Chapter 10, “The Changing Face of the Tour Guide and Its Impact on Tourist Experiences,” examines the development and usability of information and communication technologies, socio-demographic trends, tourists’ changing profiles and preferences, and tourists’ expectations for social and environmental responsibility. Also, escaping from overcrowded destinations, guides and tourists prone to smart tourism, the changing nature of guide communication, and changing travel models and approaches are examined in detail.

Chapter 11, “The New Phenomenon of Authentic Experience in the Tourism Industry,” aims to reveal how businesses can adapt themselves to this new paradigm by emphasizing the importance of experience marketing for businesses in the tourism industry. The chapter states that in the future, marketers can promote tourism dreams using experiential marketing stimuli, including advertisements, mini-movies, stories, and websites that will emotionally impact tourists.

Chapter 12, “Tourism Experience Management and Marketing in Gastronomy,” discusses experiential marketing and management in tourism and gastronomy. The best way for tourism businesses to survive and succeed in the competitive tourism market is to provide tourists with unforgettable tourism experiences and thus encourage them to revisit a destination. Nowadays it is seen that the service economy is replaced by the experiential economy. Gastronomy is considered a type of tourism that is very much related to experience. Gastronomic tourism, which is a tourism field that keeps up with the changing preferences of modern society, continues to develop rapidly. Gastronomy tourism, which is considered

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an important element of experiential tourism, has the qualities that can contribute to the socio-economic development of the regions, especially in terms of creating new job opportunities, protecting the production of specialty products, and ensuring their continuity. In this context, tourism experiences are explained and some suggestions are presented to destination marketers, managers, and businesses in the chapter.

Chapter 13, “Theme Park Experiences in the Tourism Industry,” examines the importance of experience in the tourism industry and provides an important framework for the experience of theme parks and theme park visitors, which are one of the most important attractions in the tourism industry. The chapter proposes examining the effects of social and physical elements of theme parks on visitors’ experiences. The chapter also guides future studies on the effects of visitor experiences on post-experience behaviors such as experience intensification and experience extension. Moreover, the book chapter offers some suggestions for future research by offering solutions in terms of managerial implications.

Chapter 14, “The Phygital Experiential Marketing Practices: The Conceptual Framework and Applications for Tourism Industry,” examines the new phenomenon ‘phygital’ concept in today’s hybrid world. Indeed, the impact of the Phygital approach is being felt throughout the entire tourism ecosystem. The technologies of phygital have considerable power to change the tourism industry and influence the whole consumers’ journey map. Therefore, industry pioneers need a clear understanding of phygital technologies and their impacts on tourism experiences and tourism destination management. In this regard, this chapter provides a conceptual framework for an in-depth understanding of the state of the phygital concept and its basic technologies: augmented reality and virtual reality.

Chapter 15, “Evaluation of the Experiences in the Restaurants With Multi-Criteria Decision-Making Methods,” focuses on investigating the criteria influencing the customer’s decision to choose a restaurant and evaluating restaurants based on customers’ experiences. The importance of the criteria is defined by the IVIF-CRITIC method for restaurants in Istanbul that offer first-class dinners with online reservations. Also, the restaurants are ranked with the IVIF-CoCoSo method. The chapter helps develop weak criteria and decide restaurant preferences for customers.

Chapter 16, “An Experiential Investigation on Product Sampling in Retail Store,” aims to investigate the difference in the purchase decision of the demographic/behavioral variables after a product sampling activity. The chapter also examines the effects of in-store product sampling on sales. The findings show that the significant difference in purchasing decisions is only between age groups and the sales are greatly increased.

Chapter 17, “Customer Experience Management in the Digital Marketing Era: An Omnichannel Retailing Strategy,” presents a literature review to identify the components to consider for designing customer experience in the omnichannel retail environment in the era of digital marketing. The chapter also focuses on the relationships between single, multi, cross, and omnichannel retailing systems to better understand the scope of omnichannel management. Moreover, strategies and tactics for implementing omnichannel management are discussed within the framework of integration of information and fulfillment. Finally, a research framework on the effects of omnichannel integration quality capabilities on customer experience is presented. The book chapter can be considered a precursor to future empirical research.

Chapter 18, “Customer Experience in the Banking Industry,” discusses digital transformation in the banking industry, ICTs for strategic management, and the opportunities that marketing presents to customer experiences. The chapter focuses on the development of proactive digital applications in the industry while explaining the concept of customer experience. Hence, it is thought that this chapter will make an important contribution to the literature.

SECTION 3: MANAGING EXPERIENCES IN TOURISM PRODUCTS

Chapter 19, “Online Game Experiences: The Perspective of Experiential Marketing,” states that one way to create new experiences for online consumers is to use games integrated into the game concept and new digital marketing tools. The chapter evaluates the game market, game concept, game experience, gamification, product placement advergame, flow theory, and motivation theory in terms of experiential marketing.

Chapter 20, “Gamers and Customer Engagement,” explains the importance of gamification for consumer engagement and how customer engagement occurs in two dimensions through a proposed model. The chapter also revealed how customers are connected to both the gamified system and marketing purposes, with examples of successful marketing gamification (Adidas, Alipay, MINI, Karl Lagerfeld, Subway).

Chapter 21, “Emphasis on Design Principles in the Context of Communication Technologies in Mobile Advertising,” focuses on slogans and visuals in advertisements. This chapter consists of an introduction, background, the main focus of the chapter, solutions, and recommendations, future research directions, and conclusion. From the design on the packaging of a product to the company logo and the colors used in the advertisement created for the service to the symbol of a brand, the high role of design in communication between the target audience and the customer increases the importance. So, this chapter gives direction to future studies and businesses from this perspective.

Chapter 22, “A Commercial Stage Strengthening Brand Image in the Framework of Postmodern Consumption: Pop-Up Space,” aims to examine the relationship between brand image-space in the postmodern era within the framework of different experiences presented to the customer through the metaphor of theater. It also aims to reveal the spatial elements that affect the customer’s perception of space in the pop-up space. The chapter aims to guide the examined items for pop-up retail design.

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Section 1

Experience Economy, Experiential Management, and Experiential Marketing

Chapter 1

Experiential Marketing: Post-Experience Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

Due to the changing consumer expectations and the driving force of technology towards innovation, there have been radical changes in products and services. Today, in addition to products and services, experience has changed the direction of consumption towards experiential consumption. The change in the understanding of consumption in the postmodern world causes experiential economy and experiential marketing to be a strategic understanding. Beyond meeting basic needs with products and services, it focuses on providing benefits to consumers with an unforgettable and magical experience. This chapter mainly focuses on the experience economy and experiential marketing. Moreover, this chapter focuses on post-experience behaviors such as experiential satisfaction and loyalty intentions. Experience economy and experiential marketing practice areas will be mentioned and suggestions will be made for future studies.

INTRODUCTION

Today, businesses are trying to achieve sustainable success with an experience-oriented approach. The more engaging and pleasing the enriched experiences offered in many industries to engage consumers, the more sustainable the success of marketing activities. The differences and the degree of influence obtained with the experiential marketing approach are undoubtedly closely related to marketing, management, and consumer behaviors. Also, marketers focus on sense, feel, act, think and associate elements so that consumers can have unforgettable experiences, and they try to leave a meaningful mark on consumers.

Businesses operating in many different fields use the experience as a strategic tool with an experiential marketing approach (Garg et al., 2010: 89). Consumers are offered an integrated experience of education, entertainment, esthetics, and escapism. The levels of participation in these four experience economy elements in consumption centers are expressed as active or passive participation (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

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As a result, leisure activities are presented with an experience economy and experiential marketing approach in consumption centers, and experience elements are encountered in many industries.

With the discovery and production of new products during the industrial revolution, the countries that were successful in the economy led the world economy. The market saturation, the change in consumer expectations, and the driving force of technology towards innovation have created radical changes in its products and services. However, today, in addition to products and services, experience has changed the direction of consumption towards experiential consumption. It can be expressed as instant satisfaction, instant consumption value and a simple need to be met, when pure product and service consumption leaves non-permanent memories. However, the fact that the experience is memorable and leaves pleasant and extraordinary feelings in the consumer is related to its permanence feature. Hence, it is possible to create unforgettable experiences, nostalgia, and experiential satisfaction and loyalty intentions by adopting the experiential marketing approach in addition to the traditional marketing approach. The fact that the experiential marketing approach finds practices in many areas such as tourism, travel, gastronomy, omnichannel retailing, online game, artificial intelligence, and banking makes it necessary to manage it in an integrated manner with the traditional marketing approach.

This book chapter mainly focuses on experience economy and experiential marketing. However, in addition to the traditional marketing approach, it focuses on the application areas of experiential marketing. It also examines post-experience behaviors such as experiential satisfaction and loyalty intentions, as experiential marketing is applied in many industries.

BACKGROUND

The fact that the experience is memorable and leaves pleasant and extraordinary feelings in the consumer makes it necessary to focus on experience in the fields of marketing and economy in the postmodern world. The change in the understanding of consumption in the postmodern world causes experiential economy and experiential marketing to be a strategic understanding. The change in understanding can be attributed to the development of technology, the awareness of consumers, and the emergence of more insatiable consumer groups. Beyond meeting basic needs with products and services, it focuses on providing benefits to consumers with an unforgettable and magical experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). According to the experience economy, utility is expressed as the sum of all the benefits that consumers receive as a result of an experience (Read, 2007: 45).

The breadth of the influence of experiential marketing and the creation of higher customer value and satisfaction has enabled it to find more applicable areas and develop faster, unlike traditional marketing. The diversity of the application areas of experiential marketing and the creation of experiential entrepreneurship and experiential innovation in every industry sheds light on marketing, consumer behavior, and management strategies.

The adoption of experiential consumption and the transformation of the consumption concept into a leisure activity has ensured that the consumption centers are esthetically well-designed, pleasant, and magical environments. The change and transformation of the concept of consumption have enabled consumption to be evaluated with experiential strategies. Postmodern consumers focus on hedonic and symbolic benefits beyond functional benefits. Consumers only have a long-lasting sense of satisfaction with hedonic and symbolic benefits. The products, services, and experiences offered with an experiential marketing approach and post-purchase behavior, intentions, and attitudes are evaluated. The uniqueness

of the experiences, and the fact that they are difficult to copy and imitate (Hosany & Witham, 2010) increase the importance of post-experience evaluations.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Experience Economy

With the discovery and production of new products during the industrial revolution, the countries that were successful in the economy led the world economy. The market saturation, the change in consumer expectations, and the driving force of technology towards innovation have created radical changes in its products and services. However, today, in addition to products and services, experience has changed the direction of consumption towards experiential consumption. It can be expressed as instant satisfaction, instant consumption value and a simple need to be met, when pure product and service consumption leaves non-permanent memories. However, the fact that the experience is memorable and leaves pleasant and extraordinary feelings in the consumer is related to its permanence feature.

In addition to the product or service, experience necessitates an experience-oriented examination of the fields of marketing and economics in a postmodern world of consumption. The change in the course of consumption in the postmodern world causes experiential economy and experiential marketing to be a strategic understanding. The development of technology in the postmodern consumer society can be attributed to the awareness of consumers and the emergence of more insatiable consumer groups. Beyond meeting basic and simple needs with products and services, it focuses on providing benefits to consumers with an unforgettable and magical experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). According to the experience economy, the utility is expressed as the sum of all the benefits that consumers receive as a result of an experience (Read, 2007: 45).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) stated in their book “The Experience Economy” that economic value is listed as an agricultural economy, industrial economy, service economy, and experience economy. Also, economic offerings in response to economic values are specified as commodities, goods, services, and experiences. Hence, there has been a transformation of economic offerings from commodities to experience, integrated with economic value. The era of the “experience economy” started with the transformation of services in the service economy (Yuan & Wu, 2008: 389; Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 45).

In the postmodern society, businesses tend to “experience economy” as consumers expect experiential products and services. Businesses that adopt the experience economy approach have entered an experiential transformation in their marketing activities. Businesses are trying to achieve sustainable success and continuity by focusing on memory together with experiential transformation. Also, businesses provide meaningful and valuable experiences for consumers.

The postmodern consumption society consists of consumers who actively use their spare time and focus on experience consumption. Postmodern consumption refers to a situation that allows consumers to gain a place in society beyond meeting basic needs, takes a pretentious state, and is constantly displayed (Baudriallard, 2014: 70). According to the postmodern understanding of consumption, consumers give importance to experiences enriched with senses (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

The elements of the experience economy are defined as education, entertainment, esthetics, and escape (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Also, Pine and Gilmore (1999) divided the level of consumers’ participation in experiences as active and passive participation. Active participation refers to physically participating

in activities, directly affecting the performance of consumers and consuming products, services, and experiences. Passive participation refers to situations where consumers do not directly affect the process or activities with their performance (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 71). Examples of active participation include rafting, visiting parks, participating in performing arts events and festivals, dining out, and visiting museums for passive participation. Also, Pine and Gilmore (1999) divided the experience into absorption and immersion, depending on whether they are physically part of the experience or not. While the experience of absorption is the situation in which consumers engage the mind without physically participating, immersion refers to being a part of the experience physically or virtually (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 71). For example, while a consumer watching music, opera, or concert from a distance in hotels or theme parks experiences absorption, consumers who feel the sound, image, and smell very close to the stage experience immersion (Williams, 2006: 487-488). The “sweet spot”, which is located in the middle and at the junction of active and passive participation and absorption and immersion experiences, includes the characteristics of experiences and the richest experiences (Pine & Gilmore 1999: 102; Hosany & Witham, 2010: 353). An example of a Disneyland theme park can be given as the “sweet spot” where the experiences take place in the best way (Yuan & Wu, 2008: 390).

Education Experience

Education experience which is expressed as the desire to learn something new (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 73), allows consumers to gain new skills, improve their existing skills (Williams, 2006: 488) and demonstrate their skills. Education experience requires active participation and includes absorption rather than immersion (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 73). Contrary to passive participation, it means that the consumer, who has the desire and interest to learn, is himself involved in the process (Odabaşı, 2019: 214-215). For example, taking part in shows or stage shows in hotels or theme parks by learning dance choreography and taking part in making a representative product in art festivals. Also, it can be given as an example of gaining technical knowledge and skills while learning something new during experiences, such as attending a lesson in baseball, skiing or tennis, or in a classroom (Petkus, 2004: 51; Williams, 2006: 488; Hwang & Lyu, 2015: 249).

Entertainment Experience

Entertainment experience is a kind of experience where leisure time is well spent, as opposed to learning something new. It is about the experience of consumers in entertainment areas such as theater, concerts, and parties (Pine and Gilmore, 2012: 73). Entertainment experience, unlike education experience, is an element of experience that requires passive participation (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 73). In the entertainment experience, consumers only participate in events as listeners or audiences, but they cannot influence the events (Oh et al., 2007; Chang, 2018). They have passively absorption experiences with the senses rather than immersion. For example, watching theater performances, opera concerts and passively participating in events held in hotels, museums, and shopping centers (Williams, 2006: 488; Mehmetoğlu and Engen, 2011: 243; Pine and Gilmore, 2012: 73; Chang, 2018; Odabaşı, 2019: 214).

Esthetic Experience

Esthetic experience is expressed as consumers' spending their leisure time architecturally or visually pleasing and fascinating by interpreting the events and phenomena occurring around them (Hosany & Witham, 2010). Esthetic experience requires a higher level of experience than entertainment experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Esthetic experience, which includes passive participation and immersion experiences, is about consumers' enjoyment of being in that environment and finding the place attractive, not participating in any event or activity (Pine and Gilmore, 1999: 35; Chang, 2018). For example, lighting, stage layout, design, and decorations in hotels, restaurants, and cafes provide an esthetic experience. Wandering in the Grand Canyon, being in the rainforest at Rainforest Cafe, staying in the theme hotel rooms and watching the theatrical performances, going to the theme parks designed in esthetic and architecture, visiting the museum and Göbeklitepe archaeological site can be given as examples (Petkus, 2004: 51; Oh, et al., 2007: 119; Mehmetoğlu & Engen, 2011: 243; Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 78-79; Odabaşı, 2019: 204).

Escape Experience

Escape experience refers to the fact that consumers are in areas where they can feel good and comfortable, albeit a little, as a result of crises such as stress, anxiety, and depression they experience in daily life (Reisenger, 2006: 148; Thanh and Kirova, 2018). The escape experience takes place in the form of active participation and immersion in the experience (Mehmetoğlu & Engen, 2011: 243; Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 75; Chang, 2018). Escape experience requires active participation like education experience, but it expresses more active participation than education experience (Petkus, 2004: 51). For example, theme parks, and hotels offer escape experiences. Consumers move away from real life and find themselves in the world of dreams (Hosany & Witham, 2010: 8; Thanh & Kirova, 2018). Tourism and entertainment businesses, especially hotels, theme parks, and casinos, are the best examples of the escape experience that allows them to escape from daily life with the services (Pine and Gilmore, 2012: 75).

Experiential Marketing

Experience is evaluated in consumer behavior and marketing literature as subjective reactions and emotions by consumers (Chen & Chen, 2010: 29). Experiences are unique and difficult to copy (Hosany & Witham, 2010). Experiential marketing, which is an area open to development and change (Shah et al., 2019: 47), is expressed as a marketing approach that includes the emotions and feelings of consumers by creating positive and memorable experiences about the product (Schmitt, 1999a). The products and services offered in the experiential marketing approach include tangible, physical, valuable, and interactive experience features (Williams, 2006: 485).

The transformation from product and service consumption to experience consumption represents the transition from traditional marketing to experiential marketing understanding. Therefore, experiential marketing is expressed as an orientation that exists not only in developed societies but also in developing economies and is contrary to traditional marketing (Atwal & Williams, 2009: 344). Rather than focusing only on rational features and benefits, experiential marketing is an approach that sees consumers as sensory beings seeking pleasurable experiences in a postmodern world (Williams, 2006: 485). According to Baudrillard, in increasing leisure activities, consumers see many emotions such as

being happy, sad, praised, afraid, and even suffering as a must for having a pleasant and memorable experience. Therefore, in experiential marketing, beyond the functional features offered to consumers, there is a positive and unforgettable experience (Dirsehan, 2010: 23). Postmodern consumers focus on the consumption of experience, desire, and ambiance beyond their basic needs. The consumer, who focuses on the experiential benefit as well as the functional benefit, is an emotional being who focuses on experiential pleasure rather than rational behavior (Atwal & Williams, 2009: 341). Schmitt (1999a) evaluates that consumers are not only rational decision-makers but also individuals who have emotions and make choices with their emotions. As a result, in the age of experience economy, based on the criteria of traditional marketing while evaluating consumer behavior will not bring sustainable success in a competitive market. Moreover, in this economic age, consumers seek sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and relational values focused on obtaining pleasurable experiences (Schmitt, 1999a; Williams, 2006: 493; Walls et al., 2011).

Experiential marketing strategies, which are a key to sustainable success and competitive advantage, can prevent copying in the process. Pine and Gilmore (1999) stated that to design memorable experiences, the content of the experience should be determined, the negative signs that create an impression should be harmonized while the negative signs should be eliminated, the things worth remembering should be brought together and managed in an integrated way through experiential marketing elements. If the positive recall of the experience is high, that experience will be permanent (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 22). Experiential marketing aims to create experiences and provide consumers with unforgettable and impressive experiences by bringing together the five experiential marketing elements (sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and relational) (Schmitt, 1999a) using products and services as scenes. Also, the purpose of these elements is to enrich experiences and create permanence.

Sensory Experience

Sensory experience is generally expressed as the first experience that the consumer encounters (Tsaour et al., 2007: 52) and the concrete aspects of a product or experience that appeals to the five senses such as sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell (Schmitt, 1999a; Schmitt, 2003). The interior decoration and interior design, music, and smell of Starbucks provide a sensory experience. The atmosphere, chill music, and pleasant smells of the Hollister provide very holistically and impressively. Also, the music of the Rainforest Cafe, the mists, and the coolness and tropical smell are examples of sensory experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 104). Restaurants such as Teatro ZinZanni, Hard Rock Cafe, and Ed Debevic's are also among the best examples of sensory experience. Pleasant smells in shopping malls can cause consumers to spend more time (Hulten et al., 2009; Slatten et al., 2011). The more senses the experience contains, the more effective and memorable it becomes (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Emotional Experience

Emotional experience is expressed as presenting experiences to consumers by creating experiences with various emotions (Schmitt, 1999a: 66). Experiences are expressed as inner feelings and personal feelings (Yang, 2009: 245; Mukiira et al., 2017: 6). Strong emotional experiences arise from close contacts, relationships, and interactions (Tsaour et al., 2007: 50). Starbucks focuses on its customers not only on the consumption of products but also on the consumption of ambiance and romantic moments of spending

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time in the store. Theme parks also create experiences that affect consumers, creating internalization and personalized emotions.

Intellectual Experience

Intellectual experience refers to acting according to cognitive elements by focusing on the mental basis, cognitive thinking, and creativity (Schmitt, 1999a; Mukiira et al., 2017: 6). Therefore, intellectual experience is an understanding that produces solutions and creates value. Intellectual experience, surprising, intriguing, and inspiring emotional experiences offered to consumers are triggered by shows, entertainment areas, and similar stimuli (Tsaour et al., 2007: 51).

Behavioral Experience

Behavioral Experience is expressed as lifestyles that focus on influencing consumers' lifestyles and interactions (Schmitt, 1999a) and activate consumers (Mukiira et al., 2017: 6). For example, various brands use influencers and famous people to promote products and brands, leading a large masses to obtain behavioral experiences.

Relational Experience

Relational Experience refers to experiences that include all aspects of sensory, emotional, intellectual, and behavioral marketing and are related to other social groups (Schmitt, 1999a: 68; Schmitt, 1999b: 62). Also, relational experience is related to the experience of belonging to a reference group or culture (Mukiira et al., 2017: 6). For example, all products related to Harley-Davidson symbolize a lifestyle (Schmitt, 1999a: 68).

Post-Experience Behaviors

Consumers reveal certain attitudes, intentions, and behaviors as a result of their experiences. Consumer behaviors that occur post-purchasing goods, services, and experiences are generally considered satisfaction and loyalty intentions.

Experiential Satisfaction

Experiential satisfaction is an important issue that affects post-experience behaviors. Satisfaction, which directly affects future income sources for businesses (Fornell, 1992: 6), is very important in a competitive environment. Increasing the number of satisfied consumers and retaining satisfied consumers is very important for the success of businesses. Satisfaction is expressed as the total evaluation over time of all the experiences of consumers from purchasing goods and services (Anderson et al., 1994). As the feeling of satisfaction varies from person to person, it is very difficult to establish a standard for experiential satisfaction.

Experience is expressed both as the total evaluation of consumption (Johnson & Fornell, 1991: 272) and is related to the satisfaction of the consumer (Oh et al., 2007: 123). Satisfaction can be considered a positive emotion that occurs after the purchase (Oliver, 1993). It is important to determine how and to

what extent customers are satisfied after the experience (Mukiira et al., 2017: 7). The positive or negative reactions of consumers after the experience determine the level of consumer satisfaction (Bigne et al., 2005; Chen & Chen, 2010). According to Oliver (1980), dissatisfaction occurs after consumption, when there is a difference between expectation and perceived performance. Inevitably, consumers who are dissatisfied with goods, services, and experiences will make their choices among other alternatives in the future. It is important for customer loyalty that customers are satisfied and have a positive attitude towards products and services (Jones et al., 2000: 270).

Many studies have examined the effect of experience on satisfaction (Oh et al., 2007; Hosany & Witham, 2010; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011; Kırçova & Erdoğan, 2017). Table 1 shows some studies about satisfaction.

Table 1. Some studies about satisfaction

Author(s)	Experience Element(s)	Context	Methodology	Affected Outcome(s)
Budi et al., (2021)	Brand experience	Philips Lighting Product in Indonesia	Quantitative using CB-SEM with AMOS	Brand experience had a significant impact on customer satisfaction.
Cajiao et al., (2022)	Tourist experience	Passengers traveling to Antarctica	Quantitative use with the two-step clustering procedure in SPSS	Perceived learning and satisfaction affected experiential outcomes.
Goo et al., (2022)	Travel experience	Smart Tourism Technologies in travel club in South Korea	Quantitative using SEM with Smart PLS	Tourist worries and novelty-seeking significantly and simultaneously influence transaction satisfaction and travel experience satisfaction.
Jamshidi & Rousta (2021)	Brand experience	Phone Industry in Malaysia	Quantitative using SEM with Smart PLS	Brand experience is the main source of brand satisfaction
Ju, (2021)	Virtual exhibition experience	Exhibition experience and virtual exhibition experience	Quantitative research with SPSS	The experience of visiting virtual exhibitions has an impact on experiential satisfaction
Kankhuni & Ngwira (2021)	Memorable tourism experience	Overland tourists' natural soundscape perceptions	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Memorable tourism experiences predicted satisfaction
Lee et al., (2021a)	Travel experience	Photo Taking Paradox	Quantitative using regression analysis	taking photographs during a visit increased travelers' satisfaction with an experience
Li et al., (2021)	Tourism Experience	Experiences and post-trip destination image in an ecotourism context	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Tourism experience had an indirect effect on loyalty via the mediating effects of satisfaction.
Olaoke et al., (2021)	Brand experience	Brand experience in the hospitality sector	Quantitative research with SPSS	A non-linear relationship between brand experience and consumer satisfaction was found

Continued on following page

Table 1. Continued

Author(s)	Experience Element(s)	Context	Methodology	Affected Outcome(s)
Pai et al., (2021)	Travel experience	Smart tourism technology experience in Macau	Quantitative research with SEM	Perceived experience has a significant impact on travel satisfaction
Paulose & Shakeel, (2021)	Service experience	Hotel guests during the first phase of lockdown in India to combat COVID-19)	Quantitative using SEM with AMOS	Guest loyalty was indirectly affected by the service experience through customer satisfaction.
Purnama et al., (2021)	Online Transaction Experience	Online Transactions in Islamic Banking	Quantitative using SEM with Lisrel	Customer experience in online transactions has been found to have an impact on customer satisfaction
Radović et al., (2021)	Tourism Experience	Camping tourism experience in Croatia	Quantitative using multiple regression analysis	The camping tourism experience has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction
Suhartanto et al., (2021)	Halal experience	Tourist experience in Halal tourism	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Satisfaction affects the tourist experience.
Zaid & Patwayati, (2021)	Customer Experience	E-retailing in Indonesia	Quantitative using PLS	Customer experience has an indirect effect on customer satisfaction.
Akel, (2020)	Tourism Experience and experience economy	Cross-cultural differences in the theme park hotel	Quantitative using SEM with R program	Experiential satisfaction creates a significant difference between nationalities based on the experience economy and tourism experience elements.

Source: Author

Some post-experience behaviors of visitors with experiential satisfaction will emerge. These are loyalty intentions, which include revisit intention, intention to recommend, and willingness to pay. Experiential satisfaction plays a critical role in creating a revisit intention, recommendation, and willingness to pay (Akel, 2020).

Loyalty

Loyalty is defined as a product or service that is preferred among alternatives that encourage repeated purchasing (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000: 346). Loyalty, which is evaluated among behavioral intentions (Zeithaml et al., 1996), has been defined as a strong desire and commitment to purchase a product or service repeatedly in the future (Oliver, 1981: 35). A permanent loyalty can be created when positive emotions, pleasure, lasting memories, and impressions are created on consumers by offering experience in addition to products and services. Table 3 shows some studies on loyalty.

Table 2. Some studies about loyalty

Author(s)	Experience Element(s)	Context	Methodology	Affected Outcome(s)
Budi et al., (2021)	Brand experience	Philips Lighting Product in Indonesia	Quantitative using CB-SEM with AMOS	Brand experience had a significant impact on brand loyalty
Li et al., (2021)	Tourism Experience	Experiences and post-trip destination image in an ecotourism context	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Tourism experience had an indirect effect on destination loyalty and ecotourism loyalty
Olaoke et al., (2021)	Brand experience	Brand experience in the hospitality sector	Quantitative research with SPSS	A non-linear relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty was found.
Lou & Xie, (2021)	Consumer experience	Digital content marketing	Quantitative using SEM with AMOS	Experiential evaluation positively influenced brand loyalty
Paulose & Shakeel, (2021)	Service experience	Hotel guests during the first phase of lockdown in India to combat COVID-19)	Quantitative using SEM with AMOS	Guest loyalty was indirectly affected by the service experience through customer satisfaction.
Radović et al., (2021)	Camping Tourism Experience	Camping tourism experience in Croatia	Quantitative using multiple regression analysis	Camping tourism experience has a positive and significant effect on tourist loyalty.
Rasool et al., (2021)	Brand experience	Brand experience in the setting of the banking industry	A multi-step data analysis with AMOS	Brand experience has a positive effect on customer loyalty
Safeer et al., (2021)	Brand experience	Brand experience in the global branding context	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Brand experience dimensions are an important determinant of consumer loyalty
Setiawan et al., (2021)	Experience Value	Tourist Involvement in Indonesia	Quantitative using SEM with AMOS	The experience value has a positive and significant impact on tourist loyalty
Suhartanto et al., (2021)	Helal experience	Tourist experience in Halal tourism	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Loyalty affects the tourist experience
Zaid & Patwayati, (2021)	Customer Experience	E-retailing in Indonesia	Quantitative using PLS	Customer experience has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.
Zhang & Walsh (2021)	Tourist Experience	Historic and cultural tourism in Sheqi, China	Quantitative using SEM with Mplus7.0	Tourist experience has a positive effect on destination loyalty
Akel, (2020)	Tourist Experience	Cross-cultural differences in the theme park hotel	Quantitative using SEM with R program	On the basis of the experience economy and tourism experience factors, loyalty intentions do not make a significant difference between nationalities.

Source: Author

Revisit Intention

Revisit intention is expressed as the planned behavior and future desire of consumers in another time (Oliver & Swan, 1989; Cole & Scott, 2004). Revisit intention is directly affected by satisfaction (La-Barbera & Mazursky, 1983) and is seen as an extension of satisfaction (Kozak, 2001b: 786; Um et al., 2006: 1141). While the satisfied consumer is more likely to revisit, the dissatisfied consumer is expected to seek another alternative (Oliver & Swan, 1989). Although the concept of satisfaction is abstract and difficult to measure, revisit intention is a simpler concept to measure for both customers and businesses (Akel, 2020). Table 3 shows some studies about revisit intention.

Table 3. Some studies about revisit intention

Author(s)	Experience Element(s)	Context	Methodology	Affected Outcome(s)
Hu & Xu (2021)	Memorability of a previous travel experience	Previous travel experience for Chinese individuals	Quantitative using regression analysis	Memorability of past travel experiences has a significant positive effect on revisit intention
Tiwari et al., (2021)	Memorable tourism experience	Memorable tourism experience for tourists	Quantitative using SEM with AMOS	Memorable tourism experience has an effect on revisit intention
Lee et al., (2021b)	Consumers' in-store technology experience	In-store technology experience in a Korean beauty store	Quantitative using SEM	Perceived interactivity and brand loyalty mediate the effect of in-store technology experience on revisit intention
Luo et al., (2021)	Tourist experience	Entertainment destination in Macau	Quantitative using SEM with AMOS	Tourist experience has an effect on revisit intention
Mittal et al., (2021)	Memorable tourism experience	Tourism experience for 316 respondents who had visited a heritage site	Quantitative using SEM	Memorable tourist experience mediates the relationship between social return and revisit intention
Lee et al., (2021a)	Travel experience	Photo Taking Paradox	Quantitative using regression analysis	Taking photographs during a visit decreased travelers' revisit intention
Cho, (2021)	Past experience	Past experiences for six professional baseball games in South Korea	Quantitative using SEM	The relationship between nostalgia and place attachment was moderated by past experience

Source: Author

Recommend Intention

Recommend intention, focusing on the attitudinal aspect of consumers, is the component of loyalty intention, which refers to recommending products or services to others who have positive attitudes (Pearson, 1996: 147). It takes place outside the control of businesses (Goyette et al., 2010: 6). It is also the case of consumers telling others about their experiences and motivating them to participate in the

behavior by interacting with others (Babin et al., 2005: 135; Smilansky, 2009: 1; Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 133; Barreto, 2014: 642). Consumers who intend to recommend become missionaries and brand advocates who transmit their positive or negative emotions, feelings, attitudes, and opinions to their family, friends, and other communities (Smilansky, 2009: 5-10; Akel, 2020). Table 4 shows some studies about recommend intention.

Table 4. Some studies about recommend intention

Author(s)	Experience Element(s)	Context	Methodology	Affected Outcome(s)
Gómez-Suárez & Yagüe (2021)	Multi-sensory emotional experience	Summer event to increase tourist visits to an area in Palma de Mallorca	Quantitative using SEM	Positive evaluations of the event were effective in recommending the brand by word-of-mouth
Hasan & Neela (2021)	Water-based adventure experience	Study of water-based adventure activity experiences in the coastal areas of Kota Kinabalu in Sabah, Malaysia.	Quantitative using SEM	Water-based adventure experiences have been found to affect positive e-WOM intentions
Jakobsen et al., (2021)	Stadium experience	Stadium experience for national A-team men's football matches in Denmark	A panel data analysis and several regression analysis	The atmosphere in the stadium and the positive determinants of WOM were identified
Kankhuni & Ngwira (2021)	Memorable tourism experience	Overland tourists' natural soundscape perceptions	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Memorable tourism experiences predicted e-WOM.
Lai et al., (2021)	Tourists' destination culinary experience	The effects of tourists' destination culinary experience with the experience economy theory	Quantitative using CB-SEM	Memory takes a major role in the e-WOM generation intention
Mittal et al., (2021)	Memorable tourism experience	Memorable tourism experience for 316 respondents who had visited a heritage site	Quantitative using SEM	Memorable tourist experience mediates the relationship between social return and recommend intention
Safeer et al., (2021)	Brand experience	Brand experience in the global branding context	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Brand experience dimensions are an important determinant of word-of-mouth

Source: Author

The Willingness to Pay

The willingness to pay is evaluated as the total benefit that consumers receive in return for the price they pay for goods, services, or experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 134). Willingness to pay is about being willing to pay more for the experience. Also, willingness to pay is expressed as the highest amount of money a consumer is willing to spend for a product or service (Krishna, 1991). Today, with intense competition in almost every industry, the fact that it is very difficult to retain consumers and the high

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number of price-sensitive consumers (Anderson et al., 2004) show that more importance should be given to post-experience behaviors. Table 5 shows some studies about the willingness to pay more.

Table 5. Some studies about the willingness to pay more

Author(s)	Experience Element(s)	Context	Methodology	Affected Outcome(s)
Safeer et al., (2021)	Brand experience	Brand experience in the global branding context	Quantitative using SEM with PLS	Brand experience dimensions are an important determinant of willingness to pay more. Also, brand experience dimensions positively influenced sensory and intellectual experiences
Huang, (2021)	Restorative experience	Restorative experience in an augmented reality environment	Quantitative using SEM	Physical control creates a restorative experience that results in greater immersion and ultimately more willingness to pay

Source: Author

Experiential marketing has been studied in association with many fields. Experience applied in many industries will continue to be the subject of research in the future as it has been in the past. The concept of experience, which is evaluated in various fields and from various perspectives, has been studied more especially in tourism, theme park, gastronomy, retailing, and café/restaurant areas. Consumption centers provide consumers with positive and meaningful emotions. Experiential marketing, which is dominant in all these application areas, provides consumers with an entertainment environment, removes them from the monotony and boringness of real life, educates consumers, and improves their esthetic feelings (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

In the postmodern period, experience consumption has found a practice area in the tourism industry and has been studied in consumption approaches and consumer behavior studies. In addition to the elements of the experience economy and experiential marketing, it provided the application of experiential innovation and experiential entrepreneurship tools such as theme, hyper-reality, and simulation. The use of themes in the tourism industry is designed to increase the attractiveness of consumption centers. Designing architecturally magnificent buildings to increase the sensory stimulus of tourists, the employees in clothes suitable for the presented theme, the performance of mascots, and many fairy tale characters carry the consumption further than the traditional state. The diversity and differentiation of experiential innovation and experiential entrepreneurship play an important role in increasing the number of tourists and gaining a strong market share in tourism. It offers an experiential living area such as hotel rooms, bar and concert areas, dining areas, and shopping centers. Post-experience behaviors are guided by experiential activities that appeal to different imaginations offered beyond the expectations of tourists.

Offering goods, services, and experiences in tourism centers such as hotels, theme parks, casinos, cruise ships, cafes, and restaurants ensures that tourists get unforgettable memories. The focus of experience consumption in the postmodern era is to create memories and provide a memorable experience. Planning of goods and services based on experience has become a must for experiential innovation and experiential entrepreneurship. It is not a coincidence that Walt Disney started marketing activities beyond the ordinary with experience and then continued with goods and services (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 130).

Unlike consumption centers, the planning of financial products and services in the banking industry in an integrated manner with branches and mobile experience has expanded the field of experiential elements. The rapid development of the technological infrastructure has changed the size of the experience and provided it to be supported by many virtual tools. Artificial intelligence and digital transformation have enabled the implementation of intangible goods and services in an experiential framework and aroused curiosity for the future. Today, virtual games, virtual learning environments, mobile applications, online advertising, and social media tools are the other tools that digital transformation includes experiential marketing.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing an experience beyond the expectations of postmodern consumers is a solution for sustainable loyalty intention and behavior in many industries. Postmodern consumers expect to encounter a reality that appeals to their imagination and is beyond their imagination. Focusing on the artistic and esthetic aspects and supporting them with themes and visuals change the dimension of consumption. Designing and presenting experiential activities with experiential innovation is necessary for experiential entrepreneurship. Better understanding and application of experiential innovation in dynamic and technology-based industries is a new direction of marketing.

Contrary to traditional marketing methods, the experiential marketing approach has changed the concept of consumption. Contrary to the meaning of consumption, experience consumption is dynamic, memorable, and permanent with the understanding of experience economy and experiential marketing. Businesses with an experiential marketing approach can make the benefit of consumption permanent by offering memorable, pleasant, and attractive experiences to consumers. The impact of memorable experiences persists over the years. Hence, it is inevitable that experiences increase the level of satisfaction and that post-purchase intentions and behaviors are in the interest of the business.

It shows that businesses should plan their marketing activities more carefully, as the effect of permanent experiences will be remembered for many years. Hence, the importance of managing the experience as well as the planning the experience emerges. Businesses that do not include experience orientation, experiential innovation, and the experience-technology relationship in their marketing and management strategies will have difficulties in terms of sustainable success and long-term profitability.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This book chapter presents some important findings and leads to businesses. It contributes to businesses and academics by examining experiential marketing studies in the literature and trying to present a conceptual framework. Emphasizing that focusing only on traditional marketing understanding is not enough to affect consumer intentions and behaviors in the future, this book chapter states that the experiential marketing approach should be more involved in the practice.

CONCLUSION

Schmitt (1999) stated that traditional marketing is not supported in any way to benefit from the experience economy and thus the experiential marketing approach is necessary. The fact that experiential marketing is applicable in every industry, understands the new generation of consumers better and creates higher customer value (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013: 27) has led to more research in terms of both management and marketing. The change in the meaning of consumption with experience, the transformation of consumption into a leisure time activity, the transformation of consumption centers into magical environments, and the fact that experiential entrepreneurship and experiential innovation can be applied in many industries shape marketing and management strategies.

The transformation of consumption centers such as hotels, theme parks, casinos, cruises, cafes, restaurants, and airports into theater stages and magical and attractive environments has changed the understanding of consumption. According to Pine and Gilmore (2012), marketing managers should give their employees their roles on the stage and help them to take on the appropriate characters for the roles. Actors, i.e. employees, need to rehearse behind the scenes to prepare for the appropriate role. They emphasized the importance of these rehearsals to differentiate them from the service economy. Performances by employees can make ordinary events interesting. Thus, today, the number of businesses that see and adopt theater as a business model is increasing (Pine & Gilmore, 2012: 18). Also, the development of ICTs has led to the digital and experiential transformation of virtual games, virtual learning environments, mobile applications, online advertising, and social media tools.

The architecture of the consumption centers, with their common living spaces and fantastic atmospheres, ensured the practice of different experiences. This transformation of consumption and consumption centers is the subject of experiential satisfaction. Incorporating meaningful and magical themes in many consumption centers, arranging them according to current management and marketing strategies, and focusing on creating unforgettable memories made it necessary to reevaluate loyalty intentions.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Experience: All of the unforgettable information and memories that occur in the mind of the individual as a result of certain events and situations that affect the relevant decisions in the future.

Experiential Marketing: Focuses on influencing the lifestyle of individuals, increasing brand awareness, and providing customer experience with the purchase of goods and services.

Post-Experience Behaviors: Usually attitudes, intentions, and behaviors as a result of experience.

Chapter 2

Experiential Value and Experiential Quality

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ABSTRACT

The importance of providing an experience that will make the customer feel special is better understood by businesses today. It is essential for businesses to consider customer experiences, experiential value, and experiential quality with a strategic management approach focused on market success, target profitability, and global brand image. In this chapter, the concepts of experiential value, experiential quality, and the relationship between experiential value and experiential quality are examined. The chapter aims to reveal the role and importance of experiential value and experiential quality in achieving a competitive advantage for businesses. Studies in the literature show that experiential value and experiential quality reveal that it is effective in consumer decisions such as customer satisfaction, repurchase, and recommendation. Hence, businesses need to determine their marketing strategies by taking into account what kind of experience their customers want to have with their products and services.

INTRODUCTION

With globalization, competition conditions in the market also change. However, in the face of rapid developments in technology, businesses tend to adapt to this process to increase their competitive power. On the other hand, the change observed in consumer preferences and new purchasing habits raises the need for businesses to update their working conditions and marketing strategies.

Meeting consumers' changing preferences and expectations with unforgettable and extraordinary experiences becomes a business differentiation tool. It is not enough for consumers to meet their expectations with innovative and superior quality products or services. Businesses develop their marketing strategies to provide a memorable experience, one step beyond selling products and services. This change in both the consumer and business front; led to the transition from the service economy to the experience economy. The economic value offered to the target market today; As an experience, it meets consumer needs and expectations.

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Pine and Gilmore (1998) discussed the concept of experience economy for the first time in their study called “Welcome to the Experience Economy. “They stated that businesses follow a natural process of commodities, goods, services, and experiences to increase economic value. They emphasized that businesses have moved to create an experience in this economic value series since goods and services are no longer sufficient to differentiate themselves. They expressed this new economy, in which experience came to the fore, as the experience economy.

In today’s market conditions, customer satisfaction is not a good indicator of success in keeping the customer. It is necessary to offer a different value beyond satisfaction to customers. At this point, experiential marketing helps create this difference that businesses need (Özgören Şen, 2017). The purpose of marketing is to make sales unnecessary. The purpose of experience creation is to make marketing unnecessary. Experience-creating businesses are innovative businesses and enable customers to participate in the product or service-related process with the new experiences they create (Gilmore & Pine, 2002).

Traditional marketing sees the consumer as a rational decision-maker who is only interested in functional features and utility. However, in experiential marketing, the consumer is thought to be rational and emotional individuals interested in experiences that give them pleasure. The main purpose in experiential marketing is to provide holistic experiences to the customer (Schmitt, 1999). With understanding the importance of consumer experiences, experiential marketing emerges as a part of modern marketing understanding. Apart from the superior benefits of the product or service, it is a critical and essential member of the consumer experience with the unique experiences offered to the consumer. It reveals the effect of the company on the marketing efforts by sharing the positive and negative experiences, satisfaction, or disappointment around it.

In this part of the book, the concepts of experiential value and experiential quality are mainly examined. This book chapter section will consist of the introduction, background, primary focus, solutions, recommendations, future research directions, and conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Today, consumers are heavily exposed to marketing-oriented communication efforts of products, services, brands, or businesses. Developments in communication technologies and the active participation of consumers in social media both facilitate and intensify these efforts. Consumers remember their past experiences more quickly and reveal their behavioral intention with this feeling with the messages conveyed to them. At this point, businesses have started to include experiential marketing practices in their marketing efforts.

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) emphasize that consumption has an experiential element and the consumption experience; they define it as a personal formation, often of significant emotional importance, established in interaction with a stimulus when consuming products and services. The experience is the sum of the logical, emotional, and other experiences that the person has acquired from an activity (Aho, 2001); they are experiences that are unique, memorable, sustainable, and enthusiastically shared by customers through word-of-mouth communication (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Today, the increase in the number of researches on experiential consumption draws attention. Providing an opportunity for consumers to experience a particular service is the goal of experiential consumption. Consumers sometimes reconstruct their identities in the consumption experience by combining them with their past experiences. Schmitt (1999) argues that marketing develops in the direction of experi-

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ences rather than functional features of the product or packages. In this respect, consumers buy the product or service not only for solving an existing problem or for the said features of the product, but also for fun and enjoyment. Therefore, today's consumer purchasing behavior should not be considered as a rational behavior.

The experience-oriented approach to consumption has influenced the approach of products, brands, and consumers with a new perspective and a new consumer profile. According to this new approach, consumers do not always rationally make their problem-solving choices, and other factors affect this process. Holbrook and Hirshman (1982), who are at the forefront of important studies on this subject, mention that the senses and pleasures that are effective in consumers' information processing process, consumption preferences, and action process are overlooked. In this context, it is emphasized that there is a sensory dimension that includes some games, resting activities, sensory pleasures, daydreams, aesthetic pleasure, and emotional reactions in the consumption process, and this dimension is neglected. In other words, consumers; the concept of consumption more; It is stated that they live with the expectation of "experiential view," which includes fantasies, emotions, and entertainment and that marketing professionals ignore this point (Atasoy & Marşap, 2019).

According to Klaus and Maklan (2012), customer experience results from a series of interactions that cause a reaction between the consumer's product, business, or a unit of an organization. This experience of the consumer is unique to him and also includes his participation rationally, emotionally, sensibly, physically and spiritually. In summary, it is a cognitive and emotional evaluation of the consumer's direct or indirect interaction with the business regarding the purchasing process.

Experience; It is handled in two dimensions, customer participation, and environmental relationship. Customer engagement is customers' active or passive participation in the experiences businesses offer to customers; the environmental relationship means that the experience and the customer form a whole (Tumer Kabadayı & Koçak Alan, 2014). Experiences have an economic value. The value derived from experience results from the interaction between customers, products, services, and brands (Çetin et al., 2014). Customer experience has a strategic role for both consumers and businesses. While it is a critical determinant in the consumer's purchasing decision, it is a success target for businesses. Consumers are primarily concerned with how the service is delivered rather than what is offered. Their perceptions of service experience are formed as a result of these evaluations (Klaus & Maklan, 2013).

According to Pine and Gillmore (1998), it is essential to create the main idea of the experience, harmonize impressions with positive clues, eliminate negative clues, add memorable objects to the experience, and associate the experience with the five senses in order to design an unforgettable experience that cannot be erased from memories. The main element to be considered in creating the main idea of the experience is that the main idea is different and original from the others. The primary purpose of this principle is for customers to understand in a short time what kind of experience they will have in the business they are in, or to know what kind of experience the business they will go to will give them (Tumer Kabadayı and Koçak Alan, 2014).

Emphasizing that consumers' experiences have essential effects on businesses, Schmitt (1999) suggested a new model by introducing the concept of experiential marketing to the literature. Experiential marketing considers consumers to be both rational and emotional people. The primary purpose of experiential marketing is to bring together individual experiences in pieces and create holistic experiences that will take them to a much different dimension than the sum of these experiences (Atasoy & Marşap, 2019). Schmitt (1999) proposed the experiential marketing model is experience types and experience

providers. Experiences can be examined in five groups sensory, emotional, intellectual, operational, and relational experience types according to their domains.

In today's marketing approach, the main goal is to provide customers with an experience that will make them feel special for the business. The creation of different customer experiences is of great importance for the market success of the business. Positive customer experiences are highly valuable in terms of competitive advantage, customer satisfaction, product/service differentiation, brand image, customer loyalty and word of mouth. It includes the interaction between people, objects, processes and the environment in the customer experience, purchasing decision and consumption process; It is the sum of the emotions, perceptions and attitudes that lead to cognitive, emotional, sensory and behavioral reactions in consumers and that are formed as a result of these interactions. In the management of customer experiences, it is necessary to present the right evidence to create value for customers. Schmitt (2007) argues that successful customer experience management consists of five stages: analyzing the customer's experiential world, creating the experiential platform, designing the brand experience, structuring the customer interface, and constantly innovating (Jain et al.; 2017).

In experiential marketing, the consumer can meet his or her needs for activities, aesthetics and beauty, symbolic meanings, being different, enjoying, dreaming, creativity and emotional needs (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Experiential marketing is a marketing approach that aims to achieve customer satisfaction for any product or service experience. Lee and Chang (2012) describe experiential marketing as a permanent experience in the mind of the customer. Customer experience provides an important economic value to the business, creating a competitive advantage that is difficult to imitate or change (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). The main purpose here is to provide a positive experience for the product and service that the consumer buys in order to meet his needs or create a solution to his problem. Experiential marketing is a marketing approach that aims to offer the benefit of the product or service to the customer before purchasing the product or service (Yeşilot and Dal, 2019).

Pine and Gilmore (2011) argue that when individuals buy experiences, they also buy pleasant memories that will remain in their memories, and in this way, businesses can establish personal relationships with their customers (Deligöz, 2016). Schmitt (1999) emphasized that the primary purpose of experiential marketing is to create a holistic experience for consumers; He suggested five different experience values in a consumption experience: sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and relational experience.

With the reflection of the change in consumer demands and needs on the marketing understanding, price and quality are not considered sufficient for businesses that want to gain a competitive advantage. Experiential marketing efforts provide the consumer with a mental journey by offering sensory, emotional, intellectual, relational, and behavioral benefits and the functional and functional benefits of the products. In this way, experiential marketing offers new solutions to businesses in cases where classical promotional efforts and traditional marketing techniques are insufficient to attract consumers' attention (Aksoy & Tan, 2021).

To leave a lasting impression in the mind of the consumer by giving the consumer a unique experience regarding the product or service they have purchased; Gaining satisfied, loyal and profitable customers has been the main goal of experiential marketing. There are various studies in the literature to investigate the relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Köse and Cizer (2021) determined that experiential marketing has a significant effect on both creating customer satisfaction and providing customer loyalty in their studies on the smartphone industry. Uygur and Doğan (2013) also revealed that there is a positive relationship between experiential marketing and customer

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satisfaction in their studies to determine the experiences of restaurant businesses to their customers and the effect of these experiences on customer satisfaction.

Consumers are more accessible, rational, and equipped to transform their expectations about products and brands. Businesses that focus on a long-term, sustainable and robust relationship with consumers review their marketing structures and budgets. It prefers products that create a different presentation and have high impact and access opportunities, and in this respect, experiential marketing becomes more critical (Köleoğlu et al., 2018).

By offering different experiences, businesses aim to satisfy their customers, make repeat purchases and visits and recommend them to their circles. Cesur and Çam (2021), in their study to determine the effect of experiential marketing on behavioral intentions in technology stores and the mediating role of customer satisfaction in this effect, found that experiential marketing (dimensions) had a significant effect on customer behavioral intentions. In line with the results, it is recommended that businesses that want to bring their customers back to the store, use positive references and protect themselves from price competition should use experiential marketing practices. However, due to its effect on customer satisfaction and consumer behavioral intentions (repurchase, recommendation and more payment intentions); It has been stated that businesses can use experiential marketing practices as a good tool to achieve their goals.

Experiences are also frequently used in service businesses. For example, Tchibo stores, known as coffee brands, provide training on fashion products or products used in the kitchen and information about the products. Also, on some days in the store, presentations of products and workshops are organized under the heading of a hobby. Tchibo aims to create a space for its customers to interact emotionally and emotionally and reflect on their experiences with the marketing of its products (Yetiş, 2015).

In today's service business, customers' purchasing tendencies are increasing by enriching the marketing mix components developed by the business with pleasant experiences. Therefore, service businesses should develop strategies to create and manage experiences for their target markets. These businesses should position themselves as companies that "provide services with experience" to differentiate themselves from other businesses by creating a competitive advantage. At the same time, thanks to the pleasant experiences that businesses will create, customers will be able to turn into profitable customers rather than price-oriented customers. For this reason, businesses that consider the personality traits, values, wishes, needs, and expectations of their customers from the product and service should focus on the experiential marketing approach when determining their marketing strategies. When creating their marketing strategies, businesses should try to offer, develop and manage different experience alternatives for their customers in the consumption process. Today, one of the most important ways to differentiate itself from its competitors and turn its customers into customers for life is to create unique and unforgettable experiences. Businesses that want to gain a competitive advantage should carefully consider the "experience" factor while developing their marketing strategies (Tumer Kabadayı & Koçak Alan, 2014).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Experiential Value

It is noteworthy that businesses turn to strategies that offer an experience to their customers to gain a competitive advantage. Customer experiences are an essential determinant of differentiation from competitors. Customer experiences differentiate the business from competitors and strengthen customer

loyalty. Today's customers expect businesses to consume products and services that create unforgettable experiences beyond the consumption of products or services (Walls et al., 2011). The essence of experiential marketing experiences. Experiences are not phenomena that occur spontaneously in the minds of consumers but are phenomena that are tried to be created in consumers as a result of marketing strategies developed by businesses. Businesses are trying to provide consumers with various experiences by organizing special programs. It sends various stimuli to attract the attention of consumers to experiences, and consumers who notice these may want to experience the experience by turning to brands that offer them this opportunity (Yuan & Wu, 2008).

It is recommended that businesses increase customer satisfaction by giving importance to experiential marketing to prevent customers from turning to different businesses and increasing the profit rates. When creating their marketing strategies, businesses need to experience experiences that make their customers feel inside. In order to achieve this, it can be suggested that they adjust their relations with customers, communicate with them, and provide services accordingly (Onurlubaş & Altunışık, 2021).

As pioneers of experiential value, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) suggested that consumers should be viewed more broadly in terms of consumers experiences encompassing their fantasies, emotions, and sense of fun. The experiential value view is basically; Consumer value is not contained in the products purchased, but rather the overall consumption experience, which includes the use or appreciation of products. In line with this view, Holbrook (1994) defined customer value as "a relative (comparative, personal, situational) preference" (Park et al., 2013).

Value is subjective and is created based on the presentation of experience that emerges during the transaction process or through individual perceptions. Value is developed as a utilitarian value and includes hedonic values. Experiential value can be created through consumption experience (Maghnati et al., 2012). The value customers derive from an experience is called 'experiential value. 'Experiential value is theoretically based on Holbrook's concept of 'value' (1999). Experiential value can be thought of as a perceived relative preference for product or service features that emerge through interaction in an environment that prevents or facilitates customers from achieving their goals (Varshneya et al., 2017).

Experiential value: It is the consumer's personal views on the features of an existing product and service performance that facilitate or restrict the goals and targets set before consumption. The consumption experience can be rich in value (Mathwick et al., 2002). Experiential value can be expressed as the perceptions that occur as a result of interactions that occur as a result of customers' direct use or remote evaluation of products and services (Mathwick et al., 2001). With the consumer's use of the product, experience is created and the consumer gains experiential value (Oral & Çelik Yetim, 2014). Oral and Çelik Orphan (2014); In their studies investigating the effect of experiential value experience of tourism products offered by tour operators on satisfaction and loyalty, they revealed the positive effect and importance of experiential value in providing customer satisfaction and creating customer loyalty.

Value can be characterized as permanent motivations that people seek in their lives. Marketing prepares the tools to motivate the customers. These tools are decisive in customer demand as values. The findings of the study by Güven and Ay (2019), in which they investigated the effect of experiential value and sub-dimensions of experiential value, aesthetics, entertainment, escape and service excellence on customer satisfaction, show that customer satisfaction increases as customers' perceptions of experiential value increase. Experiential value; It is an essential element in increasing the number of visits by existing customers and attracting potential customers. As a result of the study carried out for shopping centers; With practices aimed at experiential value, shopping malls move away from being places where products are sold and appeal to the minds and five senses of their customers; It is suggested that during

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the shopping experience, customers can relax, have fun, socialize, and thus become an area that provides lasting experiences in mind.

In the literature, different experiential value models developed by researchers have been put forward to explain the concept of experiential value. Pine and Gilmore's (1999)'s experiential value model; consists of entertainment, aesthetics, education, and escape values. In Holbrook's (1999) value model, each experiential value has subjective or other-directedness dimensions; intrinsic or extrinsic and active or reactive. Holbrook's value typology; efficiency, superiority, status, reputation, entertainment, aesthetics, ethics, and spirituality. Schmitt (1999) analyzed the experiential value model in five dimensions: sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational experience (Oral & Çelik Yetim, 2014). Mathwick et al. (2001) the experiential value model; entertainment value, aesthetics, return on investment, and service excellence.

Holbrook & Hirschman (1982), emphasize that the experiential value approach goes beyond rational decisions, and emphasizes fantasies (dreams, dreams, and unconscious desires), feelings (love, hate, anger, fear, sadness, and joy), and fun (consisting of aesthetically pleasing and entertaining activities). States that it consists of three elements: hedonic/hedonic pleasures). At the same time, she thinks that these three elements shape the main characters of experiential value and consumption. In this case, experience, in a simple sense, has a function that guides behaviors and creates values/values dependent on changes. In the service sector, especially in the tourism sector, the perception of experiential value emerges as an essential behavioral driver. While customers direct business activities with rational decisions, they make/will make, they also emphasize the sustainable competitive conditions of business management (Papatya et al., 2013).

Consumers' perceived value is based on their total consumption experience, especially in the service sector. Value cannot be derived directly from the products or services themselves but from the consumption experience. The experiential view is an essential indicator in the measurement of perceived value. Experiential value differs from social, functional, and market value. It includes performance evaluations of products or services, including key features such as price and durability. Many studies have revealed the effect of experiential value on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention (Fan et al., 2020).

Due to the characteristics of the services, the experiences perceived by the customers play a critical role in the brand creation efforts of tourism enterprises. Customers who have positive experiences with service personnel and other customers in the service process tend to share these experiences. Identifying dimensions of value perceived by customers positively impact customers' sharing of the overall holiday experience. Thus, customers actively participate in the marketing activities of businesses by sharing the perceived experiential value with others (Ahn et al., 2019).

Kılıç and Çakır (2022), in their study to determine the effect of tourists' perceptions of value from gastronomic product experiences on their intention to revisit; determined the dimensions of experiential value as emotional value, epistemic value, quality value, health value, and interaction value. The research findings show that while tourists' gastronomic experiential value perception is the highest, emotional value is the lowest interaction value. Experiential value dimensions are an essential research topic in tourism marketing. They play a decisive role in the general satisfaction level of the visitor and the decision to revisit by providing unforgettable and different experiences to the tourists in the tourism sector, where the tourists' experiences are decisive.

Papatya et al. (2013), in the study to determine the experience-based critical value drivers of customer offers offered by accommodation businesses, the entertainment and escape dimension outputs of the experiential value approach emerged as the most critical value drivers that will increase customers' loyalty

to the business. In the research results, the employee, escape, economic, entertainment, aesthetic, and reference dimensions were determined as critical drivers with significant relationships. In line with the research findings, accommodation enterprises should keep their level of addressing the value drivers in a positive way high; to create an environment that can satisfy these critical aspects of tourists who want to escape their problems and forget, and who want to discover their identities; strengthen their human resources; Suggestions for renewing their in-house designs and decorations suitable for target markets were presented.

Güzel (2014), in his study investigating which experiential critical value drivers focus on the tendency of customers to convey their experiences to each other through word-of-mouth communication in electronic environments; stated that the experiential value drivers emphasized after the holiday experience are grouped under four themes: physical evidence, food and beverage quality, leisure time activities and service quality. These variable groups, specified within the scope of the post-purchase positive trend, are experiential critical value points that come to the fore to strengthen the customer experience base and create customer loyalty.

Receiving and examining feedback about customer experiences is an important management approach for businesses to develop the right strategies to meet customer expectations. Business management should consider customer experiences and develop creative and innovative experiential marketing efforts to provide more authentic experiences. The study by Çavuşoğlu and Durmaz (2020) shows that customer experiences and experiential values; reveal that it directs the customer to purchase behavior and leads to repeat purchasing behavior.

Çoban and Demirhan (2019) examined the experiential value dimensions perceived by consumers in mobile banking applications and the effects of these dimensions on satisfaction and loyalty towards mobile banking applications; sensory, emotional, economic (intellectual), social, functional, personal and security values. In line with the study findings; In order to achieve goals such as directing users to the system in mobile banking, increasing the number of users, and strengthening customer satisfaction and loyalty, suggestions are emphasized to consider the experiential dimensions of concrete and additional systems to create an experiential marketing structure that will affect consumers, and to understand the importance of implementation.

Experiential Quality

The experiential quality perceptions of consumers for the consumption of a product or service is the main subject of many studies in the field of consumer behavior. Service quality is a critical determinant of customers' service experiences, especially in service marketing. Consumers identify different quality experiences related to their service experiences from different service providers.

Experiential quality is the service received by the customers in the consumption process; It is defined as the emotional evaluation of service providers, other customers, other people who stand by him in the service process, and his experiences with the personnel he communicates with (Chang & Horng, 2010). Experiential quality covers the emotional reactions of consumers towards the psychological benefits they want to experience depending on the service they have received (Chan and Baum; 2007). Experiential quality includes both the features offered by the service provider and the opportunities provided by the customers (Crompton & Love, 1995). Particularly in the service process, the service provider and the customers benefiting from the service occur together; Being the determinants of experiential quality

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imposes their role on both sides. Experiential quality includes both the service provider and the service recipient.

Evaluation of service occurs before experiencing the service (via word of mouth), during a service experience, immediately after the experience, or after several experiences with a particular service. In general, if a customer has not experienced service (pure word of mouth and promotion), he or she can assess service quality. However, without experience, it will be impossible to evaluate satisfaction. Therefore, it is meaningless to establish a causal relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality before experiencing the service. Similarly, after experiencing a few examples of service delivery, the customer will integrate their service-related assessments with all these examples and form an overall service quality assessment that will be very similar to their overall satisfaction with the service (Dabholkar, 1995).

Experiential quality is essential for understanding consumer behavior. Creating an unforgettable quality experience serves the purpose of attracting and retaining customers. In this respect, understanding consumer experiences is essential for future marketing strategies, as positive experiences will affect the consumer's psychological evaluations such as perceived value and satisfaction. The concept of experiential quality is associated with the service quality model (Feng et al., 2020). However, Otto and Ritchie (1996) emphasized the difference between experiential and service quality. They stated that the quality of experience creates a subjective perspective, provides an internal evaluation, and has a symbolic, experiential and hedonic benefit. On the other hand, they argue that service quality includes an objective evaluation and includes all participants of the service process and the service environment and that functional benefit is at the forefront.

Chen and Chen (2010), service quality as service performance in terms of quality; They express experiential quality as the psychological result of the consumer's participation in the purchasing process. While service quality is defined as the quality of the qualities of a service under the control of the service provider; Experiential quality includes not only the qualities offered by a service provider, but also those that originate from the consumer. The measurement of experiential quality is subjective and relates to the client's internal state in a holistic approach. In terms of tourism, service quality expresses service performance; Experiential quality is the psychological result of the customer's involvement in all service activities. Lemke et al.(2011); They explain experiential quality as a perception of the superiority or excellence of the customer experience. Customer experience quality is perceptual and related to the customer's goals and expectations.

Klaus and Maklan (2012) introduced the multi-item consumer experience quality scale (EXQ) based on the basic service experience structure. The findings explain consumers' evaluations of their service experiences in terms of consumer evaluations and marketing-related outputs such as purchase and re-purchase intention. According to Klaus (2010), although SERVQUAL, a measure of service quality, and EXQ, a measure of experience quality, are for the same purpose, both differ at many levels. SERVQUAL is based on the approval-disapproval paradigm, in which the consumer evaluates the service encounter by comparing their expectations and perceptions. EXQ, on the other hand, was adapted from the cause-effect chain theory to understand the consumer's decision process with consumer experience (Özgören Şen, 2017).

Experiential quality dimensions have been addressed in many recent studies. For example, Wu and Li (2017) determined the dimensions of experiential quality as interaction quality, physical environment quality, output quality, and access quality. Wu et al. (2017), on the other hand, discussed experiential quality in five dimensions: interaction quality, physical environment quality, output quality, pleasure quality,

and management quality. One of the studies in the literature is to investigate the effect of experiential quality on environmental, experiential satisfaction, and repeat purchases in air passenger transportation by Çetindaş and Sevinç (2021). The study found that experiential quality positively affects environmental, experiential satisfaction, and repeat purchases; It has been determined that passengers who perceive high experiential quality show higher environmental experiential satisfaction and are more inclined to purchase again. Also, it has been observed that environmental, and experiential satisfaction has a significant positive effect on the repurchase and that the passengers who are satisfied with environmental approaches may want to experience this experience again.

Eryılmaz and Öksüz (2021), in their study examining whether museum visitors' perceptions of experience quality differ according to demographic characteristics, found that visitors had a positive experience. The study examines the quality of experience in three dimensions: the desire to learn, sense of escape, and fun—the dimension of desire to learn covers the information and training that the visitor learns during the trip. The feeling of escape is evaluated as the visitor is being affected by his participation in the activities within the trip. On the other hand, the entertainment dimension refers to the feeling and satisfaction that the visitor gets by observing that he is not only affected by the activity.

Bellio and Buccoliero (2021) revealed the effect of three dimensions of a patient's experiential quality perceptions (Physical Environment, Empowerment and Dignity, and Patient-Doctor Relationship) on a patient's experiential satisfaction in healthcare. The findings show that the three dimensions identified significantly impact the patient's experiential satisfaction. According to the study results, the perceived quality of the physical environment positively impacts patients' experiential satisfaction. Also, the perceived quality of empowerment and dignity and the quality of the patient-doctor relationship mediate this relationship, reinforcing the physical environment's role in experiential satisfaction.

There are various studies in different sectors on the dimensions of experiential quality in the literature. Wu et al. (2018) determined the dimensions of experiential quality as peer-to-peer quality, physical environment quality, outcome quality, venue quality, information quality, and administration quality. The results show that customers' perceptions of peer-to-peer quality, physical environment quality, outcome quality, venue quality, and administration quality significantly influence green experiential satisfaction. In contrast, the effect of information quality on green experiential satisfaction is insignificant.

The Relationship Between Experiential Value and Experiential Quality

Differentiating their products or services has a significant impact on the competitive advantage of businesses. Consumer experiences are an important determinant in service quality evaluations. Businesses need to determine how consumers perceive and evaluate the quality of experience of the service they use. Consumers experience different experiences in each interaction with the business. Determining consumers' perception of experience quality will also determine their loyalty tendencies and attitudes toward the word of mouth communication (Özgören Şen, 2017).

The relationship between experiential quality, experiential satisfaction, and experiential loyalty has been studied in various studies. However, there are also studies that determined the mediating role of perceived value between experiential quality and experiential satisfaction. The level of experiential satisfaction depends on the perceived experiential quality. Service quality also has a significant impact on creating and strengthening customer trust. The effect of high trust of the customer on loyalty is quite strong. Wu (2016) suggested four basic experiential quality dimensions in his research on coffee chain customers. Among these dimensions, emotional quality was identified as the most important primary

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dimension. Physical environment, result and interaction quality are followed as other dimensions. The study also found that experiential quality significantly affects perceived value and experiential trust; experiential satisfaction is affected by perceived value, experiential quality and experiential trust; experiential satisfaction and experiential trust were determined to be important determinants of experiential loyalty.

The interaction between the customer and the service personnel or other participants in the service process is very important in terms of experiential quality and service quality. Wu et al (2021) in their research, in which they examined the effect of social interactions in the service delivery process on experiential quality, service quality and satisfaction; They revealed that the flow in this interaction process is an important determinant of customers' perceptions of experiential quality and service quality. In addition, the findings show that experiential quality has an indirect effect on service quality and satisfaction. It has been determined that the flow situation within social interaction groups indirectly affects customer satisfaction through perceptions of experiential quality and service quality.

Studies examining the relationship between experiential quality, satisfaction, and revisit intention in the literature also discuss tourist behavior. Evaluation of the quality of experience aims to pinpoint tourists' attitudes and the technical and functional benefits of service providers' external environment. The perceived quality of tourists is generally related to their experiences during their visit. Rini et al. (2021) The research results examined the behavior of tourists visiting Lake Toba in this respect; showed that experiential quality has a positive and significant effect on experiential satisfaction variables. Similarly, experiential quality has been found to have a positive and significant effect on revisit intention through experiential satisfaction. In the work of Kusumawati and Rahayu (2019), quality experience has a significant effect on customer perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty; customer perceived value has a significant effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and customer satisfaction have a significant effect on customer loyalty. They commented that the experience that consumers feel while visiting and making a purchase decision is compatible with the benefit obtained and that consumer expectations can be met.

Delivering an unforgettable quality experience is critical in attracting and retaining customers. Understanding tourists' experiences are of strategic importance as positive experiences affect tourists' psychological evaluations of perceived value and satisfaction. Feng et al. (2021), in their studies examining the effect of experiential quality and perceived value on satisfaction; immersion, participation, and fun as dimensions of experiential quality, determined the functional and emotional dimensions of the perceived value. The findings are in the direction of the specific experiential quality - fun – has the most substantial effect on perceived functional and emotional value between the three dimensions of experiential quality.

Today, consumers give more importance to the hedonic qualities of the products or services offered by the enterprises than their functional qualities. When consumers' evaluations of service delivery are positive, their perceived experiential value also increases. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic process, service encounter elements have gained even more importance. Customers expect to enjoy their experience throughout the entire flow of the service process. To make customer experiences memorable, they must be made fun of, and every detail of the experience must be worth enjoying. In their studies, Rashid et al. (2021) investigated the effect of service encounter elements on experiential value and experiential value on customer loyalty; They find that service encounter elements are precursors of experiential value and customer loyalty is a result of both service encounter elements and experiential value. The research findings reveal a positive relationship between service encounters, experiential value, and customer loyalty and that experiential value positively affects customer loyalty.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The dynamic market environment makes it difficult for businesses to survive, maintain their current market share and gain a competitive advantage. The understanding that consumers always act rationally and make purchasing decisions is not valid for today's consumer preferences. According to the results obtained, it is necessary to understand consumer behavior, meet expectations, monitor customer experiences, and develop marketing strategies and policies.

Today's competitive conditions push businesses to seek new marketing approaches to meet consumer needs beyond expectations. It is not enough to develop the functional features of the product or service in order to offer a differentiated value to the target market. Marketing strategies that will strengthen consumers' trust and loyalty to the brand, place an unforgettable experience in their minds during the consumption process, and give the consumer a sense of fun and pleasure should be the objectives.

Consumers expect to enjoy both product and service consumption. Businesses need to highlight the product and service features that push consumers to hedonistic consumption differently. It should be tried to meet the entertainment and pleasure expectations of the consumers with the experiences they will have during the purchasing and consumption process. It is necessary to offer experiences that will positively activate consumers' emotions. Marketing practices need to manage consumer experiences, experiential value, and experiential quality to turn them into loyalty success.

From the consumer's point of view, experience is experienced with the product he uses or the service offered to him, and the consumer gains an experiential value. Businesses should ensure customer satisfaction by offering experiences designed to meet the target market's needs. For businesses that adopt this marketing approach, preventing existing customers from leaving the business; gaining new customers; The strategic goals of the business, such as increased profitability through loyal customers, will be more achievable.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This book chapter includes a literature review on experiential value and experiential quality. The application of experiential value and experiential quality to consumers with different demographic characteristics and behavioral intentions in different sectors with a representative sampling method will contribute to researchers and practitioners.

Researching consumer experiences is essential in understanding consumer behavior and making the right decisions. Studies in the literature have shown supportive results. Value and quality-oriented studies can be expanded for different countries, different target markets, different sectors, and different experiences. The results will contribute to the literature and guide business managers' suggestions.

The dimensions of experiential value perceived by different consumer groups in various shopping experiences and the effect of these dimensions on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and behavioral intentions can be examined. The richness of the studies can be increased by establishing different models with other experiential value and experiential quality dimensions that affect the future consumer experience and are not explored within the scope of current studies.

In order to determine the role of customer experiences, perceived value, and quality in the business world, customer satisfaction, behavioral intention, etc. it is necessary to understand its relationship with post-consumption behaviors. In this respect, revealing the roles of experiential value and experiential

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quality in influencing customers' behavioral intentions will help business managers in their marketing plans, decisions, and strategies.

CONCLUSION

Businesses are to retain their existing customers and gain new customers in the face of their competitors and changing consumer preferences. On the other hand, consumers want to experience excitement, entertainment, and pleasure with products and services. Businesses can meet their expectations for targeted market success and performance by offering and providing different customer experiences. The different positive experiences that consumers will get from the product or service affect their purchasing behavior positively. In this respect, business managers should include marketing strategies that will improve and increase the perceived experiential value and perceived experiential quality by analyzing consumers' experiences with products and services within the scope of marketing plans and practices. At the same time, businesses will be able to realize their financial goals such as sales and profitability by offering different experiences to their customers.

The unforgettable and decisive experiences require businesses to be among the primary objectives of their marketing efforts. The fact that customers take a more active role in the marketing process raises the importance and necessity of a correct understanding of the emotions and feelings of the customers. In this respect, determining the experiential value and experiential quality and its sub-dimensions will support the effectiveness of the marketing outputs of the enterprises. It will be guiding that these should be taken into account, especially for businesses operating in the service sector. The consumer's experience quality evaluations include all interactions with the business before, during, and after the sale.

When the studies in the literature are examined, it is seen that the experiential value and experiential quality; It is seen that there are significant relationships between marketing results such as customer satisfaction, repurchase, recommendation and for different target audiences and different experiences. At this point, businesses need to learn how they want to experience their product and service consumption to retain their customers. In realizing these goals of enterprises, it is necessary to follow a path that will support the effectiveness of marketing communication efforts toward the target market.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Experience: The sum of the logical, emotional, and other experiences that the person has acquired from an activity.

Experiential Marketing: A marketing approach that includes a product or service and an experience that satisfies the customer.

Experiential Quality: The service received by the customers in the consumption process.

Experiential Value: The relative evaluations of the consumer regarding the characteristics of the product she uses and the service performance, facilitating or hindering the goals and targets set before consumption.

Value: Characterized as permanent motivations that people seek in their lives.

Chapter 3

Customer Experience Management

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ABSTRACT

The growing attention to the customer experience is the result of the increasing complexity of channels, interactions, choices, and customer journeys. Businesses try to overcome these challenges by increasing their efforts comprehensively. Organizations depict and manage customer experiences through customer journeys (including multiple touchpoints representing direct and indirect customer interactions with the organization). Businesses need to plan and manage the elements that will arouse curiosity and interest and direct them to purchase behavior. This chapter explains almost all concepts related to customer experience management such as customer experience, classification of customer experience, digital customer experience, luxury customer experience, and customer experience control, and offers suggestions to businesses within these concepts.

INTRODUCTION

Customer experience is the next evolutionary step in marketing approaches to customer relationship management and customer satisfaction (Schmitt, 2003). Thank to technological innovation, the consequent commodification of goods, and insufficient focus on the customer's perspective, it has become increasingly important to shift from the focus of collecting products, services, and data about customers. Customer experience, which is a complex output for a business or customer, that covers the entire customer lifecycle of the business, emerges at this point (Meyer & Schwager 2007; Klaus & Maklan 2013). Customer experience management (CEM) is about how people experience and perceive that they buy services and goods to fulfill their hedonic, sensory, and emotional desires and the processes necessary to achieve other aims (Maklan & Klaus 2011). Furthermore, customer experience is explained as the all consequence of all personal interactions of the customer, from the first to the last stage of brand discovery, which can be divided into physical, social, emotional, affective, and cognitive responses between the brands and customers. (Gentile et al., 2007; Verhoef et al., 2009).

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Experience emerges from any type of customer interaction and reaction, such as usage, customer support, packaging, reliability, functionality, or advertising (Meyer & Schwager 2007). Customer experiences turn into memories that affect all their future experiences (Oh et al., 2007). Since the expectations of the customers are constantly increasing and changing, businesses need to make changes in their marketing strategies and follow the innovations to meet these expectations. It also affects the expectations of the Y generation, who are more inclined toward the digital world than previous generations, and the Z generation, who was born into technology, to dominate the digital world. Therefore, managing the digital customer experience well will provide a competitive advantage. The purpose of this book chapter is to provide a conceptual framework for customer experience management, experiential marketing, digital customer experience and customer experience control. Also, the aim of this chapter is to provide advice to businesses to better manage the customer experience and gain a competitive advantage and it is to include the results of the studies conducted in different sectors and reveal the importance of evaluating and reviewing the dynamics of each sector and show that there are different customer experience components in each sector.

BACKGROUND

Creating and managing customer experiences is very important in recent years, especially for service-intensive businesses, and customer experience has received great concern from practitioner and academic (Pullman & Gross, 2004; Palmer, 2008; Lywood et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Palmer, 2010). Sherma & Chaubey (2014) state that “customer experience is one of the most important elements in achieving success for businesses in all industries”. Consumer studies show that “consumers gain experience when they search for products, buy products and services, and consume them” (Brakus et al., 2009). Experiences include all products and services during the customer’s product research during the pre purchase, purchasing stage, usage, and post purchase stage. Schmitt (1999) explains that customer experiences are “behavioral and relational values that replace sensory, emotional, cognitive, functional values.” Customer experience can lead to competitive advantage and differentiation (Schmitt, 1999). Creating and presenting a unique customer experience is important for building relationships and loyalty with customers, thereby providing economic value to businesses (Mascarenhas et al., 2006; Frow & Payne, 2007; Lywood et al., 2009; Brakus et al., 2009).

When the studies on customer experience management are reviewed, it is revealed that every business has its own dynamics and they should be careful when managing customer experience. At this point, in this book chapter, research made in different businesses and their results will be included. Kisang & Soocheong (2008) determined a six-factor scale including of service product, social factors, facility aesthetics, layout ambiance and lighting in their research. Morgan et. al. (2008) stated that analyzing service encounters can explain the role played by the customer, the purpose of restaurant visits, and the unmentioned subtexts behind critical events. Zehrer (2009) stated that service experiences should be managed appropriately by the SME operator who collects and evaluates relevant customer experience data. Also, according to him, service design should be complementary and embedded in the cultures of businesses using tools such as “planning”. Synergetic learning and cooperation zones between tourism providers are important to achieve long-term competitiveness. Gopalan & Narayan (2010) stated that effective customer satisfaction in the tourism industry requires transparent measurement and cross-functional collaboration plans that clearly define the impact of the actions taken by stakeholders on customer

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experiences. Coghlan & Pearce (2010), in their research on tourists' experience and motivations, found that emotional lability; they found that positivity emerged over time with different stages of discomfort and receptivity. The variability appears to be linked to personal characteristic and daily activity. Klaus & Maklan (2011) stated that customers value hedonic pleasures and personal advancement. Social interactions facilitate experiences and provides efficiency. According to Sathish & Venkatesakumar (2011), the services provided by the worker and the quality of the products offered are more essential than other variables in offering the coffee experience. Miao et al. (2014), the perceived hedonic values (anticipated, experienced, and recalled) of accommodation consumption remains dynamic throughout the experience. Prebensen et al. (2013), personal service, environment, and tourist resources significantly increase the experiential value of a trip.

Rahimian, Shamizanjani, Manian, and Esfidani (2021) defined four stages for customer experience management in the hotel industry in their study. These stages are customer experience design, customer identification, customer experience measurement and customer experience application driven by factors such as structure, leadership, technology culture, and human resources. Abadi, Saeednia & Khorshidi (2021) found a model a customer experience management and identified 24 components in mobile banking industry. The components include performance, relative values, software, background values, service quality, customer satisfaction, bank loyalty, customer loyalty, emotional tendencies, needs recognition, follow-up, main services, absolute values, customization, promise realization, knowledge audit, mixed marketing, security, hardware, staff evaluation, citizenship behavior, behavioral tendencies, customer expectations, and flexibility.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The Concept of Customer Experience

Customer experience firstly emerged in the field following the publication the groundbreaking paper "The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings and fun" by Hirschman and Holbrook. CM is the whole of the feeling and perceptions of the customers, which are formed because of the relationships established with them at all touch points. Customer experience is primarily the possession of a product or service and all perceptions that occur in the customer after using and consuming that product or service. When it comes to customer experience, first, having a product or service and all the perceptions that occur in the customer after using and consuming that product or service come to mind. If these perceptions are positive, customers share their feelings with excitement. Furthermore, customers are looking for ways to have more and more diverse experiences to add more than one new meaning to their lives (Batat, 2019). Customer experience represents the total value given to the business that emerges across all touchpoints. Touchpoints cover the customer's thoughts, starting before the customer's purchase of the services or products and continuing during the purchase and post-purchase processes (Yeşilot & Dal, 2019).

Pine & Gilmore (1999) identify four areas of a customer experience. In this study, the researchers identify two dimensions: firstly, the level of passive or active guest participation; secondly, absorbing the environmental relationship between the customer and the existence. Binding these dimensions explains four dimensions of experience: escape, education, aesthetics and amusement. However, there is a study by Oh et al. (2007) that aims to develop the first measure of tourists' destination accommodation

experiences. They operationalized four experience areas by examining customers' experiences with rural B&Bs. Moreover, the study defined theoretical variables such as quality, memories, customer happiness and arousal (Oh et al., 2007). O'Loughlin et al. (2004) defined customer experience in financial services as a process, brand, and relation experiences. Firstly, the brand experience is perceived by both consumers and managers at the corporate brand level, representing corporate value. Second, brand image is the operational experience, which varies from functional to individual, depending on the products used. The third is a relational experience, which refers to the experience of having relationships with the business. Mascarenhas et al. (2006) revealed that the customer experience includes both emotional and physical factors. They explained that experiences depend on the customers.

Gentile et al. (2007) expressed customer experience as a multi dimensional construct and classified customer experience component. (1) The sensory component is an ingredient of the customer experience that influences on the senses that need to be stimulated, taste, hearing, smell, sight and touch, and evokes a sense of beauty, satisfaction excitement and esthetic pleasure (2) the emotional component includes the customer's emotional systems through the formation of feeling, and emotion and mood (3) the cognitive component is concerned with engaging customers by using their thinking processes or their ingenuity in problem solving. (4) the pragmatic component, which contains practical action and relates to the concept of usability, is not only about the post-purchase use of the product, but also about all product lifecycle phases. (5) the lifestyle component related to the product, usage, and consumption is expressed as loyalty to certain values that the business and brand demonstrate and to which customers contribute. (6) the relational component is expressed as a ingredient of the customer experience that includes people, use of a product or consumption.

Brekus et al. (2009) defined four experience factors as behavioral, intellectual, sensory and emotional. When the research on customer experience is reviewed, it is seen that there are different dimensions and different definitions from business to business. When previous studies are examined, there are six components of customer experience (Gentila et al., 2007; Grundey, 2008; Schmitt, 2011):

The sensory component, which is one of the elements of the customer experience, influences on the senses with its stimuli. The purpose of this experience is to trigger customers' sense of hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. It is also offers unforgettable sensory experiences by arousing various senses such as aesthetic pleasure, satisfaction, excitement, and beauty on those emotions. Sensory experiences are very useful for identifying businesses' products or services, stimulating prospective customers, and inducing a sense of value for the product in the consumer's mind.

The emotional dimension includes mood, the formation of emotions and feelings, and the emotional system. Businesses use the emotional experience to create a deep relationship between their customers and their brands and products. Emotional experience evokes the effect of loyalty to an organization or brand (creating a particular emotion and mood). Consumption of a product or service is affected by feelings (positive or negative) towards the services or products.

The intellectual dimension is associated with thinking or various conscious and logical mental processes. They offer the business will present attracts customers to use their creative skills or in problem-solving situations. Moreover, this experience can encourage customers to review and refine a product or idea. In the intellectual experience, it is aimed that customers are encouraged to participate in activities full of thoughtful and creative thoughts, and the business and its products are re-evaluated by them.

The lifestyle dimension emerges with the adaptation of a lifestyle and behavior, the acceptance of the system of the beliefs and values of the individual. Products and services can offer such an experi-

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ence because they create loyalty to the values that the brand embodies and those customers share among themselves.

The relational dimension includes the individual and individual's relations with the people around them or their ideal self beyond the social context of the individual. Relational experience includes characteristics of behavioral, emotional, sensory, and intellectual experience. However, the relational experience goes beyond the individual's senses and feelings, thus relating the people to something outside of his or her situation. Relational experience appeals to an individual's desire for self-development. Individuals need to be perceived positively by others (for example, peers, girlfriends, boyfriends, etc.). They relate the person to a wider social system. The American motorcycle brand Harley-Davidson is an excellent example of relationship marketing. Consumers see this brand as part of their identity. With the experience, it is not surprising that Harley Davidson users establish strong bonds with the brand. Relational experience goes beyond the individual's personal feelings, emotions, and actions, enabling him to connect with the broader social and cultural context that reflects his or her self into a brand. Moreover, relationship marketing enables the products or services used by consumers to identify with their selves or organizations in their minds.

The pragmatic dimension derives from the practical actions of doing anything. This dimension, which also carries the concept of usability is not only related to the use of the products in the post-purchase phase but also all phases of the product life cycle. Studies examining various dimensions of customer experience in different sectors are given in Table 1 (Rageh et. al., 2011).

Table 1. Studies on customer experience dimensions

AUTHOR	YEAR	CONTEXT	DIMENSIONS
Holbrook & Hirschman	1982	Conceptual paper	Emotion, fun and fantasy,
Arnould & Price	1993	River rafting	Personal growth, renewal harmony with nature, and communities.
Otto & Ritchie	1996	Tourism industry (airplane, hotel, and tour)	Interactive, stimulation, comfort, innovation, hedonic and safety.
O'Sullivan & Spangler	1998	Conceptual paper	From innovation, mass production, real to virtual and community or degree of personalization.
Pine & Gilmore	1999	Conceptual paper	Esthetics, escape, education, and entertainment.
Poullsson & Kale	2004	Many industries; balloon rides, games, theme parks, rock climbing, gym, museums etc.	Learning, personal attention, engagement, surprise, and innovation.
O'Loughlin et al.	2004	Financial service	Transactional and brand experiences, and experience the relationship.
Mascarenhas et al.	2006	Conceptual paper	Physical and emotional dimensions.
Gentile et al.	2007	Research on some famous brands	Relational, lifestyle, cognitive, emotional, pragmatic and sensory, components.
Brakus et al.	2009	An empirical study on various brands	Behavioral, sensory, intellectual, and emotional dimensions.
Klaus & Maklan	2011	Sports tourism	personal progression, hedonic pleasure, efficiency, surreal feeling and social interaction
Chang & Lin	2015	Creative Life Industry	Escapism, entertainment, esthetics, and education.
Chauhan & Manhas	2017	Civil Aviation Sector	Safety, hedonism, recognition, novelty, and comfort
Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown	2019	Hotel industry	Affective, sensorial, behavioural, cognitive, and relational, dimensions.
Pekovic & Rolland	2020	DIY (Do-It-Yourself) retailers	Emotional, cognitive, sensory, social, behavioural, technological,
Shin	2021	Digital Banking	Employee–customer engagement, security, convenience, and usefulness.

Nowadays, organizations manage the processes by considering the customer experience when buy luxury brands and services. Today, the concept of experiential luxury marketing has emerged to manage the experience of customers purchasing luxury brands, and businesses are recommended to follow ten rules (Batat, 2019):

1. Emotions: Promotes positive action, consumer loyalty and emotion.
2. Pleasure: Customers obtain a positive and memorable memory from the store or restaurant.
3. Commitment: Luxury brands must deliver value so that consumers can stay loyal to the organization and identify with the organization.
4. Empathical behavior: Customers find to have an empathetic experience stimulated by relational capital, people and emotions.
5. E-experiences: The online shopping experiences whenever consumers want to buy services or products.
6. Ornament: Presentation of proposals that focus on aesthetics, decors, sensory and themes.
7. Fascination: Surprise consumers and create a WOW effect by designing a sensorial offering.
8. Expressions of customer values: Organizations can integrate the values of consumers into their concept store, product, and service.
9. Exclusivity: Every customer should be considered unique.
10. Embrace: Values sharing and long-term relations with customers.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT

CEM is the process of strategic management by the company of all the experiences that may occur when customers interact with the company, product or service. (Schmitt, 2003). Experiences occur when businesses use their services as a pre-stage and their products as support material in a way that will create an event worth remembering in the memory of their individual customers (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). CEM is a strategy that focuses on the processes and operations of businesses within the framework of individual customer requests. This strategy refers to the exchange that results in the value gained by both the retailer and the customers (Verhoef et. al., 2009). Customer experience management is to define and manage the experience that customers will have at the meeting point with the product or service. The sum of these touchpoints will ensure the total customer experience and thus customer loyalty. CEM is not a brand new and completely different business philosophy. Customer Experience Management is a practical managerial tool that answers questions about how companies can create experiential value for their customers and in turn provide a financial return to the company.

The focus of CEM is the analysis of the customer and customer experience. CEM is the process of strategic management of all customer deficiencies with a brand at all touchpoints. Experiences often arise from direct participation and observation in events. The philosopher Merleau-Ponty says in his book *Phenomena of Perception*: “The world is not an object. I know its law of creation. It is the natural environment and also the domain of all my thoughts”. In other words, when it comes to management and marketing, it is important to create the right environment to create the desired customer experiences. Providing customers with the right environment and connecting with customers at every point can be achieved through customer experience management. Also, customer experience management aims to integrate various factors of the customer’s experience world. Customer experience management is a

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practical management tool, not a vague philosophy. Customer experience management creates value for the customer before the sale, during the sale, and even after the sale. This creates an experience with the brand. This creates customer loyalty and increases the value of the company. Managers enable to create positive emotions in customers and enable them to cope with negative emotions (Schmit & Mangold, 2004).

It is necessary to consider the following steps in customer experience management (Chatzopoulos & Weber, 2020):

1. It is important to review products or service objectives.
2. It is necessary to collect Voice of the Customer (VOC) and research data through customer interviews, competitive intelligence, customer surveys, web analytics, contextual inquiry, customer support logs and social media.
3. It is necessary to map the customer journey as a timeline in which the categories of awareness, research, options, delivery, and follow-up are shown and analyzed. Ordering and production are handled by the delivery department.
4. The previous categories should be analyzed into detailed tasks/steps that the client has done or needs to perform.
5. Customer touchpoints and the channels through which they occur should be identified and demonstrated. For example, the customer should be notified of the channels through which he can pay by invoice and mail, online or in person.
6. It is necessary to create an empathy map at each contact point. Customers can be understood by answering questions such as what the customer says, feels, thinks, and does.

It is impossible to clearly and fully plan the customer experience across all relevant touchpoints. Instead, one should be aware that several influential factors affect customer experiences. There are five factors that affect customer experience management (Bruhn & Hadwich 2012):

1. Internal determinants are factors that are considered to be inherent in the person concerned. This may include, for example, age and gender. Interpersonal determinants describe influencing factors that can be effective among several people. For example, there may be interactions with other customers.
2. The determinants of the company are the factors that can be affected by the business itself. For example, the friendliness of the service team is very typical here, and this often has a positive effect on the customers and their experiences.
3. Performance-related determinants targeting functionality and service quality or performance characteristics: For example, the high quality and uniqueness of the product will likely enhance the customer experience.
4. Situational determinants that may arise spontaneously in the relevant situation: The surprise appearance of a good friend at the time of sale can increase a positive experience, while time constraints will likely make creating a positive customer experience more difficult. However, discounts from other businesses can also be seen as situational determinants and can affect the customer experience.
5. Environmental determinants are not related to the use of services or products but are factors that affect customer experiences as contextual conditions. However, the economic situation can also be expressed as a determinant of experience.

Some of the advantages of customer experience management to businesses (Karakadılar & Güney, 2015):

- Improvement of customer service;
- Ensuring and improving customer satisfaction;
- Ensuring and increasing the loyalty of existing customers;
- Creating loyalty for new customers;
- Ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in marketing activities;
- Providing life value to people;
- Creating word of mouth communication;
- Encouragement and motivation of employees.

Customer experience is all perceptions of the consumer about owning and consuming a product or service (Lewis & Chambers, 2000). If customers' perceptions are positive and provide them with unique satisfaction, customers remember this and share their feelings and thoughts with others, finding it worth telling it to other people (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). CEM is the progression of strategically administrating the customer's experiences with products or services that the business has offered to the market or directly related to the business itself. CEM is as much an art as it is a science. Also, customer experience management is about how customers are driven. Moreover, it is about the ability to respond to changing impulses, deliver ideas, design and test experiences, and understand what it's like to be a customer. The fundamental principle in customer experience management is to "go with the flow" and proactively respond to emerging opportunities: to deliver more personal, memorable, and targeted experiences (Walden, 2017).

Schmitt (2003) emphasizes that customer experience management consists of five main stages. First, there is the customer's experience analysis. Businesses ensure that customers can be understood by looking at their inner world. Creating a second, experiential platform, is aimed to establishing a relationship between the developed strategies and the implementation. Third, with the brand experience design, all products or services that are required to provide a special experience for people are designed appropriately. Fourth, personal relationships with the client need to be structured. Communication channels at the contact points where there is constant interaction with the customer are needed to function effectively. Fifth, it is very important to benefit from the reactions of customers to experiential marketing practices to ensure the continuity of the company's success in innovation efforts with continuous innovation work (Güney & Karakaları, 2015).

Schmitt et al. have used experiential marketing practices to manage customer experiences and achieve success in many industries. New trends in technology, media and society are driving a movement towards marketing experiences, not just the functional aspect of products. There are five dimensions of customer experiences: relational, emotional, sensory, cognitive and behavioral experiences. These customer experiences are also expressed as strategic experiential modules that form the target of marketing efforts. The sensory experience aims to create experiences through sound, smell, taste, sight and touch. Also, marketing is used to motivate customers, add value to products and differentiate businesses and products. Cognitive experience includes experiences that appeal to customers' creativity and cognitive functions. The behavioral experience aims to influence behaviors, lifestyles, and interactions. Also, marketing aims to provide customers with experience, offering them different ways of making things. Moreover, it enriches customers' lives by demonstrating alternative lifestyles and interactions. Relational experi-

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ence goes beyond the people's personal and private feelings and associates the people with something outside of his or current situation and appeals to the people's desire for self-development (Schmitt & Rogers, 2008).

Digital Customer Experience Management

The design and successful management of the digital interface for the customer are becoming more and more valuable. Customers spend a lot of time on digital platforms and basic information systems to organize their daily lives, consume digital content and meet their entertainment needs (Goldbach & Benlian, 2015; Lusch & Nambisan, 2015). Digital customer experience refers to all stages of the purchasing or consumption process and describes a customer's holistic experience in digitally-powered interactions with one or more providers (Verhoef et al., 2009). Although businesses follow different business models such as the placement of advertising content, the sale, and rental of digital products and media, or the operation of digital marketplaces, they see the successful management of the digital customer experience as an important driver for their success (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The design of digital customer experience is used for businesses in traditional industries. The automotive, financial, or insurance industry is relevant for three reasons: First, innovations today mainly occur at the level of digital products and services. That's why companies need to understand the digital customer experiences as an integral part of product and service innovations. Second, in the digitalization process, customer interactions are more strongly influenced by the use of consumer technology. On the one hand, this is due to the shift of customer expectations and preferences and consequent behavior towards digital interactions. On the other hand, the usability and penetration of consumer technology in the personal environment are also increasing. As a result, incumbent businesses must also learn to deal with the multitude of new consumer technology configurations on the customer side. In the future, businesses will have to design the digital customer experience through a service delivery network, rather than focusing solely on their organization.

The developing and changing customer experience with the internet of things has created new technologies such as, virtual reality, deep learning, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. Technologies that change the traditional customer experience and are shaped according to the positive or negative experiences and expectations of the customers are used. Thus, the digital customer experience becomes important. Artificial intelligence also plays a role in the digital customer experience. Artificial intelligence increases its impact on with the experience that institutions offer to their customers. Personalizing content to deliver a unique customer experience will bring customers closer to the brand. Artificial intelligence not only personalizes the customer experience regarding past behavior but also predicts the behavior of new and existing customers. Artificial intelligence records all behavior of customers and creates big data. Thus, institutions can develop their strategies according to the expectations and needs of their customers (Seyitoğlu, 2019).

Customer Experience Control

Customer experience auditing focuses on what is right and wrong in on customers' experience with the business, taking into account not rational and functional, but also emotional sides. Five important steps to be followed for Customer Experience Audit are suggested (Berry & Carbone, 2007):

1. Identifying the emotions that lead to customer loyalty: The steps to reveal the emotions that customers want to have during their experience with a business constitute the first stage in experience control. By using research techniques designed to reveal the needs and desires embedded in the conscious or unconscious thoughts and feelings of the customers, their deeply desired emotions can be determined. Various techniques such as video recordings, digital photographs, and in-depth interviews are used to reveal these hedonistic or utilitarian feelings.
2. Creating an experience model: An experience model that is integrative for all experience cues identifies the feelings, emotions, and thoughts that customers derive from the experience. It is very important to establish an experience model in all experience clues of enterprises to reveal feelings and emotions and create emotional bonds.
3. Establishing and evaluating the inventory of experience clues: The current customer experience needs to be monitored from the customer's perspectives and examined with experience clues that activate their emotions. These cues are then listed and examined according to their contribution to either reinforcing or inhibiting the emotions outlined in the experience model. At this point, the availability, continuity, and execution of experience clues are measured. Anthropology, heuristics, linguistics, and psychology can be used to identify clues that customers are experiencing. Also, video or audio recording files that can be used for detailed clue scanning analysis can support the recording and identification of clues. The use of video cameras and pinhole cameras concealed in their clothing should be preferred to monitor a subject's or employees' verbal language, tone of voice, gestures, body language, and facial expressions. Linguistic tools are also used to evaluate the effect of communication between the business and its customers.
4. Identifying the experience gap: One of the essential steps in conducting a successful experience control is identifying the gap between what customers want to experience in an experience and what they experience. The basis for building a customer experience plan, supported by new and updated clues, is identifying the gap between the current emotions that the experience creates in customers and what they want to experience.
5. Filling the experience gap and monitoring implementation: When experience auditing is done carefully, it is possible to reveal the gap between what the customer experiences in an experience and what they desire. A new customer experience management strategy should be constantly pursued and corrected with feedback when necessary.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In recent years, the subject of customer experience and customer experience management has attracted great attention both in marketing and sales research and corporate applications. Many organizations are aware of the importance of creating personalized customer experiences, but there is no systematic process for customer experience management. Hence, it means regular adjustment of institutional structures and no systematic definition of objectives. There are also some challenges in measuring management success and establishing implementation and feedback loops. A customer experience should be considered holistically. Especially in organizations with high sales potential, the interaction between customers and sales personnel is considered very important. However, this is not enough. Customer experience should be understood as a multidimensional construct from which a customer experience is created in all interactions. Accordingly, customer experience management should be understood as a strategic ap-

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proach and should not be reduced to individual measures. For this, the relevant contact points must be clearly defined. Customer experience management also requires systematic expectation management. This means that on the one hand, customer expectations must be guided by their positioning idea, and the customer experience must be improved in a targeted way. For this, it is necessary to know the expectations of the customers and to develop tools for expectation management. A more comprehensive analysis of customer touchpoints is required for sustainable customer experience management. Identifying real moments and managing assets represents another central challenge for customer experience management, but this requires better planning and implementation in many places, but above all, even better measurement of impacts.

As a result of the postmodern marketing approach, customer experience management has shifted its focus from the old understanding to the customer. It looks at the client's world from both an analytical and creative perspective and uses the tools to shape it. According to customer experience management, companies need to analyze customer experience, determine an experience-oriented strategy and implement this strategy with integrated tools to maintain their growth and provide profitability, efficiency, and productivity. This will lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This book chapter has some limitations. In this book chapter, the customer experience management studies have been tried to be reviewed by limiting attention to conceptual and theoretical perspectives, but some studies such as the economic aspect of customer experience management are not included. Future researchers may adopt different perspectives when explaining and reviewing customer experience management studies. For instance, studies of how to design tailored customer experiences for different businesses may represent another area for future review research.

CONCLUSION

Businesses need to monitor their customers to be successful and gain a competitive edge. So, it can affect the decision-making process of customers and manage this process more successfully. Consumers no longer make completely rational decisions when purchasing a product. The emotion created by the brand itself and previous experiences with that brand affects their purchasing behavior. The positive perception of customer experience has become the focal point for businesses under these circumstances. Therefore, it aims to provide a competitive advantage by attracting the attention of customers. Also, businesses need to plan and manage applications that will surprise their customers, arouse interest, make them curious, and lead them to purchase behavior. Creating positive experiences and impressions is related to the fact that customers can have good memories that they will never forget. Making innovations in the customer's experiences and making them unforgettable memories for the customer depends on the manager's observation ability and planning of this process well.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Customer: A consumer of a product or service.

Customer Experience: Considering the benefits of products and services along with their sensory aspects.

Customer Experience Management

Customer Experience Control: It is a concept that focuses on what is right and wrong on customers' experience with the business, taking into account not only rational and functional but also emotional elements.

Customer Experience Management: It is the process of strategic management by the business of all the experiences of the customers that may occur over time when interacting with the business, product, or service.

Digital Customer Experience: It refers to all stages of the purchasing or consumption process and is the holistic experience of a customer in digitally powered interactions with one or more providers.

Experiential Marketing: It is a holistic approach that focuses on customer experiences rather than the benefits of services and products to customers.

Chapter 4

Customer Online Shopping Experience

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, online shopping has grown heavily, with the global online commerce volume increasing significantly due to the COVID-19 crisis. The rapid development of technology has greatly changed the way customers shop. The transition of the customer shopping model from physical stores to online shopping has led many companies to create effective online systems to retain their existing customers and acquire new customers. With the internet becoming the main channel for product and service delivery, the online shopping experience has become vital. This study covers how the latest and notable technological innovations are shaping the customer online shopping experience, advancing customer adoption, and e-commerce success. Online customer experience is an extremely important issue for companies today. In this context, the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), blockchain, and metaverse technologies play an important role in the success of online customer experience.

INTRODUCTION

Shopping has a significant place in human life (Emidi, 2021: 7). Customers in the shopping process; It is exposed to countless brands that aim to meet the same needs and offer products with similar quality and price (Carmo et al., 2022: 1). Shopping for the customer has come out of the process of just obtaining a preferred product or service and has become a social experience (Terblanche, 2018: 49). Since the emergence of the idea that consuming or purchasing a product involves a series of activities valued by customers, the concept of experience has taken on an important role for businesses (Carmo et al., 2022: 3). Marketing professionals need to look for new opportunities that will attract customers, aiming to establish a bond between the customer and the brand (Carmo et al., 2022: 1). Nowadays businesses have shifted their focus towards attracting and retaining valuable customers rather than increasing their sales, and they are aware that the key to success is related to providing great shopping experiences to their

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customers (Anshu et al., 2022: 3). Because today's customers often expect an interactive, versatile, and holistic shopping experience that entertains them, affects them emotionally, and encourages creativity (Terblanche, 2018: 49).

Nowadays, which we can describe as the age of experience, customer experience is one of the concepts that gain importance in the marketing discipline. Unlike traditional marketing, which relies on customers to make rational decisions, experiential marketing deals with customers' intelligence, senses, intellect, and emotions. Experiential marketing aims to establish and deepen relationships with customers by offering interactive, exciting, meaningful, and memorable experiences with their products and services (Dimirieska & Efremova, 2021: 140). Therefore, a better customer experience is essential to ensure customer satisfaction, which is the key element for businesses to compete in market conditions. Every interaction an organization has with customers and employees creates an experience. The experience can be positive or negative, but emotions are always produced as a result. Every interaction is very important to ensure that customer expectations and requests are met and to create lasting relationships. Positive relationships enable customer value to grow, employees to thrive, and users to be enthusiastic (Joshi, 2018: 1).

As the ways of reaching and establishing relationships with customers have diversified in the globalizing world, the shopping experiences offered by companies for customers have begun to differentiate (Pleyers & Poncin, 2020), and the way people experience both virtual and physical environments have changed through rapidly developing technologies (Flavian et al., 2019: 547). The customer shopping experience has partially or completely shifted to the digital world (Kawaf & Tagg, 2017: 223). This change; customers do not aim to visit physical stores, but prefer to benefit from technology through the online features of the retail organizations (Eneizan, 2020: 2554). Therefore, the validity of all processes applied in physical stores has decreased in digital stores, and businesses have sought different ways to interact with customers.

Online shopping has been on the rise since the 1990s, with customers purchasing more diversified products from online platforms (Zhou et al., 2007: 41). Retail e-commerce sales worldwide in 2020 amounted to 4.28 trillion US dollars and it is estimated that this will increase to 5.4 trillion US dollars in 2022 (Gulfraz et al., 2022: 1). In recent years, with the rapid spread of Internet penetration and increasing consumption rates, e-commerce has grown incredibly around the world (Vakulenko et al., 2019: 306). Online shopping offers customers the opportunity to purchase products or services over the Internet (Rooyen & Amoah, 2021: 18). Online shopping provides customers with potential benefits such as original services, low prices, a variety of options (Zhou et al., 2007: 41) and to shop whenever and wherever they want (Eneizan, 2020: 2554). Bring off successfully meet the rapidly changing and growing expectations of online shoppers, businesses must develop a strong customer experience agenda (Vakulenko et al., 2019: 306). Providing customers with rich and enjoyable experiences is seen as a good approach for marketers to develop a competitive advantage. Technological advances have increasingly provided new opportunities for marketers to embrace the experiential challenge (Pleyers & Poncin, 2020). Therefore, online shopping and customer experience should be handled together (Kawaf & Tagg, 2017: 223). Because online shopping largely depends on the customer's experience (Pappas et al., 2014: 188).

This book chapter how the latest and notable technological innovations are shaping the customer online shopping experience, advancing customer adoption, and e-commerce success. Online customer experience is an extremely important issue for companies today.

BACKGROUND

Customer experience refers to the overall experience a customer has with a retailer based on their interactions with the brand and their thoughts about the brand (Ameen et al., 2021: 2). There are Some features must exist to provide experience. Here are the seven elements of designing a customer experience:

- Businesses must create a certain resource to survive by gaining a competitive advantage.
- Good customer experience is achieved by giving the right answers to the emotional and physical expectations of the consumers.
- While designing the customer experience, the focus should be on mobilizing planned emotions.
- For a good customer experience, customer expectations should be considered and customers should always be at the focal point of the business.
- For a good customer experience, feedback should be obtained from customers about the products and services offered by the company.
- A good customer experience should increase profits by reducing costs and expenses.
- The way to create a good customer experience is to provide special experiences for customers everywhere (Aydın & Onaylı, 2020: 650).

A customer's experience is the result of a process by which they participate or are involved in the delivery of a company's goods or services. The online shopping experience, on the other hand, encompasses mental and subjective perceptions of interaction with a company's online value proposition (Rooyen & Amoah, 2021: 18). In the literature, online customer experience has been defined as "Internet experience, website brand experience, online purchasing experience, and the online shopping experience" with similar but different expressions. Especially, the change from static websites to dynamic websites has offered customers the opportunity to interact and personalize more with the online web environment (Mucan & Tanyeri, 2016: 680). Online customer experience is defined as the emotional and cognitive evaluation of the customer's direct or indirect interaction with a company (Barari et al., 2020:3). Thus, there are two components to the online shopping experience:

- Cognitive experience in online shopping refers to the conscious processing of information that leads to problem-solving or learning. It is linked to thinking or conscious mental processes. Cognitive experience in online shopping has its roots in the concept of online 'flow'. He defined online streaming as "a cognitive state experienced while browsing online" (Bhattacharya and Srivastava, 2018: 15-16). A website can arouse customers' curiosity and encourage them to use their imagination and creativity. The customer's curiosity during the act of purchasing is related to the mystery that the retailer can create. New technologies enrich the visual experience by combining the real world with the virtual world, providing the customer with a mentally interesting and enjoyable experience (Cachero-Martínez & Vázquez-Casielles, 2021).

- Emotional experience in online shopping; leads to an emotional connection between the customer and the product, service, brand, or organization, which "involves the emotional system of the person through the creation of moods, feelings, and emotions" (Bhattacharya and Srivastava, 2018: 15-16). The ultimate goal is to create deeper bonds by attracting the attention of the customer, increasing their interaction, and sharing this emotional experience (Cachero-Martínez & Vázquez-Casielles, 2021).

There are many differences between the online shopping experience and the traditional offline shopping experience (Pappas et al., 2014:188). The online shopping experience is defined as "a subjective,

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holistic and complex process resulting from interactions between the online environment and customers”. The fundamental distinction between physical experiences is the environment in which the experience takes place. Accordingly, the online experience can only exist thanks to the presence of the internet with technological devices such as smartphones, computers, or tablets. Another key difference between physical experiences is the level of personal contact. While physical experiences often require face-to-face communication, online shopping can be accomplished without contacting other individuals. Also, the amount of information in the online experience can be much higher due to the presence of images and rich details about products. Also, online settings can represent the brand only through audio-visual cues, while stores operating in real places can rely on physical cues (Emidi, 2021: 21). Thus, the online shopping experience is more complex than the physical shopping experience. Online experience encompasses elements such as finding, searching, selecting, browsing, evaluating information, and comparing, as well as transacting and interacting with the online company. Customers can feel more confident about shopping online based on their previous shopping experience. Some key factors that lead to a good online experience include a functional design, an easy-to-understand language, fast response time, provision of relevant information, a clear navigation structure, effective tools for selecting the desired product and ordering process, and consumer-friendly browsing (Verghese, 2018: 12).

Online customer experience has become very important with the rapid development of technology and the increasing interest in online environments. Businesses offer customers many possibilities, including time, 24/7 accessibility, and flexibility on digital platforms. Although digital stores offer customers a shopping experience in the comfort of their own homes, they have a wider variety of products than physical stores. It makes it much easier for customers to move between stores with search engines instead of the time spent shopping from physical stores. Customers’ positive experiences, therefore, play an important role in online sales, as the cost of switching from one seller to another is greatly reduced (Aydın & Onaylı, 2020: 650).

In an online context, customer experience is an important aspect of a company’s success. Therefore, managing the customer experience can affect the sustainability of companies’ competitiveness. In an online context, failing to provide a high-quality experience to a customer can have negative consequences for a firm. Because customers can access comprehensive information to check the quality of their experience and compare product/service options. In addition, trust in the company is very important in the customer’s online shopping experience. Building trust is a challenge faced by the vast majority of online businesses, especially those with newly established websites or lacking a brand reputation. For such firms, the website is the primary tool through which online customers evaluate whether to engage with the firm. Establishing trust is crucial for the success of a relationship, especially in the early stages when customers have not yet directly interacted with the online company (Stouthuysen et al., 2018:25).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The Antecedent of Online Customer Experience

Online customers’ shopping experience is a multifaceted, holistic, and subjective process that emerges through interactions between customers and the online environment (Gulfraz et. al., 2022: 3). Online retailers tend to attract as many shoppers as possible to their online shopping stores by establishing an emotional long-term bond with their customers and providing experiences that encourage customers to

be loyal. Therefore, experiential elements are critical factors in increasing customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and sales. So let's examine some of the most influential online elements of businesses (Urdea et al., 2021: 9):

Ease of Finding the Website and App: The online experience is when the decision-making process begins when potential customers visit a search engine to find the products and services they are looking for via a device (tablet, computer or smartphone). Also, the global positioning system (GPS) feature on the devices provides an intermediary to determine the closest service provider location and the physical location of the customer (Bilgihan vd., 2016).

Ease of Use and Usability: The quality of human-computer interactions defines the Web site usability experience. For example, service companies attract customers because online hotel reservations can be easily compared to competitors' prices, saving money and time. Website browsing plays an important role in the utilitarian nature of online shopping. Therefore, e-commerce tools need to be easy to navigate to create a preferable experience (Bilgihan et al., 2016).

Hedonic and Utilitarian Features: Website elements used to create a good online customer experience are considered one of the most important prerequisites. The visual design of a Web site is the most important criterion in evaluating the reliability and quality of the Web site. Maintaining a balance of utilitarian and hedonic features on the Website is essential to create a satisfying customer experience (Bilgihan et al., 2016). Hedonic experience, which expresses the intrinsic value given to the experience by customers, can result in positive or negative results depending on the situations customers experience during interaction (García et al., 2018: 27).

Personalization: Personalization in online contexts is an important determinant of positive experiences. It reflects the extent to which information has been adapted to meet the needs of individual customers. For example, referral systems are used on websites that claim to attract customers because of their personalization features. E-commerce websites such as Amazon apply data mining based on the similarity of products purchased by the customer. It also recommends similar products based on their search and purchase history (Bilgihan et al., 2016).

Social Interactions: The developments in Web 2.0 technologies have been effective in the social interaction of companies with customers. One of the latest developments in Web 2.0 technology is online communities. Customers' perception of themselves as members of a community is expressed as online social interactions. For this reason, the social interaction dimension, which is considered as a social experience in e-commerce, emphasizes the importance of community dialogues (Bilgihan et al., 2016). The sociability dimension emerges when the customer interacts with virtual communities, which leads to a perception of sociability, friendliness, and kindness (García et al., 2018: 27).

Multi-Device Compatibility: Desktop computers, which in the past were widely adopted for doing business over the Internet, has recently been replaced by smartphones and tablet devices. The tablet and smartphone markets are coming into focus as companies spend more resources and time understanding the omnichannel customer experience. Therefore, creating a unified customer experience is extremely important for companies. When creating touch-points through mobile, tablet, and the Web used to interact with customers, companies need to support their business goals and align with core brand features. For example; browser-based e-commerce designs should have the same features as the Web design features of smartphone or tablet applications. Also, design cues like color and images need to be similar across social media channels to create a unified experience. Creating a unified experience is critical to gaining a competitive advantage in e-commerce (Bilgihan et al., 2016).

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Entertainment: When people have fun, they may be attracted to the experience (for example, watching a performance, reading for pleasure, listening to music) that interests them and gives them some pleasure or relaxation. Despite the widespread belief that entertainment on the Internet should be highly interactive and participatory, some Internet users remain in the role of mere observers or spectators just to watch or listen. For example, Victoria's Secret (www.victoriasecret.com) streams exclusive fashion shows simultaneously on the Internet and TV to drive more customer traffic (Kim & Kim, 2007: 50). Therefore, creating an enjoyable online experience can both reduce the shopping cart abandonment rate in digital stores and trigger the warning of Web page visitors (Bleier et al., 2019: 99).

Technologies Used in Shaping Customer Online Shopping Experience

In the last 20 years, the “digital revolution” has revolutionized the customer experience, and the World Wide Web is enabling new interactions, transactions, and communications through an entirely new medium and platform (Hoyer et al., 2020: 58). Customers no longer refer to product quality in their retail shopping, but also to the retail environment and technologies used. Gone are the days when price and product quality were the only determinants of customer satisfaction and experience (Ratna, 2020: 973). Many e-commerce firms use customized technologies to provide a personalized experience to their customers. These innovations have led to a strong technology race among all giants in the e-commerce industry (Wang et al., 2020: 2). The experience hierarchy consists of 4 experience levels:

Level 1: Traditional experiences; it is essentially one-way (from companies to customers) and the role of technology is absent or limited.

Level 2: In technology-supported experiences; technology plays a facilitating role in providing support to customers. On the other hand, it does not allow customers to create experiences and interact together (e.g. Web 1.0. technology).

Level 3: In experiences enriched with technology; technologies (eg Web 2.0.) allow consumers to take an active role and shape their experiences.

Level 4: Finally, the fourth and highest levels are immersive technologies and technology-enabled experiences, where technologies are required to make experiences happen. At this level, customers are offered the added value from their ability to create experiences together and engage them at a high level (Flavián et al., 2019: 552).

The rapid increase in the use of online shopping has brought many opportunities for companies to interact with and maintain customers (Pappas et al., 2014: 188). In marketing theory, interaction defines the functional properties of technologies that allow objective, accurate measurements, and therefore offer powerful conceptual tools that can help understand customers' responses to technology experiences (Högnäs & Lendahl, 2018: 9). Let's examine some of the most recent and notable technological innovations (Wang et al., 2020: 2) that have shaped the future of the online shopping experience and advanced e-commerce success over the past few years:

Internet of Things (IoT) and Customer Experience

The Internet of Things (IoT) enables embedded objects with Internet connectivity to be identified and interact with each other, people and their services on a global scale. The level of connectivity provided by the IoT both increases the efficiency and reliability of the enterprises and provides enhanced access to information (Durukal, 2019: 71). IoT enables the interconnection of multiple technologies that make

it possible to monitor, coordinate and make collaborative decisions among business partners (Ratna, 2020:973). Recently, retailers have become more aware that customers are more demanding and expect a more personalized experience. This fact compels them to deliver the right experience for the right customer. Therefore, online retailers use IoT technologies to create complete and unique experiences (Venture, 2020: 557).

The IoT can be perceived as being deliberately developed to design and manage the customer experience. Smart devices can automatically collect and transfer data from multiple touchpoints via sensors. It can use subsequent analytics to eliminate interactions that are viewed negatively by customers and to increase the number of positive interactions between customers and a brand, product or company. They can provide an interface for evaluating the service in the store, for example supporting the satisfaction survey. IoT can also be used to improve customer relationships, establish emotional bonds with customers, improve product services, reinvent marketing communications, and deliver products that meet customer expectations. Global brands such as Tesla, Amazon, Sephora and Nike have incorporated IoT into their marketing strategies. As a result; to develop emotional bonds with customers, create competitive advantage and create a unique customer experience, companies have launched products and services supported by mutual communication devices using IoT technology (Marek & Wozniczka, 2017: 167-168). Table 1 presents the effect of IoT on customer experience:

Table 1. Impact of the internet of things on customer experience

IoT opportunities	Explanation
IoT increases and improves the flow of data about customers' behavior.	Collecting and analyzing the data provided by smart devices gives a rich insight into the buying and using behavior and habits of customers.
IoT improves the accuracy of advertising and sales promotions.	Data provided by smart devices enables standardized advertising messages to be replaced with information tailored to the customer's needs and wishes. In addition, customers can evaluate the frequency of product use, brand loyalty, etc. Allows the implementation of improved sales incentive programs that reward.
IoT provides customers with tailored services and builds strong relationships with them.	Smart devices are used to provide tailor-made services to customers aimed at strengthening the bonds between the customer and a brand or company.
IoT keeps customers up to date.	Sending customers up-to-date information about product delivery status to their smart devices positively affects the perception of waiting time and reduces the number of incoming inquiries and complaints.

Kaynak: (Marek & Wozniczka, 2017: 167-168).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Customer Experience

Artificial intelligence (AI) uses algorithms that allow machines to describe emotions, learn from experience, understand, and reproduce natural language. AI performs tasks that seem to require intelligence with three elements: statistical and computational techniques, data collection and storage devices, and output systems, and enables autonomous decision-making regarding products on behalf of customers (Hoyer et al., 2020:62). Therefore; more and more webshops are integrating cutting-edge AI into their stores to improve satisfaction, loyalty and customer experience. In recent years, the use of Artificial Intelligence in online commerce has increased. AI is seen as an excellent tool to increase sales efficiency and meet changing consumer demands. AI systems work automatically to interpret and shape consumer

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behavior patterns and can analyze big data in real time. Thus, it improves the online shopping experience by offering personalized products and services to customers (Nagy et al., 2021: 155-157). Advances in AI systems have the potential to improve the online customer experience by increasing companies' knowledge of customer preferences and shopping patterns. Strategically distributing this information to different key customer touchpoints with AI systems can bring significant benefits to companies and a possible increase in customer satisfaction (Ameen et al., 2021: 1-2). Some of the new AI developments that power the customer experience are detailed below:

- **SEARCH** option results: AI is in the process of activation and development even before the customer expresses it in the estimation of customer wants and needs through a common **SEARCH** option. This behavioral information about customers can become available to companies and offer personalized recommendations throughout the customer's purchasing journey. Therefore, this information can be used to strengthen and facilitate customer experiences and customer purchasing journeys. Google, one of the largest online platforms, uses a machine-learning algorithm (Rank Brain Technology) to improve **SEARCH** results.
- **SPEED** is another AI application that turbocharges the delivery of content, thereby improving the customer experience. The spread of digital media, especially social media, it helps customer trends to spread faster and wider.
- Dynamic pricing algorithms enable automatic demand-based pricing. Many travel sites (such as Priceline, airlines, and hotels) use this technique very effectively.
- The chatbot facilitates communication between the customer and the brand, providing a seamless communication process. Thus, automated help that enhances the customer experience can be developed through chatbots.
- Sentiment recognition technology through sentiment analysis enables brands to make personalized recommendations that are more emotionally relevant.
- Another AI application, "ALWAYS ON" user insights; It pioneers the seamless collection of behind-the-scenes data through the passive user interface between smart devices and cloud data. Passive insights are used to gain additional insight into consumer behavior through machine learning. It also allows brands to enter into more app-based data partnership agreements with complementary companies.
- **Cross-device communication:** Advances in artificial intelligence are helping companies link customer interactions not only with smart devices but also with individual customers. For brands to provide a perfect experience, it can be ensured by cross-device communication that customers understand how and when they use their devices in the customer purchasing journey and accelerate their purchase or repurchase. Stored customer profiles that are consistent across devices grow and evolve with each interaction. In this way, brands can automate micro-conversations (call – click – store directions) and macro conversations (online sales – physical store) with potential customers through cross-device marketing and programmatic advertising (Batra, 2019: 227).

Augmented Reality (AR) and Customer Experience

Augmented reality (AR) has emerged as a new technology that allows retailers to interact with customers in a unique and lively way. AR features provide both utilitarian and hedonic benefits to consumers (McLean & Wilson, 2019: 210). AR is perceived as an interactive technology. However, it offers more

features in terms of machine interaction (ie allowing the user to access different content) than allowing communication with other people (Högnäs & Lendahl, 2018: 9). Blending virtual and real worlds, AR (Hoter et al., 2020:60) has been applied in marketing activities since the late 2000s, defining the visual harmony of virtual content with real-world contexts, adding virtual computer-generated information to create real-time, direct or defined as the indirect view. Unlike virtual reality, where customers are completely immersed in a virtual environment, augmented reality allows users to stay in the real world and see the real world, as it aligns real and virtual objects with each other through various devices such as vision and monitor-based (Scholz & Duffy, 2018: 12).

In the online retail environment, there is a huge information overload and product redundancy that makes it difficult to select useful and relevant information for customers. Also, many online shoppers have trouble visualizing what products might look like and are dissatisfied when products don't fit their environment. On the other hand, increasing customer returns and online shopping cart abandonment rates prompt online retailers to develop additional value-creating strategies to address these challenges, encouraging them to use AR to increase the attractiveness of online purchasing and improve customer experiences. By layering virtual objects on physical environments, AR merges virtual information with reality and enables customers to interact with brands in real-time. In-store shopping experiences can be simulated by allowing consumers to place virtual objects (e.g. furniture) in a personal environment (e.g. at home), reducing uncertainty when making an online purchase decision (Haumer et al., 2020: 369). AR provides a different form of product or service visualization that drives inspiration and promises bearable creativity in customers' purchasing decisions. For example, the Akzo Nobel "Visualizer" and IKEA "Place" apps guide customers to create unique interior designs for their homes by helping them try new combinations of furniture or decorations and allowing them to share AR designs with others (Jessen et al., 2020: 88). Firms such as Sephora, L'Oreal, Nike, Adidas, and Mini are applying augmented reality to enhance the realistic experience of their products and to help consumers in their decision making and conceptualize the potential of augmented reality in interacting with customers and influencing their purchase intentions (McLean & Wilson, 2019: 210). AR technology, which is formed by the integration of virtual and real objects and strengthens reality, enables users to create a participatory experience and increases the effect of the experience by using technologies that appeal to different senses such as vision motion, tracking, touch, smell and hearing (Küçüksaraç & Saymer, 2016: 80).

Virtual Reality (VR) and Customer Experience

Virtual and augmented worlds are the ideal context for creating experiential marketing opportunities (Daisy, 2020: 1-3). VR is a multi-sensory experience, defined as real-time inductive graphics with a multidimensional frame, complemented by an imaging technology that provides model integration to the end-user (Farah et al., 2019: 136). VR offers retailers the opportunity to change the way people shop. Customers can try products in three-dimensional views without having to visit the physical store. Well-developed virtual reality-based applications can create personalized customer experiences (Batra, 2019: 227). Corporate marketing is a specific area that greatly supports virtual applications: through virtual education and entertainment applications, institutions can effectively communicate their goals, values and services (Daisy, 2020: 1-3). Consumer end industries (e.g. retail, tourism, fashion, entertainment, automotive, services) can use these cutting-edge, reality-virtual technologies to provide their customers with enhanced experiences. In consumption situations, consumers can use VR devices to examine the winemaking process during a wine tasting session (Flavián et al., 2019: 552).

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VR technologies, which have significantly affected many sectors in recent years, are important. These technologies create an interactive virtual environment that simulates real-life experience and allows users to control and navigate their actions in the virtual World (Pleyers & Poncin, 2020). Therefore, businesses have begun to integrate VR technologies into their effective marketing strategies to improve the customer experience. For example, Oreo has used VR to advertise its new brownie-flavored cookies in a mystical fantasy world filled with Milk Rivers and chocolate canyons. In 2014, when launching the XC90 SUV, Volvo launched a test drive VR experience using an HMD targeting the younger generation interested in buying their first luxury car. Volvo sales increased by 412% compared to the previous year. Similarly, in the retail sportswear industry, Adidas launched a VR experience in 2017 for its customers to follow the mountaineers during their climbs, thus increasing their outdoor sports experience and providing richer information about Adidas TERREX products (Farah et al., 2019: 137). The real estate industry can also enable these technologies to enable consumers to teleport themselves directly to properties for sale or rental from anywhere (in VR), potentially saving valuable time and money by easily (re)visiting a wide variety of properties before seeing a property. Therefore, these technologies have the potential to revolutionize this service-based industry by producing an engaging customer experience. Realtors provide an abundance of information that allows buyers to imagine themselves interacting with the product, encouraging positive reactions to products (Pleyers & Poncin, 2020).

Blockchain and Customer Experience

It emerges as cyber security providing technology supported by mathematical calculations for fast and unchanging identification of digital data. Blockchains are seen as simple databases in this sense, with transparent, distributed data files that are open to everyone (Durukal & Öztürk, 2019: 450). The most important benefits of a blockchain-enabled system are transparency. It provides information on all stages in the blockchain supply chain process. Thus, the customer can control all the information such as the origin of the product, the raw materials used in the product, when and where it was produced, how it is transported and when it finally reaches the retailers. This transparency can remove all concerns about the product and check whether the product is truly organic. It will enhance their experience and increase their confidence in the retail or manufacturing organization. This trust and reward system will motivate them to share more information about themselves with retailers and marketers (Khatoun, 2020: 31).

Blockchain is recognized as one of the most innovative technologies that will shape and influence businesses and society for years to come. Large companies such as Deloitte, IBM, and Accenture have started using blockchain to circumvent the current plight of loyalty programs by reducing operating costs, hosting multi-brand partnerships, and improving customer experience. Loyalty programs are generally regarded as an economic incentive that enhances customer experiences and purchase retention by leveraging the instrumental benefits of financial advantages (Wang et al., 2019: 397). Loyalty programs are considered the most popular “value-added” CRM strategies for increasing customer retention, rewarding frequent customers, and understanding customers. Also; The customer database aims to increase organizational profits and improve customer experience based on their preferences and behaviors (Ghazaleh & Zabadi, 2021: 207). Today, it is seen that companies providing loyalty program services eliminate the limitations and inefficiencies they encounter without using blockchain technology. By implementing blockchain, companies can make the customer experience positive with secure and instant refunds from various vendors. Therefore, companies can convince their customers for instant rewards for every purchase through this technology (Agrawal et al., 2018: 80).

Metaverse and Customer Experience

The concept of the Metaverse, which has attracted attention in the world of technology since 2020, refers to a three-dimensional virtual world where avatars of real people live (Kim, 2021: 141). Metaverse refers to a computer-generated world that expresses a universe beyond the physical world, separating it from the metaphysical or spiritual concepts of spaces beyond the physical (Jeon, 2021: 82). The distinguishing feature of the Metaverse is the tangible representation of the user, namely the avatar. Avatar presence provides a focus for social interaction (Gadalla et al., 2013: 1494).

Metaverse offers patients an immersive experience that can be used in psychotherapy. Similar to how people get emotional knowing that novels are not real, Metaverse can provide services based on user-interactive stories by providing a tangible feeling even though there is no real world (Park & Kim, 2022: 4211). Optimization of technology should be considered when defining a virtual shopping experience. Now retailers can develop three-dimensional websites. Metaverse retailing allows for a more robust shopping experience of three-dimensionality, three virtual channels (Swilley, 2016: 676). Metaverse retailing offers a completely different experience for customers. The peculiarity of various Metaverses, such as Second Life, is that it encourages creativity. It allows users to build everything in Second Life's landscape themselves, including shops, homes, office buildings, campuses, nightclubs, clothing and jewelry. Therefore, it is a user-centered philosophy that allows them to digitally create anything imaginable to use, sell and trade products directly from the creator (Gadalla et al., 2013: 1494). For example; Nike company announced that its own branded virtual world called "Nikeland" has come to Roblox, and Roblox users in Nikeland have offered the opportunity to create their own experiences using interactive sports materials. In addition, users offer the opportunity to experience Nike "products" by choosing shoes, clothes and accessories to dress their virtual avatars (Hollensen et al., 2022: 4). This technology allows for an exceptional experience for customers.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the rapid rise of online shopping, providing a better online customer experience has become an important issue. To create a good customer experience, businesses should consider customer expectations, respond correctly to both emotional and physical expectations of customers, always create channels where customers can get feedback about the products they offer, and always offer special experiences to customers. Therefore, businesses should shift their focus from increasing sales to acquiring and retaining valuable customers, and they need to give due importance to the online customer experience.

The increasing trend toward dynamic websites has allowed customers to further interact and customize the online Web environment. Since businesses cannot communicate with customers face-to-face on digital platforms, it is of great importance that the websites they create are built with a user-friendly and functional design. It is necessary to create a structure suitable for all environments (smartphone, PC, tablet, etc.) where the online customer experience takes place. Fast response time for a good online experience, effective tools for selecting the desired product, an easy language, a clear navigation structure, providing product-related information, a user-friendly browsing and ordering process, and visual and audio richness of products are the points that businesses should pay attention to.

This book chapter offers businesses a variety of recommendations regarding the technologies used in customer experiences. Businesses need to integrate the internet of things, artificial intelligence, blockchain,

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augmented reality, virtual reality and metaverse technologies, which make significant differences today, into their digital platforms. In this way, businesses will have unlimited options to meet the expectations of today's customers for an entertaining, creative and exciting holistic shopping experience.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Researchers planning to work on the online customer shopping experience can determine the factors affecting the online shopping experience of customers by considering different online environments and different technologies. Considering the use of technologies that make the online customer experience more creative in many sectors from cosmetics to fashion, it can be determined what differences exist between sectors.

CONCLUSION

Developments in online retailing and the rapid rise of online shopping put pressure on businesses to adapt to increasing customer expectations and a rapidly changing market environment. This situation leads businesses to use different methods to achieve sustainable success in an intensely competitive environment. Nowadays, businesses attach great importance to the online shopping experience to establish emotional bonds with customers, create sustainable relationships, and ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. The main reason for the dramatic increase in the interest in the customer online shopping experience is; Customers who are faced with numerous brands that offer similar products and services with similar quality and prices, can now consider them as companies that make a difference. It is inevitable that businesses that create experiences that provide customers with a fun and intriguing environment, encourage creativity, and enable them to use their imagination will be more attractive to customers.

Technological advances are creating tremendous change for both customers and vendors today. Incredible changes in technology have led companies to use technological innovations in the online shopping experience. These innovations are also of great importance for companies. Companies that invest in technology and use it to design creative experiences for customers will become the successful companies of today. Otherwise, it has become impossible for companies that cannot adapt to today's competitive environment and globalization, which is accelerating with the effect of COVID-19, and the opportunities offered by online shopping. Therefore, online customer experiences created using retailer-changing technologies are very important for companies.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Blockchain Technology: Different from the existing database logic with its features such as transparency and data security, and it provides authority and responsibility sharing by distributing the powers of the central authority to each node in the chain.

Customer Experience: Aims to create a creative, memorable, and enjoyable experience to create a holistic customer value and sustainable competitive advantage.

Customer Online Shopping Experience: Seen as two important goals that customers try to achieve during their online shopping experience, cognitive and affective experiences.


Metaverse Marketing: Provides customers with a personalized experience in virtual environments.

Online Shopping: Aims to provide the products and services that businesses need to their customers, to search, select, order and payment services over the internet.

Chapter 5

Digital Transformation for Improving Customer Experience

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ABSTRACT

Customer experience is defined as the customer's perceived overall quality of all interactions and relationships that the customer has with a company's products and services. Business leaders have increasingly begun to attach importance to the role of customer experience in helping companies gain competitive advantage. Also, the advantages and disadvantages of digitalization affect the customer experience process. In this respect, companies and brands that try to offer a unique experience for their customers need to prioritize the customer experience. So, in this chapter, the contributions of digitalization to customer experience are investigated. First, the theoretical infrastructure of customer experience and the creation of customer experience are examined. Afterward, customer journey and customer experience are discussed, and customer experience, touchpoints, and mapping of the customer journey are discussed. After that, digitalization and customer experience and the creation of the digital customer experience have been examined, and the conclusion has been reached.

INTRODUCTION

Digitization has changed every aspect of our daily lives in the last decade. Technological devices have become a part of our daily lives, and individuals without a smartphone are almost nonexistent. Various objects such as shopping, along with most products and services, are digitized. Digitization can be seen in many sectors such as finance, education, health, sports, communication, transportation, and retail.

These developments have been reflected in marketing as well as other sectors. Customers are, first and foremost, humans. The internet is used by people all over the world for entertainment, shopping, socializing, sharing, and learning. Businesses are examining how to use and optimize the newest information technology as part of their total physical operations to maximize their chance to innovate, differentiate, and expand while also considering how to do it cost-effectively. According to Berman's (2012) research

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of top organizations, companies with a coherent strategy to combine the digital and physical components of operations may effectively transition their business models. These forward-thinking organizations are focusing on two complementary activities: redesigning customer value offerings for increased customer contact and cooperation, and digitally modernizing their processes. To do this, companies are learning new skills that will help them move forward both ways.

One of the most impressive things that can be created with these technologies is experiences. Experiences have a very important place in marketing. This is the chance to integrate individuals into the new product development process of virtual prototypes on virtual platforms that will allow high interaction and engagement with customers to achieve personalized products (Füller & Matzner, 2007). As can be seen, digital technologies change Schmitt's (1999) way of creating sensory, affective, cognitive, physical, and self-identity experiences. Although the usage and adoption levels of these technologies differ in developed and developing countries, they can facilitate people's lifestyles, increase the speed of service, enable them to experience the product/service, and encourage them to participate in design and development processes.

Marketing concepts have faced many different changes, from a commodity focus to a holistic perspective (Kotler, 1972). The role of the customer has also changed significantly from relational to emotional decision-maker (Schmitt, 2003). Today, it is seen that new customers only want to "access" the service that "millennials" will buy. Digital customers want to share, rent, or stream and are much more attracted to these brands that create valuable experiences. Their main focus is on sharing experiences using several digital devices. In addition, digital customers want to be in the creative role involved in all processes from design to production to promotional activities (Angus, 2018). This view encourages marketers to find new and digitized experiences with different technologies. As the use of internet technologies and mobile devices increases, companies need to adapt to technological developments that will create new experiences. On the other hand, with the increasing importance of data analytics, the success of experience management in marketing depends on interpreting accurate and reliable data at the right time and in the right way and using it in the decision process. Namely, since individuals are independent of time and location, there will always be a flow of data from various touchpoints to the CRM to support a holistic customer experience (Heavin, & Power, 2018). Emerging technologies and their impact on creating experience must occur "on an emotional, physical, intellectual, and even spiritual level" as with traditional methods (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

When determining whom to trust, where to shop, and what to purchase in the new digital marketplace, customers use mobile interactive technologies to acquire rapid insight into product and service offers and their respective worth. Businesses, on the other side, are undergoing a digital transformation by rethinking what consumers value most and developing operational models that take advantage of new competitive differentiation opportunities (Ventura, 2020). The sole purpose of all these is to improve customer relations, emphasize customer centrality, and increase the long-term marketing and financial performance of the brand. The integration of disruptive technologies in every aspect of life is facilitating the way customers shop and interact with businesses. Today's customers need deep interaction with companies through social media or any other digital platform, and customers want to be actively involved in a two-way interaction buying process (Gloor et al., 2017). Also, since they are highly interconnected, they can be used to share information, talk, etc., with several networks and objects from anywhere. They benefit from various types of interaction such as (Verhoef et al. 2017). It is emphasized that today's "digital customer" is very powerful because he can share, present, criticize and interact with all his experiences regarding products and services.

Schmitt's (1999) sensory, emotive, physical, cognitive, and social identity experiences may also help customers and businesses (sense, feel, think, act, and relate). The customer can feel all these levels at all moments of contact with the customer journey (Shaw & Ivens, 2002). However, it can be said that the created experience is also successful because the new customer likes to share, co-create and interact. However, some authors (Rosedale, 2017; Ardito et al. 2018) who examine future technological developments in detail suggest that there will be a huge field shortly that will make valuable contributions to the literature in marketing and especially in customer experience. From this point of view, in this section, the customer experience and the effect of digital transformation to improve it are mentioned. In this direction, firstly, transformation, and digital transformation were mentioned, then customer experience and digital customer experience were examined. Then, the effect of digitalization on customer experience and the touchpoints created by digitalization in the customer journey was examined and concluded conceptually.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Fundamentals of Customer Experience

The internet revolution and greater commodification of goods in all marketplaces caused by digitalization are driving the megatrend and penetration of customer experience in today's corporate environment. With the demands of a growing awareness in the society that seeks more stimuli as information and options increase, the customer experience trend has also evolved and continues to evolve. In particular, the fact that business leaders see customer experience as a central part of companies gaining competitive advantage has elevated customer experience to a stronger position in customer-centered marketing. However, the last decade has seen an increasing interest in customer experience (Becker & Jaakkola 2020). Despite this, an ongoing debate has arisen about how to define customer experience (Lemon & Verhoef 2016).

To keep up with the wants, needs, and demands of consumers in the market, businesses now know the importance of building a strong brand. Strong brands today are looking for something else from others along with traditional differentiators such as price, quality, and service. Companies that do not have or have lost differentiation capabilities, unfortunately, cannot find a new differentiator. However, dynamic companies, care about their employees, have a corporate culture, and support innovation, this differentiation brings in and out of customer experience design. This trend is affecting all companies, and if one company doesn't act, today's customer quickly and easily moves to other companies that offer great customer experiences. Customer experience has grown in importance to the point that it is now seen as a new sustainable differentiation, a new source of competitive advantage, and a new danger to businesses that do not react (Shaw & Ivens, 2002).

The premise that providing consumers with an experience improves value generation via efficient client connections is well supported in the literature (Schmitt 1999; Gupta & Vajic, 2000; Berry et al., 2002; Berry & Bendapudi, 2003; Srivastava & Kaul, 2016). However, the issue of how best to define, conceptualize and approach the concept of experience is still not well defined.

However, as customer experience is a new concept, there is theoretical confusion about it. However, it is also stated that there is no common understanding of what customer experience is (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). Various and different ways have been noted by researchers in the literature regarding customer experience creation and design. Pine and Gilmore (1998) emphasize that reflecting on the offerings that companies manage, and deliver is a way of seeing the customer experience. Another way is defined as

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customers' responses to contact with the company (Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Homburg et al. 2014; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

What is customer experience, exactly? In the literature, there are several definitions of customer experience. Each researcher has defined the customer experience differently. Although the definitions are different, they also have common aspects. Namely, three common denominators can be deduced from these different definitions (Garg et al., 2014). One of the denominators is that there is an emotional bond between the organization and the customer. The second denominator is that the experience is internal to the customer. Finally, customer experience depends on moments of contact.

Garg et al. (2014) then conceptualized customer experience to move away from this definition, which can be seen as an elusive and non-figurative concept. This was done by focusing on what factors contribute to the customer experience. As in all subjects, conceptualization is of great importance in customer experience.

Schmitt (2011) defines experience as a combination of consumers' intellectual and emotional emotions as a consequence of their interaction process with a company's brand and, more particularly, its goods or services. While according to Adeosun and Ganiyu (2012) experience is defined as thought which is represented through actions and yields insignificant customers' feelings. The common definition used by the researchers for customer experience is that developed by Gentile et al. (2007); where it is conceived as the result of a customer's intimate interaction with the company at all levels. Moreover, Gentile et al. (2007) explain that the levels range from a plausible decision to the purest spirit of the customer. In other words, customer experience is shaped when customers consume something (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Customer experience, in general, refers to a customer's perception of the entire quality of all encounters and connections with a business and its goods and services. Interactions may be direct (for example, when a consumer completes a sales transaction with the help of a sales professional) or indirect (for example, when a customer reads a social media blog about another person's contact).

Customer Experience and Service-Based Experience

Customer experience and service experience have stronger backing in the literature. Customer experience, according to Chauhan and Manhas (2014), is the result of a sequence of contacts that result in response between consumers and businesses. According to Dube and Helkkula (2015), service experience includes both indirect and direct experiences. Customer experience, according to Johnston and Kong (2011), is a personal interpretation of the service process as well as how the service process is viewed by the consumer and how this process is seen by the customer as long as they utilize multiple touchpoints. True, some writers have referred to the standard service contact as a "service experience" (Hill et al., 2002) or a "customer's firsthand experience with service" (Goldstein et al., 2002).

Brand differentiation using conventional components such as pricing, delivery, and delivery times, which was formerly a primary positioning and differentiation strategy for brands, is no longer a viable business strategy. Marketing differentiation, positioning, quality, pricing, service, brand loyalty, and so on. It has been shifted away from functions like emotional commitment founded on the customer experience and toward the customer experience as a cumulative process. In this process, customer experience may be defined as direct or indirect contact with market actors that are influenced by cognitive, emotional, physical, sensory, and social elements (Verhoef et al. 2009; De Keyser et al. 2015).

In a different context, Meyer and Schwager (2007) explain that service experience by its very nature is a subjective and personal response to the process of interacting with a company. Klaus and Maklan

(2012) support this statement and explain that responses consist of cognitive, physical, and emotional evaluations. They believe that the service experience is a broad construct, including before and after the service felt by the customer. There is a physical feature behind it, and these features are the physical experiences offered such as higher quality, on-time delivery, and good price for value (Shaw & Ivens, 2002).

Creating Customer Experience

Understanding the customer experience is vital for companies to stand out from the competition and increase their market share. Through positive customer experiences, brands can gain greater brand loyalty and higher customer satisfaction. Customer experience was seen as a factor in creating customer value and it was emphasized that customer value was created by empirical experiences (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). It has also been proven that customer experience is linked to customer loyalty and customer satisfaction (Pullman & Gross, 2004). From this point of view, it can be said that customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are related to customer experience and brands that use this relationship well and correctly will be more successful in this regard. Because, regardless of the process, the importance of creating a customer experience should not be overlooked to achieve the targeted result.

How is the customer experience built? While this question is easy, the answer is very comprehensive. The notion behind customer experience design is that businesses should cease focusing on themselves (Shaw & Ivens, 2002). Customer experience design refers to how a firm arranges itself around the needs of its customers and adjusts organizational structures, systems, and procedures to achieve this. To achieve all this, seven philosophies have been proposed by Shaw and Ivens (2002) as guiding principles that guide a company's behavior.

The elements that make up the customer experience, according to Schmitt (1999), are sensory experiences (sense); affective experiences (feel); creative cognitive experiences (think); physical experiences, behaviors, and lifestyles (act); and social-identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture (relate). In other words, experiential marketing concentrates on how a customer feels about a product from the first moment they hear it until its ultimate disposal in the post-purchase stage, rather than on its practical usefulness (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

As a result, customer experience is linked to customer value and is a critical component of value development. As a consequence, customer experience may be seen as a result of customer value. Also, the customer's expected value has an important role in experienced value. Customers compare expected value to the experienced value and if the expected value is too high or the company cannot meet these expectations the experienced customer value is poor even though it would have been at a satisfying level if the expected level of value would have been lower. Therefore, customer value is based on various reactions (Gentile et al., 2007).

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) established four main categories in which touchpoints may be classified. Brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/independent touchpoints are the four categories. The customer journey can be mapped by companies to gain important knowledge and information about what affects the customer experience. As follows, the categories are described.

1. **Brand-owned.** The firm can design its touchpoints, and these are called brand-owned touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). These touchpoints are controlled and managed by the firm. Examples of brand touchpoints are websites and advertisements, product features, packaging, and other company-controlled elements.

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2. Partner-owned. The next category of touchpoints is those that belong to the partner. These are interactions that are co-managed, designed, or controlled with one or more partners/partners during the experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). A partner can be a distribution partner or a marketing agency. Brand and partner touchpoints partially go hand in hand. Controlling these touchpoints is only possible to some extent because there are other actors involved outside the company.
3. Customer-owned. These touchpoints often occur in the early stages of the purchasing process (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Touchpoints include customer actions that firms or partners cannot control. Pre-purchase choices are the hardest to influence, as customers evaluate what works best for them.
4. Social/independent touchpoints. Throughout the customer journey, the firm's customers are also influenced by other external touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). This can for example be independent information sources, the environment around the shop/counter, peer influences, and other customers. An experience at a restaurant or a cinema might be destroyed or distorted by external factors such as other customers. These external factors can also be a strength, for example, if a customer speaks well about a company or leaves a positive review on social media or a review site. With these distinctions between different contact points within a customer journey, a company can try to influence as many stages as possible to have as much control over the customer journey as possible.

Customer experience, according to Klaus (2015), is more complicated than customer happiness and service excellence. Through multiple investigations, Klaus (2015) has created and enhanced three elements of customer experience quality: brand experience, service experience, and post-purchase experience.

1. The influence of all direct and indirect consumer interactions before purchase, such as search and pre-buy assessment, is referred to as brand experience.
2. The term "service (company) experience" refers to all direct consumer interactions with the provider throughout the purchase and selection process.
3. The assessment and potential implications of a customer's experience with the company after acquiring, consuming, or utilizing the offer are described as a post-purchase experience.

Customers' behavior is positively influenced by all three customer experience factors (Klaus, 2015).

CONSUMER JOURNEY AND CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

Consumer Journey

The customer journey is the route taken by a consumer from need identification through consumption. Before, during, and after the purchase, a prospective customer's journey is made up of many touchpoints and interactions with the organization (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The customer journey is not a direct process. The client will navigate through different channels collecting information from the company as well as other customers. Marketers can now face this issue by creating a consistent and tailored marketing experience across all channels at the same time, thanks to current technology (Grossberg, 2016).

The customer journey is a way of conceptualizing the customer experience by taking into account the multiple touchpoints that occur during the customers' purchasing cycle (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Total customer experience can also be conceptualized as a dynamic process. This process consists of the pre-purchase phase, purchasing phase, and post-purchase phase.

When looking through the literature, it is clear that the words purchase funnel and customer journey are often used in marketing and sales research. Both words allude to the journey that a client takes from not knowing about a product to buying and enjoying it. A minor distinction is that the buying funnel is a notion that generally focuses on a single purchase event and is seen from the perspective of the sales function (Patterson, 2007).

The customer journey represents a more intimate approach to a relationship, with the customer at the focus of scrutiny. In a thorough literature study, Flstad and Kvale (2018) discovered that there are various schools of thinking on the customer journey. When analyzing the customer experience, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) provide a three-stage customer journey model. There are three stages: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-buy. Pre-purchase is the beginning of the consumer journey. This is where everything takes place before the actual transaction. The consumer recognizes a need, seeks information, and weighs his alternatives at this point. It may cover anything before the acquisition. The second step is the buying phase, which comprises interactions such as selecting, placing an order, deciding on a payment method, and paying. The consumer uses, consumes, demands, or otherwise engages with the firm about the transaction in the last post-purchase phase. After the post-purchase phase, the consumer has the option to repurchase or return to the pre-purchase phase and begin the cycle again with alternative suppliers. Companies should aim to understand the triggers that prompt customers to start searching for new providers to better concentrate on this key phase in the customer journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Kuehnl et al., 2019; Gao et al., 2020).

Examining it as a three-stage model resembles the customer journey model with the consumer purchase decision model. When someone makes a purchase, they are not automatically signed in as a lifetime customer. Therefore, the customer journey is more important than the consumer buy decision model in this process. Because the goal of the customer journey is to keep them at that moment as long as possible, resulting in more sales and glowing recommendations to everyone they know. The consumer purchase decision model gives customers detailed information about their purchase, but not so much about their trip. The customer journey is the process of developing and deepening brand loyalty via targeted post-purchase content that delights by amusing, enriching, and upgrading the consumer's experience. To summarize, the consumer purchase decision model is about the steps a potential customer takes to reach a buying decision, while the customer journey is a strategy used to retain customers after the brand has already made a purchase. By making all the experiences a customer has with the brand enjoyable even after making the purchase, it will increase the likelihood that a customer will purchase that brand's products or use its services again in the future.

Customer Journey Mapping

The customer journey is the route a customer follows from beginning to finish to execute a transaction with a company. Brands must control the customer journey, and hence the customer experience, in this regard. The customer's path is often plotted for this purpose. Whether you mix the two processes or keep them separate, mapping the customer journey is an excellent way to plan and manage the customer experience.

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There are many studies on Customer Journey Mapping in the literature (Crosier & Handford, 2012; Kojo et al., 2014; Micheaux & Bosio, 2019; West et al., 2020;). Identifying the paths customers take to purchase your product is about mapping the customer journey. This includes various marketing channels, physical routes, digital routes, toll roads, etc. it could be. To map the customer journey, it is necessary to follow every path like the customer, and document the steps from beginning to end. After that, it is necessary to identify the pain points that cause problems for the customer. In the last stage, it is necessary to remove the pain points, try it in practice and “make sure not to interfere with the way of the customer”.

The strategic process of graphically charting and laying out all client contacts, activities, and engagements during a customer journey with a business is known as customer experience mapping (Micheaux & Bosio, 2019; West et al., 2020). It very much covers everything, from the first point of contact to the last engagement, and it includes every single touchpoint. An intelligent customer experience platform aids in the charting of the customer journey via precise customer journey maps to capture critical moments.

Touchpoints

There are customer experience touchpoints during the pre-buy, purchase, and post-purchase phases because touchpoints are related to the customer journey (Lemon, & Verhoef, 2016). It is feasible to get the customer’s viewpoint on the service process by using the customer journey concept (Flstad & Kvale, 2018). A touchpoint is a point that is touched for a specific reason through any channel. Any time a prospective consumer or customer comes into contact with your brand—before, during, or after they buy anything from you—this is referred to as a touchpoint. Customer touchpoints include any point of interaction between a company and its customers, such as an email, call center, or corporate website.

Touchpoints represent an actor’s active or passive action (Halvorsrud et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015). The touchpoint is placed in the customer’s journey lane to draw the relevant customer into action. Besides unstructured disclosure, touchpoints include:

- Device
- Experience point
- Application time
- Standby time
- Time to rest

A touchpoint can be associated with a device (Lee & Karahasanovic, 2013; Halvorsrud et al., 2014; Young, 2014). Online touchpoints require devices, while offline touchpoints do not. The degree of experience describes the customer’s feelings at a relevant touchpoint (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016; Kalbach, 2016). This describes how the customer feels because of the interaction performed.

Customer Experience During the Customer Journey

In reality, one may claim that the customer journey is primarily concerned with the client experience. Because the goal of customer experience is to maximize customer lifetime value (CLV) by delivering a positive experience, evaluating the customer journey is also significant in this context. The customer journey is a process that strengthens your brand’s relationship with existing customers to make them more loyal to your brand and increase customer lifetime value. The customer journey focuses on target-

ing existing customers with post-purchase content that enhances their experience as a customer of your brand. The main goal here is to increase customer lifetime value by improving customer retention rates.

When it comes to the customer experience, the customer journey is crucial. Potential consumers' paths cross with the firm and its communication in a variety of ways and at various times (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Grossberg (2016) underlines the need for a consistent and positive brand experience across all channels, devices, and customer journey touchpoints since inconsistent touchpoint experiences have been linked to unpleasant experiences.

At various phases of the customer journey, the consumer is exposed to various experiences. Such an approach to the phenomenon analysis is necessitated by the segmentation of the customer experience into several phases throughout the customer journey. Diverse touchpoints in the consumer journey result in different experiences. As a result, rather than concentrating on the whole trip, studying one step at a time offers a clearer picture.

Lemon and Verhoef defined three stages of client experience, as previously stated (2016). Pre-purchase, purchase, and post-buy are the three phases. Several touchpoints, some of which are owned by the brand, may be included in these phases. The corporation has control over these touchpoints. Different touchpoints impact the entire consumer experience at each level.

Based on who owns the touchpoint, customer journey touchpoints may be classified into four types. This makes it easier to comprehend how many distinct groups may influence the consumer experience. Brands, partners, customers, and social/external/independent groups all exist. Each step of the customer journey might include touchpoints from all four categories, and the relevance of each group varies by the stage (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR IMPROVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Digital Transformation

Making full use of new technical capabilities to generate value and competitive advantage is what digital transformation is all about. Customers notice this in the form of enhanced or altogether new goods and services. This transition often has a significant influence on the organization's business model, operational model, organizational structure, and key resources. By analyzing and reengineering the enterprise's value generation and value capture systems, digital transformation should enable this transition. Traditional application development requires a very different strategy than innovation and agile development (Korhonen & Halén, 2017).

The primary emphasis of digital transformation marketing research is on multichannel strategies to attract and keep consumers, as well as analyzing digital customer journeys by determining the contribution of each channel to the final transaction. Digitalization is a phenomenon that has drastically changed the marketing landscape, disrupting traditional marketing in how they operate, creating strategies, delivering, and delivering while also influencing customer behavior. Historically, marketers competed over products, prices, promotions, and distribution. Although these factors continue to differentiate businesses, they are quickly becoming an important part of business strategy to maintain a competitive advantage in the digital marketing environment (Hagberg et al., 2017; Hänninen et al., 2018).

With numerous digital advances taking place across many sectors, the rate of digital transformation has grown rapidly. As a result, scientists have started to refer to the shift into the digital era as the

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“fourth industrial revolution” (Morrar et al., 2017) and the “second machine age” (Morrar et al., 2017). (Valenduc & Vendramin, 2017). An increasing number of consumer touchpoints across channels are being integrated using digital technology to produce a “seamless shopping experience” (Hagberg et al., 2017). Customer experience creation is becoming increasingly important as a result of digital transformation, which is altering how marketers connect and interact with their consumers (Nell & Wiid, 2014).

Customers are the motor of the process, and they seem to prefer digital solutions to old solutions; future generations are growing up with digital technology, and it will become the standard. However, there are certain risks involved with this procedure (Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2019). Electronic currency systems, barcodes, and point-of-sale technology have all been around for a long time, going back to the 1970s (Hagberg et al., 2016). However, at the time, the vast majority of advancements were “quite unnoticeable to customers” (Hagberg et al., 2016). Since then, consumer-facing technologies such as smartphones and apps (Fuentes et al., 2017), virtual mirrors (Pantano & Vannucci, 2019), augmented reality experiences (von Briel, 2018), electronic shelf labels (Soutjis et al., 2017), and self-service technologies like pick-up points, self-service checkouts, and scan-and-go technology (Inman & Nikolova, 2017; Fuentes et al., 2017). Big data, artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, augmented reality, the internet of things, and customer touchpoints have completely transformed business and impacted many traditional firms in various sectors, creating a new way to serve customers and other existing players, resulting in a significant impact on market space as more competition between firms.

Overall, digital transformation is described as a more complicated sort of technology-enabled business transformation that must address the strategic roles and capabilities of new digital technologies to achieve effective digital innovation in the digital world (Yoo et al., 2010). It is defined by Ismail et al. (2017) as the process by which companies converge multiple new digital technologies, enhanced by ubiquitous connectivity, to achieve superior performance and sustained competitive advantage, by transforming multiple business dimensions, such as the business model, the customer experience (comprising digitally enabled products and services), and operations (comprising processes and decision-making), and simultaneously imitating them (including the entire value system).

Digital Customer Experience

We live in the digital age, and it is no longer strange to buy all kinds of products online. That’s why we place so much emphasis on the digital customer experience. Creating and reforming the customer experience can be seen as one of the main possibilities to benefit from digitalization. While some companies see this as a challenge rather than an opportunity, new technological innovations are giving brands entirely new ways to communicate with customers.

The digital customer experience (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Teixeira et al., 2012) is a novel concept that focuses on the customer or service experience (Klaus & Maklan, 2012; Dube & Helkkula, 2015). Pine and Gilmore (1998) propose that a company’s goods and services should serve as customer experience media. Customers must get extraordinary value from businesses. Overall, the digital customer experience is the total of all the interactions that customers have with a company through digital media.

Companies in many different industries are under pressure to adapt to the ever-changing business environment to be sustainable in the long run (Westermann et al., 2014). This requires various businesses to review their strategy and even completely transform it to incorporate digitalization capabilities. However, McKinsey reveals that retailers that rely heavily on face-to-face interaction struggle to adapt to unexpected circumstances (Briedis et al., 2020).

Creating Digital Customer Experience

Customers have many different touchpoints with brands across various digital channels that create the digital customer experience. The entire quality of all encounters and connections that a customer has with a company's goods and services is referred to as customer experience. A digital customer experience is created when the customer performs one or more transactions using a digital channel or device. Building a digital platform that only delivers positive customer experiences and meets all customer needs can be challenging. On top of that, customers expect to be able to use a variety of digital channels, and often a single digital channel is not enough. Customers assume that these various digital channels are integrated and available anytime and anywhere. Companies that understand these thoughts and behaviors of their customers aim to offer them more experience according to the conditions they want.

A customer's purchase using the digital channel always has an uncertainty factor. The customer cannot see or feel the physical product they are purchasing, which may result in misleading information by the retailer or misunderstanding by the customer. The customer may feel insecure about the product itself or the retailer, and therefore reducing uncertainty and distrust towards the retailer is an important part of creating the customer experience (Luo Ba & Zhang 2012).

The two key components of the online customer service experience, according to Klaus (2013), are functionality and psychological considerations. According to the setting of this study, Lemke et al. (2011) will be employed within the scope of Klaus's (2013) larger perspective of online customer experience factors. The technical performance of the website is evaluated on the functional dimension, which is further separated into usability, product presence, communication, social presence, and interactivity. Context familiarity, trust, and value for money are all psychological characteristics. (Klaus, 2013).

Customer experience is affected by the digital transformation process. According to Westermann et al. (2014), transforming customer experiences is at the heart of digitalization. The process of transforming customer experiences into online contexts covers the entire usage journey with four steps to consider (Westermann et al., 2014):

1. Designing customer experiences from the outside
2. Creating customer reach and customer engagement
3. Putting customer data at the center of the experience
4. Seamlessly link physical and digital experiences in innovative ways

Technological considerations are one of the most significant aspects of creating a digital client experience. Today's business relies largely on information systems. Organizations must improve their management of information as a strategic asset since it has transitioned from being only operational tools to becoming key strategic assets with the ability to generate new value creation models (Hafsi & Assar, 2016). (Earley, 2014; Hafsi & Assar, 2016).

According to Ross et al. (2016), businesses should have a technology backbone that supports operational excellence, which they refer to as the "operational backbone". The operational backbone guarantees that data is dependable, safe, and readily available and that it can be shared across essential systems in a transparent manner (Earley, 2014; Ross et al. 2016). McLean (2017) believes that data quality has a direct influence on creating a pleasant customer experience, emphasizing the significance of a strong operational backbone.

Digital Transformation for Improving Customer Experience

The operational backbone is defined by Ross et al. (2016) as “the combination of business and technological capabilities that assure the efficiency, scalability, dependability, quality, and predictability of fundamental operations”, with the company’s information systems built on a technology platform at its heart. It allows for smooth integration of various systems. Companies employ information systems to improve their operational excellence by building and automating internal processes with digital capabilities, according to Hafsi and Assar (2016). This digitalization process enables businesses to have a more transparent picture of their operations and better manage their performance.

According to Hafsi and Assar (2016), a functional operational backbone allows operational data to be exchanged and utilized more readily throughout the business to enhance decision-making and customer experience. Most businesses rely on unique technological platforms that are outsourced, acquired from a platform provider, or self-developed (Ross et al. 2016). Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) systems, and other systems, databases, and other data stores that hold critical internal and external data are the most essential fundamental components of operational backbones. These essential systems guarantee that the company’s master data and transactions with suppliers and customers are accurate and reliable. In today’s fast-paced business world, no organization can survive long without using data assets to execute transactions and customer service inquiries effectively, reliably, and speedily (Ross et al. 2016, Zolkiewski et al. 2017).

Data from operational backbone systems, as well as sensor data, customer experience data, and social media data, are used in the digital services backbone. This information is utilized to develop new digital technologies that are vital to the company’s future success. Customers may benefit from a variety of new data-driven services enabled by the digital services backbone, such as preventive maintenance of installed equipment or targeted sales offers based on product use data to optimize their performance (Ross et al. 2016).

A robust technological stack makes up the digital services backbone (Porter & Heppelmann, 2014). The rising importance of cognitive technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence in offering a seamless customer experience, according to Paris et al. (2016), has the potential to enhance the emotional link with consumers throughout the customer journey.

Along with the operational backbone, the digital services backbone incorporates data from external sources like sensors, customer experience, and social data. In the analytics engines layer, various data-sets are combined and analyzed using digital technologies to obtain useful business insights from the data. These data-driven business insights may be converted into digital business solutions such as new business models and improved consumer experiences. It’s vital to remember, nevertheless, that digital technologies are simply required preconditions for realizing the full potential of digital transformation.

Marketing Practices

The relevance of digital transformation in the sphere of marketing and branding was underlined. Because of the fast speed of technology innovation, every firm must undergo digital transformation and, more than likely, several transformations to remain relevant and competitive. However, before you can realize the advantages of new technology, you must first properly adjust your consumers and staff to the change—and here is where the digital transformation issue comes in. As a result of this paradigm change, businesses should continue to look for ways to improve their operations (Malik, 2022).

Digital solutions are increasingly being used by businesses to boost their agility, speed, and decision-making. However, most businesses are still working on digital transformation. Different firms will be motivated by different motivations - established organizations will see it as a feasible approach to enhance customer experience and operations in the face of increased competition, while upstart businesses will see it as a key strategy to disrupt their respective sectors (Canon, n.d.). Many businesses have yet to implement digital transformation on a large enough scale to make an effect (Moovaz, 2021). Companies who have effectively incorporated digital transformation into their operations, regardless. Here are marketing techniques for digital transformation strategies of businesses with well-known marketing strategies and brand values. Here are several instances from which we may learn:

Ikea

It can be done on practically any level if it can be done level. IKEA's digital transformation is certain to encourage businesses of all sizes and industries that digitalization is doable. IKEA is a shining example of a company that has effectively – and continues to achieve – in its digital transformation. Its metamorphosis began when, like LEGO and GameStop, a cultural shift was prompted by the appointment of tech-savvy leadership. IKEA has recruited its Chief Digital Officer in Barbara Martin Coppola. One of IKEA's biggest problems was figuring out how to stay loyal to the company's DNA while pivoting in a manner that affected every aspect of the business, from sourcing materials to supply chains, warehouses, fulfillment centers, e-commerce, delivery services, and in-store experience. For IKEA to change, they needed to be meticulous in their digital approach. Eighty percent of all IKEA client journeys now begin online. Customers may design new interiors and visit stores where they can use VR and AR software to see how a given set of things might appear in their house. IKEA shops serve as fulfillment facilities in certain circumstances, enhancing the purchasing experience, whether it's entirely online or a mix. Its supply chain is updated to customer demand and market changes using machine learning and AI forecasts. Customers may also add services like hiring temporary employees to assist in transport and constructing items at home using API services from third-party suppliers like TaskRabbit (van der Zwan, n.d.).

Nike

Discover the most successful digital transformation cases, including Nike. Nike, the sports footwear industry's behemoth, has begun to concentrate on mobile devices. It employs cutting-edge technology such as machine learning and recommendation algorithms. The business has developed a smartphone application that uses a leg scan to assist determine the right sort of shoe. The program produces a map of the foot based on 13 data points by scanning them. Furthermore, the application provides the organization with critical information for developing future footwear initiatives. The NIKE Plus program, which rewards the most engaged loyalty program members, is an important corporate effort. The approach resulted in a considerable boost in sales in Japan, where it was applied. The NIKE SNKRS application was equally successful, with sales of the prestigious shoes increasing by 100 percent. NIKE's digital transformation demonstrates how innovation may lead to internal corporate functions being modernized. Company design teams may operate quicker and more effectively by digitizing 6,000 footwear materials. This has a direct impact on the time it takes to respond to market demands (Knoll & Pluszczewska, 2021).

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Starbucks

With the introduction of Starbucks Digital Ventures in 2009, Starbucks has been a digital transformation pathfinder. The Starbucks mobile app is an integrated and user-friendly digital loyalty program that has played an important role in the development of a large digital ecosystem. The Starbucks mobile app has become a strong tool for attracting and retaining loyal consumers by enabling users to earn and redeem Stars and incentives inside the app itself. This foresight has even contributed to an increase in total income. The smartphone app has 19 million monthly active users in the United States alone as of last year. Digitization has also enhanced the customer experience tremendously. Customers may now place drink orders and make payments directly from the mobile app, thanks to the addition of the Mobile Order & Pay option. Nearly a tenth of Starbucks customer transactions are performed using Mobile Order & Pay, which eliminates waiting time and makes payment safe and simple (Canon, n.d.).

Coca-Cola

Digital transformation in the supply chain allows companies to go farther and quicker while saving time and money. An organization's supply chain must be optimized if it is to remain competitive in today's marketplace. Digital transformation is the most effective technique to improve a supply chain. The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) and its bottlers, Coca-Cola Bottlers' Sales and Services (CCBSS) have long promoted the use of digital services to improve supply chain efficiency. For example, TCCC is obliged to produce proof of customer fulfillment of products and services. TCCC was able to modernize the formerly manual process with electronic evidence of delivery, reducing communication failures and human mistakes. Therefore, it transformed a previously perplexing process into a simplified system capable of processing orders with improved quality, speed, and accuracy (Moovas, 2021).

L'Oreal

L'Oreal, the world's largest cosmetics company, has prioritized digital transformation, calling it a "true revolution" that is "totally altering our methods of living, consuming, communicating, and working". Customers may check out things in their own homes using augmented reality solutions provided by the company. They released the ModiFace app in collaboration with Facebook, which incorporates this feature directly into the social networking platform. It has extended this tech-first approach to offline retail, too, by installing "magic mirror" devices in stores, bringing AR and VR to the brick 'n' mortar shopping experience. L'Oreal is another early follower of the metaverse movement, having built virtual environments for clients on the internet and selling artwork inspired by its product line as non-fungible tokens (NFTs) (Marr, 2022).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While digitalization affects the customer experience, it has also begun to change the entire environment that affects this process. Changes in consumer attitudes, advancement of technology, digitalization, investor diversity, and competition in national and international markets have also led to the emergence of financial technologies (Alpago, 2018; Huseynli, 2021). Supporting the digital customer experience

with digital payments and digital currencies has also begun to change the consumer purchasing process. In this context, researching customer experience within the scope of customer payment technologies and digital currencies in future studies may enrich the subject.

CONCLUSION

The total of all consumer interactions with a brand through digital channels is referred to as the digital customer experience. This is where the value of digitizing the customer experience is realized. Digital customer experience is the online representation of these efforts, if the customer experience is about displaying empathy, developing trust, and human connection. As a result, the digital consumer experience is inextricably linked to the whole customer experience, which includes in-store and other physical encounters.

In general, experiential marketing improves consumer perceptions of value, customer happiness, customer loyalty, and brand personality (Geel et al., 2018). (Brakus et al., 2009). Companies that take this consumer-focused approach are termed non-traditional retail companies by Childs et al. (2020). The concept has proven useful in a brick-and-mortar environment in different industries, especially the retail industry. However, as noted, there is a lack of international research on the concept of customer experience. Therefore, research is needed to understand the perceptions of customers in different cultures, companies, and brands and the possible cultural effects on their experiences. These disclosures provide an opportunity for further development of the experiential marketing concept to adapt to the evolving global business environment.

Customers` expectations and interactions with companies are fast evolving in today`s age of dynamic consumer empowerment and digital disruption, therefore a range of contemporary customer experience programs have been developed, and more are in the works. New tactics and technology provide practitioners a fantastic chance to capitalize on this rapidly expanding customer experience frontier (Batra, 2019).

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Customer experience is a comprehensive strategy that includes everyone in a business and extends beyond the customer service department. Customer experience, as opposed to customer service, which focuses on a single unique encounter at a time, considers the whole customer journey through establishing long-term connections with clients.

Companies who put in the effort to plan out the client journey always come out on top. You won't be able to build distinctive experiences unless you understand when and where your consumers connect with your business. It's helpful to conceive of digital customer experience management as a four-step process with this in mind:

1. First and foremost, you must identify your target audience. What emotions will spark the interest of each target segment?
2. Create personalities for each of the target consumers. What attributes do each persona's clients have in common?
3. Prepared to provide relevant information and experiences at each stage of the consumer journey. Do you have the top, center, and bottom of the funnel covered?
4. Personalize digital experiences throughout the process, even if you start with the fundamentals.

Customer experience develops at all touchpoints encountered in the service delivery process (Jüttner et al., 2013). To enhance the customer experience, a firm must identify and impact the most crucial touchpoints for each client at each step. To do so, you must first comprehend what consumer touchpoints are.

Considering all these, 3 stages need to be planned and implemented correctly to digitize the customer experience.

In the first stage, it is necessary to have a close grasp of consumer behavior to digitize the customer experience. In addition, it is necessary to know the behaviors and journeys of consumers step by step and to determine the customer contact points correctly to determine the customer touchpoints correctly, it is necessary to determine the purchasing journey of the customers, the places where the contact points can be created, and what the touchpoints can be.

Identifying and transferring to the digital environment the locations (points) of the customer journey and customer touchpoints that can be digitized. At this stage, it is also necessary to ensure that the touchpoints that can be digitalized are adapted to customer behaviors and customer habits. For this, the customer purchasing model, customer journey, and customer touchpoints determined in the first stage and digitized "points" need to be interchanged, associated, or combined.

In the last stage, to digitalize the customer experience, the use of corporate resources, the digital customer experience should be harmonized and associated with the marketing strategy. The primary goal of this stage is to develop an integrated customer experience plan by linking the digital customer experience with the marketing strategy.

Solutions to successfully manage the customer experience can be achieved through the involvement of real customers. Systems designed to make the customer experience strategy viable should focus on embodying the customer experience strategy internally and externally. However, clarification and prototyping of ideas given in-house are crucial to demonstrate how a customer experience strategy can be integrated into employees' daily practices. Finally, the range of solutions must take into account the social aspects. Customer experience is shaped when customers consume something (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Customer Experience: Customers` reactions to corporate interaction are referred to as “customer experience”. Customer experience is a big strategy that involves everyone in a business and goes beyond the customer service department.

Customer Journey: The customer journey is the end-to-end route that a customer takes to complete a transaction with a company, and it is a means of conceptualizing the customer experience by taking into consideration the many touchpoints that occur over the customer`s purchase cycle.

Customer Journey Mapping: The customer journey is the route a customer follows from beginning to finish to execute a transaction with a company. In this regard, companies must carefully manage the customer journey and, as a result, the customer experience. The customer`s path is often plotted for this purpose. This is known as customer journey mapping.

Digital Customer Experience: The digital customer experience is the sum of all the ways a customer interacts with a brand through digital channels.

Digital Transformation: Making full use of new technical capabilities to generate value and competitive advantage is what digital transformation is all about.

Touchpoint: A touchpoint is a point that is touched for a specific reason through any channel. Any time a prospective consumer or customer comes into contact with your brand—before, during, or after they buy anything from you—this is referred to as a touchpoint. Customer touchpoints are any time a company interacts with a customer, such as through an email, a call center, or the company website.

Chapter 6

Practices of Netnography and Mixed Quantitative Data Analysis Methods in Experiential Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Advancements in digital areas resulted in an opportunity for consumers to share their experiences in easy, quick, and through various means. Experiential marketing research focuses on how to get consumer insights from product and service experiences of consumers on social media and how to transform these insights into profits for companies. This chapter discusses the netnography technique based on the gathering and interpretation of posts of consumers shared about their product/service experiences in digital environments and the marketing practices of this technique. On the other hand, considering the volume and variety of data that are increasing in digital areas, it also dwells on the practical benefits of the use of mixed research models that would allow getting benefit from both the in-depth information potential offered by the lithography technique and the dynamic structure of quantitative data analysis techniques.

INTRODUCTION

Postmodernism has offered a significant theoretical infrastructure to understand consumer behaviors and consumption-related phenomena. Considering these theoretical foundations, experiential marketing research has focused on emotional people who use consumption as a way of constructing meaningful experiences (Skandalis et al., 2019; Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

A marketing manager needs to know when and how their brands are used, which emotions and contexts are associated with their brands, and which social experiences take place when their brands are consumed. To correctly interpret what consumers want from their experiences, managers need a collective understanding of methods addressing the dynamic nature of the lifestyles of consumers. For

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example, it is possible to make an observation on consumers who use Harley-Davidson motorcycles and analyze the experience they gain based on this observation. What is lacking methodologically is an empathetic understanding concerning the social interactions of motorcyclists in the context of their identities, spirits, and daily lives. Filling this gap requires an analysis of those who use Harley-Davidson motorcycles in their social environments (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

On the other hand, the improvement of digital areas has made it possible for consumers to gain their consumption experiences through various methods including virtual reality. And thus, social media has become an area to experience new products for consumers. In addition, consumers are given a chance of sharing the experiences they gain in easy, fast, and various methods. While consumers share their experiences of products and services with various contents in a very large digital area, sharing platforms may also significantly vary. Widespread adoption of social media tools results in the production of a high amount of textual data. Researchers are able to conduct analyses with a great number of data structures such as videos, pictures, photographs, and audio records.

Businesses may analyze this high amount of social media data to discover new information and interesting patterns and understand what their competitors are doing and how the industry is changing to gain a competitive advantage over their competitors. Decision-makers may use the findings to develop new products/services and take efficient strategic and operational decisions. It is believed that this makes it possible that competitive intelligence may help businesses become aware of their strengths and weaknesses and increase the level of business efficiency and customer satisfaction (He et al., 2013).

Mixed quantitative data analysis methods such as data mining, machine learning, and deep learning are frequently used to analyze data obtained from the Internet. However, considering the typical ways of communication and cultural structures of social media communities, it is seen that what is required is such techniques that are more explanatory and interpretative. Therefore, new internet research methods are needed for experiential marketing research to use the data from digital areas for the benefits of businesses (Sharma et al., 2018). From this point of view, it is focused on the netnography technique as one of the most important application techniques of experiential marketing and, the mixed techniques where it is possible to use the netnography technique together with big data analysis techniques such as machine learning, data mining and text mining.

This chapter focuses on the experiential marketing practices of the netnography method. It discusses how the netnography technique emerged and the differences between the netnography method and ethnography. Thereafter, it analyzes the data collection and data analysis stages of the netnography method, mentions the ethical principles considered in the netnography method, and attempts to identify the experiential marketing applications in different industries and how businesses could benefit from the details on consumer experiences obtained from social media. It also explains the benefits of the use of the netnography method, which provides businesses with deep insights about consumer experiences, together with the mixed quantitative data analysis tools that allow them to take advantage of the dynamic potential of the big data, showing some application examples concerning thereto. The conclusion section discusses the future forms of experiential marketing in digital areas and how the netnography method would contribute to the assessment of this process.

BACKGROUND

Today, new communities emerge on social media, in particular, social networks, and certain cultural structures and behavioral patterns are formed inside these communities. Malinowski (1922) mentioned the importance of the observation of a community in their own environment to understand the culture and behaviors of that community in the best manner. Ethnographic research, which obtains in-depth information about a community by observing the experiences of that community, is basically intended to understand which behaviors are used to construct a community that has formed a certain culture. Based on digital transformation, Kozinets built a system in 1995 with the idea that ethnography would apply to groups created in the internet environment. This was a move outside the conventional structure of ethnography and an adaptation of ethnography to networks created in the virtual world resulted in the emergence of netnography, an online marketing research method, also known as internet or network ethnography (Kozinets, 2002, 2010). Ethnography deals with any type of community of people while netnography focuses on online communities. Therefore, ethnography addresses consumers as a part of the social structure they belong to while netnography considers consumers as a part of the online social networks and online communities they belong to.

For an experiential marketing research, ethnography and netnography methods are frequently used (Skandalis et al., 2019; Rinallo et al., 2010; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Ethnography and netnography methods have been used for different purposes of experiential marketing. First of all, referring to the example concerning the use of Harley-Davidson motorcycles, the purpose is to purchase a product and then experience it by interacting with other user groups with the same product. Another way is to analyze content containing reviews and thoughts about a product such as texts, pictures, videos, etc. just like that in netnography research.

Netnography allows marketers to access the common thoughts and knowledge of groups of people ensuring that conclusions could be made on consumer insights through social media channels. In addition, it is also possible to get a better understanding of what, why, and how consumers consume, their point of view of brands, how consumers position these brands, and the social structure of the community (Varnali, 2019; Kozinets, 2010). Collecting this information, netnographic research turns them into marketing outputs.

The necessity for the adaptation of netnography in the field of marketing with mixed quantitative data analysis techniques started to be debated in recent times. It is not hard to estimate that these debates will continue in the upcoming period and result in the emergence of new models that are based on the use of both the quantitative and qualitative methods. This chapter focuses on the practical benefits of the integrated use of netnography as a qualitative technique, with mixed quantitative data analysis techniques. This will make it possible to enjoy the benefits of both the quantitative approaches, which allow us to closely analyze the big data on almost all consumer groups, and the qualitative approaches, which allow us to conduct in-depth analyses and interpretations of consumer experiences by means of considering consumers together with the cultural and social structures they belong to. This also presents a “mixed model” which will eliminate the most significant disadvantages of the qualitative and quantitative techniques. The main question here is how to integrate these two techniques and carry out the data collection and data analysis stages thereof. From this point of view, we have discussed the studies in the literature, where netnography and mixed quantitative data analysis techniques intended to analyze the data obtained from social media such as data mining, text mining, machine learning, and social network analysis are used together.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Netnography

The netnography technique is a form of the ethnography technique, which has been used for marketing research since the beginning of the 19th century, being applied in digital areas. Ethnographic research using qualitative methods allows us to see the dynamics of a group both as a whole and individually for each group member and understand the structure of the group. To understand the society's cultural structure, a researcher should spend a long period of time within the society to closely observe them, analyze the behaviors of individuals in a community, record their conclusions thereon and create a dataset accordingly. Analysis of cultural codes in a community as an attempt to see the world from the point of view of the study group will make it possible to better understand the community and ensure that more realistic conclusions could be made (Kartari, 2017; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994).

As the internet technologies advance at a fast pace, the possibilities of consumers to purchase and experience products/services in digital environments are increasing. Digital areas, where products/services are reviewed, allow users to share their true feelings and thoughts without any reservation by means of hiding their own identities. These areas offer an opportunity to get in-depth information about motives, concerns, and experiences, in particular, for research that involves sensitive and personal issues (Ji et al., 2016; Morgan, 2006).

A quick increase in the volume of e-sales, and the fact that consumers frequently use social media channels to review services and brands have brought a substantial size of complex and embedded data to business companies. However, most of these business companies have a limited volume of knowledge on how to use this giant data stack, how to transform it into insights from consumers, and thus, how to increase profitability by converting it into experiential marketing instruments. It is inevitable that with this information, business companies increase their profitability levels by means of developing marketing strategies in line with the complaints and requests of consumers. It is obvious that a direct implementation of current techniques for online social interactions would not work and these current techniques should be adapted to technological changes, which forms one of the fundamental principles of netnography (Kozinets, 2010). The definition, characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages of netnography are provided below.

What is Netnography?

The netnography technique is based on the collection of reviews of consumers that contain detailed information on their experiences posted on the Internet (Vo Thanh & Kirova, 2018; Kozinets, 2002). Netnography is not only applied as a research method intended to collect data for scientific research but also an innovative marketing method that facilitates the processes of product development and branding (Bartl et al., 2016). Netnography makes it possible for market researchers to observe the consumer opinions about products or the natural behaviors of consumers such as looking for information (Kozinets, 2015).

With the help of netnography, it is possible to conduct internet research by means of actively integrating the community members or passively observing them and integrating the information and ideas collected therefrom into the new product development process (Kozinets 2002). A netnographer is someone who discovers meanings that are linked to consumption. Instead of observing people, netnographers analyze the computer-mediated texts that they produce but they do not know the exact identity

of the people that are belonging to social groups. In this way, the role of a researcher goes beyond the observation and analysis of computer-mediated interaction and includes the recontextualization of the conversational acts that emerge from the texts that are produced. It is possible to apply netnography to different interactional contexts in which consumer groups converge and engage on issues of common interest (Camiciottoli et al., 2013).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Netnography

Online research does not only bring comprehensive descriptions and interpretative profundity (La Rocca et al., 2014) but also allows researchers to conduct analyses that are structured around conceptual schemas and ideas (Wu & Pearce, 2014). Marketers may benefit from both the advantage of discussing customer problems and complaints by being aware of the nature and extent of the consumers' engagement (Brodie et al., 2013) and the positive ripple effect of the word-of-mouth communication by targeting the certain consumers with the highest network values on social networks. In this respect, netnography helps researchers in deriving communicative and cultural comprehension about the embedded understanding of the consumer thought process by mapping the consumer reviews posted on social media (Sharma et al., 2018). Netnography results in useful outputs when applied to online communities with higher post traffic and rich data in connection with the respective research (Kozinets, 2002).

On the other hand, the netnography technique, which provides information on the symbols used by online consumer groups, the meanings thereof, and their consumption behaviors, is a tool intended to discover consumer behaviors by listening to and understanding them. Further, it serves as a driving force to identify the leading users, estimate the respective trends and also, deliver innovation and develop new products (Sharma et al., 2018; Bartl et al., 2016). Compared to other qualitative research techniques, netnography helps researchers understand the complex social phenomenon and develop themes considering the point of view of consumers, which are considered the fundamental superiorities of netnography to other techniques. (Vo Thanh & Kirova, 2018; Rageh et al., 2013; Kozinets, 2002). On the other hand, typical methodologies for research experiences such as observations, interviews, and talks with focus groups take too much time (Vo Thanh & Kirova, 2018; Rageh et al., 2013) and are subjective, which are considered significant disadvantages (Sharma et al., 2018; Kozinets et al., 2010). Netnography is however quicker, easier, and cheaper than ethnography and typical techniques for research experiences (Sharma et al., 2018; Vo Thanh & Kirova, 2018; Wu & Pearce, 2014; Kozinets et al., 2010). In addition, it has further advantages, e.g. it makes it possible to collect different opinions in a quicker manner, and it results in a higher quality of representative online opinions as well as useful and interesting data obtained from a relatively less number of messages (Kozinets, 2015).

Besides these advantages, netnography has some significant disadvantages: Among these disadvantages are that researchers are not able to contact consumers for further explanations and details, and that the profiles of participants are not accessible or there is limited accessibility (Kozinets, 2002, 2015; Morgan, 2006). Also, the lack of ability to get background information from the participants, the fact that researchers are not able to request further explanation and details about the main themes and, the participants are those that control the direction are considered some significant disadvantages of netnography (Whalen, 2018). On the other hand, the challenge to deal with instant information overload is a far more important problem for netnography than that for ethnography (Kozinets, 2002).

These disadvantages of netnography significantly prevent researchers from discovering all the aspects and depths of social phenomena. These restrictions indicate that although netnography makes it pos-

sible to collect non-participant data, we still need ethnographic methodologies during the performance of online research. Therefore, these advantages are eliminated when research is conducted by making use of participant observation (Whalen, 2018).

An auto-netnography method has been developed to eliminate the disadvantage of netnography as not being participative. Kozinets and Kedzior (2009) define auto-netnography as “an approach to netnography that highlights the role of the netnographer’s own experiences of his or her own online experiences” (Kozinets & Kedzior, 2009:8). Auto-netnography is intended to offer added personal participation to the study of online cultural and communal phenomena for the purpose of comprehending their nuance from a necessarily and suitably engaged position, and to faithfully represent this engagement for the purpose of providing an enhanced understanding of the cultural nature of online experience (Kozinets & Kedzior, 2009).

Steps of Netnography

Kozinets (2002, 2010) introduced a netnographic procedure consisting of six methodological steps. These are the identification of the research area, the definition and selection of the community, data gathering, data analysis, ethical considerations, and findings & solutions. The step of the identification of the research area includes the definition of the research area according to the design patterns applied to qualitative research, and detailed research questions. The step of the definition and selection of the community is based on the analysis of the details of the community members and forums. The step of findings and solutions is discussed in detail in the last section, where experiential marketing practices are mentioned. The steps of data gathering, data analysis, and ethical considerations are discussed below under separate headings.

Data Collection Techniques in Netnography

The techniques of netnography and ethnography vary from one another in terms of data gathering methods. Table 1 shows the main differences between the techniques of netnography and ethnography.

Table 1. The main differences between ethnography and netnography

Characteristic	Ethnography	Netnography
Research focus	A human society with all its groups	Online communities
Communication focus	All forms of human communication including body language, tone, etc.	Online content: primarily textual communication with some multimedia elements
Method	Obrusive – the researcher participates in the group that is the object of the research	As a general rule unobtrusive – based on anonymous observation
Data collection	Real-life observation and primary data collection	Data access is supported by computer-based information retrieval methods and secondary data collection
Efficiency	Takes longer, is more expensive, and slower	Comparatively short in duration, comparatively less costs, and faster
Retroactivity	No	Yes

Source: Bartl, M., Kannan, V. K., & Stockinger, H. (2016). A review and analysis of literature on netnography research. *International Journal of Technology Marketing*, 11(2), p. 168

Practices of Netnography and Mixed Quantitative Data Analysis

As shown on Table 1, since netnography deals with online communities, computer-based data techniques are used during the step of data gathering. Ethnography includes many data collection techniques such as individual and group interviews, surveys, historical document analyses, and any other techniques that are considered important and beneficial to help for understanding the research questions, while the cornerstone of ethnographic study and then netnography, is participant observation (Whalen, 2018). As an important aspect of the process to understand a culture, participant observation (Kozinets, 2006) requires an in-depth analysis of the respective community and researchers' long-term participation in and understanding of the community members as well as a combination of participation and conservation through talks and interactions (Whalen, 2018). Otherwise, research would result in nothing but simple coding (Kozinets, 2006). Therefore, the foundation of the process of data collection for the netnography is the participant observation. Nevertheless, samples directly taken from consumer statements are preferred at the starting phase of the netnography technique.

The first step for data collection in the performance of the netnography technique is the selection of a segment that is suitable for the research question and the identification of certain online communities with a higher level of inter-member communication and rich data content to analyze an experience. The second step is that a netnographer should make attempts to get detailed information about the respective forums, groups, and individuals as much as possible. Therefore, the respective data range is identified and the posts that are relevant to the research question are selected. Before an attempt to collect data, a marketing researcher should know the characteristics of the respective online communities such as group memberships, market-focused behaviors, interests, and languages. To ensure a reasonable level of reliability, one should pay attention to certain factors that indicate the geographical origin of the users, in particular, e.g. language. (Kozinets, 2002). These types of cultural elements contain deep clues to understanding consumer behaviors and give useful information for explaining the differentiation of consumer experiences.

There are two important factors of data collection: the data copied by the researcher directly from the computer-mediated communications of the online community members, and the data recorded by the researcher concerning his or her observations about the community members, their interactions, and the meanings thereof. Unlike ethnography, netnography makes it possible to automatically copy almost all the posts that are downloaded. This makes it possible to get a high volume of data in a short period of time and at lower costs (Kozinets, 2002).

Since there are posts with significantly different contents in an online environment, the posts are first classified by relevance. And posts may also be classified by the participation level and consumption activities. This is because, for example, "Tourists" lack social bonds and do not get a deep interest in activities, while "Minglers" have strong social bonds, but a less level of interest in consumption activities. "Devotees" have a higher interest in consumption, and a lower level of bonds with the online group, while "Insiders" have strong bonds with the online group and consumption efficiency and tend to be members to whom long term and frequent references are made. Therefore, the devotees and the insiders represent the most important data resources for the creation of an efficient marketing strategy (Kozinets, 1999).

The most important advantage of netnography is its special bonds with certain online consumption groups and its profoundness in the explanation of online communications. Therefore, if these messages contain a sufficient level of descriptive richness and are interpreted using a notable level of analytic depth and understanding, it is possible to get interesting and useful results from a relatively less amount of messages. A netnographer may take notes concerning sub-texts, possibilities, conditions, and personal

feelings that may arise during the performance of research to ensure that the data are associated with one another (Kozinets, 2002).

Data Analysis Techniques in Netnography

Upon the selection of appropriate online communities, it is possible to move into the stage of data analysis. As a significant level of increase is observed in the volume and diversity of the data available in digital areas, the quality of software tools to be used for netnography becomes of more importance (Kozinets, 2010). Kozinets (2010) suggests “calculation supported tools” based on high-quality software to be made use of during the stages of selection, data collection, and data analysis of a netnography research process. Accordingly, the calculation supported tools should deliver the following basic features: functions to make it possible to scan an online environment (sourcing), provide source information (tracking), offer an ability to a researcher to write and record his or her own notes and observations on the data set (marking), collect and archive datasets considering cultural characteristics (collecting), exclude such data that are not relevant to the research question from the dataset (reducing) and, visualize the data making use of different techniques.

It is seen that it is possible to interpret the data manually in research with a relatively smaller dataset (Mkono, 2013; Wu & Pearce, 2013). However, the fact that today, the datasets from digital areas are of very high dimensions makes it impossible to interpret a dataset manually. Therefore, software tools are frequently used for netnographic research. One of the most frequently used software tools used for netnographic research is NVivo software. Among other software tools used for netnographic research is Atlas.ti (Kozinets, 2010), WordSmith (Dias et al., 2014), QDA Miner (Richelieu & Korai, 2014), and Leximancer (Wilk et al., 2019).

Analysis of netnographic data has become more complex due to the increasing number of multimode, multi-author, and multimedia content of online research, the data convergence problem, and the need to make an attempt to gather all the data sources. However, some codes that could be applied to all the datasets need to be created to overcome these types of convergence problems. During the performance of netnographic research, a researcher is expected to create a coding system to interpret a high amount of data collected from the research considering the guiding theories (Kessler et al., 2021).

There are many qualitative ways to analyze netnographic data. Netnography is a multiple method that is a combination of various methods and techniques that may include content analyses, semiotics, hermeneutics, historical analyses, and thematic analyses (Mkono, 2012; O'Reilly et al., 2007). In an article analyzing some tourism-related netnographic studies published in different disciplines, Tavakoli and Wijensinghe (2019) suggest that the most frequently used data analysis methods are thematic analysis, coding, content analysis, and discourse analysis respectively. During the performance of some certain studies, they have also made use of interviews, fieldwork, focus group interviews, and documentation analyses that are among traditional qualitative analysis techniques, in addition to netnography.

There are two types of research methods that are commonly used to analyze messages: content analysis and thematic analysis. Both of these analyses involve the coding of content in a precise and careful manner. Content analysis is deductive and quantitative of measures that are applied to messages in an objective and reliable fashion. Among the two content analysis options are human coding and computer coding of message content. On the other hand, the option of thematic analysis includes emergent and interactive process of interpretation of messages and also thematic structure as the typical outcome. These two sets

Practices of Netnography and Mixed Quantitative Data Analysis

of methods have been applied in a variety of manners to many different areas. In addition, because of the different approaches of these sets, they may be considered as complementary (Neuendorf, 2018).

Software tools and data analysis techniques are very important for netnographic research, but the role of a researcher is considered crucial since he or she is the only tool that makes it possible to understand and strengthen the contextual findings of the research. While the software tools are strong and useful, the only way to discover thoughts and feelings that are lost in an analysis is by the researcher. To do that, the researcher may actively establish interactions and/or analyze the findings using his or her understanding.

Ethics for Netnography Research

For research conducted in the field of social sciences, it is crucial to strictly abide by ethical regulations, and pay attention to keeping the identities of participants confidential. In particular, it is essential for ethical considerations to pay strict attention to copyright protection and protect data privacy. Therefore, researchers need to guarantee that the identities of community members are kept anonymous and confidential (Bartl et al., 2016).

Ethics is one of the most controversial issues for netnographic research. Tuikka et al. (2017) highlight the importance of answering some aspects while identifying the ethical principles during the performance of netnographic research. These aspects are in particular whether or not informed consent is needed to be obtained from the respective online community members, whether or not it is necessary to keep the details about the members anonymous and, how important the responsibility imposed on the researcher is. Additionally, the sensitivity of the research subject is another aspect that needs to be considered for the identification of the ethical principles.

While some netnographers defend the idea that a researcher is expected to fully disclose their presence and intentions in the online environment, some others do not agree that they are required to do that in areas allocated for online public statements (Whalen, 2018). Kozinets (2002) refers to the necessity that researchers are required to fully explain to the online community members their presence, communications, and intentions during the performance of any research, and the identity of informants needs to be kept confidential. On the other hand, he underlines that the use of any private post that is to be directly referred to in research needs to be subject to the consent of the informants. Langer and Beckman (2005) suggest that the ethical rules recommended by Kozinets (2002) be reviewed and they have acted contrary to the rules that are set by Kozinets (2002) during the performance of their studies. Based on the fact that the internet message board (IMB) is a public communication tool, Langer and Beckman (2005) have not informed those who sent messages to the IMB of the identity of the analysts. Considering that the participation in the IMB does not require any official subscription, they have not checked the members, not informed the authors of the messages directly referred to, and not asked for their permission. On the other hand, personal information such as e-mail addresses and phone numbers have not been shared. In conclusion, they have not considered an analysis of public messages as an ethical breach and defended that the disclosure of the researchers and the research subject could be negatively affecting the participation and, changing the organic nature of the conversation due to the impact of the researchers' participation and exposure. This is because it has been considered that informing the message authors that their posts would be part of a research project would harm their true points of view and ideologies and thus prevent them from giving a valid answer to the research question (Lehner-Mear, 2019). This approach is widely accepted in the literature (Reilly & Trevisan, 2016; Wu & Pearce, 2014; De Koster & Houtman, 2008).

Comparison of Netnography with Quantitative Data Analysis Techniques

There are some fundamental differences between netnography and text mining, data mining, and machine learning techniques that are among the quantitative data analysis methods used to analyze the data obtained from social media. Witten (2005) underlines that netnography is based on qualitative observation while text mining is a quantitative method that is used to get information from a relatively high amount of textual data. Text mining relatively falls into the area of natural language processing (NLP) and is related to the capacity of deriving new information types from textual resources (Camiciottoli et al., 2013).

Kozinets (2015) highlights that data mining considers qualitative data on the internet as a type of content that needs to be decontextualized to reveal more general patterns, while researchers using netnography view qualitative online data from the perspective of cultural understanding considering them as the source of many complex central structures. Data mining is a technique that has a significant value to answer certain types of questions and that focuses on software for word recognition and content coding, an automatic content analysis is crucial and almost indispensable to processing big datasets. Nevertheless, there is a risk of missing some of the most interesting contextualized cultural components of online social phenomena. Netnography, on the other hand, attempts to find the cultural participation and deep meanings thereof by carefully following these conceptual connections (Kozinets, 2015).

During the comparison of machine learning with netnography, Kozinets et al. (2018) highlight that information obtained from machine understanding about human experience is very limited and, no matter how big the dataset is, no matter how smartly machine learning algorithms are programmed or no matter how comprehensive the public oversight is, the research status would be ethically problematic (Kozinets et al., 2018).

Mixed Research Technique: Use of Netnography Techniques with Mixed Quantitative Data Analysis Techniques

Today, it is cheaper, faster, and easier to collect and store the data that are obtained from digital areas. With the help of a smartphone, users are able to start a process of discussions about a brand or reviews about a product at any time during the day. On the other hand, social network companies and big data processors such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become very important research and marketing tools through which it is easily possible to reveal consumers' behaviors. Considering this process of change, it is frequently highlighted that netnographers need to make attempts to bend the borders of the research traditions and accommodate themselves to ever-changing situations and look for a more experimental and participating approach in connection with a social area that is changing (Kozinets et al., 2018). Decision-makers, on the other hand, expect the research processes are faster completed than ever and, the flows of feedback for dynamic working models to be more instantaneous. (Marchuk et al., 2020). Most researchers indicate that netnography needs to be a flexible method that is efficiently adaptable to online environments and that is required to be reshaped according to the characteristics and mutations of online environments (Caliandro, 2018; Robinson & Schulz, 2009). This is because fast-growing data volumes result in not only opportunities but also challenges for netnographers. In particular, as the data amount gets higher, it becomes harder to collect, understand and integrate the data in a meaningful manner. Therefore, the contents such as texts, videos, and pictures, through which consumers' comments and experiences are shared in digital areas, were used to be analyzed only by means of qualitative methods in the past, but today qualitative and quantitative methods have started

to be used together (An & Alarcon, 2021; Sharma et al., 2018). Advancements, in particular, those in the fields of artificial intelligence and deep learning, make it possible that intelligence machines are now handling with more steps in netnography (Marchuk et al., 2020). Barbier and Liu (2011), on the other hand, underline the importance of applying data mining techniques in netnography that is based on direct observances and, highlight that netnography could be helpful to provide useful information to data miners in the attempt of discovering social media.

In the study where they discuss the future of netnography, Kozinets et al. (2018) underline that netnography is affected by artificial intelligence and Internet of Things (IoT) to the same extent as it is affected by ethnography and asks this question: That qualitative research yielding the last of its ground to the rising tide of quantification? Along the lines of these debates, Reid and Duffy (2018) show that it is possible to analyze consumer behaviors in a more realistic and deeper approach by means of building a bridge between small, rich, and conceptually sensitive data, which are the distinctive characteristic of netnography, and social media data.

Del Vecchio et al. (2020), on the other hand, indicate the benefits of the integration of netnography with business analytics during the process of creating values from big data on social media by means of taking advantage of customer relationship management and customer information management. During this study, where big data analytics and netnography are used together, they suggest that an interdisciplinary approach based on the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches should be adopted in the processes of obtaining, storing, and analyzing the data created by customers on social media.

The challenge here is to understand which parts of netnography could be carried out by machines, which parts could be better performed by humans, and, how the combination thereof could deliver a better performance than that delivered by either machines or humans. (Marchuk et al., 2020). Considering two HYVE innovation projects carried out with Beiersdorf, Marchuk et al. (2020) monitored a people-oriented insight process in one of these projects, and used the state-of-the-art technologies in the field of machine learning for the second project. In this way, they have revealed the positive outcomes of the cooperation between human and machine netnographers that may take place in the not-too-distant future of netnographic research.

Experiential Marketing Practices

Netnography methods are used in experiential marketing practices for many industries and, as a result of bibliographical and content analysis carried on netnography, Bartl et al. (2016) verify that netnography is associated with various business areas such as tourism & entertainment, food, and fashion industries. This chapter discusses the experiential marketing practices of the netnography methods, in particular, in the food, entertainment & tourism, fashion, and other industries.

Tourism and Entertainment Industry

Active use by tourists and tourism professionals of the new technologies and social media brings new points of view to analyze tourism experiences. Tourists may use social media to get opinions from others, share their experiences, provide feedback about the places they have visited/stayed, and experience products/services. On the other hand, there is a continuing increase in the number and size of online communities created by users that ensure that tourists can easily search for tour details. Research suggests that travelers trust online reviews shared by other tourists more than online advertisements placed by

the tourism industry (Vo Thanh & Kirova, 2018). This gives a great opportunity for researchers to have an easy understanding of tourist experiences (Mkono & Markwell, 2014). Therefore, as social media channels have become popular, netnographic research started to be used for experiential marketing practices in the tourism industry. Research suggests that the reason why netnography research is not widely used in the tourism industry to the extent it should have been used is because the tourism researchers have a limited level of trust on (Mkono & Markwell, 2014) and lack of awareness concerning the use of netnography (Tavakoli & Wijesinghe, 2019).

An and Alarcon (2021) made use of a netnography technique to define a rural tourism market based on tourist experiences in Spain. This study was intended to understand the natural perceptions of tourists about rural tourism experiences and the characteristics of the rural tourism market and develop appropriate response strategies accordingly. For this purpose, the opinions of 1002 tourists in three online communities were analyzed by a multi-compliance analysis and cluster analysis in addition to qualitative information. This study verifies that there are three market segments for rural tourism in Spain: comfort-focused visitors, rural ambiance spenders, and active entertainment seekers. This study is of importance since it starts with the qualitative collection of online content created by users through netnography and ends with the quantitative segmentation of the market based on tourist experiences.

Parthasarathy et al. (2020) analyzed the reviews shared on the blogs created by visitors from TripAdvisor about Hampi, one of the worldwide-known heritage sites in India, by means of a netnography research method making use of NVivo software. Analyzing the three factors of the destination attractiveness of Hampi (attraction, accessibility, and convenience), this research concludes that this area is found satisfactory by tourists in respect of “attraction” but it is not sufficiently cared about by the tourism improvement authorities in respect of the remaining two factors.

Wu and Pearce (2018) applied a netnography method on tourist reviews from TripAdvisor to analyze the structure of the experiences of entertainment tourists in South China. It concluded that international tourists, in general, perceive the traditional and unique tourism style as a positive experience.

Rageh et al. (2013) analyzed the basic aspects that constitute the structure of customer experience by means of using a netnography research method. For this purpose, they considered the reviews from the tourists visiting tourism areas of Egypt in English shared on tripadvisor.com and holidaywatchdog.com. As a result of this study, 8 aspects that constitute the structure of customer experience were classified: education, comfort, innovation, security, beauty, recognition, and relational.

Mkono (2013) conducted a netnography technique on customers’ reviews to understand how ‘authentic African’ food experiences of the customers of the two restaurants in Victoria Falls are marketed. This study suggests that tourists enjoy actively taking part in cultural shows and this brings a perception of reality to their experiences.

Vo Thanh and Kirova (2018) conducted a netnography method to analyze the wine tourism experience by making use of an experience economy model. This study considered 825 reviews posted on TripAdvisor by tourists who have visited the region of Cognac in France. The results show that there are more positive experiences worldwide and, experiences concerning the aspects of education and entertainment are more dominant.

Food Industry

The literature suggests that food industry-related experiences affect the attitudes to like and accept foods, remembered food experiences directly impact certain behaviors such as the desire to get the

same experience, and, past food experiences gained in childhood could determine current purchases (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013). On the other hand, experiential marketing practices further grew in importance because of higher purchasing frequency in the food industry, an extraordinary increase in the e-sales volume in the food industry due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and problems with the supply chains.

He et al. (2013) conducted an in-depth case analysis by means of a text mining technique based on the unstructured textual content of the biggest three chains of pizza (Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza, and Papa John's Pizza) available on Facebook and Twitter. Consequently, they suggest that positive customer experiences could encourage customers to be active brand defenders, enhance the level of brand loyalty, and raise the number of recommendations resulting in an increase in the income of the brand.

Sindhvani and Ahuja (2014) used the netnography technique to analyze the organizational potential for co-creation. In line with the updates and responses from Starbucks as well as the feedback and suggestions from consumers, heuristic research has been conducted concerning the behaviors of consumers within the online community "My Starbucks Idea". This research underlines that co-creation provides significant achievements in respect of the efficiency of the co-created products since they are closer to the consumers' needs and due to their higher commercial potentials.

Ashman et al. (2021) indicated how the process of creating contents on social media uses the design thought principles to provide consumer-oriented market creation strategies and food innovation. This research, during which an auto-ethnography method has been used, makes use of the integrated design thought theory (establishment of empathy, definition, formation of ideas, creation of prototypes, and testing thereof) to understand how a popular healthy food influencer has designed a successful vegan restaurant.

Fashion Industry

Camiciottoli et al. (2012) used netnography and text mining techniques in the fashion industry as techniques that are supplementary to each other. The text mining technique was used to identify the brand associations from the texts created by online communities, while the netnography method was used to understand these brand associations and identify the perception by consumers of a brand. This study brought a new point of view to the literature since it integrated netnography with text mining techniques to analyze the perception by consumers of brand images on fashion blogs as a social media form. It concluded that businesses needed to focus not only on the feelings of consumers about the brand but also on enhancing the knowledge of consumers about the brand to retain them and increase the level of consumers' loyalty to the brand.

Wang (2019) analyzed the users' experiences during a live video stream by means of a netnography technique. Online observations were first made on the live video stream platform of Twitch and then, archive data were collected and analyzed. During the second stage, the study focused on the personal experiences of 105 users to see the users' active participation in online events, their personal experience of feelings, and their engagement in the debate on problems. During the last stage, interviews were made with friends, colleagues, and classmates of these 105 users to verify the data previously obtained. The researchers asked questions about the personal experiences of the users by means of participating in their active lives and reassessed the data by means of moving into the offline mode. The research concluded that the fundamental motivation for online video games is not cognitive entertainment, hedonic satisfaction and pragmatic satisfaction, which is contrary to what is claimed in the literature, and the main factor is the fact that the platform features live, instant and interactive functions.

Mane et al. 2020 used a technique they called “Netno-mining”, through which they integrate text mining and netnography methods to analyze the satisfaction levels and experiences of travelers who use the online services of the select travel companies in India. The authors classified the system architecture into four main modules: the content acquisition module, the netnographic analysis module, the text pre-processing and sentiment analysis module, and the visualization of the results. The study used various website components as parameters such as website loading time, service and support, information depth, website content, user-friendliness, etc. to assess the satisfaction of travelers using the services from the five select online travel agencies.

Virtual Experiences

During a study, where they analyzed netnographic research in the field of tourism by means of a bibliographical method, Tavakoli and Wijesinghe (2019) concluded that most of the researchers carry out their studies on Web 1.0 or Web 2.0. The authors highlighted that netnographic research conducted on virtual environments such as SecondLife or vTime, which simulate real and imaginary destinations and, which are visited by millions of people every year, where the behaviors of the virtual tourists are analyzed within a single research (Tavakoli & Mura, 2015), could contribute to the field.

The fact that the experiences of tourists in the virtual tourism destinations were not discovered yet although the virtual tourism has become a popular social practice in modern society was the motivation for the research conducted by Tavakoli and Mura (2015). From this point of view, the behavioral patterns of Iranian female tourists traveling in Second Life were analyzed by means of a netnographic research method. The findings suggest that the appearance of the avatar chosen when traveling in a virtual environment is a very important factor for Iranian Muslim women and, this appearance is not in compliance with the Islamic women’s representations in public areas.

As Virtual Reality (VR) devices are becoming popular in the consumer market, new applications started to emerge to offer innovative and exciting consumer experiences. For example, people may have the feeling of telepresence when they are in simulated environments, where they could fly over the cities or visit tourist attractions. Dehghani et al. (2021) used a netnography technique together with the structural equation model (SEM) to identify the factors that support the continuous usage of virtual reality (VR) users. It is considered important for marketing strategies to know the factors that affect the continuous usage of VR device users, who could experience the feeling of being in a virtual environment. During the first stage of the study, 3,205 real buyers from the top 10 VR brands listed on amazon.com were identified. The following factors were identified as the indicatives of subsequent adoption of VR devices by means of a netnographic content analysis: perceived functional benefit, perceived discomfort, perceived focused immersion, temporal dissociation, perceived health risk, and task quality. During the second stage of the study, hypotheses were tested by means of using the structural equation method from 119 VR users. The conclusion indicates that the most important variables that affect the continuous usage were temporal dissociation and task quality.

In an experimental research project conducted on online communities of a British football team, Fenton and Procter (2019) used a netnography method together with interview and social network analysis (SNA) methods. With the use of this mixed-method, it was aimed to provide an academic and practical contribution to the fields of digital marketing, information systems, and sports businesses for researchers, who want to analyze modern social media communities. The SNA method was mainly used in this study to identify the limited social networks that netnographers would interact and conduct research,

understand how people establish connections with one another in time, and find the effective members in a network.

Other Industries

Misopoulos et al. (2014) used Twitter to identify the critical factors of the service experiences of customers in the airline industry. A netnography technique was used to identify the factors of customer services that offer positive experiences for customers and also find the strong aspects thereof as well as those aspects that require further improvements. It concluded that most of the positive feelings are associated with online and mobile check-in services, affordable prices, and flight experiences while the negative feelings are the usability of the companies' websites, flight delays, and problems in connection with lost luggage.

Chan and Li (2010) discussed how the structural and experimental interactions in online communities affect reciprocity and common exchange under the scope of the resource exchange theory. The study was carried out by netnography and quantitative data analysis techniques that are applied to the data collected by means of an online survey. The study concluded that businesses could benefit from the strength of online communities by not only offering more structural interactions but also creating experimental interactions that would increase the participation of consumers.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Social media channels reveal the common thoughts, communication symbols, and behavioral patterns of human communities and thus contribute to the understanding of cultural codes. In digital areas, it is cheaper, faster and easier to get data in different formats such as texts, videos and pictures. These developments enable businesses to get feedbacks from customers in a more instantaneous way and, provide them with advantage in the face of the increasing level of competition. Improved structure of digital areas and expectations of decision-makers encourage methods that are suitable for the dynamic structure of the digital world and that are capable of conducting an in-depth analysis of consumers' insights. As one of these methods, netnography is a qualitative data analysis method that is frequently preferred in the literature.

This chapter focuses on the benefits of the use of a combination of netnography and mixed quantitative data analysis techniques in experiential marketing practices. An analysis on the studies that have used this mixed model reveals the ways of taking advantage of the benefits of a qualitative approach, which offers an opportunity not only to reveal patterns that are embedded in the big data but also to conduct an in-depth analysis on and interpret consumers' experiences considering consumers together with the cultural and social structure that they belong to. Thus, since netnography focuses on online communities and makes use of the big data obtained from online communities, mixed quantitative data analysis techniques need to be used. In addition, in-depth interpretation, as a characteristic of netnography, is needed to avoid that consumer insights obtained from the big data consists of only a simple content coding.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Considering a TV system recently developed by a Japanese scientist Yoshiaki Miyashita recording the tastes of real foods to offer a taste experience, it is not hard to estimate that research on product experiencing methods will gain speed and the experience outputs of consumers, who experience these applications, will be able to be analyzed in the near future. From this point of view, the principal focus of the experiential marketing research in the future will not be probably only an analysis of the consumer experiences that are shared in online environments but also an analysis of the consumers, who use the digital area itself as an experienced tool. Therefore, the use of both quantitative data, through which we are able to get meaningful results from the big data, and netnography, which considers individuals as parts of the community they belong to, allows the researchers to get information that exceeds the borders of their hypotheses, will be of more importance to understand consumers' experiences, the extent of which is increasingly expanding.

CONCLUSION

The study discusses the experiential marketing practices of netnography and mixed quantitative data analysis techniques in different industries, which offers examples with practical benefits to researchers and marketers in this field. On the other hand, this chapter focuses on the studies that have used netnography and mixed quantitative data analysis methods such as data mining, machine learning, and structural equation model in experiential marketing for different purposes. These are the purchase of a product and experiencing it by means of interacting with other user groups which have that product, the analysis of contents such as texts, pictures, and videos that contain reviews and thoughts about the product, and virtual experiences that are improved in particular with virtual reality methods. Netnography and mixed quantitative techniques are used together, which eliminates a major disadvantage of the netnography method. Besides, the study paves the way for an opportunity for netnography and different quantitative data analysis methods to be used together in the future.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Ethnography: A type of qualitative research that does not seek to explore the cultural and symbolic aspects of people's actions and the context in which those actions occur.

Netnography: A qualitative research methodology that uses ethnographic research techniques that are optimized for the Internet to analyze the behaviors of online communities.

Text Mining: An artificial intelligence (AI) technology that uses natural language processing (NLP) to transform the unstructured text in documents and databases into normalized, structured data suitable for analysis.

Chapter 7

Creating Brand Experience Based on Brand Equity in Tourism Destinations

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of introducing the attractions of destinations, making them known to tourists, determining the brand elements specific to the holiday region, and creating associations in the consumer over time is to attract a certain number of visitors to the holiday destination every year. The aim of local governments in tourism destinations, associations or organizations that carry out tourism and promotion activities, and tourism operators is to attract a certain number of tourists to the region every year, to provide them with a good holiday experience, to satisfy them during their stay, and to create an attitude towards revisiting the area. The most important achievement in this process is to develop loyal tourists to the tourism destination. This chapter examined the importance of brand loyalty in destinations based on brand management principles and experiential marketing. By giving place to the results of various researches carried out in this field in the world, gaps in the literature have been identified, and it is aimed to make inferences that will guide future studies.

INTRODUCTION

The most important strategic goal of modern marketing practices is to create sustainable consumer value and gain loyal customers. It can be said that value is created for consumers who are passionately attached to a product, celebrity, city, service, restaurant, hotel, or bank and have no intention of giving up. For example, for wine, which is a popular drink in many Mediterranean countries, what makes Italy's Venette, Piedmont, Lombard, and Tuscany regions a more popular wine tourism route than other regions? What could be the reason why some of the ski resorts in the USA, Finland, and Australia are more recommended or preferred, even if they show similar characteristics? What could be the determinants of the competition between popular ski resorts that show similar characteristics only in France? According to

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researchers, there is no single answer to this (Moilanen, 2008; Maizza & Rosato, 2008; Frochot et al., 2009). While factors such as quality, customer satisfaction, awareness, image, personality, competitiveness, and capacity to use their talents are necessary for a destination to become a brand first; As a result creating a good experience and creating tourist loyalty, it ensures that a destination is a place that can be preferred, recommended and can create loyalty compared to its competitors.

From the past to the present, similar definitions have been made about the brand. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2016), a brand is defined as a name, concept, word, symbol, design, and a combination of these, which serves to promote and define the goods or services of manufacturers or sellers, and to differentiate them from competing products or services in the market. The common aspect of the definition of the brand is that the brand is a concept that makes a difference, attracts attention, and symbolizes trust and power. On the other hand, in consumer behavior, brand, product, and service options are considered concepts that the consumer evaluates with the effect of various external environmental factors or the advertisements are exposed. In the process, the individual wants to remember the same product or service in their future purchases by giving meaning to them and facilitating the purchasing decision process (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

Brand definitions are generally handled under two approaches (Ambler & Styles, 1996). The first of these approaches is to the brand; while it is a traditional product-oriented approach that looks at the product as an add-on, the other is a holistic approach that considers it as a whole, including the marketing mix, and focuses on the satisfaction that the individual gets from the product consumer buys. According to the holistic approach, a brand, in addition to any product, is created by the elements of the marketing mix surrounding it; real or imaginary, rational or emotional, visible or invisible. According to this approach, the brand also includes experiential attachments such as symbol, personality, emotional benefit, and personal benefit.

While brands take place in the market with elements such as symbols, logos, and names, they must have certain features to create competitive leadership and increase market share (Kapferer, 2008). Accordingly, brands must first present big ideas and be attractive, provide them with experience at the points of contact with the consumer, become active due to various actions or behaviors, and be an asset that can be communicated and distributed. It would be appropriate to emphasize that the brand is a three-axis process in this context. Brands should create value for the consumer and the company with their intangible and concrete ideas, have assets that are hard to change, such as names and symbols, and provide product or service experience.

The brand's strength lies in what customers learn, feel, see, and hear about the brand as a result of their experience over time. In addition, the brand's strength is proportional to the consumer-based brand equity it creates in the market. For this reason, branding strategies are based on the purpose of creating brand loyalty. The brand's loyal customers are more oriented toward providing positive word-of-mouth communication to potential buyers in the market. These individuals tend to transfer their favorable experiences with the relevant brand to third parties. Brands need loyal customers, especially to achieve success in brand expansion strategies. In addition, the possible mistakes of brands that create substantial value for the consumer can be tolerated by loyal customers. The aim of brand managers who want to create a strong brand by creating brand loyalty is to create a long-lasting, positive, and strong brand experience.

Brand management in destinations is crucial that some destinations make a worldwide impact while others do not achieve the success they deserve. While one of the destinations with rich natural, historical and cultural heritage attractions, nightlife, entertainment centers, and accommodation alternatives in the same city, close to each other and with similar characteristics, can be more popular, the other is not

preferred. The main focus of this chapter of the book is strategic and managerial issues such as brand management principles, experiential marketing origins, who or how to create loyal visitors for tourism destinations, and the importance of loyal visitors to destinations. This section mentions practical examples of the primary brand strategies researched in the past in theoretical terms of destinations. In addition to making inferences for future academic research, some practical inferences are made for the managers in decision-making positions in tourism centers.

BACKGROUND

In today's market conditions, destinations compete with their attractiveness, creative promotional activities, the potential holiday opportunities they offer, the holiday advantages they promise, and the various meanings they gain in the branding process. Destinations gain an image by assuming an identity and personality, like products and services, in the brand structuring process. Thanks to the image it has acquired with its identity and personality, destinations determine a positioning strategy according to the target population they address in the tourism market. Strategies for branding in destinations; the purpose of goals, objectives, programmed decisions, and performance evaluations are to achieve brand equity goals (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) identified three critical steps for a successful branding process towards establishing brand equity. In the first step, the recognition and visibility of brands in a crowded market environment should be increased. In the second step, brand associations should be created with brand elements, identity, personality, and image. This step aims to establish close relationships with consumers and create a start to create customer loyalty. In the third and last step, it is necessary to make sustainable the strategies that will protect the loyal relationship established with the consumer. These steps should be implemented so that the branding strategy contributes to brand equity.

Branding strategies and brand elements such as destinations name, slogan, logo, and character; aim to create awareness among visitors with elements that reflect the brand spirit such as image, personality, and identity. Compared to other destinations, since visitors have experience and gain functional and emotional benefits as a result of their visit to any destination, they can be an extension of their selves and complete their personalities, are perceived as an element of social acceptance, and have various symbolic features; moreover, it may tend to prefer it more, regardless of the price factor. Such destinations have achieved a successful branding strategy and created consumer value (Kapferer, 2008).

Value is the degree to which any product or service decided to be purchased meets functional and emotional wants and needs (Woodruff, 1997). To the extent that a purchased brand meets the consumer's expectations, the consumer will prefer the relevant brand or recommend it to others in future purchasing processes. This means that the relevant brand creates value for the consumer. In today's market conditions, brands are now turning to consumer value-oriented approaches in their efforts to create sustainable competitive advantage, protect or increase their market share, and make profits.

Kotler & Keller (2012) express the benefits expectations in the brands offered to them to satisfy the wants and needs of the consumers as the total consumer value. The sum of the costs based on the temporal and monetary energy consumption and the psychological efforts carried out by the consumers while trying to obtain the brand that will meet their expectations is expressed as the total consumer cost. In addition, consumers gain some benefits when they use the brand. These benefits may even complement the personality and image of the staff or consumer who is the provider of the brand. The sum of these

benefits is the total consumer benefit. The positive difference between total consumer benefit and total consumer cost represents the total value created.

Another critical point in the consumer value creation process is consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction expresses the satisfaction that arises from the performance or benefit obtained by the individual from the product or service purchased is higher than the expected performance or benefit before purchasing the brand (Mittal et al., 2005). In brand purchases, the aim of brand managers to create consumer satisfaction is to attract consumers to repurchase brands. Brands that acquire this type of customer group are expressed as brands that have created brand value in the consumer. Especially the creation of emotional benefit is essential at this stage. Because the consumer who buys the relevant brand will feel connected to the brand and will miss it when does not buy or feels the absence of the branded product, in such cases, consumers establish an emotional intimacy with the brand. One of the most critical factors in creating brand value is the brand image. Previous studies have shown that brand image directly impacts brand loyalty and so brand equity.

The concept of brand equity is a set of active or passive assets linked to the name and symbol of a brand that increases or decreases the value provided by a product or service to the firm or the firm's customers (Keller, 2013). Unlike researchers who evaluate the concept of brand value from a financial point of view, the concept of brand equity deals with consumers in terms of handling and is seen as an abstract concept that emerges as a result of the evaluation of the brand by consumers. According to this approach, if the brand has no meaning to the consumer, other definitions have no meaning. In this context, the most comprehensive expression of brand equity, according to Aaker (1991), is adding or subtracting the value provided by a product or service linked to a brand, name, and symbol to a company's customers.

Evaluation of brand satisfaction for consumers is a dynamic process. Brand satisfaction includes all the functional, emotional, and symbolic benefits of brand experience. The most important factor creating dissatisfaction is the functional and symbolic benefit of brand experience (Swan & Combs, 1976). For every brand, there is a performance that the consumer expects. At the beginning of the consumer purchase evaluation stage, the performance a customer perceives for each brand is the same as the performance a customer expects from the brand. After the brand experience, there is a positive or negative difference between the perceived and expected performance at the end of the evaluation process. While the positive state of the difference is expressed as consumer satisfaction or satisfaction, the negative difference indicates the consumer's dissatisfaction (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Consumers' satisfaction with the brand is affected by many factors, from the loyalty relationship between the brand and the consumer to the brand's performance (Aaker et al., 2004). According to Bassi & Guido (2006), the satisfaction of consumers depends on the consumption experience beyond the performance of the brand. In particular, sensory and emotional experiences related to the brand are directly related to brand satisfaction (Alkilani et al., 2013).

In addition, Bigne et al. (2008) stated that brands that create a sense of happiness in individuals also reveal the feeling of brand loyalty and brand satisfaction. Consumers' satisfaction with the brand shortens the time of the purchasing decision process for their next purchase. Consumers who develop a sense of satisfaction due to their purchases are likely to communicate positive word-of-mouth (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). In the case of brand dissatisfaction, users may display various behaviors such as ending their current brand purchases and changing brands, or negative word-of-mouth communication or complaints (Brown & Beltramini, 1989; Swan & Oliver, 1989; Goodman & Newman, 2003). For this reason, brands should create realistic expectations and manage to balance the brand's characteristics with the interest and expectations of the brand (Oliver, 2006).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The First Step to Generate Loyal Visitors to the Destination: The Decision to Select Brand Elements

Various elements make brands well known and easily remembered in consumers' minds. Brand elements enable a particular brand to be distinguished from its counterparts (Keller, 2013). The goal of brand managers in selecting brand elements of a particular brand, such as name, logo, symbol, and characters, to create brand equity is to ensure brand awareness and recognition (Farhana, 2012). Because consumers know and recognize the brands in the market thanks to the brand elements. Due to brand elements such as names, slogans, colors, and characters, consumers also perceive the brand's personality (Seimiene & Kamarauskaite, 2014).

The selection of brand elements used in promoting a particular tourism destination to the world as a brand is to create brand equity, just like product or service branding. Especially in the branding of holiday destinations, although the destination brand name precedes other brand elements, it is essential to choose other brand elements such as logo, personality, and character in a way that creates tourist loyalty based on experience (Kladou et al., 2017). Destination brand elements should provide descriptive information, clearly indicate what needs the destination would meet if visited and include a value proposition addressed to potential visitors.

One of the crucial points that should be emphasized in selecting brand elements in destinations is that the destination promises to offer unforgettable and meaningful experiences in all aspects and aesthetics to potential visitors. The aesthetic state here is related to the visuality and verbal expression of the destination brand element. Destination brand elements must undergo necessary updates over time, that is, adaptable, to become a contemporary brand due to changing consumer demands, needs, values, beliefs, and thoughts. The most obvious example of this situation is that destinations have made some innovations in their logos overtime to keep up to date, and they have acquired logos with a more contemporary look. Also, brand elements must be legally protected both at the competition stage and in general because the easy copying of any element of the brand can cause severe and irreparable damage to the destination in the long run.

The first decision to manage brand elements in destinations is related to the brand name. The brand name is one of the most crucial brand elements that reflect the central theme and critical associations (Grewal et al., 1998). One of the essential elements in the brand's communication is the brand name. In large advertising projects for touristic destinations, various associations can be brought to life in the consumer's minds simply by the name of the destination (Meyers-Levy, 1989). The brand name is a brand element that can be remembered just like other brand elements has distinctiveness and creates a brand association (Robertson, 1989). From this point of view, the brand name in destinations affects the brand preferences of the destination visitors as a visual element (Degeratu et al., 2000).

Another brand element, the logo, in destinations, can be considered from many different perspectives, such as remembering and recognizing the destination more efficiently, the origin of the destination, the place it belongs to, and the association it makes. According to Aaker (1991), the logo is an element that should be at the center of the brand, such as some geometric shape, cartoon character, or human, and has a characteristic feature that distinguishes the brand from its counterparts. A logo can be defined as any unique geometric shape, object, person, theme, cartoon character, letter, word, or a combination of

these, which evokes the destination or can be associated with the destination in the minds of consumers (Kapferer, 2008). Logos that do not contain any words are called symbols.

In destinations, its logo can also represent a specific product, service, region, or directly the destination itself. The brand logo, which sometimes represents the name or initials of the destinations and can be expressed as a visual symbol, can also be interpreted as a signature belonging to the destination, making the destinations known in the tourism world (Henderson & Cote, 1998).

As potential visitors may associate the logo with the destination with the use of the logo in destinations, their intention to revisit or recommend the destination to others is likely to be affected. In addition to the promotional role of the logo in destinations, the logos that are directly related to the various features of the successfully designed destination create associations in the visitors and facilitate the recognition of the features related to the destination (Keller, 2013). Another benefit of using the logo in destinations is that, since it is a brand element that cannot be expressed in words if it is used for the same destination in different cultures, it enables the quality of the destination to be revived in the minds of potential visitors (Han et al., 2010). Unlike the destination brand name, logos can be adapted to time more efficiently and ensure that the brand always maintains its up-to-date, contemporary and modern structure.

Although it is often confused with the concept of logo, another brand element that has distinct differences from the concept of the logo is the “brand emblem”. The brand emblem is an important element of the brand identity, which consists of images that reflect the tangible or intangible features of a particular destination, do not have lexical features, and can often be used together with the brand logo (Aaker, 1996). According to Kapferer (2008), the emblem is the capital of brand equity. For this reason, the choice and use of emblems in destinations is an important component that ensures that the destination is known and remembered by its potential visitors, gives it strength and durability in the transfer of the destination brand to the future, and reflects the personality of the destination (Zhang, 2017).

A brand slogan, another brand element, is a short and concise expression that can provide descriptive and persuasive information about the brand, frequently used in various advertising and promotional activities (Keller, 2013). It is a short statement that adds value and creates long-term consumer value. According to Dimofte & Yalch (2007), slogans are a brand element that allows consumers to keep a specific brand in their mind and remember it constantly. If the brand slogans created in terms of destinations create various emotional connotations on the visitors, they also strengthen the name or symbol of the relevant destination brand. According to Aaker (1991), in addition to the name or symbol of the brand, the brand slogan is closely related to the brand positioning. So much so that while some established and influential brands cannot follow a strengthening strategy with a brand name or symbol within the framework of positioning or repositioning strategies, the same strategy can yield successful results with a slogan added to the brand’s name or symbol.

The slogan also plays a supporting role in the brand identity and expresses as one of the destination’s communication channels. Like the brand name, the brand logo also requires intense advertising and promotional activities since it cannot contain detailed descriptive information about the brand. However, the brand slogan to be created in the destinations strengthens the destination’s communication by filling the gap about what should be said in a short, concise, plain, and emphatic way about the destination’s image. In this respect, having a slogan contributes significantly to the brand identity, brand association, and brand awareness of the relevant destination. For this reason, the slogan to be used in destinations plays a crucial role in emphasizing the meaning of the destination or emphasizing what makes the destination special.

Creating Brand Experience Based on Brand Equity in Tourism Destinations

Another brand element, the brand character, is designed through advertisements to create brand loyalty and plays a crucial role in promotional campaigns (Farhana, 2012). A brand character is a unique form of the brand logo. A brand character can be a real-life person or a cartoon character adapted to real life. Brand characters are essential in creating brand awareness and association due to their rich color options and visually satisfying. Brand characters, which are essential in terms of making the destinations known around the world and facilitating their communication with different countries and cultures, also play an essential role in ensuring that the destinations are easily remembered, attractive, liked, and known by the potential visitors, and in creating effective communication between the destination and potential visitors.

Brand Building in the Process of Creating a Successful Destination Brand

Brand identity is the first and most essential step of the branding process, of creating consumer-oriented associations that show who or what brands are to create consumer loyalty based on brand experience (Keller, 2013). The associations created by the brand identity help convey various messages such as the brand's goals, values, and beliefs to the consumer. All of the brand elements that reveal the brand's image and make the brand known by the consumers constitute the brand's identity (Ghodeswar, 2008). In this context, brand identity is a concept that answers questions such as the purpose, structure, vision of the brand, what is required to ensure brand satisfaction, what its values, competence, and legitimacy are, and how it differentiates the brand from others, and what the indicators are for the brand to be recognizable (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Brand identity is not just an abstract concept expressed by definition. Brand identity is a concept that includes all brand elements, offering functional, emotional, and personal benefits to the consumer (Nandan, 2005). Consumers who find something from themselves in a particular brand will still prefer the same brand in the future. By matching the brand identity with their own beliefs, consumers can make the brand a passion, and the brand can arouse admiration in the consumer.

While products communicate with their brands, brands communicate with their identities. However, in terms of brands, capturing such connections with the consumer requires adapting to today's changing market conditions. Ensuring this requires developing brand strategies following modern brand communication theory beyond the classical stimulus-response relationship. According to this theory, who is the presenter or speaker, and who is the receiver, that is, the listener should be taken into consideration while creating the brand identity. Kapferer (2008) explains the brand identity creation process with a communication theory-based approach. According to this approach, which is also called the brand identity prism, the first point to be considered while creating a brand identity is related to the physical characteristics and quality of the brand. These features are the first and most basic distinctive features of the brand that come to mind. The physical features and quality that form the brand's backbone also add tangible value to the brand, reflecting what it is and how it looks. Brands that create value and have a prestige image create value. In addition, brands should have a personality and culture reinforced by their character. Each of the big brands competing in today's markets has a culture. Due to the brand culture, brand communication is also provided. For this reason, brand culture is also seen as a source of inspiration, loyalty, and admiration in consumers based on brand experience. In the service industry, the brand is also seen as a relationship. According to this point of view, the brand plays a crucial role in the relationship where customers benefit from products and services effectively. Each brand is also the customer's projection of certain things. For example, a destination may express that it is young or old by emphasizing a human quality. Similarly, a brand can reflect an individual's self-image. For example, materialistic individuals may express this by choosing more ostentatious destinations.

Brands can acquire personality traits or human values, just like people, due to consumer experiences or marketing activities (Plummer, 2000). Brand personality is a concept that expresses the harmony of any aspect of the brand perceived by the consumers with the personality traits of the target consumer group. Brand personality is an essential factor influencing consumer brand preferences and purchasing decisions. Kapferer (2008) emphasizes that brand personality affects brand awareness, creates a reason for purchasing, and reveals consumer value. Brand personality can be determined by presenting some human personality traits to individuals and asking closed-ended questions such as what a brand would be like if it were a human being (Aaker, 1997). The purpose of communication studies of brands is to reveal the brand's personality and image (Blackston, 1993). The brand's personality creation in destinations occurs due to the features that enable the brand to differentiate by one or more specific demographic, social, cultural, emotional, and cognitive characteristics, just like people. This situation increases the awareness of destinations by consumers and creates associations. Destination brand personalities that create a perception of quality and trust create consumer loyalty. As a result of the experiences gained for a particular destination, consumers who develop brand loyalty intend to recommend the destination to others or revisit it.

Consumers evaluate brands according to the image they create. Brand image, which is another strategic decision regarding the branding of destinations, is a concept in which all determinants such as the personality of the brand, the associations it creates in the minds of consumers, and the changes it creates in their senses are perceived together (Dobni & Zinkhan 1990). The brand image includes features that cover consumers' thoughts about the intangible qualities of the brand and generally meet the psychological and social needs of consumers regarding the branded product (Faircloth et al., 2001). Connections and associations formed in the consumer's mind about the product point to the brand's image. These associations can be formed due to the brand experience acquired by the consumers, or they can be formed through advertising or various promotional activities.

One of the most critical steps in building brand loyalty for destinations, creating a vivacious, continuous, and substantial brand experience, and ensuring that visitors recommend the destination to others by visitors is brand positioning strategies. To create a reason for visitors to visit again, to enable them to transfer the brand experience gained in the destination to others, to increase the possibility of the destination being preferred by potential visitors, to emphasize the similar and different aspects compared to other destinations through brand identity and personality, to be remembered before rival brands in the purchasing decision process by creating associations in the consumer's mind. Providing consumer value depends on the success of brand positioning strategies. Brand position in destinations is the focal point of all marketing strategies as it is an indicator of success in creating consumer value. According to Kotler & Keller (2012), the brand position is the success of designing the brand's presentation and image to differentiate it from competing brands and create value in the consumer's mind.

In the positioning process of the brand, answers to four basic questions are sought (Kapferer, 2008; Keller, 2013). The first of these questions is about what benefit the brand will provide and its value to consumers. What is emphasized in this question is the degree of overlap between the promise of the brand and the benefit to be obtained by the consumer. At this stage, studies are carried out on the brand's image in the consumer. The second question sought to be answered to whom and which target population of the brand will appeal, and what its aims will be with the communication method to reach this audience. The third question to be answered is the reason for the brand's existence. This issue is about the actual or subjective elements that support the promised benefit of the brand. The last question to be answered is

about who will be the possible competitors of the brand in the market, and what will be their superior or different aspects from their competitors. At this point, the possible competitors of the brand are defined.

Building Destination Brand Loyalty Process

Brand loyalty is a situation that reflects the possibility of the customer preferring another brand when there is any change in the price or product features of any brand. According to Brand loyalty is at the center of all branding strategies. Aaker (1996) states that perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association affect brand loyalty. The concept of brand awareness, which is the first of creating brand loyalty steps, expresses the presence and power in the consumer's mind (Riaz et al., 2014). The brand creates consumer value when the consumer has high knowledge and awareness about the brand and keeps a strong, positive, and unique brand experience in his memory. According to many researchers, brand awareness is the first and most important dimension of creating destination brand loyalty (Lu et al., 2015; Lee & Back, 2008; Pike et al., 2010; Boo et al., 2009). Brand awareness is considered a prerequisite for brand loyalty, as consumers tend to trust a well-known brand and purchase more frequently (Hsu et al., 2011). According to Lassar et al. (1995), the most crucial component of brand loyalty is brand awareness and brand associations, and the most important determinants of these components are value, social image, and trust. Brand awareness is the first and most fundamental step of brand communication. Brand awareness enables consumers to become familiar with the relevant brand. Individuals familiar with the brand are more likely to develop loyalty and love by establishing an emotional bond with the relevant brand.

Brand association is everything positive or negative about the brand that is in the minds of consumers. Aaker (1996) emphasized that brand associations are a variable that depicts the brand and stated it consists of three dimensions: value, brand personality, and organizational associations. According to Keller (1993), brand associations reveal the meaning of a brand in the minds of consumers. Brand associations are related to the communication ability of the brand. When brand communication stimuli create a positive reaction in potential customers, associations affect brand loyalty positively (Yoo et al., 2000). According to Aaker (1991), the strength of brand association increases when it is supported by consumer experience and communication. The brand can differentiate from its peers through brand associations, create reasons for purchasing, and help brand expansion by creating positive attitudes towards the brand. According to Kim et al (2008), brand associations and brand awareness positively affect consumers' behavioral loyalty to the destination brands.

In brand associations, all the information related to the brand that the consumer remembers in his mind reflects the brand image (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2003). According to Aaker (1996), another determinant of brand association is the brand personality perspective. Therefore, brand personality is a critical component of brand loyalty based on brand experience. A brand's slogan, its functional or emotional benefit, its association with various qualities or expertise in a particular field, and its emphasis on increasing credibility or confidence in the product allow the consumer to create a reason for purchasing the relevant brand within the context of need. Moreover, some associations created by brands are loved by consumers and attributed to the brand, and some positive emotions can often establish a link between the brand and the consumer. Such developments contribute to developing a sense of loyalty between the brand and the consumer.

One of the essential stages of creating brand loyalty in destinations is to create quality within the framework of specific standards and to make it permanent. It is not easy to define quality precisely, but individuals always evaluate quality internally. For this reason, as the level of brand experience increases,

the quality evaluations of individuals for the relevant brand often change (Chi H-K et al., 2009). Perceived quality is an abstract and general feeling towards a brand. The perceived quality concept, which is often associated with brand-related reliability and functional benefits, can often be determined by comparison with competing brands (Aaker, 1996). Many researchers have found a high relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty in their research and revealed that with the increase in perceived quality, brand loyalty, intention to recommend to others, and repurchase tendencies increase (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Hyun & Kim, 2011; Nam et al. al., 2011).

According to researchers focusing on the relationship between perceived quality and advertising, consumers perceive advertising as an external tool to evaluate the quality of products (Rao & Monroe, 1989). Researchers also found a positive relationship between perceived advertising spending and perceived quality (Villarejo-Ramos & Sanchez-Franco, 2005). Therefore, consumers generally perceive higher advertisements as higher quality products (Yoo et al., 2000). Consumers' perceived quality of a branded product or service has many benefits to the brand. At the beginning of these benefits, perceived quality creates value and reveals the reason for purchasing (Aaker, 1991). A correct way for brands to follow while creating their positioning strategies is to position them on quality.

The focal point in branding decisions in destinations is to create brand loyalty by creating brand awareness, brand association, and high-quality brand perception. The commitment to a brand is an emotional state that shows the emotional attachment between the consumer and the brand (Louis & Lambart, 2010). Individuals repurchase a preferred brand and recommend it to others (Luarn & Lin, 2003). Strong loyalty to a brand reduces the tendency among consumers to turn to other brands (Zhang et al., 2014). Brand loyalty also demonstrates consumers' strong belief and trust in the brand.

According to Keller (2013), brand loyalty can occur in the behavioral, attitudinal, sense of community, and active loyalty. Behavioral loyalty to the brand is related to the frequency and amount of consumers purchasing a particular brand. Creating behavioral loyalty alone is not enough to create brand loyalty. Attitudinal loyalty, on the other hand, is about changing consumers' attitudes towards a particular brand or maintaining it. On the other hand, community sense is when a brand creates broad meanings among consumers by connecting it with people who use the same brand and have similar feelings. Active brand loyalty is the most vital brand loyalty. Beyond the consumers' purchase, consumption, and spending of the brand; the willingness to spend time, energy, money, and other resources on the brand is the situation in which active loyalty to the brand is created. In such cases, the individual may see themselves as a brand ambassadors. To form this commitment, attitudinal attachment and social identity integration are necessary together.

Some researchers have evaluated brand loyalty from an attitudinal perspective. For example, Chaudri & Halbrook (2001) emphasized attitudinally that brand loyalty is a tendency or commitment towards different and unique characteristics of the brand. While definitions of brand loyalty based on behavioral perspective emphasize consumers' loyalty to the brand in their purchasing choices, definitions based on attitude perspective emphasize the consumer's intention to be loyal to the brand. On the other hand, establishing and maintaining a positive brand image is critical for developing and maintaining brand loyalty. According to studies, individuals who have a positive image perception of the brand also increase their loyalty to the relevant brand (Hyun & Kim, 2011; Kandampully & Suhartanto., 2011).

The Role of Destination Brand Satisfaction on Brand Loyalty

In addition to the functional and emotional benefits that a brand will provide for consumers, brand satisfaction and past experiences with the brand are one of the main factors affecting the repurchase decision and the likelihood of recommending the brand to others. Brand satisfaction is an essential driver for brands to create consumer loyalty. Brand loyalty occurs when a consumer completes or defines themselves with any brand purchase. Brand loyalty, which is one of the elements of brand equity, and brand satisfaction are two interconnected structures. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2016), brand satisfaction is the key to creating value for consumers. Customers with brand loyalty are customers who trust the brand, establish an emotional bond with the brand, love the brand, tend to recommend the brand to others and believe in the brand, and are insensitive to the different brand information presented to them and the marketing efforts of the competitor brand. Since customers with brand loyalty see themselves as brand ambassadors, they intend to convey their satisfaction and intense brand satisfaction to other potential customers at every opportunity. In addition to the performance offered by the brand, its power in communication with the consumer is another determining factor in brand satisfaction. Although it is costly for brands, studies have shown that brands that interact individually with the consumer create satisfaction and affect repurchase and recommendation to others (Mittal & Lassar, 1996; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996; Bearden et al., 1998).

There may be brands that leave a positive or negative, short or long-term strong experience in the consumer's mind, and brands that create weak experiences. Brand experience is not only the emotional relationship with the brand but also the sum of the sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions that develop under the influence of stimuli such as personality, identity, and image from the brand (Brakus et al., 2009). Although the concept of brand experience has been used frequently in the marketing literature since the beginning of the 2000s, the first study to measure the experience relationship between consumers and the brand was conducted in 2009 by Brakus et al. by evaluating different disciplines together. In the concept of brand experience, the aim is to keep consumers' interest and excitement alive, add joy and excitement to the purchasing process, create unforgettable memories with unique feelings, and create consumer value by intensifying the desire to own (Schmitt, 1999). Accordingly, encountering one of the brand elements anywhere, seeing its logo, name, or slogan, and being exposed to various promotional and advertising elements related to the brand in online environments reveals a positive or negative experience for the brand in consumers.

In the first study on the measurement of brand experience, it was suggested that various brand-related qualities could be examined in 4 dimensions: sensory, emotional, intellectual, operational, and relational (Brakus et al., 2009). The sensory experience dimension, the first measurable dimension of brand experience, includes the brand's characteristics that the individual's five senses can perceive and that can be perceived through visual, auditory, contact, taste, or smell—sensory experience elements related to the destination. For example, a destination's architectural features, decoration, natural and historical appearance, aesthetic features, traffic, various food and beverage businesses, festivals and cultural events, climatic features, weather conditions, environmental cleanliness, and local foods.

Emotional brand experience is a concept that includes the experience of various emotions such as happiness, sociability, fun, excitement, or love that any brand can experience by brand users (Beckman et al., 2013). When the sensory brand experience is considered in terms of destinations, it can reflect the happiness or excitement of the visitors from being in the destination or choosing it, as well as the social experiences that the tourists will have in the destination. The intellectual brand experience, on

the other hand, refers to the experience of prompting them to think from various perspectives with the sense of interest and curiosity that the brand will create for its users. For example, a potential visitor who encounters the brand slogan from a brand element of a destination in any environment may have positive feelings about the destination and may choose the relevant destination or recommend it to others, thinking that he or she can have a more exciting or fun experience than the different destinations he has experienced so far. The operational brand experience, on the other hand, is a concept emphasizing that consumers can make use of their free time in a unique way and gain experience full of new and alternative activities suitable for their lifestyles. It is possible to list the examples that the brand can present as an operational experience in touristic destinations, such as bicycle paths in the city, walking routes, alternative nature sports, and various activities that support healthy living. Relational brand experience, on the other hand, is a type of brand experience that is formed as a result of previously created sensory, emotional, operational, and intellectual brand experiences and the contribution of various social influences, classes, identities, roles, and brand communications, group memberships, and cultural values. In this type of experience, individuals gain experience through various social roles, classes, and brands to associate themselves with.

The strategies applied in brand management aim to create brand loyalty by providing long-term, positive and robust experiences to the consumer and creating unique experiences that will raise awareness in the consumer's mind. According to Oliver (2006), to create cognitive loyalty towards the brand, the consumer has good knowledge about the brand, for the formation of emotional loyalty, the satisfaction and happiness from the brand are high, and the intention to repurchase as a result of trying the brand at least once for the formation of effortful loyalty. On the other hand, behavioral loyalty should transform the intention to repurchase into behavior based on the brand's experiences. One of the main factors affecting the intention to recommend tourism is the word-of-mouth communication in the purchasing process. The fact that tourists recommend their experiences about a particular destination to others is affected by their social relationships, purchasing desires, and purchasing decisions, affecting their intention to revisit in the future. Visitors who have positive and robust experiences related to the destination are also satisfied customers about the destination, and they are individuals who have developed a sense of loyalty towards the destination with a high probability. When a sense of loyalty and satisfaction develops in individuals, they show the behavior of transferring their positive experiences to others and influencing their purchasing decisions.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most important sectors where strategies focused on creating value loyalty in the consumer due to intense and positive brand experience is seen in the tourism sector. Actors in the tourism sector, who want to increase countries' contribution to their economies annually, focus on the value that touristic products will create for consumers. With the focus of touristic facilities, accommodation businesses, food, and beverage businesses, touristic entertainment centers, and touristic attractions centered on creating value for consumers, competition has now become viable between brands in tourism. Managing touristic products and services in line with consumer value-oriented planning and strategies between countries and different local areas within the same country, region, city, or destination has become inevitable.

Another development observed in the last 20 years for branding in tourism is the branding of touristic destinations, regions, cities, towns, and centers with touristic attractions as a touristic product. The brand-

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ing of destinations, frequently found in the literature, differs based on countries and tourism regions. In some tourism regions, long-term results are obtained with the investments made in the past years, while the importance of destination branding is newly understood in others. Just as products and services create brand loyalty after the brand experience, the successes achieved by the strategies that focus on creating value and loyalty for the consumers in tourism destinations spread to other tourism destinations day by day. In this context, tourism managers should catch up with this change in the sector and keep up with it.

Touristic destinations can achieve success in their branding efforts by making a name for themselves in the market with their natural resources, various tourism infrastructure opportunities, promotion, and advertising activities, quality-oriented services, and their approaches focused on creating value for the consumer, including the personnel working in the tourism sector with various pieces of training. Efforts to create awareness and awareness can also be achieved with connotations that will enable consumers to remember the relevant destination more easily in holiday purchases or organizations. In addition, creating high-quality destinations perceived by consumers with all the possibilities and resources is another essential key to success in branding. Destinations that provide consumer value awareness, recall, perceived quality, create brand satisfaction, and provide a solid and successful brand experience are more successful in attracting a certain amount of tourists every year.

Moreover, the economic advantage that destination brands provide to the stakeholders (i.e. tourism organizations, local governments, residents and communities, tourists, environment) by creating awareness, recall, loyalty, and quality perception for tourists in the market is the value of the destination brand. If the destination brand is remembered and known by consumers in a way that may be a reason for preference when making a holiday purchase decision or holiday organization, it is perceived as high quality, recommended to others, and the exact destination is preferred every time; means that the relevant destination brand has created consumer-based brand equity in the market. This development is an abstract result experienced at the end of the branding process. Creating consumer-based brand equity in the market is all brands' only goal to achieve. Ensuring that it is sustainable is one of the most costly efforts of marketing managers when designing marketing mix elements and managing brand strategies.

It is equally important to measure the brand's success as a result of these strategies, as well as to create brand equity of touristic destinations, make them a brand that can be preferred by consumers, and create strategies for the brand to create consumer satisfaction. The collection of economic returns can increase the financial value of the brand and satisfy the stakeholders. From another point of view, the increase in the number of tourists can also please the tourism operators in the destinations. However, the only way to ensure that these positive developments are permanent is for the destination brand to create consumer-based brand loyalty. Otherwise, the economic size of the touristic destination and the number of tourists it hosts according to specific periods can create imbalance and instability with sharp increases and decreases. This situation may adversely affect the stakeholders and the economies of the countries in the macro sense.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

One issue on which researchers agree on building a destination brand is creating value for consumers. Researchers attribute the most critical stages of being consumer value-oriented and creating brand equity in the market to the choices of brand elements. For this reason, the success of tourism destinations in their efforts towards branding in creating brand equity should be determined by contacting consumers.

For example, any destination's contribution to the formation of brand equity and its relationship with brand loyalty based on brand experience should be explained based on factual data through studies that include brand personality or identity and brand image. In future studies, it would be appropriate to make inferences for destination brand managers with the increase in studies that associate the success of destinations that emphasize brand identity or personality with experience in creating brand loyalty.

An essential contribution of the brand experience is that it enables brand extension efforts. Brands that create value for consumers and create brand equity have a high success in product or brand expansion. However, it has been determined that studies on the expansion of destination brands are pretty limited in the literature. As Lim & Weaver (2012) emphasized, considering the positive contributions of destination brands on products to brand loyalty, it is thought that studies in this area will open the horizons of destination brand managers. In addition to the brand image, the possible contributions of the country's image to the brand experience and brand loyalty of destinations at the local level are pretty limited in the literature. It is recommended to increase studies in this area in the future. (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2008; Pappu et al., 2007).

The process of creating a solid brand experience for consumers requires a very participatory effort, as Sartori et al. (2012) stated in their study. However, it is seen that the effect of tourists' perceptions of brand experience on brand loyalty and intention to recommend is widely investigated in the literature. In the future, conducting and comparing the measurements of the brand experience perceptions of local governments, tourism personnel, and local people separately will make the ideas that will contribute to the formation of destination brand loyalty more meaningful. Similar to the method in the study of Gomez et al. (2015), it has been determined that there is a need for studies that consider the small touristic towns of destinations separately and make comparisons between these towns. Findings from such studies are likely to be a resource for tourism managers in destinations and other researchers.

CONCLUSION

In light of the theoretical foundations emphasized in this section of the book, it is aimed to make some suggestions to local governments regarding destinations and stakeholders active in tourism. Destinations are touristic markets with significant potential in the world tourism market with their natural and cultural assets, alternative tourism opportunities, and facilities that can appeal to tourists from almost every group. The most critical condition for recognizing destinations in the world tourism market is possible with practical promotional activities. Advertising and promotion activities are among the subjects that marketing managers invest the most in making products, services, and brands contact consumers. While a brand's communication with consumers makes significant contributions to the customer value-based branding strategies. Tourism investments can take many years to return. Considering that the brand elements that contribute to brand loyalty and affect the brand experience are elements that cannot be changed frequently, the selection of brand elements should be ensured with a participatory approach by taking the opinions of all tourism stakeholders.

In addition to the fact that a particular destination brand creates brand loyalty based on experience, another important point is to ensure that value can be recommended to others and to create the success achieved, considering that communication activities involving the brand's information should be prioritized. Investments and the need for qualified personnel in tourism should not be forgotten. Having experts in their fields, who have high communication skills, who know foreign languages, who are aware of the

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destination brand, and who are focused on creating value for the consumer, has critical importance in creating brand loyalty.

Also, the increase in the number of visits to a specific destination and the length of stay increase brand loyalty, brand satisfaction, and solid and positive perceptions of the brand experience. For this reason, creating reasons that can increase the length of stay of tourists, have a positive effect on their intention to revisit, and enable them to recommend the destination to others is another critical issue that tourism managers in destinations should consider when determining their brand strategies.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Brand Equity: Reflects the value-oriented approach created in the minds of the consumer, who is willing to pay a higher price when necessary, which makes a brand a reason for preference when evaluated together with other brands in the consumer's mind. While brand equity expresses an abstract concept related to the brand, it is also the focus of all brand strategies.

Brand Loyalty: Refers to consumers' emotional and behavioral commitment to a particular brand. At the same time, brand loyalty is considered a success indicator of a brand in the market.

Brand Management: All of the activities that will ensure that the product, service, person, institution, city, country, or region is different from the similar ones and will be easily noticed by the consumers by putting their distinctive features into the foreground.

Destination Marketing: The whole of activities aimed at making the region known and preferred by wider masses as a result of effective communication activities carried out with potential visitors by highlighting various qualities or attractions specific to a particular place.

Experiential Marketing: Refers to a kind of life experience in which the brand and the consumer can be in direct communication, based on the direct use experiences of individuals regarding the product or service.


Section 2

Experiential Marketing Practices

Chapter 8

Experiential Marketing and Practices: The Perspective of Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

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ABSTRACT

Experiential marketing creates lasting happiness and satisfaction by influencing the desires and emotions of consumers at the point of transforming the product or service into utility and symbolic value. This study aims to look at the examples and outputs of experiential marketing, which is one of the important marketing approaches to achieving customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. For this purpose, the concept of experiential marketing, dimensions of experiential marketing, stages of customer experience management, experiential marketing practices (Starbucks, IKEA, Nike Town, Disneyland, and Abercrombie & Fitch) customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty are discussed theoretically in this study. Then, the effect of experiential marketing practices on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is presented. Finally, theoretical information is presented that experiential marketing application examples are an important tool in creating permanent happiness and satisfaction by influencing the sense of pleasure of consumers in the conclusion part.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of the contemporary marketing approach has spread to all world economies as of the 21st century. Businesses develop their marketing strategies according to the contemporary marketing approach to meet the customers' wishes, needs, and requests (Khotimah, 2017: 38). Businesses must create value to retain their customers. The best way to create customer value is to examine the experience of customers and their reaction to marketing communication (Altun, 2019: 39). The fact that traditional

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marketing methods are already known by all businesses and that products and services are offered only with traditional methods constitutes a handicap in terms of lack of differentiation. Therefore, businesses focus on current marketing approaches such as experiential marketing. Experiential marketing has a critical role for businesses to present the products or services they offer to their customers with a story (Kose & Cizer, 2021: 220). The products, services, atmosphere, and environmental factors offered by businesses especially affect the formation of experiential value (Kınıklı, 2019: 11).

Experiential marketing is the concept of presenting the product or service to consumers by transforming it into a utility and symbolic value. Experiential marketing is an important approach to creating lasting happiness and satisfaction by influencing the desires and emotions of consumers. The main purpose of businesses is to have a sustainable operation. It will be better understood how important it is to obtain satisfied and loyal customers through long-term customer value management in this direction. According to Khotimah (2017), experiential marketing is expressed as the process of attracting customers by providing an in-depth experience about a product, service, brand, or business. According to the International Experiential Marketing Association, experiential marketing is expressed as “a tool that allows businesses to communicate with customers through sensory means and enables customers to interact with brands, products and services” (Herdem, 2019: 5). Therefore, it can be said that the perceptions acquired through an experiential marketing communication effort have a permanent effect on customer loyalty (Arora & Chatterjee, 2017: 22). Experiential marketing focuses on using the five senses (smell, sight, taste, touch, and hearing) to emotionally connect with brands. The stimuli perceived by these senses trigger the motivation and needs of customers and lead consumers to buy products to achieve their marketing goals. Experiential marketing is becoming more and more useful as it involves satisfying both businesses and consumers (Khotimah, 2017: 37).

Satisfaction with the experience is among the main reasons for being constantly interested in a product. Therefore, businesses strive to continuously increase the satisfaction level of consumers (Kose & Cizer, 2021: 221). Customer satisfaction can be expressed as an emotional response to the experiences associated with the product or service purchased (Nugraha & Indrawati, 2017: 58). The way to please customers is to give them an excellent experience and surprise them. The main way to surprise customers is to deliver experiences that exceed their expectations. Therefore, businesses design an experience by taking advantage of the difference between what customers must see and what they expect to achieve (Güven, 2019: 103). Anderson et al. (1994), the cost of attracting new customers is much higher than the cost of retaining existing customers. Therefore, maintaining loyalty should be a strategic priority for the business. Creating customer value and customer loyalty is one of the best marketing strategies for businesses. Rowley and Dawes (2000) state that consumers are willing to be loyal only when they realize that the firm is the best option in the market. That’s why it’s important to provide customers with exceptional, memorable, and satisfying experiences.

Today, it is seen that the enterprises that set out to increase the experience of their customers do not have sufficient practical and theoretical backgrounds. This book chapter is designed as a guiding guide for researchers and businesses. In this direction, the effects of the concepts of customer value and experiential value on experiential marketing were examined in this study. Theoretical information is given about the concept of experiential marketing, the dimensions of experiential marketing, and how experiential marketing is designed. The research was then supported with examples of experiential marketing practices. Finally, the effects of experiential marketing practices on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are discussed.

BACKGROUND

Consumers, whose access to the product has increased with the development of the world economy, demand much more than a product today. The way to win satisfied and loyal consumers are to offer them unique experiences that are much more than products. Tsaur et al. (2007) stated that there is a positive and strong relationship between the dimensions of intellectual, emotional, sensory, relational, and behavioural experience and customer satisfaction. According to Yuan and Wu (2008), it was concluded that emotional and intellectual experience dimensions affect customer satisfaction. Lin et al. (2009) concluded that there is a significant relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Lee et al. (2010) found that experiential marketing has a positive effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Nyse et al. (2012) have found a positive relationship between sensory experiences on customer loyalty, and intellectual experiences have a negative effect on customer satisfaction. Karadeniz et al. (2013) concluded that experiential marketing practices in shopping centers are effective in customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Alkylani et al. (2013) examined the effects of experiential marketing practices on social networks in Malaysia on customer satisfaction. It has been determined that sensory and emotional experience dimensions have a positive effect on customer satisfaction. However, it was concluded that there was no relationship between the dimensions of intellectual, behavioural, and relational experience and customer satisfaction. Öztürk (2015) observed that there is a relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in a study on cosmetic products. Yacob et al. (2016) revealed that experiential marketing has a positive and significant relationship with customer loyalty in the retail sector. Finally, Tunç (2017) found that customers enjoy experiencing Burger King's new product types much more. It can be stated that there is a relationship between experiential marketing, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty based on the results of this research. There is also a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Many research results also support this argument (Bowden & Dagger, 2011; Ahrholdt et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2018; Akel, 2020).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction is critical to business due to factors such as lower purchasing cost, base profit, revenue growth, cost savings, and price premium. Satisfied customers maintain longer relationships with businesses (Shava, 2021: 72). Customer satisfaction is a “cognitive or emotional reaction and emerges with experience before or after purchasing” (İşler, 2015). According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), customer satisfaction is “a process that starts before purchasing a product or service and includes after-sales services, and it shows to what extent the events in this process and the customer's earnings meet their expectations” (Yangınlar and Tuna, 2020: 177). Alkylani et al. (2013) define customer satisfaction as “an emotional response to certain products or services purchased, retail outlets, and certain shopping behaviour patterns and experiences”. According to Singh (2006), customer satisfaction is associated with emotions such as acceptance, happiness, relaxation, excitement, and enjoyment. The most important factor in the profitability, growth, and continuity of businesses is customer satisfaction. Therefore,

all business activities should be organized on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Kara & İrge, 2021: 1495-1496).

Customer loyalty is defined as “a sustainable relationship between an individual’s attitude and repeated purchase” (Mai et al., 2021: 75). According to Oliver (2010), customer loyalty is expressed as “customers’ commitment to purchase the same brand despite the situational effects or marketing efforts that affect their behaviour to change the brand or service they consistently prefer”. The cost of acquiring a new customer is far greater than the cost of serving existing customers. Therefore, it is possible to have loyal customers with much less effort and cost (Kose & Cizer, 2021: 222). It is seen that businesses that are successful in customer loyalty are effective in personalizing the brand, training their personnel, meeting customer expectations and needs, and constantly developing products or services. Also, businesses need a system that understands and values customers’ feelings. There are two types of customer loyalty, “attitudinal loyalty” and “behavioural loyalty”. Attitudinal loyalty is expressed as the level of loyalty tendency while behavioural loyalty is repetitive purchasing behaviours (Alizadehfanaeloo & Özüdogru, 2020: 852). Reichheld and Sasser (1990) state that customer loyalty and profitability are closely related. Furthermore, Xie and Heung (2012) and Leong et al. (2015) concluded that there is a relationship between customer loyalty and customer satisfaction.

Current marketing practices have begun to attract customers with customer relations and experiential marketing strategies rather than focusing on product and brand management in recent years. These marketing strategies are not about how any product will be sold to consumers, but how it will offer them an experience. With experiential marketing strategies, businesses can maintain their relations with existing customers, attract potential customers, and ultimately have loyal and satisfied customers (Öztürk, 2015: 2817). Therefore, it is possible to say that experiential marketing is an important indicator of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Research has revealed that the senses, feelings, and relationships created through experiential marketing affect customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Wu & Tseng, 2015: 111; Abadi et al., 2020).

Experiential Marketing

Businesses are constantly in search of innovation because products and services are very similar to each other, and traditional marketing does not offer consumers any difference at present. Businesses that want to differentiate from the increasing competition have frequently benefited from experiential marketing approaches in recent years (Varinli, 2012: 153). Pine and Gilmore (1998) stated in their book “Experience Economy” that as products and services differ, consumers are more interested in the individual experiences they have gained, not in small differences in quality and prices. This perspective is conceptually where the strategic application area of experiential marketing begins (Peng, 2019: 98). A traditional product-oriented mindset has been shifted to a consumer-oriented mindset with an understanding of the experience economy. Consumers are involved in both value definition and value creation according to it (Kose & Cizer, 2021: 220). The postmodern world of consumption is based on feeling, relating, and acting. However, experiential marketing practices, which are difficult to substitute and imitate, have gained momentum (Eroglu & Kose, 2019: 1058).

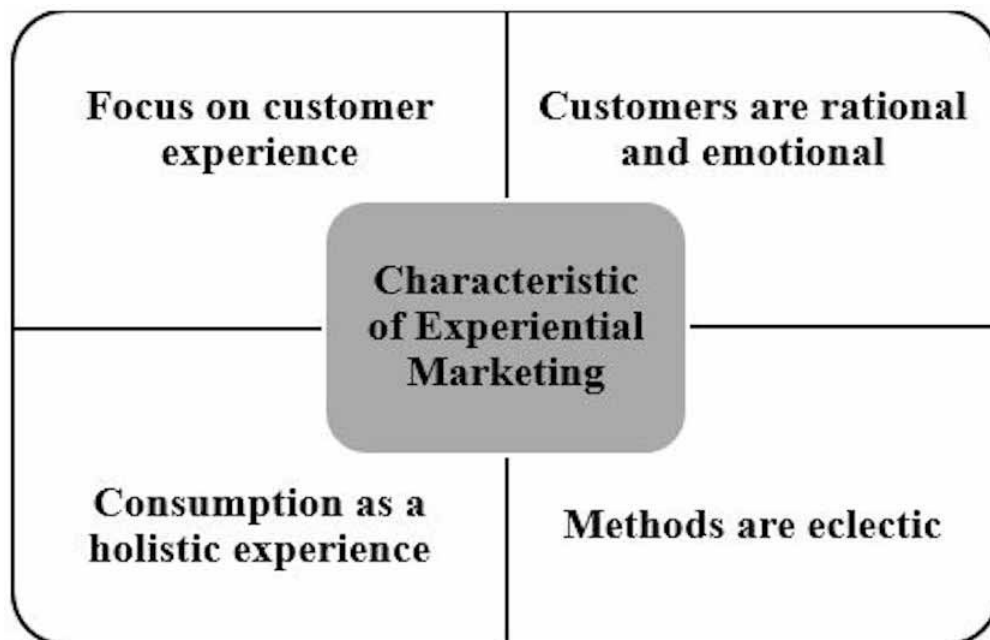
According to Same and Larimo (2012), experience is defined as “something that affects a person’s feeling or knowledge/skill through doing, seeing or feeling something”. Antonella and Bernard (2008) stated that consumer experiences consist of four elements:

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- *Pre-consumption experience* is about experience expectation and anticipation.
- *The purchasing experience* includes product selection, payment, and packaging.
- *Core consumption experience* is related to perception and sensation, satisfaction level, and remembered consumption experience.
- *The experience of nostalgia* is a classification of memories used to remember past experiences.

According to the Experiential Marketing Association (2011), “consumers interact with brands through sensory means” (Herdem, 2019: 5). Rachna and Vishal (2011) defined it as “the difference between telling people about the features of products and services and making them experience their benefits”. Etkin and Sela (2016) define the concept of experiential marketing as “marketing through senses, emotions, actions, thoughts, and relationships so that an individual customer can describe the product or service to offer a unique experience and increase overall consumption value”. Four basic features distinguish experiential marketing from traditional marketing (Schmitt, 1999: 58). These are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Characteristics of experiential marketing
Source: (Schmitt, 1999)



Experiential marketing research shows that consumer perceptions of a brand can be changed by an experiential marketing strategy. In this respect, it is important to know the elements that improve the customer experience. According to Wood and Masterman (2008), the customer experience elements are as follows (Arora & Chatterjee, 2017: 21):

- Present emotional characteristics,
- Interacts with participants and brand ambassadors,

- Appeals to all senses,
- Provides an individual experience,
- Creates a memory between customers and the brand,
- Designs a real and original presentation,
- Develops content, location, timing, and continuous innovation,

Globetrotter offers rain and freezing rooms in its outlets so that its customers can experience sports products in nature (Arora & Chatterjee, 2017: 21). Consumers experience emotions associated with a product, service, or brand through experiential marketing. Consumers could try and compare products and services for themselves thanks to the long-term customer interactions established with experiential marketing. Therefore, the harmony between consumers and products increases. Such experiences make consumers feel more comfortable by appealing to their senses, emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and relationships (Kose & Cizer, 2021: 220).

Dimensions of Experiential Marketing

According to Schmitt (1999), five different experiences perceived by customers also constitute the dimensions of experiential marketing. The way these different dimensions are perceived; are “feel”, “sense”, “think”, “act”, and “relate”. The “Starbucks” brand, which is an example of all these dimensions, can be considered before explaining the experiential marketing dimensions. Starbucks designs its shops to appeal to the five senses. Factors such as the music played in the store, the smell of coffee, and the visual integrity of the interior design create synergy and create the sensory dimension of the brand. Characteristics such as people who have coffee experience writing their names on coffee cups and addressing the consumer by name, preparing the coffee according to the wishes of the consumer, offering special coffee blends produced by the baristas, and designing the place to spend time for a long time show the emotional dimension of the Starbucks brand. Employees also play a major role in creating the consumer experience for Starbucks. According to experts of the Starbucks brand, employees should feel like a member of the family. This situation creates the behavioural dimension of the Starbucks brand. Starbucks has created a contrasting structure and space to Turkish coffee culture. It has created behavioural changes in the lifestyles of consumers due to the design of a different structure in terms of both product and place. These changes created in the lifestyles of consumers constitute the relational dimension of experiential marketing (Anlı, et al., 2019: 117). Evaluation of experiential marketing dimensions through the practices of the Starbucks brand is important for a better understanding in the future.

Sensory Experience

According to Khan and Rahman (2013), sensory experience is expressed as “the experience that customers get from the senses of sight, smell, taste, sound, and touch”. It refers to “messages developed by customers for products or services” in terms of marketing (Nigam, 2016: 9). Sensory experiences are also used as a brand identity element, enabling customers to focus on the brand. Sensory marketing is used to differentiate products, services, and brands by motivating customers with their aesthetic and excitement senses (Schmitt, 1999: 61).

The sensory dimension of experiential marketing is aimed at creating a perception of customers. Marketing managers need to use every touchpoint between customers and customers efficiently to achieve

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this. Fewer advertisements may weaken the bond with the brand while the use of more advertisements (stimulus) than necessary can bore customers (Çakırkayan, 2019: 3110). The elements such as striking colours, music, design, and themes should be taken to use to provide a sensory experience (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 90). For example, the colours offered by the Tiffany & Co brand are found attractive by aesthetic and synergy customers.

Emotional Experience

Consumers consider emotional experiences as well as the characteristics of the product while purchasing in the global competitive environment. Schmitt (1999) defined emotional experience as “an approach that appeals to customers’ inner feelings to create strong sympathy or positive mood towards a brand”. Emotional experience is the provision of experiences that will create strong feelings. It is necessary to determine which stimuli should be used to create which emotion by establishing empathy with the customers to create emotions. The use of similar emotions in many advertisements has made the advertisements standard rather than different. Creative messages should be conveyed to customers that will make them experience emotional moments for this reason (Varinli, 2012: 156). The advertisement designs of the Coca-Cola and Kent brand about bringing people together in a happy theme during religious holidays in Turkey are among the best examples of emotional experience (Çakırkayan, 2019: 3110).

Businesses operating in a globally competitive environment use the strategy of “creating space” as an emotional experience application. Thanks to this strategy, an impressive venue has been designed to provide consumers with an experience. For example, consumers are educated on how to care for their pets at Purina farms created by Nestle and Purina Petcare. In such advertisements, where emotional content is dominant, consumers who feel good are brought to the fore. Therefore, it is aimed that consumers to remember the happy events in their past and associate themselves with the happy characters in the advertisement. Finally, it is aimed to ensure that the consumer focuses on the product with positive feelings (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 91).

Behavioural Experience

The behavioural experience focuses on the physical experience of consumers. This experience offers different possibilities for consumers to have an experience that suits their behaviours and lifestyles (Song et al., 2015: 240). The behavioural experience offers customers alternative lifestyles and interactions by focusing on physical experiences. Customers can create loyalty to the product, service, or brand thanks to this experience (Nigam, 2016: 9).

Changes in the lifestyle and behaviour of individuals are usually motivational, spiritual, and emotional. Behavioural experience is to examine the behaviour patterns of consumers and design how experiences can be offered to positively affect their lives. For example, it is possible to say that a consumer who buys a sports car is fond of freedom, independence, and an individual life (Varinli, 2012: 157). Similarly, the Nike brand’s “Just Do It” campaign encourages the customer to purchase GYM equipment. Changes in the behaviour of consumers, athletes, and movie stars are carried out in an inspiring, emotional, and motivational way through role models (Rather, 2020: 18).

Intellectual Experience

Intellectual experience develops customers' rational thinking about products or services. Intellectual experience is also expressed as customers reflecting on their evaluations of products or ideas during the development of a new product or idea (Nigam, 2016: 9). The main purpose of intellectual experience is to offer creative solutions to consumer problems related to products, services, or brands. Consumers spend time thinking about how to use the product through intellectual experience. It is aimed to surprise the consumers and attract their attention and mobilize them through the intellectual experience strategies. It also enables customers to think positively about related brands and to be different from their competitors (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 92). Cognitive problem-solving experiences related to products, services, or brands are created for consumers through intellectual experience. For example, Microsoft asked several questions to its customers during an advertisement: "What do you want to do today?", "What do you want to do with information technology today?", "Do you know how you can use information technology in your business?". Microsoft motivated businessmen and made them think about these questions (Varinli, 2012: 157).

Relational Experience

According to Schmitt (1999), relational experience has a relationship with other types of experience. Relational experience arises from the interaction of the individual with other people. Individuals are affected by their sensory, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual experiences. Relational experience is associated with social awareness and belonging for customers. Therefore, it is to establish a bond between the product, service, or brand and the customer (Çakırkayan, 2019: 3111). Experiences gained with relational marketing strategies allow the customer to develop himself and stay connected to a social community. The marketing researchers focus not only on the products offered to customers in a fast service chain restaurant but also on the intangible services provided with it (Nigam, 2016: 10).

Relational experience creates experiences of customers' ideal selves and personal growth. The relational experience directly aims at making customers feel like part of a group, be respected, acquire social identity, and create a sense of belonging. For example, the consumer's possession of a classic Volkswagen car or a Harley Davidson motorcycle reflects his membership in a community (Varinli, 2012: 158). Therefore, it can be said that social roles, cultural values, family and friendship relations, and reference groups have a critical role in creating relational experience (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 93).

Customer Experience Management

One of the crucial factors of experiential marketing is to create a customer experience. Therefore, theoretical information on customer experience management is given under this title. Customer experience management is a process that aims to customize the customer's experience with a company in line with their needs and wishes (Benzarti et al., 2021). According to Schmitt (2011), the stages of customer experience management consist of customer analysis, experiential platform creation, brand experience, and consumer interaction.

Customer Analysis

Customer analysis can be carried out through focus group interviews, surveys, or in-depth interviews. However, qualitative research techniques (ethnographic, etc.) are preferred more generally (Schmitt, 2011: 88). Schmitt (2003) suggested research methods for customer analysis, observing customers in natural consumption environments, using real stimuli, and designing the future. The first method is based on collecting information about the customer while the customer interacts with the offered product or service. The second method involves obtaining and collecting information from customer reactions through advertisements made with three-dimensional and multi-sensory presentations. The third method is to research the customer's future expectations about the product, to get their ideas, research their lifestyles, and meet with fashion and trend experts to follow the innovations related to the product (Tunç, 2017: 34). It is possible to summarize the customer analysis stages in this way. However, it can be classified in more detail as follows.

The first stage of customer analysis is “determining the target customer”. Target customers are clearly defined at this stage. Then, competitor and product comparison analyses regarding customer experience are carried out using several methods (focus group interview, qualitative/quantitative methods) (Deligöz, 2016: 67). The second stage is to design the “experiential environment”. The atmosphere in which the customer is experiencing the experience affects their thoughts about the experience. Each different experience, customer's feelings, and thoughts also evoke different repercussions from this point of view. Therefore, understanding the psychology of the customer is the first condition of an effective experience design for the customer (Yeşilot, 2019: 29-30). “Customer contact points” are created in the third stage. Customer interaction points constitute the time in which the customer interacts directly with the business or brand. Interaction points cover all the moments when consumers interact with a product, service, or business. The identification and design of consumer interaction points play a critical role in ensuring the quality of the experience (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 96). The fourth stage covers the “research of competitors”. This stage requires comparing competitors and analyzing market entry conditions to determine how competition affects the customer experience. It tries to increase brand awareness with product, service, quality, price, and promotion activities after competitor research and market structure are analyzed (Oskan, 2019: 54). The fifth stage of customer analysis consists of making investigations with “research methods”.

Creating an Experiential Platform

According to Aaker (1996), creating an experience platform is explained as a guide for subsequent applications. Experience design should arouse consumers' attention and align with the personality of the brand. Experiential platforming includes a multidimensional (sensory, emotional, relational, intellectual, and behavioural) description and the promise of experiential value that the customer expects from the product (Schmitt, 2011: 88-89).

The first stage of experiential platforming is “experiential positioning”. Experiential positioning means that the consumer designs with several promotional activities to create a better image with their current product compared to its competitors. Experiential positioning shows how the brand gains a place in the minds of customers (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 96). The second stage, “experiential value promise”, includes customers' expectations from the product or service. Experiential value is expressed as a functional brand promise that focuses on familiar product benefits (Oskan, 2019: 55). The third

stage is the “comprehensive theme”. According to Bostancı (2007), the theme is the summary of the main message and style to be used in the customer and product experience. The theme is the identity of the business and the brand, should be designed by considering the dimensions of education, entertainment, aesthetics, and escape experience that will appeal to the target customers selected with the most appropriate marketing communication (Tunç, 2017: 37).

Creating the Brand Experience

A brand experience design is made and presented to customers for interaction at this stage. This designed experience is specially transferred to the brand’s identity, packaging, websites, and all its physical elements. The verbal messages presented by the experiential design and the visual elements complement each other in this way (Schmitt, 2011: 89-90). Schmitt (2003) has some suggestions to create and manage experiential brands. These suggestions are as follows (Aracı, 2016: 36):

- Creating and surprising in the strategic planning process of experiences,
- Adding some hedonic features to the experience,
- Emphasizing the distinctive aspect of the brand from the others and gaining a place in the minds of the customers,
- Focusing on the consumption process rather than the product or service,
- Appealing to the customer’s five senses to create a holistic experience,
- Matching the brand with key elements such as excitement, passion, and dynamism.

Among the most important elements of experiential marketing are “product experience” and “brand identity”. The design and emotions related to the product should be presented together with the corporate brand identity elements. The product must have a unique logo, colour, and design for consumers. Because today’s consumers focus on the experience dimension rather than the tangible features or functional benefits of the product. Bringing experiential elements to the fore in product designs ensures stronger customer satisfaction for this reason (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 97). For example, Harley Davidson and Starbucks offer not only motorcycles and coffee but also experiences beyond the expectations of consumers (Aracı, 2016: 35).

Creating Customer Interaction

Establishing customer interaction means presenting the service quality expected by the customer accurately and effectively. The first stage of creating customer interaction is to design “style”. Style is a particular quality, form, and form of expression. Styles have functions such as creating an experience, brand awareness, and emotional effects for businesses, as well as revealing the difference between products and services. It is obtained from visual elements that are predominantly style, shape, and colours that create an aesthetic and increase brand awareness in terms of experiential marketing (Oskan, 2019: 57). The second stage is to create a “theme”. Themes reflect the business identity and image. A well-designed theme should attract attention, arouse interest, provide a competitive advantage, and have differentiating features from the products of other businesses (Yeşilot, 2019: 32). The third stage is the “analysis of the lifestyles” of consumers. Lifestyle is the main motive for many purchasing behaviours of consumers.

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The correct analysis of lifestyles is important for a better understanding of consumer behaviour in this respect (Tunç, 2017: 40).

The styles have many important functions in the creation of consumer interaction, such as creating brand awareness for businesses and leaving intellectual and emotional effects. It also contributes to revealing the originality of the products and to the consumers' classification of the products. The fact that the style creates an aesthetic in terms of marketing is because it presents visual elements in which shapes and colours are predominant. Styles must be presented together with the brand identity to be effective. The theme expresses the meaning of the brand identity and the image it reflects. A strong theme design should come to the fore in product appearance, brand identity, advertisements, and provide awareness (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 99).

Experiential Marketing Practices

Businesses have used experiential marketing strategies to be preferred by consumers in an intensely competitive environment since the beginning of the 2000s. Manufacturers benefit from marketing communication tools, while retailers benefit from factors such as store atmosphere, employees, and design. The online experiences offered by shopping malls in the traditional sense and e-commerce sites such as Amazon.com in the modern sense are shown among the application examples of experiential marketing (Varinli, 2012: 163). Brands that offer experiential marketing application examples such as Starbucks, IKEA, Nike Town, Disneyland, and Abercrombie & Fitch are discussed in this section.

Starbucks

The first Starbucks store was established in Seattle in 1971. The name Starbucks was inspired by the "Moby-Dick" tale, which reflects the seafaring tradition of the first coffee merchants. In the 1980s, an American young man named Howard Schultz joined the Starbucks company. During these years, Howard Schultz experienced Italian coffee houses for the first time and made some attempts to bring the warmth of coffee culture to Starbucks. Growing rapidly after these years, Starbucks opened branches first in Chicago and Vancouver, and then in California, Washington, and New York. In the 1990s, it spread all over the world, including Japan and China. Acting with the mission of "to inspire and nurture the human spirit-one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time", Starbucks is currently the coffee shop with the largest market in the world (Starbucks, 2022). Starbucks is one of the most important examples of experiential marketing.

The success of Starbucks as a coffee chain is based on five critical principles. These principles are quite simple and result-oriented to reflect on the Starbucks experience. These principles are (i) adopting; (ii) caring about everything; (iii) being surprised and delighted; (iv) embracing the resistance; (v) leaving a mark on the minds. These principles constitute the corporate culture of Starbucks (Güney & Sarper, 2015: 144). Starbucks has used the motto "live coffee" to create its brand image. This indicates the company's efforts to keep the coffee culture alive in the world. Starbucks focused on three main components to create its experiential brand strategy. First, it has worked directly with manufacturers and suppliers to ensure they offer the best quality coffee in the world. Second, it has trained its employees to inspire customers with their experiences. For example, Starbucks employees recognize their customers' favorite beverages. Third, it is the atmosphere that makes customers revisit the store. Starbucks has also

created socializing environments for those who want to come with their families or friends, providing resting areas for those who want to stay longer (Alsitrawi, 2016: 306).

Starbucks has a policy aimed at the active involvement of its customers in product development. Starbucks uses social media effectively and receives feedback from its customers. This feedback is considered and ensures that the product innovations are adopted by the consumers. Thanks to the “My Starbucks Idea” website of Starbucks, customers can share their experiences. For example, with the feedback received on this platform, the Starbucks brand introduced a new product called “Sugar-Free Chai Tea Latte” to its consumers in 2008. In addition to product innovations, Starbucks has also made some innovations to improve customers’ experiences. For example, it closely monitors its customers with loyalty cards. So, customers could purchase free coffee. Similarly, it is aiming to create a warm bond between customers and employees by writing the names of people on coffee (Güney & Sarper, 2015: 146-147).

Ikea

IKEA was founded in 1943 by Ingvar Kamprad. IKEA is a Swedish company that designs furniture, kitchen, and home accessories. IKEA, the world’s most widespread furniture chain, operates with 225,000 co-workers. IKEA retail sales reached 41.9 million euros in 2022. Even as most stores re-opened, online platforms were clicked by 5 billion consumers worldwide by 2022 (IKEA, 2022).

Having a wide range of products, IKEA is positioned as functional and low-priced. IKEA’s vision is to “create a better daily life for people”. The concept and design of IKEA stores are almost the same in all stores. There are “furniture”, “space display” and “restaurant” areas on the upper floor while there is a “children’s playground” and a “cinema” on the ground floor, there are also home accessories, self-service furniture areas, kiosks, and markets in the store. IKEA stores ensure that consumers always find themselves in a home concept. It is aimed that consumers imagine the relevant furniture and designs and associate them with their homes when it comes to the display sections exhibited with different concepts. It is aimed to keep families in the store all day with the restaurant and playground. IKEA’s free “kids paradise” section is designed to both attract consumers to the store and make things easier for parents who are shopping. Customers collect their trays after eating in the restaurant. Customers have a safe and peaceful shopping experience by assuming joint responsibility with IKEA. IKEA strives to differentiate the customer experience in all areas. For example, IKEA allows customers to assemble their furniture with the “do it yourself” service. It offers an instructive experience in improving the creativity and problem-solving skills of its customers in this way. The pragmatic component of the experience is further enhanced by the layout of the store and easy access to information. IKEA uses maps showing the direction of merchandise at many different points on the ground floor. The narrow aisle of the store is one-way and always forward. IKEA has also a single entry and exit door. Customers are asked to follow the store product aisle by deliberately reducing the exit doors. Therefore, it is aimed that customers visit all the departments in the store and increase their consumption. IKEA’s furniture designs are kept in flat boxes that fit easily into any vehicle. IKEA customers will not have any space problems during transportation and will be able to shop more with this smart packaging (Kulapa, 2016: 83-87).

Ingvar Kamprad has developed a concept called “democratic design”. This design by Kamprad has its origins in an ideal of poor farming communities in Smaland, Sweden. He asked himself, “Why does well-designed furniture always have to be so expensive?” while developing this concept. He has developed IKEA furniture with functionality and a low price that most people can afford it. The democratic design stands for form, functionality, and low price. IKEA’s potential target customers in the UK consisted

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of 60% traditionalists, 30% innovative, and 10% indecisive in 1997. IKEA's marketing strategy was to encourage 30% of the market to like more and 10% to decide. It has been determined that the obstacles in front of this are the stereotypical styles and antiques of the target customer. Therefore, an advertising campaign was launched by IKEA such as "leave your old style". It has been tried to give customers a more "modern" identity that will change the homes of England in this way. The campaign had the desired effect and IKEA became a fashion icon that reached the homes and private lives of British people. IKEA carries out the "price design" before designing any product. Analyzing the cost of the product ensures that the relevant product is affordable to the target customer. IKEA designers are involved in the production process to achieve the most affordable price tag. The doors made by a manufacturer in Poland are primarily converted into a table in a horizontal plane. The resulting "on-chassis" structure corresponded to only 30% of the energy and materials required to manufacture the tables after a few processes. This product, which is easy to pack, light, and environmentally friendly, has taken its place in IKEA stores. IKEA established a "code of conduct" for the manufacture of its products in the 2000s (Edvardsson et al., 2006: 235-239). It can be stated that IKEA's success in today's customer experience management is not a coincidence and has a deep-rooted marketing strategy based on this information.

Nike Town

NIKE Inc was founded in 1964 in Oregon, the USA by Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman. The product groups of the NIKE brand consist of sports shoes, clothing, equipment, and accessories. Nike, which manufactures products for men, women, and children, sells related product groups in retail stores and e-commerce platforms around the world. NIKE has many stores in the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Africa, and Europe. The company reported revenues of \$44,538 million for the fiscal year ended May 2021, an increase of 19.1% over 2020 ([Marketline, 2022a: 1](#)).

The main strength of the brand is marketing, design, technology, and the identification of famous athletes with the brand. It was a trinity with the combination of its famous slogan "Just Do It!", its famous idol "Michael Jordan" and its product "Jordan Air" in the mid-1980s. The "Just do it!" slogan is a good example of the brand's approach to physical experience. It creates change in lifestyles and behaviours through well-known and famous people. Nike motivates its customers, inspires them to be famous athletes, and impresses them emotionally. Nike has taken everyone as a target customer whose mission is to "inspire every athlete in the world and create innovation" and defines the athlete as "if you have a body, you are an athlete". Nike stores offer the best examples of experiential marketing. Sports equipment, clothing products, and accessories are presented on different floors with different experience options in the Nike Town stores. The showcases, revolving doors, and turnstiles of Nike Town stores invite people in. Different sports events are shown in synchronization from huge screens, accompanied by dim lighting and music in the store. The victories of famous athletes, their proud, faithful, determined, and courageous stances, and team spirit are emphasized with professionally prepared advertisement productions. Nike Town has become the stage of the brand with its experiential shopping areas, unique themes, multimedia animations, and dramatic lighting. Nike Town uses such display elements to tell a story. Nike Town's exterior and showcases are consistent with its main theme. The successes of famous athletes with business partnerships are reflected in their showcases with a heroic style. Therefore, the attention and interest of customers are directed directly to these points. Customers put themselves in the shoes of famous athletes and identify with them. Special spaces have also been created to experience the products. For example, a person who wants to buy basketball shoes feels like she/he is on a basket-

ball court, while another person who wants to buy running shoes feels like himself on an athletics track (Pekpostalcı, 2015: 190-207).

Disneyland

Disneyland is the first theme park in the world and was founded by Walt Disney in California in 1955. The Disneyland theme park is also described by Robert Venturi as a “symbolic American utopia” (McCarthy et al., 2018: 445). Known as the multi-land park, themes of Disneyland have originated from extensive playgrounds throughout history alongside the waterfront amusement parks of the early 20th century (McCarthy, 2022: 253). Disneyland’s primary goal is to provide a safe, clean, aesthetically appealing, and creative recreational facility for all family members. The experiences of products and customers offered at Disneyland parks have commodified Disney’s stories and characters. Disneyland was a huge success and reached 1 million visitors right after its establishment. As of 2018, the global revenue of Disneyland parks increased by 10% to reach 20.3 billion (Luo et al., 2020: 273).

Walt Disney stated that traditional amusement parks are dirty, seedy, boring, and unimaginative. Therefore, he created his theme park “Disneyland”. Walt Disney’s primary goal is to design a space where the older generation can recall the nostalgia of the past and the younger generation can enjoy the challenge of the future. Walt Disney aimed to enable visitors to escape from their ordinary daily lives with pleasant experiences and fantasies. Disneyland offers an extraordinary atmosphere, where the history and achievements of America are covered, promising to break away from the realities of life. Disneyland employees are committed and consistent with their duties and roles. The understanding and structure in Disneyland parks also support this. Therefore, staff should always smile and appear to be having fun. Disneyland employees are classified as “actors”, “onstage” and “backstage” staff. This classification of Disneyland is a metaphor for a kind of theatrical performance. These performances are achieved through emotional labor at Disneyland. Emotional labor is offered by a group of employees who are highly committed to Disneyland. Disneyland uses “hybrid consumption” extensively by accessing various venues and recreation options within the borders of a holiday destination to maximize its product appeal (Akifoğlu, 2016: 21-29).

Abercrombie & Fitch

Founded in 1892 by David T. Abercrombie in New York, the name of the company was changed to Abercrombie & Fitch in the 1990s, after Ezra Fitch bought a stake in the company. Abercrombie & Fitch is a specialty retailer offering a wide range of apparel, accessories, and personal care products. The company’s product portfolio consists of knitted and woven shirts, fleece, sweaters, t-shirts, woven jeans, shorts, pajamas, dresses, underwear and outerwear products, personal care products, and accessories. Abercrombie & Fitch, which also sells its products through e-commerce sites, stores, franchises, and license agreements, carries out its commercial activities mainly in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The company reported revenues of \$3,125.4 million for the fiscal year ended January 2021, a decrease of 13.7% over 2020 (Marketline, 2022b: 1).

A&F is one of the most popular clothing brands among the young generation who follow fashion in America. The more indispensable the bond is the more private, personal, and sincere the experience. The experience has a high “story value” and adds “explanatory value” to it. The experience of consumers with the brand becomes a part of their social identity. A&F stores provide memorable experiences

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with magnificent visuals, light, music, and the use of live models. Tall and handsome mannequins greet customers, and customers can have their photos taken with these people at the entrance of the store. Although these people are salespeople, they create a perception as if they are celebrities. The music in the store is in the concept of a nightclub, the lights are dim and the smell in the store creates a unique awareness (Yaman & Zerenler, 2018: 113-115). A&F company offers its customers a unique experience.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In sales and market-oriented development of marketing, the needs of consumers have also differentiated along with the production. Consumers focused only on the functional features of the product during the period of a production-oriented marketing approach. Consumers focus on the sense of pleasure, symbolic value, and, benefit rather than the functional benefit of the product with a market-oriented understanding. Consumers, whose accessibility to products of all types and quality has increased, now expect much more from the product with the development of world economies.

The solution to this situation is through the experiential marketing approach. The way to please consumers is to sell the experience to them. The focus of experiential marketing is customer experiences. Experiential marketing practitioners see products or services as part of the experience, rather than considering their characteristics. Businesses that successfully realize their experiential designs regarding this will inevitably be successful. The experiential marketing approach, which ensures that consumers' expectations and desires are no longer a problem, creates serious advantages for businesses to establish a healthier loyalty relationship with their customers. Therefore, the sustainability of businesses that focus on experience rather than being product-based will increase.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Marketing researchers should focus on more measurable brand promotions to increase brand and customer engagement. Experiences built on sensory, emotional, behavioural, intellectual, and relational dimensions not only increase brand and product promotion but also create a significant level of interaction with customers. Product and brand promotions, carried out by offering a unique experience to customers, also leave a lasting impression in the minds of consumers and arouse sympathy. Therefore, customers need to reconnect with the relevant brand, develop loyalty and encourage them to buy.

Examples are given on the effect of experiential marketing practices related to brands on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in this study. Therefore, the theoretical background in the literature is presented by discussing this study. Empirical research can be conducted on brands such as Starbucks, IKEA, Disneyland, and Nike, which provide examples of experiential marketing in future research. The relationship between the experience factor and other variables can be investigated. The effect or relationship of experience on variables such as culture, aesthetics, and gender can also be examined.

CONCLUSION

The dynamism of consumption habits has also increased with digitalization. Consumers are constantly interacting with each other with the easy accessibility brought by social media platforms. They are frequently exposed to the sharing and product promotions of phenomena that closely follow fashion trends. The measures taken also with the COVID-19 crisis in recent years have changed consumption habits. It can be said that consumption patterns change and develop much faster than in the past. Traditional marketing strategies have lagged in responding to changing consumer preferences instantly and satisfactorily on the other hand. Therefore, it is necessary to benefit from current marketing approaches.

It is also essential to approach it from a psychological perspective while approaching the concept of experience from a marketing perspective. Positive subjective experience emerges as an alternative method with its effect on individuals' psychological damage repairs and healing processes. Positive psychologists have developed two different approaches to achieving happiness hedonic and eudemonic. The hedonic approach emphasizes that happiness arises from experiencing sensory and pleasurable moments. The eudemonic approach states that happiness stems from living a meaningful life and engaging in meaningful activities on the other hand. The eudemonic path can be expressed as the search for permanent meaning leading to happiness while the hedonic path is related to the pleasurable elements in the lives of consumers (Schmitt, 2011: 98). Therefore, it can be said that experiential marketing is an important tool for creating lasting happiness and satisfaction by influencing consumers' sense of pleasure. Zaran-tonello et al. (2011)'s research on experience, happiness, and quality of life also supports this argument. It has been observed that consumers are very happy when they consciously focus on their consumption experiences according to the results of this research. It has been determined that the level of experience of consumers is also related to happiness and perceived quality of life within the scope of this research. It has been found that consumers prefer "being" rather than "having" to according to it. Consumers have also determined that time contributes to happiness rather than money (Schmitt, 2011: 98-99). Therefore, providing much more than coffee (friendly approach, sincerity, value, comfort, and comfort) like Starbucks or entertaining the consumers with themes that will distract them from the mundaneness of life like Disneyland are situations that will provide satisfaction.

The main purpose of businesses is to have a sustainable structure. Therefore, it is necessary to gain satisfied and loyal customers with long-term customer value management. Businesses that know their customers' consumption habits well, gain a permanent place in the minds of their customers with the right experience designs. Brakus et al. (2009), the argument that long-term customer experiences occupy a positive place in customers' memory also supports this situation. Similarly, Arnold and Reynold (2003), purchasing processes related to experiences make people feel emotions such as escape and excitement, and they state that individuals acquire positive emotions such as satisfaction. Pine and Gilmore (2000) have revealed the 3S model (satisfaction, sacrifice, surprise) to increase customer experience. This model speaks of the necessity of surprising customers by creating experiences that exceed their expectations to create satisfaction. Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are directly related. Customer loyalty, which has a critical role in affecting the profitability of businesses, is the strongest way to develop a continuous purchasing relationship with any brand or business. Considering the cost of acquiring a new customer, also retaining existing customers seems to be the most rational option. Satisfied and loyal customers can be gained with experience designs that understand and value the emotions of customers.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Customer Experience Management: Means the design of the level and quality of interaction between the business and the customer. This interaction is a process that starts before the purchase and continues until after the purchase.

Customer Loyalty: An individual's continuous purchasing relationship with any brand and business. Customer loyalty affects the profitability of businesses.

Customer Satisfaction: Means the level of meeting the benefits and expectations of consumers regarding a product or service. It has a major role for businesses to have a sustainable life.

Experiential Marketing: To realize the features of products and services with a presentation that activates the senses of the consumers. The most effective way to design a product, service, brand, or business experience is to appeal to consumers' senses.

Experiential Marketing Dimensions: Can be expressed as "sensory", "emotional", "intellectual", "behavioural" and "relational" about a product, service, brand, or business. The most effective way to design experiences is to take advantage of experiential marketing dimensions.


Chapter 9

Flow Experience in Tourism Activities

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ABSTRACT

Since tourism is an experience-intensive field, the experiences offered by tourism activities to individuals are very important. Understanding the psychological processes underlying the experiences of the individuals is essential for the effectiveness of tourism activities. An important phenomenon that explains the internal processes experienced by individuals in tourism activities is the flow experience originating from positive psychology. Flow experience is the individual's intense focus on the activity he/she is performing with his/her own inner will, without any external reward, and integrates with the activity by being isolated from the environment. Also, the flow experience can be expressed as an internal process that includes losing the perception of time and feeling happiness. Today, some research shows that the flow experience can be experienced in many areas of daily life and tourism activities. In this chapter, the flow experience has been discussed with its various dimensions, and evaluations have been made in the context of examples of some tourism activities.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry today is built on experiences beyond goods and services. With a famous expression in the field of tourism, “Tourism destinations are seen as theaters where experiences take place, and tourists are actors performing in these theaters” and tourism experience is evaluated as a unique concept arising from this relationship (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003: 41). Therefore, today, touristic products are in a transformation towards experiences, and experiences as “can be remembered after they happen” (Kim et al., 2012: 13), towards unforgettable tourism experiences (Kırtıl, 2019: 1).

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Flow Experience in Tourism Activities

It is of great importance to understand the changing and increasing tourism activities and different travel motivation trends over time, determine the strategies related to touristic activities and touristic products related to them, and decide on their production and marketing. Thus, depending on the changes in the motivations of the tourists and the trends have experienced, it is possible to determine the consumer needs and desires and to predict the most important issues in the creation of touristic offers for them (Mahika, 2011: 15). So, since touristic activities are experiences-based activities, the factors affecting the experience and the results depending on the experience are considered important. Especially recently, the concept of experience, which is accepted as a more competitive advantage than price, product features, product core benefits, or quality, has attracted increasing attention in the different disciplines (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020: 1) as well as in tourism (for example, Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017; De Freitas Coelho et al., 2018, Kim, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Wong et al., 2020; Wyatt et al., 2021).

Today's consumers are in search of experiences that "activate their emotions", "include them in the process", "touch the hearts" and "awaken the mind" beyond consuming to meet their needs (Hosany & Witham, 2009: 4). Consumers in search of unique, extraordinary, and memorable experiences are willing to participate in activities that can provide them with these experiences (Ayazlar, 2015: 32). Tourists are in search of unforgettable tourism experiences (Scott et al., 2017) that encourage emotional engagement (Michalkó et al., 2015) and increase satisfaction (Kim, 2018). Also, creating unforgettable experiences requires understanding the mental processes that occur during a tourism experience, including many external factors (Knobloch et al., 2017; Skavronskaya et al., 2020: 1). Among these mental processes, one of the most important phenomena that can be considered in the context of activities and one of the concepts that clarify the psychological state of individuals during experiences is a mental process called "flow experience".

Flow experience, which has its origins in Maslow's peak experience studies in the 1960s, has developed and conceptualized by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the 1970s. It is a research area that is currently included in positive psychology. Flow experience is also referred to as "optimal experience" or "autotelic experience". It is also expressed as "The Science of Happiness" by the developer of the theory, Csikszentmihalyi (1975) (Csikszentmihalyi, 2018). Since 1975, flow experience research has been and continues to be discussed in many areas of human life, from sports to art, from education to working life (Turan, 2019: 181-182).

According to flow experience, when individuals participate in an activity, they tend to find it enjoyable and intrinsically rewarding. Whatever the main motivation behind playing chess, dancing, playing a musical instrument, or going out with a friend, the individual will not continue to engage in this activity or repeat it later, unless such activities are fun, enjoyable, or people are motivated by extrinsic rewards (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2014: 233). Considering that the main purpose of tourists is to seek beautiful, enjoyable, and unforgettable experiences (Song et al., 2015: 401; Çeşmeci & Koçak, 2020: 382), the flow experience is examined in the context of touristic activities to obtain positive results.

Therefore, in this chapter, considering that individuals encounter flow experience in various tourism activities, it is aimed to examine the subject by giving examples from various tourism activities. The possibility of benefiting from the flow experience in increasing the pleasure and satisfaction of tourism activities is discussed.

BACKGROUND

Many of the psychology-based theories of the tourism discipline, which aim to explain various human attitudes and behaviors, are based on behavioral or socio-psychological subfields. The cognitive psychology sub-field, which aims to examine various mental processes such as how people think, feel, learn, decide, and remember, makes important contributions, especially to the conceptual development of these processes that form the basis of touristic experiences (Skavronskaya et al., 2017; Skavronskaya et al., 2020: 1-2). Also, Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) make some efforts to develop a new science of positive psychology that includes human development, happiness, perfection, and optimal human functioning. In addition to these efforts, the emergence of this science of positive psychology as a newer and more interesting field indicates that it creates an important field of interaction in the context of tourism. An increasing number of studies in the tourism literature have linked travel experiences and touristic experiences with positive psychological outcomes using the lens of positive psychology (Filep & Deery, 2010; Coghlan, 2015; Filo & Coghlan, 2016; Nawijn, 2016; Filep, et al., 2017; Zambianchi, 2017; Filep & Laing, 2018; Garcês et al., 2018; Chen & Yoon, 2019). For example, it has been reported that people are happier when they are on vacation than at home (Filep, 2008) and they perceive vacations as an escape from their daily responsibilities at work (Pearce, 2009). These examples show that positive psychological concepts can be useful in studies and evaluations related to tourism (Vada, 2020: 1).

There are several theories used to explain the relationship between leisure activities and happiness in tourism. Flow theory associated with intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) is categorized as one of many types of intrinsic motivation theory. Intrinsic motivation refers to the inner motivation of the individual without any external reward. Here, the main factor in the action of the individual is his inner motivation. When people are extrinsically motivated, they engage in activities for extrinsic reasons such as obtaining a benefit or receiving a reward, whereas when it comes to intrinsic motivation, people are involved in an activity because they are interested and enjoy the activity (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Moore, 2013: 36). As a result, the action that takes place is done by the individual's inner desire. This also applies to tourism activities. Because individuals participate in various tourism activities in line with their own internal goals and wishes. Thus, it is possible to say that such activities originate from intrinsic motivation. The state of pleasure and happiness that an individual gets from the activity that he/she performs with his/her own will and will point to the concept of flow experience. Flow experience is a mental event related to a person performing an activity with a focus full of attention and energy, and a feeling of pleasure and happiness from the activity process (Liu, 2013: 69). The concept of flow experience has been defined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2000: 381), the developer of the concept of flow experience, as "the optimal state of experience that people report when they are intensely involved in doing something fun to do".

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Flow Experience

Flow experience is a theory of psychology that has been studied within the field of positive psychology. Positive psychology is a holistic term that examines various positive psychological structures such as positive emotions, positive internal processes, and positive characteristics (Seligman et al., 2005: 410).

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Because of this holism, flow experience focuses on the positive internal processes that individuals experience during activities.

Flow experience is a theory that Hungarian-American psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi developed to explain the psychological state an individual is in regarding an action he is performing and explained in his work “Beyond Boredom and Anxiety” in 1975.

Csikszentmihalyi observed that people’s approaches to life differed from each other as a result of the fact that people suffered great material and moral damage due to the war during the difficult processes of the Second World War. He observed that some people are in great despair because they have lost everything and that some people can be happy in some way despite everything that has happened. Csikszentmihalyi, who has a great curiosity about the sources of power that distinguish these individuals from others, has devoted a large part of his life to researching the origin of happiness with positive psychology (Henshon, 2019: 153-155). “Autotelic experience” or “optimal experience” means that people do something for their good, their wishes, without any reward at the end. It has a research history of approximately 50 years with a series of studies carried out with these concepts.

In his work, Csikszentmihalyi attributed the origin of this optimal experience structure to a psychological framework that recognizes the importance of intrinsic motivation. He further explained that the structure of optimal experience is based on Maslow’s (1968) concept of “peak experiences”, which is defined as the process of “self-actualization” obtained through unconventional rewards from intense and intrinsically motivating activities. Csikszentmihalyi’s work has also been heavily influenced by the constructs in which researchers such as Lepper and Greene (1978), Deci (1975), deCharms (1968) investigated intrinsic motivation behavior (Jones et al., 2003: 18). Even Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2005: 600) stated that flow is a theory based on intrinsic motivation because it emerges with an impulse arising from within the individual without any external reward.

Csikszentmihalyi, on the subject he is working on, “Why do people engage in receptive, difficult and often dangerous activities when they receive no visible external rewards?” seeks an answer to the question. For this purpose, a series of studies have been conducted, initially involving extensive interviews with hundreds of rock climbers, chess players, surgeons, athletes, and artists (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). The most basic conclusion that has emerged from these studies is that in all the various groups studied, respondents have experienced a very similar subjective experience, have reported high levels of enjoyment from it, and are willing to make a great effort to experience it again. During these interviews, the metaphor of “like a flowing river that is effortlessly glided over”, which the participants used to describe this activity they enjoyed, eventually led to the term “flow experience” for this phenomenon (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2014: 230).

The concept of flow experience has been defined as “a process, a state of consciousness, in which an individual concentrates all his attention on the action he is performing, gains control over it, and at that moment everything loses its importance except this action” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 4). It also means that an individual isolates himself from the environment to realize his goals, with the feeling that he is in control, by giving himself completely to the experience he has lived, without even realizing how time passes. Moreover, it is expressed as a mental process that includes a kind of happiness from this situation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 46). Flow experience, in its essence, immerses individuals in an activity to such an extent that they do not care about anything other than that activity. This experience in itself is so enjoyable that even if there is no reward at the end, individuals are willing to pay a great price just for taking part in that activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Berk et al., 2021: 487). Flow experience, in essence, means that individuals are so immersed in an activity that they don’t care about anything

other than that activity. This experience in itself is so enjoyable that even if there is no reward in return, individuals are willing to pay a great price just for taking part in that activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Berk et al., 2021: 487).

According to Csikszentmihalyi (2018: 19-20), individuals feel a kind of joy and pleasure when they feel responsible and in control of their actions. These moments, called optimum experiences, often occur when an individual's body and mind are challenged by a voluntary effort to achieve something difficult and worthwhile. For example, for a child, this moment may be to place with trembling hands the last piece of a tower that he has built higher than anything he has done before. Moreover, it can be a very difficult move for a dancer to keep up the dance, for a swimmer to break his record, or for a musician to master a complex piece of music while performing. Thus, flow experience is considered as a psychological state in which an individual feels cognitively productive, motivated, pleasant, focused, and happy at the same time (Moneta & Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 277).

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990: 42), flow makes an existing activity more enjoyable and meaningful. In the flow experience, the activity itself is experienced as a reward. In other words, individuals enjoy the activity not because they expect to gain social, economic, or other benefits from the activity, but because they do it because they want it, with a sincere impulse. It is possible, therefore, that the flow experience may be viewed as a particularly productive and pleasurable state of inner experience (which has led some authors to refer to it as optimal experience). Accordingly, the flow state can be characterized as an optimal experience state in which sensory, motor, cognitive and emotional processes are regulated not only in a way that facilitates the achievement of any ongoing task but also in a way that gives inner meaning while doing it (Te Brömmelstroet et al., 2021: 7-8). For this reason, being in the flow experience means strengthening the interaction of the individual with the activity he performs and at the same time providing an inner satisfaction from it.

The theory of flow experience focuses on the integration of individuals with the lived moment and the values they acquire in this way, regardless of the action they take (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002: 102). For this reason, the flow experience is considered as the individual experiencing the feelings of joy and creativity through his action and feeling that he is fully included in life. This intense feeling fosters cognitive development and provides suitable conditions for human activity to take its optimal form (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Experience, with these positive contributions it makes, not only makes actions and activities enjoyable and enjoyable but also makes an important contribution to the personal development and happiness of the individual (Kaya et al., 2015: 7).

Conditions and Dimensions of the Flow Experience

In the literature, flow experience proposes nine key characteristics: challenge-skill balance (balance between the challenge of the activity and personal skills), clear goals (the clear idea of what needs to be accomplished), feedback (clear and immediate feedback), concentration on the task at hand (focused attention), Integration (merger) of activity and awareness (involvement in the task; actions become automatic), sense of control (clear feeling of control), distortion (transformation) of time (altered perception of time; either speeding up or down), loss of self-consciousness (no concerns with appearance, focused only the activity), and autotelic experience (the activity is intrinsically rewarding) (Jackson & Marsh; 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Guo et al., 2012: 3; Ottiger et al., 2021: 2). While these are considered the basic features of the flow experience, three features (challenge-skill balance, clear goal, feedback) are considered as antecedents (or conditions) in the realization of flow. There is no obligation to meet

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these conditions to talk about flow experience, but when these are present, people are more likely to experience flow (Guo & Klein, 2009: 838). Others reflect the characteristics of the flow as dimensions. Each concept is briefly explained below:

Challenge-Skill Balance: The flow experience is a phenomenon expressed as a “balance” between high skills and high challenges related to the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Also, flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) suggests that activities involving the perception of high skills and high challenges will create intrinsic motivation, and participation in these activities will result in optimal experiences (Lambert et al., 2013: 397). Challenges inspire individuals to excel in various activities, win competitions and overcome obstacles, often motivate individuals to seek new ways to win, and ultimately reduce boredom. There must be a certain level of challenge for the flow to emerge. However, on the other hand, too much challenge in the activity and the challenge exceeding the individual’s ability can have the opposite effect. Such challenges, which are very difficult to overcome, will prevent individuals from being successful and winning, and ultimately increase their disappointment (Teng & Huang, 2012: 3). This will prevent it from entering the flow or cause it to exit the flow. That’s why finding a balance between skill and challenge is important to the flow experience.

Clear goal: Flow experience emerges when there a clear goal or target that the individual is trying to achieve (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 54). When certain goals motivate individuals to make an effort, the performance shown in the activity increases, and clear goals provide individuals with a direction in which they can use their efforts (Quinn, 2005: 617-618). In this sense, the flow experience can emerge when the goals are clear. Another important aspect of goal setting is that the individual has a belief that the goals are attainable. Otherwise, the individual will not make any attempt to achieve the goal. To be able to talk about the flow experience, it is expected that the individual will have a belief that he or she can achieve the goal or goals that he or she has set, together with the capacity and skills he or she has. If the person has this belief, he will also have a belief that he has control over his action (Yaşin, 2016: 58). In such a case, the flow experience will be possible.

Feedback: Flow occurs when an individual regulates their behavior by receiving instant feedback on how well they are doing with the activity in line with their goals. Therefore, the individual needs to receive feedback on his/her performance in the activity in direct proportion to the goals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 54-54). For example, a chess player’s goal is clear; checkmate his king before his opponent. With each move he makes, he can calculate whether he is approaching this target or not. A mountaineer’s goal is to reach the summit or complete the climb without falling, and he receives feedback that he is progressing towards his goal at every moment of the climb. The individual’s feedback for success adds pleasure and excitement to the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2018: 90-91). When the individual approaches his goal or comes to a will that he is progressing towards his goal, the activity gives him more pleasure and excitement internally.

Concentration (Focused Attention): Concentration or focused attention is the situation in which individuals mentally pay attention or focus on any activity for a certain period. The individual focuses heavily on the activity in which he is in the flow and gives his attention only to it. The duration of this concentration may differ from person to person, and it can be prolonged or shortened. The more the individual assimilates the activity, the more he will immerse himself in the activity and will intensely concentrate on the activity (Çabuk & Kuş, 2019: 263). Here, an individual in the flow is extremely focused on the activity he is in, and even in this deep focus, he cannot give the rest of his limited attention capacity to other things because he gives almost all or most of his attention to this activity.

Integration (Merger) of Activity and Awareness: Flow experience has been defined by Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi (2002: 102) as “an individual’s complete integration with him by losing his/her self-consciousness, regardless of the action he/she performs at that moment”. This definition emphasizes the concept of awareness about the flow experience, that is, the integration of the individual’s self with the activity. An individual in a state of flux identifies with the activity. In this dimension, the individual is fully immersed in the activity; that is, he begins to devote himself to the relevant activity and integrates with what he is doing (Procci et al., 2012: 2309). Furthermore, the person intensely identifies himself with the activity and what the activity entails. In this dimension, it is possible to say that the person focuses on how he is doing rather than what he is doing (Turan, 2019: 189-190).

The Sense of Control: The sense of control is expressed as a perceptual state of feeling that one’s actions are under his control in an activity (Koufaris, 2002: 208). The sense of control is among the main dimensions of flow experience, as it provides pleasure and concentration in an activity (Ghani & Deshpande, 1994: 382-387). In the flow experience, there is typically no worry of “losing control” as in many situations of normal life (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014: 231). The individual is aware that he can minimize the risks involved in the activity he is in, and therefore he does not have to worry about losing control. The belief that the individual has control over the activity he is in is an important factor in increasing the pleasure and entering the flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 59-62).

Time Distortion (Transformation): The distortion (transformation) of time is a perception that time passes faster or slower than normal depending on the activity (Guo & Poole, 2008: 1). During the flow experience, individuals feel as if they are isolated from time and lose track of the flowing time (Rau et al., 2006: 397). It also has a distorted sense of time. Being in a flowing activity distorts the perception that time moves on an orderly basis. So, hours pass like minutes, minutes like seconds, people express that time passes very quickly. But sometimes the opposite can also happen. For example, a difficult turning movement that takes about a second for a dancer may seem like minutes (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 66; Csikszentmihalyi, 2018: 106-107). For example, for an athlete who has immersed himself in the action, if his team is defeated, the last minutes of the match may seem like it goes by very quickly as there is an opportunity to score and draw. Contrary to this situation, when they are victorious, these last minutes may seem like they are not going away as the competition is wanted to end as soon as possible under the pressure of the opponent. In both situations, there is a loss of time perception.

Loss of Self-Consciousness: In general, people tend to monitor their appearance and behavior by social norms, cultures, and expectations of others and shape and defend themselves accordingly. Also, being heavily immersed in a particular activity removes these worries. In other words, all other irrelevant thoughts will disappear while performing the activity (Chen et al., 1999). Because each individual’s consciousness has a limit, the individual will not be able to have a wide consciousness enough to pay attention to other thoughts while inactivity. Loss of self-consciousness can be defined as a loss of sense of self and isolation from the surrounding world. Thus, the person will not be able to notice the changes in his environment while he is inactivity, and will not be aware of what is happening around him (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Guo et al., 2012: 5). At the moment of flow, the individual does not have the consciousness to think about the problems of daily life, the bills to be paid, and the aquarium fish that need to be fed. In this sense, the flow experience contains pleasure in itself, as it distracts the individual from the problems and responsibilities of daily life.

Autotelic Experience: Autotelic experience is the result of an activity or a situation that creates its intrinsic motivation, reward, or incentive, without external factors, goals, or rewards (Faiola et al., 2013: 2). Self-sufficient means an activity with no expectation of benefit and its only reward in itself.

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In autotelic experience, the activity has a specific purpose and has an intrinsically rewarding feature (Csikszentmihalyi, 2018: 107-109). In such a case, the pleasure of the activity creates motivation in itself, and this motivated situation also increases the pleasure from the activity (Chen, 2006: 223). A summary of the general characteristics of the flow experience across all these premises and dimensions is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. General characteristics of flow experience in terms of preconditions and dimensions

	Construct	Type of Construct	Definition
1	Challenge-skill balance	Precondition	"A balance between the challenges perceived and the skills a person brings to" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988)
2	Clear goal	Precondition	"The activity must have relatively clear goals." (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988)
3	Feedback	Precondition	"Provide rather quick and unambiguous feedback" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988)
4	Concentration (Focused attention)	Dimension	"Concentration on the task at hand" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 58)
5	Integration (merger) of activity and awareness	Dimension	"Individuals become so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous, almost automatic; they cease to be aware of themselves apart from their actions." (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 53)
6	Sense of control	Dimension	"There is a sense that the results of the activity are in principle under one's control." (Csikszentmihalyi 1988)
7	Time distortion (transformation)	Dimension	"Distorted sense of time" (Csikszentmihalyi 1988), "The transformation of time", "Time no longer seems to pass the way it ordinarily does (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 66)
8	Loss of self-consciousness	Dimension	"There is not enough attention left to allow the individual to think about the past, the future, or other environmental stimuli unrelated to the activity" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 61)
9	Autotelic experience	Outcome/ Dimension	"The key element of an optimal experience is that it is an end in itself." (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 67)

Source: Guo (2004: 14)

Although the flow experience is mostly expressed by the nine key characteristics discussed above, today, many years after the emergence of the flow concept, there is still no consensus on how to make it operational (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2008: 30). Discussions on the dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of flow experience continue due to its multifaceted and comprehensive related structures (Ettis, 2017: 45). Dimensions can be handled in different ways according to the type and structure of the activity. However, the presence of these properties is not an absolute condition for the realization of a flow state. Also, it is not necessary to meet all these dimensions/premises for the flow experience to emerge (Cruz & Uresti, 2017: 12). On the other hand, all dimensions don't need to occur simultaneously for the flow experience to occur. Novak et al. (2000), the realization of at least one of the dimensions that may differ from context to context can be sufficient for flow experience (Özkara, 2015: 60).

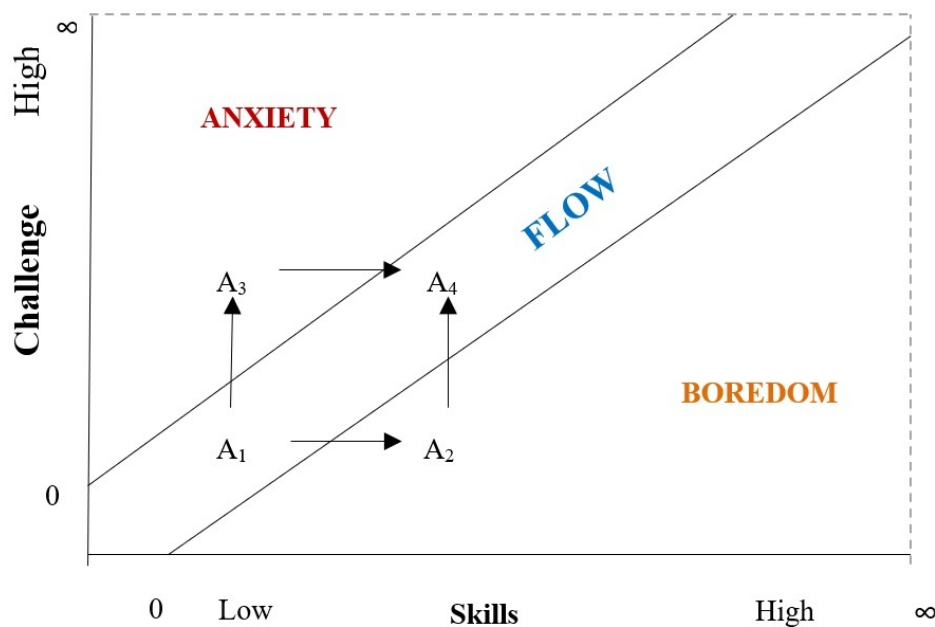
Models Explaining the Flow Experience

Flow models are related to Csikszentmihalyi's flow approach, which is considered according to the balance of skill and difficulty. These models consider all possible combinations of low or high skills and difficulties. Underneath all flow models, skill and difficulty play a central role as predictors of flow (Yung, 1997: 2). Therefore, the models developed to explain the flow experience are based on the balance between the skill (competence) of an individual to perform the activity and the level of difficulty (challenge) of the activity. Among these models, the flow experience is described in a channel, and these models are expressed as three-channel, four-channel and eight-channel models.

The three-channel model has the first to be proposed regarding the flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). In the three-channel model, flow occurs when the difficulty of the activity performed by the individual and the skill of the individual regarding this activity is in balance (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Early three-channel flow model

Source: Csikszentmihalyi (1990: 74)



As seen in Figure 1, if the activity is difficult but the skill of the individual is not sufficient, anxiety tension will arise. When the individual can provide the necessary skill in the face of the difficulty of the activity, the individual will go back into the flow. If the activity difficulty is low and the individual's skill is high, boredom will occur. Since the individual will not be satisfied with anxiety or boredom, the individual will try to enter the flow channel (Csikszentmihalyi, 2018: 118-119).

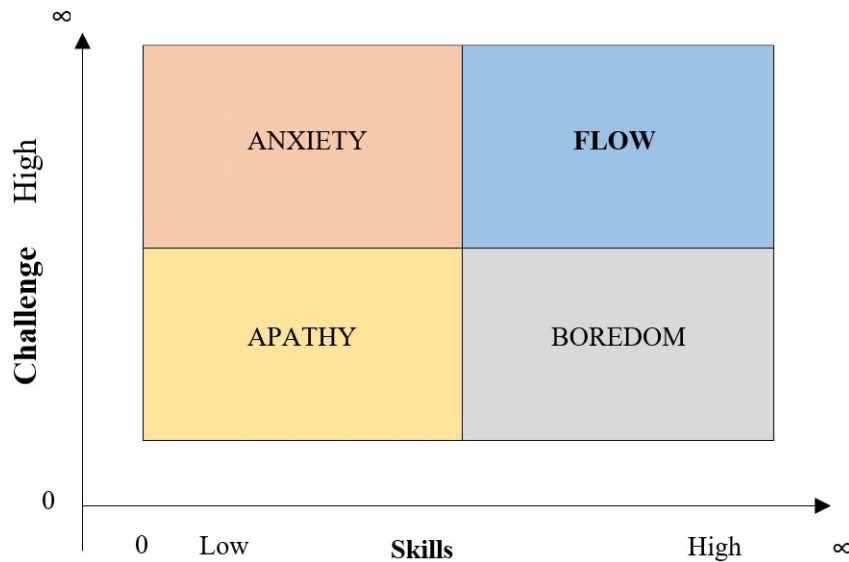
The four-channel flow model (Figure 2), created by adding one more factor to the three-channel flow experience model, functionalized the flow experience within the framework of four separate channels. Accordingly, (1) flow will occur when the difficulty skill is above the individual's average, (2) anxiety will arise when the difficulty level is above the skill level, (3) when the skill level is high but the diffi-

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culty level is insufficient, boredom will occur, (4) when both difficulty and skill are below the average, apathy will emerge (Jones et al., 2003: 19).

Figure 2. Four-channel flow model

Source: Novak et al. (1997: 2)

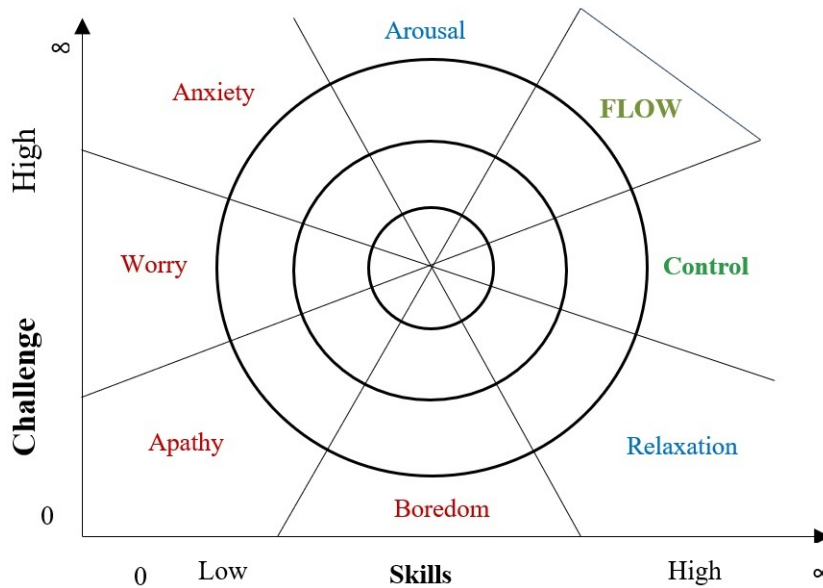


As can be seen in Figure 2, if the difficulty level is higher than the skill level, individuals may worry because they cannot fulfill the task in the activity. When the difficulty level is lower than the skill level and a small effort is required to perform a task, the individual may feel bored. If the skill level and difficulty level are extremely low, the person may feel indifferent. The flow will occur only when a difficult task is in balance with one's skill; this indicates a situation where both skills and difficulties are high (Obadá, 2013: 553). In other words, the flow will be effective at the junction of high difficulty and high skill levels.

In the four-channel flow model, unlike the three-channel model, there is the "apathy" channel. Apathy stems from achieving a lower degree of success or from a lack of interest in certain activities. Feelings of apathy and unwillingness lead to an inability to concentrate enough on a particular activity. Therefore, the individual who does not have sufficient skill level will not be able to achieve success in the activity. So, the individual becomes apathetic to the activity or may refrain from participating in this activity (Teng & Huang, 2012: 1). As a result, it will lead to divergence from the flow.

Unlike previous models, as an extension of the four-channel model, Massimini & Carli (1988) proposed a more complex and advanced model of the advanced experience. In the eight-channel model, eight different situations occur according to skill and difficulty level, and the flow experience will only emerge when high difficulty and high skill are balanced (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Eight-channel flow model
 Source: Massimini & Carli (1988)



As seen in Figure 3, in addition to the four-channel model, there are also arousal, worry, control, and relaxation factors. These are intermediate levels. In the eight-channel model, it is seen that the perceptual state of the individual regarding the activity is formed according to the difficulty-skill balance, as in the previous models. Also, it is seen that the flow situation occurs at the level where high difficulty and high skill are combined. Flow experience can be observed in any activity where this situation is experienced.

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The emergence of flow experience in a variety of activities has been documented in a wide range of populations. In 1975, Csikszentmihalyi was able to study and determine the existence of flow experience in various groups, including surgeons, chess masters, composers, rock climbers, dancers, and basketball players (Rich, 2013: 48).

Flow experiences appear relatively few in daily life, but almost everything can create a flow experience with the fulfillment of certain conditions (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2014: 232). An activity in which the conditions that produce the flow experience can be combined can be an activity in which flow can be experienced, and not necessarily just physical activities. Csikszentmihalyi (1975: 36) stated that the flow experience is an experience that can occur not only in physical activities but also in many different activities. Flow can also occur in situations such as art, hobby activities, sports activities, mountain climbing, rafting, chess and leisure activities, competitions, reading, learning, or doing a job or task (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

Since flow experience is associated with elements such as motivation, high performance, peak experience, and enjoyment, it has been further investigated in various research areas, mostly sports, educational science, and gaming (Ottiger et al., 2021: 2). In the past, flow experience has been studied within the scope of activities such as daily life activities, sports activities, peak experiences, and games, but today

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it has been studied in areas such as education-learning activities. Moreover, nowadays, human-computer interaction has also been studied in the fields of internet activities, tourism activities, and consumer behavior. Today, it is known that the occurrence of flow is not specific to some unique activity types, and individuals can experience flow in the right conditions while performing almost any type of activity (Mahnke et al., 2015: 56).

Various studies show that flow experience can occur in many fields and many different activities. Studies on activities in which flow experience emerges are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of activities to experience flow

Activity	Source
Dancing	Hefferon & Ollis, 2006; Douse, 2017; Bernardi et al., 2018
Education and learning	Bakker, 2005; Giasirani & Sofos, 2017; Yoo & Kim, 2018; Kiili et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2021
Extreme sports	Hwang et al., 2014; Sidorová, 2015; Chang, 2017
Meditation	Delle Fave et al., 2011; Tseng & Shen, 2014
Music	Diaz, 2013; Wrigley & Emmerson, 2013; Valenzuela & Codina, 2014; Clementson, 2019; Abiodun, 2021; Cohen & Bodner, 2021
Online shopping	Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000; Novak et al., 2000; Koufaris, 2002; Skadberg & Kimmel, 2004; Lee ve Wu, 2017; Özkara et al., 2017; Temel, 2021
Reading	McQuillan & Conde 1996; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; van Peer et al., 2019
Smartphone usage	Kim & Han, 2014; Leung, 2020; Marty-Dugas & Smilek, 2020; Pearson et al., 2021
Sports	Jackson, 1996; Stavrou & Zervas, 2004; Schüler & Brunner, 2009; Scott-Hamilton et al., 2016; Koror & Alpullu, 2020; Stoll & Ufer, 2021
Theatre	Martin & Cutler, 2002; Demirutku & Ağaoglu, 2018
Tourism and holiday	Boniface, 2000; Cheng ve Lu, 2015; Chen et al., 2017; Ayazlar & Yüksek, 2018; Kim & Thapa, 2018; Karasakal, 2020; Sijinjak et al., 2021
Video Games	Chen, 2007; Cowley et al., 2008; Thin et al., 2011; Klasen et al., 2012; Sanjamsai & Phukao, 2018
Work	Fullagar & Kelloway, 2009; Kuo & Ho, 2010; Maeran & Cangiano, 2013; Akçakanat et al., 2019; Müceldili et al., 2019
Yoga	Phillips, 2005; Tyagi et al., 2016

Source: Developed by the author in line with the research papers in the literature

As seen in Table 2, the flow appears with many activities in daily life. However, although the flow experience can occur in almost any activity, some activities may be more adaptive to the experience. For example, activities that motivate and delight individuals such as many games (Csikszentmihalyi 1975) and sports (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi 1999) are more important for the flow experience (Rich, 2013: 48). Csikszentmihalyi (1988: 1990) stated that flow experience is generally more easily experienced in autotelic activities that include elements of adventure and rewards in themselves and are not based on external material incentives (Jones et al., 2003: 18). It is possible to consider many of the activities within the framework of tourism within this scope.

Tourists are individuals who aim to participate in various activities according to destinations to spend their leisure time and holidays most efficiently and thus to spend their holidays in the best way (Karasakal,

2020: 64). Various events occurring during the trip or any feature of the external environment contribute to the construction of the tourist experience. Tourists are interested in or actively participate in certain events while traveling. Tourists collect memories by participating in these activities. Accordingly, tourist experiences are related to a planning process (individuals anticipate touristic events through expectations before the activity takes place), actually making the trip (events during the trip), performing the activity, and remembering these touristic events (Larsen, 2007: 8-9). In this context, the goals of tourists and the purposes of touristic activities provide an important basis for experiencing the flow experience. Examples of some of the tourism activities in which the flow can be experienced are presented below.

Leisure Time Activities

Leisure has been studied by Stebbins (1997), who is an important researcher on leisure time, by dividing it into two “ordinary leisure time” and “serious leisure time”. The concept of serious leisure is defined by Stebbins (1997: 117) as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobby-based or voluntary activity that participants find so important and interesting”. In this type of activity, individuals dedicate themselves to a career focused on acquiring and expressing their specific skills, knowledge, and experience. In a sense, serious leisure time includes individuals spending their leisure time with activities they are passionate about and committed to (Stebbins, 1992: 3; Jones, 2000: 284). A distinctive feature of serious leisure time is that there is a strong bond between the activity and the participant, and the activity now reflects the participant’s identity. Serious leisure time participants tend to talk about their activities with pride, and excitement and often in their conversations with other people (Stebbins, 1982; 2007; cited by Akyıldız, 2012: 50).

Since the flow is accepted as an optimal experience that integrates activity and the individual and contributes to the quality of life, the flow experience will likely occur in serious leisure environments (Lee & Payne, 2015: 163). It is possible to occur flow experience in various leisure activities such as sports activities such as skiing, ice hockey, basketball, mountain biking, and hobbies such as bird watching and fishing. Such activities require physical skills, often performed with mental acuity and relevant knowledge. The skill-difficulty balance and control components of the flow experience are quite evident in such activities. More generally, all amateur activities and physically active hobbies have the potential to create a full or partial flow experience (Stebbins, 2010: 22).

Although few studies are dealing with serious leisure activities and flow experience, some studies in the literature have revealed the existence of the flow experience. Stebbins (2001) stated that the flow experience occurs during leisure activities with a high level of intensity, involvement, and commitment. According to a similar argument, Havitz & Mannell (2005) revealed that the flow experience can easily occur if tourists give themselves to this activity (intensely involved) while performing leisure activities. Lee & Payne (2015) stated that people who participate in serious leisure activities that involve cognitive stimulation are more likely to experience higher flow levels. Mannell et al. (2005) suggested that leisure activities may reduce the chance of experiencing flow as they may not provide the necessary conditions for the challenge that is an antecedent of flow. However, they also stated that some leisure activities that require some skills to overcome certain difficulty levels offer a great opportunity to realize the flow (Chang, 2017: 3).

Outdoor Recreation Activities

Recreation is an activity that is chosen individually or in groups, indoors or outdoors, with or without a vehicle, in the city or outside the city, with an individual will, pleasing, entertaining, and done with an inner desire (Güngörmüş, et al., 2006: 286). Outdoor recreation, on the other hand, is where the individual is intertwined with nature and interacts with nature; health is a kind of leisure-time activity that gives well-being to the individual in the physical, psychological and social context (Ardahan & Lapa, 2011: 1330; Eryılmaz, 2018: 24).

It is thought that outdoor recreation activities that individuals participate in provide individuals with the opportunity to choose freely, renew themselves, develop experience, and provide an escape from the problems and responsibilities of daily life, even for a certain period. Moreover, considering that individuals express themselves, it is thought that flow experience is offered to individuals (Leckey & Mannell, 2000). Outdoor recreation is seen as one of the most effective approaches to understanding the emotional reactions of tourists, such as the flow experience, to make sense of tourist behavior (Wu & Liang, 2011; Kim & Thapa, 2018: 8). Individuals who experience recreational flow can perceive positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and a sense of achievement due to the satisfaction arising from activities. This situation can lead individuals participating in the activity to participate again (Wöran & Arnberger, 2012; Ayhan et al., 2020: 1298-1299).

There are previous research results that support these views. For example, Cheng & Lu (2015), in their research on surfing among recreational activities, concluded that if surfers have a high level of recreational participation, they can have a high level of flow experience from the activity. Also, a confirmatory conclusion that flow is experienced during surfing activity is presented by Morgan & Coutts (2016). Çeşmeci & Koçak (2018) determined that there is a flow experience during the hiking activity. Also, Çeşmeci & Koçak (2020) discussed the flow experience in the context of the hiking experience in another study and determined that the flow state is an important value-creating element of the hiking experience. Moreover, it has been determined that the flow experience is related to perceived value and destination loyalty. In the study, it has concluded that the flow experience has a privileged feature that adds value to the experience in terms of touristic activities in the context of hiking. Eryılmaz (2018) in his study, which deals with the flow experience in both outdoor and indoor recreational activities, concluded that the balance between the difficulties and skills that constitute the flow experience dimensions of the individuals participating in the recreational activities and their adoption of the activity positively affect their self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Cater et al. (2020) revealed that flow is experienced in scuba diving activity. In their study investigating how scuba diving tourists' storytelling intentions are affected by flow experiences, they determined that the effect of flow experience on tourists' storytelling intentions is due to satisfaction.

Adventure Activities (Adventure Recreation)

Adventure tourism, which has recently emerged as part of a new spectrum of tourism practices, offers a generally unique, unrepeatable tourist experience in which participants can influence outcomes through their actions. Characteristics of adventure activities (eg excitement and challenge) have increased interest in adventure tourism. Therefore, especially in recent years, it has attracted great attention from researchers and industry (Wu & Liang, 2011: 317).

The concept of adventure recreation is based on traditional outdoor recreation. Both types involve activities and specific skills in outdoor settings. However, according to Ewert (1989: 8), adventure recreation is distinguished by intentional risk and uncertainty of outcome. The presence of risk in such activities is important and plays a central role from experience to satisfaction. Because risk adds excitement to the activity. When there is no risk, an individual's desire to participate in the activity may decrease (Weber, 2001: 361).

During the flow experience, there is a sense of control. In other words, the worry of "losing control" experienced in many different situations in normal daily life is not seen in the flow experience. This sense of control is also heavily reported in activities involving serious risks such as sailing, rafting, rock climbing, and racing car driving. While these activities can be seen as potentially more dangerous for an outsider than the stagnation of daily life, the person performing the activity has no such worries, on the contrary, he feels that the process is under his control. For example, rock climbers may insist that their incredible adventures are safer than crossing a busy street as they can foresee every possibility on the rocks, whereas crossing the road is at the mercy of several factors they cannot control (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2014: 231). This makes adventurous activities important activities to experience flow. Because the activity becomes exciting, enjoyable, and rewarding. In this respect, risky adventure sports and peak experiences provide excellent conditions for the flow experience (Ewert, 1994; Pomfret, 2006).

Mountain climbing is considered one of the most important adventure sports that involve risk and is suitable for the flow experience. This activity is well suited to the flow experience, which is essentially an inner situation. Because it involves physical risks, even danger of injury or death, but not external rewards. Mountain climbing is thus an outstanding example of a particular class of flow activity (MacAloon & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983: 361). Therefore, mountain climbing activity is accepted as a typical adventure activity of flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; 1988; 1990; 2018).

Delle Fave et al. (2010) stated that flow experience is achieved when both challenges and skills are positive during climbing. Also, the researchers stated that flow experience can motivate climbers to participate in a risky expedition. In this context, one of the main reasons that motivate climbers to do this activity is the flow experience. In similar research, Metin (2020) examined the flow experience of individuals in mountain climbing activity.

Even though it is less risky than mountain climbing, mountain hiking or hiking (Pomfret, 2006), which is accepted as a kind of adventure sport, is one the example of flow experience. Although mountain hiking is walking in a way, the ever-changing terrain conditions bring with it a challenge that allows the flow experience to emerge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Wöran & Arnberger, 2012: 96).

Rafting is another activity where the conditions are constantly changing and the excitement is high. According to Wu & Liang (2011: 317), rafting is a popular and exciting adventure tourism activity that represents an important recreational experience as well as meets the tourists' need for interaction with nature. Also, the balance of the participant's skill and difficulty in this activity affects the participant's flow experience significantly and positively. Moreover, it significantly promotes a positive mood, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Museum Visits

The experience of visiting a museum is an experience that reveals various emotions of individuals such as discovery, pride, respect, curiosity, surprise, and inspiration (Pekarik & Schreiber, 2012: 490). During the visit to the museum, individuals can feel as if they have taken a romantic and nostalgic journey

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away from their current time and towards the relevant period. Also, individuals can search for meaning in the past and travel to various fields such as art and architecture in the past (Goulding, 1999: 656-659; Goulding, 2001: 575-576; Aykol & Aksatan, 2013: 74). Cameron & Gatewood (2000, 2003) have also pointed to a similar situation. Kırcova & Erdoğan (2017: 652) stated that the motivation of individuals to visit museums is not just about information or entertainment. They also stated that they seek deeper experiences that will allow visitors to feel in touch with people and experiences from the past. It is compatible with the characteristics of this flow experience, such as integrating with activity by abstracting from the current environment, losing the perception of time, and focusing. Moreover, museum visits can be an activity in which flow experience can emerge in this respect.

In previous studies, studies are expressing that museums are the place where flow experience emerges. For example, Harvey et al. (1998) revealed that the general design features of the museum are related to the flow experience. In this study, it has been observed that the design change caused more flow and more visits. Kırcova & Erdoğan (2017) concluded that the flow experience occurs during the museum visit and that being in the flow experience during the visit has a positive effect on satisfaction. Dönbak (2018) found that flow occurs during museum visits. This study has stated that the emergence of the feeling of flow in the museum visit depends on the physical environment in the museum, the attitude of the officials, and the time that the visitors spare for the museum visit.

Guided Tours

The cultural heritage of countries and destinations is an important source of income, with the planning of guided tours that provide a means of attracting visitors to the destinations and satisfying experiences (Crespi-Vallbona, 2019: 2021). The tours have the potential to turn into an integrated experience with the guide's narration. As in museum visits, the participant can immerse himself in the experience and travel to the past.

Although not much has been researched in previous studies, there are many findings that flow can occur in guided tours. Kuo et al. (2014) in Taiwan has shown that flow experience occurs during the guided tour, resulting in positive outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty. Akgül (2020) examined the flow experience during the tour with guides in Turkey's Gallipoli Peninsula. In this study, it has revealed that the flow experiences of individuals are shaped by the values they perceive about their experiences and that they display positive behavioral intentions about this experience as a result of a happy experience.

Restaurant Visits

Food and beverage have an important role in the development of tourism services, as it constitutes a large part of tourism expenditures and is a necessity for tourists in all destinations. Tourists seek dining experiences beyond meeting their basic physiological needs and travel to different destinations for this purpose. Therefore, in the context of tourism, dining experiences have gained new meanings (Richards, 2012: 13). During the activity of eating in a restaurant, the individual can gain an important experience with the atmosphere of the restaurant.

The main purpose of food and beverage management is to make the services and experiences offered to individuals attractive. Tourism businesses offer physical environments and atmospheres to attract the attention of individuals with services and experiences (Yıldırğan & Zengin, 2014: 74). Restaurant businesses not only meet food and beverage needs but also provide experience. Individuals evaluate restaurant

businesses not only from a functional point of view but also from an experiential point of view (Ünal et al., 2014: 28; Karaca & Köroğlu, 2018: 780). Therefore, atmospheric and service elements offered to individuals in restaurant businesses have the potential to affect the experience as a whole. In the research conducted by Karaca & Köroğlu (2018), who focused on this subject, it was seen that the consumers who visited the restaurant had a flow experience, were pleased to be in the restaurant, and were individually satisfied with their experience. They also concluded that flow experience affects revisit intention. Kang et al. (2018) stated that the flow of social networking sites of restaurants positively affects the overall flow. Satisfaction with the flow positively affected individuals' offline purchase intentions. Experiencing the flow makes it possible to obtain positive outcomes. All examples show that various tourism activities are important experiences in terms of the characteristics of the flow experience. In other words, flow experience is a mental state that can occur in different tourism activities. The flow experience makes it possible to obtain positive outputs.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the flow is both a very immersive and a very enjoyable experience, individuals have positive emotions (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Huang, 2003; Guo & Klein, 2009: 840). According to the flow model, the realization of the flow experience encourages an individual to engage in the activity, insist on repeating the activity, and revisit an activity because of the intrinsic experiential rewards. Thus, it encourages the development of skills related to the activity (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014: 249). In this respect, the emergence of the flow in the context of tourism activities may have some positive results.

The flow experience perceived by the individual during a touristic activity can increase the perceived value of that activity for the individual. Also, the flow experience can create a tendency toward repetition of the activity and the intention to revisit (Kim & Thapa, 2018; Chen et al., 2020; Zhang, 2021). Besides, it can create an opportunity for positive word-of-mouth communication to the close environment or other people through social media platforms related to the activity and destination. In an environment where there is a high level of competition between tourism activities and destinations, revealing, analyzing, and understanding these relationships related to experience will enable understanding the basic characteristics of experiences. Moreover, it will shed light on better designing touristic activities and experiences (Çeşmeci & Koçak, 2020: 383).

Supporting this view, some studies in the literature (Bastiaansen et al., 2019; Buehring & O'Mahony, 2019; Hosany et al., 2019; Wood, 2020; Pedro et al., 2021; Sigala & Steriopoulos, 2021) have shown that emotions are associated with the recall of a tourism experience. Csikszentmihalyi (2018) who developed the theory of flow stated that the flow experience can be experienced by tourists in different tourism activities. Kuo et al. (2014) stated that tourists who perceive a high degree of flow in their tourism experience have higher levels of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Karasakal (2020) stated that the flow experiences of tourists cause them to be satisfied with their holidays. Ding (2021), who has addressed the issue in terms of music festival visitation, found that the flow experience can improve visitors' memory and behavioral intentions towards the festival. Yang et al. (2022) revealed that tourists who seek authenticity in their ethnic tourism experience have more positive emotions when they experience the flow experience.

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Studies on the concept of flow experience include leisure activities (Stebbins, 2001; Havitz & Mannell, 2005; Mannell et al., 2005; Stebbins, 2010; Heo et al., 2010; Lee & Payne, 2015), outdoor recreation activities (Coble et al., 2003; Wu & Liang, 2011; Wöran & Arnberger, 2012; Tan et al., 2013; Cheng et al., 2016; Eryılmaz, 2018; Cater et al., 2020; Çeşmeci & Koçak, 2020) mountain climbing (Tsaour vd., 2013; Delle Fave vd., 2010; Metin, 2020), hiking (Pomfret, 2006), paragliding (Ayazlar & Yüksel, 2018), rafting (Wu & Liang, 2011), museum visits (Harvey et al., 1998; Kircova & Erdoğan, 2017; Dönbak, 2018), guided tours (Kuo et al., 2014; Akgül, 2020) and restaurant visits (Karaca & Köroğlu, 2018). Also, it has formed within the framework of various tourism activities and empirical results have been obtained regarding the flow experience in these activities.

However, not all antecedents and dimensions need to be fulfilled for flow to be experienced. Flow may arise as a result of strong experience by the individual of any of the antecedents or dimensions of flow experience. When considered in this context, there is no necessity for the experiences and activities to be pleasurable for the moment. For example, a swimmer's muscles may become extremely tired during a race in which the swimmer has an experience that swimmer will never forget, this swimmer may feel that their lungs are about to explode at that moment, and the swimmer may be stunned by exhaustion; however, when swimmer looks back, it has been the best moments of their life for that swimmer (Özdemir et al., 2020: 109). Therefore, it will be important to ensure that the activity that creates the experience leaves a positive impression and leaves a mark on the life of the individual and that it is positively memorable.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The questioning of what is the source of an optimal experience and a happy life has been the main starting point of the flow theory, which is in the field of positive psychology. According to flow theory, the answer to this question is the feeling of being fully involved in life (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009: 195). Although feeling the satisfaction of experience in every moment seems to simplify happiness, it is a very valuable acquisition (Kaya et al., 2015: 7). Therefore, flow experience is a positive psychology approach that gives important ideas about how activities make sense and how they can be experienced (Havitz & Mannell, 2005). Flow experience offers an important evaluation and inference opportunity for tourism activities in many different areas. When the structure, characteristics, interacting factors, antecedents, and successors of the flow experience are better understood, it will be possible to ensure that individuals are fully in the flow and to provide positive outputs for all parties of the activity.

The discussion about the role of flow in tourists' experiences is crucial for researchers and industry practitioners alike, as flow is critical to understanding tourists' motivation as well as their behavior (Jackson, 2012). Increasing the knowledge in this area, examining the concepts and variables that lead individuals and tourists in particular to flow experience, and making inferences and evaluations about their driving forces, processes, and results are important both in terms of the relevant literature and tourism applications (deMatos et al., 2021: 1-2).

This chapter reviews the literature, which includes numerous studies of flow experience in the context of tourism activities, emphasizing the importance of the concept of "experience" in tourism activities. In the light of the findings revealed in various research, it has been revealed that the flow is experienced in many touristic activities. This review provides important insights in terms of experiences related to flow experience that can be used in various fields of tourism.

In addition to the potential of this study to contribute to the understanding of flow experience in the context of tourism, it should be noted that this subject still contains some important inspiring aspects waiting to be discovered. It is thought that in the context of different derivatives and stages of tourism activities, various quantitative and qualitative research to be conducted in the future will make important contributions to the flow experience under the influence of various conditions, variables, and factors.

CONCLUSION

Tourism is expressed as the biggest social and leisure phenomenon that creates happiness (Pearce, 2009: 39). Tourism is about positive psychology, as the goal is to achieve happiness. As Filep (2012) mentioned in his book chapter titled “Positive Psychology and Tourism” (cited by Akgül, 2020: 1), the elements of positive psychology and tourism contribute to the fulfillment of basic human desires (Filep, 2012: 45). Tourism activities are also closely related to positive psychology, as they correspond to people’s pursuit of happiness and are characterized as a social and leisure phenomenon (Akgül, 2020: 1). To make a general assessment, flow experience as an output of motivation and positive psychology can be examined in most areas that concern people (Turan, 2019: 193). Today, it is accepted that the occurrence of flow is not specific to some unique types of activity, but is a general phenomenon that people can experience while performing almost any type of activity (Mahnke et al., 2015: 56). From meditation (Delle Fave et al., 2011; Tseng & Shen, 2014) to yoga (Phillips, 2005; Tyagi et al., 2016), from reading (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; van Peer et al., 2019); to extreme sports (Sidorová, 2015; Chang, 2017); even to the use of smartphones (Leung, 2020; Marty-Dugas & Smilek, 2020), flow is an experience that can be experienced in a wide range of activities that individuals enjoy and feel good about. In this regard, flow experience, which is the main subject of this chapter, is closely related to experiential tourism activities as an important phenomenon of positive psychology.

Tourism, which is service and experience-oriented, is important for tourism researchers and practitioners in understanding the nature of the flow experience. Flow is not a difficult situation if the necessary conditions are provided for the activities that individuals are interested in. Individuals take great pleasure in being in the flow experience (Rheinberg, & Engeser, 2018). This brings with it tendencies such as staying in the activity for a longer time and doing this activity again at the first opportunity to enjoy the activity has experienced by the individuals.

Tourists, who are involved in an experience physically, emotionally, and cognitively in travel or touristic activities, can pass into a flow state where they lose the concept of time and space, perform the activity with an inner interest, and lose the perception of time (Çetin & Bilgihan 2016; Coffey & Csikszentmihalyi 2016; Chen et al., 2017; Karasakal, 2020: 63). Because the main purpose of tourists is to be a part of experiences that put them in highly satisfying psychological states. Traveling or being involved in touristic activities is an activity that allows each individual to get away from daily life for a while (Stein, 2011; Larsen, 2019) and promotes a positive mood. The fact that travel and touristic activities attract an individual’s interest, enjoy this activity and find it entertaining reflects the autotelic nature of this action in the flow experience. The individual tends toward an action that he wishes to last forever (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), and this helps the individual to get away from daily and real life, albeit temporarily, and to feel like he is in a different world. Although this action will take place for a limited time and will return to real life when the action is concluded, the individual who experiences flow during the

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action makes a transition to a new reality (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). With the transition, the individual can feel like a different person by getting away from his world and life (İşçi & Güzel, 2019: 1234-1235).

People have many main motivations for traveling; some of these escapes, relaxing physically and mentally, spending time with family and friends, visiting cultural and historical places, discovering something new and different, developing knowledge, meeting new people, establishing relationships, and having adventures. These motivations can be classified into two categories. While the first one is more about escape and hedonism, the other is more about adventure and self-development (Liu, 2013: 68). Such motivations provided by touristic activities are closely related to the features mentioned in the conceptual framework of the flow experience. On the other hand, Harrison (2001) and De Botton (2002) draw attention to the fact that the sensory and aesthetic perception of touristic experiences can become special and unusual for many tourists. These highly enjoyable, special, and extraordinary descriptions of travel experiences resemble the elements of “flow experience” and “aesthetic experience”. This supports the connection between flow experience and touristic activity experiences (Filep, 2007: 121). Considering that the main purpose of tourists is to seek beautiful, enjoyable, and unforgettable experiences (Song et al., 2015: 401; Çeşmeci & Koçak, 2020: 382), the flow experience has to be examined in the context of different touristic activities to obtain positive results in tourism.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Autotelic Experience: It is an activity that the individual engages in because he wishes to experience it and participates entirely for his good.

Experience: It is all of the memorable knowledge and experiences that are formed in an individual's mind as a result of certain events, situations, knowledge, learning, and experiences that affect their future related decisions.

Flow Experience: It is the state of intense focus on the activity that an individual participates in internally without any external reward. Also, it is an internal process that involves being isolated from the environment and integrating with the activity, losing the perception of time, and feeling pleasure and happiness from it.

Internal Motivation: It can be expressed as the willingness and the driving force to act, which arises purely from within, without any external factor such as any enforcement, incentive, punishment, or reward.

Positive Psychology: It is a discipline that examines and explains the positive emotions, strengths, and characteristics of individuals such as well-being and happiness by focusing on them.

Recreation: It is the whole of activities that are based on entertainment and recreation, which are done voluntarily without being subject to any rule, gain, or continuity, and that increase and refresh the cognitive, physical, and social health, quality of life of the person.

Tourism Activity: It is an event in which individuals participate in certain actions for various purposes such as traveling, having fun individually or collectively, spending time, improving, and resting voluntarily.

Chapter 10

The Changing Face of the Tour Guide and Its Impact on Tourist Experiences

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important sector due to its contribution to the economy and employment. Despite the decreasing tourism activities under pandemic conditions, positive effects can be mentioned for all countries of the world. While tourism has an effect on all stakeholders, time also has various effects on tourism. Tour guides who try to act in accordance with these effects have to improve and transform themselves. A tour guide who can keep up with innovations can only benefit his country and provide satisfaction to the customer. Therefore, in this chapter, the development and usability of information and communication technologies, socio-demographic trends, the changing profiles and preferences of tourists, the expectations of tourists regarding social and environmental responsibility, and the implications and reactions of the guided tour industry will be examined. Moreover, escaping from overcrowded destinations, guides, and tourists who are prone to smart tourism, the changing nature of tour guide communication, and changing travel models and approaches will be examined in detail.

INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of the tourism sector and ensuring customer satisfaction are largely related to the service of the tourist guide. Tourist guides are cultural ambassadors that establish a connection between the host country and visitors (Ap & Wong, 2001: 551). A tourist guide is someone who guides visitors in their chosen language and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area recognized by an appropriate authority (WFTGA, 2021). Moreover, a tourist guide is “a real person who has the right and authority to provide tourist guidance services by being accepted into the profession by the provisions of the law. Tourist guiding service; provided that it is not a travel agency activity, domestic or foreign tourists as individuals or groups, using the language they have chosen before the trip, can provide information about

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the country's culture, tourism, history, environment, nature, social, etc. It means promoting and showing the values and assets in line with cultural and tourism policies. It also states that the tours organized by the travel agencies are carried out as defined in the written documents of the travel agency and sold to the consumer and managed on behalf of the agency (Tourist Guidance Vocational Law, 2012: article 2). The understanding of professionalism lies in the basic concept of the profession. Cogan (1953) defines the profession as "an occupation based on an understanding of the theoretical structure of some learning or science department and the abilities accompanying this understanding".

As a result of the changing and developing technological opportunities, the methods of practicing the profession and the experiences of the guides have also changed. With the development of technology, information is easily accessible. For example, when tourists wonder about the family of a plant while visiting a historical site, they can get information by taking a photo of the plant with a mobile application. With the augmented reality made through guides, museums and ruins narratives have become widespread. Moreover, thanks to social media, access to tourism and all kinds of tourism-related information has become easier. Potential customers have the chance to read the reviews of the customers who have gained experience before going on the tour or to watch the online videos about the relevant destination. The fact that tourists can easily obtain information from the Internet and social media require the guides to constantly improve themselves and to have the most accurate, up-to-date, and reliable information about the areas and events they tour.

Spreading from Wuhan to the world in 2019, COVID-19 has affected every aspect of life and consumer behavior. It is expected that the changing situations due to COVID-19 will also reflect on touristic consumer behaviors and lead to differences in the understanding of tourism in the future. COVID-19 has also caused tourist guides to improve themselves in some respects and to various changes in their professions. As a result of these changes and developments, the roles of guides in tourism have begun to differ. For the guidance profession to keep up with the changing world, it is necessary to review their vocational education. In this field, courses containing current topics have been added to the curriculum and/or have been proposed to be added.

While the tours carried out before the pandemic were mainly aimed at mass tourism, they started to be made in buses with less capacity and to appeal to fewer people, taking into account the health factor during and after the pandemic. Tourists ask for tours and content where they can get fun, memorable, and personalized experiences tailored to their interests and needs.

Tourists prefer guided tours during their travels. The most important of these is the opinion that the guides have a command of all the activities and trends that can be done in a destination. In this way, competition and sustainability in tourism can be achieved with guides.

A tour with the same content sold to many people at different times can offer a different experience for each group. Although the content does not change, people's expectations and energies do. The guide has to follow and apply everything that changes and transforms to offer a special and differentiated experience to these ever-changing groups. In a tour that has different components at different times, the experience of the participants may differ in return for the service provided by the guide.

It would be right to emphasize that the tours, especially after the pandemic, do not only support the physical journey but are an activity that contributes to the inner journey. The uncertainty of the end date of the epidemic increases the concerns about the future and can lead to widespread unemployment, economic contraction, and sociological problems (Torales et al., 2020). It is an issue that should be investigated and observed in-depth that people who cannot travel or even participate in any activity during the pandemic process become depressed. One of the most important purposes for tourists to participate in

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tourism activities is to gain experience. The person who will help the tourist to gain destination-specific experiences in a destination they do not know is the direct guide. Tourists do not buy a product, but the experience that the product will offer them. It is expected that the guide will take into account that he has gone on a tour for his inner journey while providing service to the tourist who buys experience, and it is expected that he will make a difference in the way of management of this situation.

However, an important task falls to those who guide tourists who have gone to a country with a package tour to turn the crisis into an opportunity after the pandemic. There is a reason why there is a separate border for tourists traveling with package tours. Tourists who come with a package tour are picked up from the airport by the guide, hotel entrances, exits, and excursions are made by the guide, even for shopping, they are guided by the guide and finally left at the airport by the guide. On such a tour, the tourist spends the most time with the guide and in a sense, they have to trust the guide. When the guides fulfill the requirements of their profession and focused on customer satisfaction in package tours, the expenses will increase and the number of tourists will increase when the normalization process begins.

The fact that tourists stay indoors for a long time has caused a change in their behavior patterns. The demands and desires of tourists on tours have begun to change due to negative behavior patterns. The guides should not interpret the tourists who participated in the tour in a dissatisfied way according to the pre-pandemic conditions. With the pandemic, it has become mandatory for tourist guides to go beyond their informative and occasionally entertaining missions. Guides who closely follow the approaches developed by the science of psychology for today's people should benefit from the knowledge they have in the field of psychology to understand tourists and increase customer satisfaction under necessary conditions. The dominance of the changing mental states of the societies constitutes the most important aspect of the guides that need to be changed.

Changing technological opportunities have affected the tourism sector. The tourist guide is expected to master the existing technological innovations to increase the tourist experience within his service area. Apart from keeping up with the technology in museums and historical sites supported by augmented reality, the guide should also closely examine the online rating and comment sites that the tourist follows before participating in touristic activities. Electronic word-of-mouth communication is the most extensive and effective communication tool for experienced tourists to guide potential tourists. It is unthinkable that the guide, who offers direct experience, is closed to this communication in the 21st century. The guide has to improve his skills in new communication approaches.

BACKGROUND

Tourist Experience and Tourist Guidance

The tourist experience is individual and personal, so it is impossible to define it in general (as in the case of tourists). Based on sociology, consumers want to buy products and/or services to have a unique experience. While these products or services are offered to the consumers, their lifestyles are taken into account. Experience is defined as the exchange of information and emotions between customers and the business (O'sullivan & Spangler, 1998; Schmitt, 1999; Robinette & Brand, 2001; Haahti & Komppula, 2006). Also, experience is the gains of individuals from interactional processes that are meaningful for them in certain periods (Knutson & Beck, 2004: 25).

Guides also provide information that helps to better understand local warnings or signs. Tourists often do not understand or notice local warning signs. In tourism, guides draw the attention of tourists to such signs and markers and share their meanings with tourists. Knowing how to apply signs and pointers is as important as knowing their meanings. The application is explained by the guides. The guide should have the capacity to express background information about the rich cultural heritage of a particular destination and be aware of the policies, rules, laws, and practices followed by a particular destination to enlighten and enrich the tourists at large (Weiler & Black, 2015).

There is no consensus on the concepts of tourist experience or tourism experience. Since the two terms can be used interchangeably, optimal experiences can be provided to the target group (Levy, 1963: 224; Çelik, 2013: 17). The tourist experience is intangible and tangible emotions that vary from person to person. The experiences that emerge with the use of touristic products at the touristic destination and the event of living this moment are called touristic experiences (Çelik, 2013: 4). The tourist experience begins with the tourist's participation in any touristic activity and ends with his leaving the activity. It is impossible to provide a standard in the service offered to tourists. Therefore, the experiences of the tourists also differ. In a more general way, experience may not have a single quality but may have various qualities for different market classes (Pinto & Silva, 2010:113). According to Otto and Ritchie (1996: 166), the tourist experience is expressed as a subjective mental state felt by the participants.

According to Quan & Wang (2004), the tourist experience is studied separately in two areas, namely the humanities and marketing and management. In the humanities, the tourist experience means traveling for satisfaction. It is widely accepted that tour guides contribute not only to tourist satisfaction but also to the destination image, marketing and. The tourist experience in the field of marketing and management is the consumer experience discovered as a consumer from commercial enterprises. This tourist experience includes all services before, during, and after travel. Although there are differences in both areas, there is an organic unity. Both types of experiences affect each other and thus create the overall quality of the tourist experience branding (Baum, et al., 2007; Wong & Kwong, 2004).

Tourist experience consists of emotions and opinions obtained from different tourist destinations, within a certain period, and from products. All other tourism businesses that provide these services, especially travel agencies, tend to create a package of mostly physical evidence, services, and interactive experiences. Especially in intangible touristic products, when compared to the experience of the goods, the satisfaction or dissatisfaction during the experience is more measurable. While the services end with a certain performance, the value of the experience remains in the minds of individuals (Mendes, et al., 2010: 112). Also, negative experiences are more memorable than positive experiences.

During the tours, the guides become relational market-based resources that transform the emotional bond between the receiving country and the tourist by sharing experiences and knowledge (İşler & Güzel, 2014). Tourists feel safe when they participate in guided tours and they also encounter language problems. Tourists do not have to think about many details, as tours are managed by travel agencies and guides. Guides are skilled in solving a possible problems during the tour. Hence, unforeseen problems that may be encountered during the tour are minimized by the guides. Guides in package tours provide comprehensive and accurate information about the touristic destinations visited. Guides provide the necessary information by learning from different sources while describing a destination. One of the main reasons why tourists choose guided tours is that it is less than the cost of the individual tours they plan. The tourist will often not receive any discount on transportation and accommodation expenses during their vacation by their means, so the cost can be expected to be high. One of the reasons why

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some tourists prefer guided package tours is to participate in activities that can be done with a group and not to take a vacation alone.

According to Shaw & Ivens (2002), seven steps to creating a perfect consumer experience (Shaw & Ivens, 2002: 210):

1. Resources to create a long-term competitive advantage,
2. To create a continuity that will exceed the physical and emotional expectations of customers,
3. Focusing on pre-planned emotions and developing differences,
4. Ensuring effectiveness through inspiring leadership, an empowering culture, and happy and empathetic people.
5. Design from “inside out”, not “outside-in”,
6. To reduce costs and increase revenues,
7. To help embody the brand.

When these steps are evaluated for tourist guidance, steps such as appealing to the different emotions of tourists and inspiring leadership with experience based on previous experiences increase the tourist experience. A tourist guide alone is not enough for a perfect tourist experience. The perfect tourist experience can be achieved with the combination of different tourism employees and factors. Jennings (2006) talked about the travel experience process. For the tourist, the travel experience begins with planning, followed by travel, on-site activity, return travel, and remembering the trip. If the tourists do not participate in the package tours organized by the travel agencies, the experience starts from the planning stage. Buying train tickets, and booking hotels are part of the planning process. With the tourist buying a package tour, the experience continues during the travel and on-site activity stages. At these stages, experiences such as traveling, seeing, eating and drinking, and buying souvenirs can be provided. The planning phase is carried out by the travel agency. The tourist, who evaluates his experiences at the stage of remembering the trip, can share information and experience with the potential tourist through electronic word-of-mouth communication during this stage. The recall phase can be positive or negative in line with the performance of the enterprises or the guide.

Past experiences affect the tourist’s experience in a tour they participate in. Even if the guide or tourism business has programmed the best possible tour with various activities, the tourist’s expectation or previous experience may result in the tourist’s dissatisfaction. Even a well-prepared tour with all details considered cannot be prepared to include all participants. Touristic experiences have some different characteristics compared to experiences in other sectors. The characteristics of the touristic experience can be listed as follows (Denizer, 1992; Kylänen, 2006; Lin, 2006: 20; Tarssanen & Çeltek, 2010: 36-37, Oskan, 2019):

- Tourism experience has the characteristics of a composite experience. It is formed by the combination of many elements in the experience pyramid.
- It is difficult to imitate the tourism experience of competing businesses.
- Tourism experience cannot be standardized.
- There is a lot of subjectivity in the tourism experience.
- Tourism experience creates psychological and physical change in people.
- Since the experience is intangible, its evaluation differs from customer to customer.
- Tourism experience is process-oriented.

- The tourism experience adds uniqueness and personalized value to the touristic product.
- Tourism experience improves the value and brand identity of the touristic product.
- The tourism experience provides sensory, emotional, conceptual, and relational value.

Although there is no direct study on the changing face of the tourist guide and the experiences of the tourists, there are many related studies in the literature. Jennings & Weiler (2006) emphasized in their study that the tourist experience is not always of high quality. guides may not always be effective in the tourist experience. As cultural mediators, guides often behave positively, sometimes negatively or neutrally. The attitude of the guide may vary from tourist to tourist. In the same study by Jennings and Weiler, they noted that tourist guides and other official intermediaries are 'expected' to mediate the tourist experience.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Tourist Guiding and Experience Tourism

For the tourist, the experience can be either positive or negative. Tourists are generally positive about experiences where they can reflect on a region's culture and heritage, appreciate social factors, gain control over the experience, experience positive exchange with the local community and themselves, and respond to beautiful scenery and attractions (Jackson et al., 1996). According to Andereck et al. (2006), a negative experience can be expressed as "bad luck" or other external factors such as bad service in the tourism sector or by the local people (Andereck et al., 2006: 83). One of the factors on the positive or negative experiences of tourists in package tours is the guides who are always with them. The guide markets a destination or business in such a way that unfavorable conditions can be tolerated by tourists.

Guides are cultural ambassadors of a country. Also, they are active tourism workers who communicate directly with tourists and tourism workers. The roles and importance of guides in the profession have changed since tourist guiding began to be considered a profession. The guides, who used to only provide information and complete the tour with various directions, have a mission to provide experience to conscious tourists who can easily access information today. Pine & Gilmore (1998) are generally regarded as two of the first researchers to conceptualize the customer experience and define it as "events that engage individuals in a personal way" (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 12).

After the technological developments and Covid 19, the needs and demands of the customers started to change. With the pandemic, people began to care more about psychological satisfaction than physical satisfaction. The widespread use of the Internet has increased the development of social networks and mass communication. People who are in quarantine and in the process of closing with the pandemic have started to use social media more effectively. In addition to the Internet and search engines such as Google, the introduction of other tools such as Wikipedia, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter creates a wide range of opportunities and threats for the tourism industry (Buhalis, 2000; Pearce, 2011), tour guides, and stakeholders (Weiler & Black, 2015).

Social media, which started before Covid-19 and is one of the most important communication resources for all of humanity during the quarantine, has moved word of mouth communication to electronic media. When it is looked at the experience of tourists, electronic word of mouth communication has revealed the comparative tourism sites of various platforms. The interfaces of these platforms are changing and

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developing day by day. To increase the market share in the tourism industry, it is necessary to further develop communication skills (Sen & Avcikurt, 2013: 305).

According to the National Restaurant Association (2020), 63% of consumers say they would rather spend money on an experience than purchase a product from a store. Hence, it is important to gain a positive customer experience in guided tours. Guides are tourism employees who best present their touristic destination experiences. The guide can evaluate which experience the tourists will be happy with according to their typologies, cognitive and sensory orientations. The guides make this evaluation with the knowledge they have by visiting the same region many times with different tourists. There are approximately 45 tourists on each tour, and the guides serve approximately 45 different types of tourists per week. While practicing their profession, guides train themselves in tourism experiences by responding to the needs, wishes, and orientations of these different tourists. Tourists now want to participate in personalized and customized activities.

Tourist guides are very important for general tourist satisfaction and the future prosperity of the industry. There are many complaints about the inconsistency of the service received by tourists against their expectations from tourist guides, and the roles and behaviors of tourist guides for various reasons (Sandaruwani & Gnanapala, 2016: 2).

Tourists who want to participate in the guided tour can easily access and read the experiences of the tourists who have participated in the tours with the development of technology. The development of technology facilitates the sharing of people who have purchased the product through online channels. The transformation of word-of-mouth communication into electronic means that consumers can easily share their experiences with a large number of people. Consumers share experiences not only with words but also with different versions such as voting.

Since the potential tourists are affected by the comments, the agencies that sell the tours take into account all the comments about the tours. Agencies try to provide complex customer relationship management by responding to comments where experiences are shared. While thanking the positive comments, the negative comments can be made to compensate for the situations where the customer is right. It is ensured that other customers dominate the process by immediately writing a comment about the product that is compensated. Comments cannot be easily deleted in electronic word-of-mouth communication channels. However, it is easy to comment even anonymously. Comments can also be liked in interactions on channels where experiences are shared. Electronic word-of-mouth has become such a powerful experiential marketing avenue that even product experiences that consumers write receive interactions such as comments or likes. Potential consumers read the comments in order from the most liked to the least liked. There are many applications related to this.

With the understanding of the importance of experience, tourist guides have added diversity in terms of providing experience in the service they provide. Various activities in museums and ruins where tourists can participate in the company of guides have recently attracted attention. However, not all of the tour participants want to participate in the activities. Some of the tourists may provide different levels of satisfaction from these activities in which they participate.

A tour offered by guides is focused on providing a safe and quality service. Tours have three components. These are guides, tourists and the environment. Among these three factors, guides have an important role in developing the destination image, guiding the tourist experience, and spreading responsible tourism experiences. The increase in these experiences shows that experience is important. Tourists now focus on whether there are cognitive, sensory, physical, and spiritual effects when they buy a tourism product. Hence, the experience expected by the tourist should be evaluated multidimensionally.

Package tours in Turkey can only be arranged through travel agencies by the Travel Agencies and Travel Agencies Association Law No. 1618. Tourist guides are tourism employees who have to take part in package tours by the Tourist Guiding Professional Law No. 6326. Travel agencies that prepare guided package tours within the scope of laws tend to program and manage tours with customer participation and experience. Travel agencies are trying to create tour programs that not only provide an experience but also create an experience with other tourists who have bought the tour.

Tourist Guidance Training

The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA) defines a tourist guide as “a person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and comments on the cultural and natural heritage of an area normally owned by the person”. According to the regulation of professional tourist guides in Turkey, the training of tourist guides supported by courses until 1995 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Avcikurt et al., 2009) is now carried out in universities and certificated courses. In Turkey, by the law numbered 6326, training can be obtained in two ways. First; “To graduate from associate, undergraduate or graduate programs of tourist guidance departments of universities”. The second is to graduate from other departments of universities other than the tourist guide department at least at the undergraduate level. However, after graduation, with the joint proposals of the associations and the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB) and the approval of the Ministry, the languages and regions determined by taking into account the needs of the tourism sector, within the framework of the procedures and principles determined by the regulation regarding the courses and exams, by the unions under the supervision and control of the Ministry. It is necessary to complete the national or regional tourist guiding certificate program organized” (Tourist Guidance Profession Law, article 3c, 2012). There are some common courses in these training, universities, and certificate programs. According to the Tourist Guidance Professional Regulation (2014), these courses are;

1. General tourism information and tourism legislation,
2. Professional ethics and vocational course,
3. History of Turkey and tourism geography,
4. General Turkish history and culture,
5. Turkish language and literature,
6. Archeology,
7. Mythology,
8. Art history and iconography,
9. ğ) History of religions,
10. General health information, first aid, health tourism, tourist health,
11. Communication skills,
12. History of Anatolian civilizations,
13. Turkish folklore and traditional Turkish handicrafts,
14. Turkey’s flora and fauna, natural history,
15. Tourism sociology,
16. Museology.

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A guide should be knowledgeable in many subjects from the economy to the climate, from the geography to the history of the profession. Hence, some lessons should be added to the lessons in the regulation regarding changing tourist experiences. For example, to understand the tourist who has gained a psychologically different perspective with the pandemic, basic psychology course, gamification and drama course with the increase in the number of tourists who give importance to experience and activity, and sanitation course should be added with the increase in different variations of pandemic diseases. The changing service understanding of the guides by adapting to digitalization should be reflected in education and subjects such as digitalization and social media should be taught as a separate course. Considering that augmented reality will become a part of the profession over time, technology courses should be added to the curriculum as soon as possible.

There is no national-level guide training in the United States, but there are several institutions that offer training opportunities to tourist guides, such as the International Tour Management Institute and the International Guide Academy (Gorenak & Gorenak, 2012). Also, the tourist guide training given in 10 days in Dubai is supported by institutions such as Dubai College of Tourism-DCT, The Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing- DTCM, and The Department of Economic Development- DED and is only given to the citizens of the country (<https://www.visitdubai.com/en>). For example, training in Greece lasts for 30 months, and guide candidates must be citizens of EU member states and have a certificate that proves they can use modern Greek fluently. Candidates who want to apply to a tourist guidance school from non-EU countries must be at least a high school graduate and have a good command of the Greek language (Yenipunar & Zorkirişçi, 2013). Moreover, graduates of secondary education in Brazil can practice their profession by receiving guidance training for about 11 months. Furthermore, in Romania and Estonia, no special training is required to be a guide. Finally, to be a guide in India, one is required to be a university graduate and to have received 6 months of guidance training (Lovrentjev, 2015).

In Turkey, guide candidates must know a language other than Turkish very well to receive their employment cards after graduation. According to TUREB (2022), there are 9944 national and 1760 regional guides in Turkey. According to Table 1, the language with the highest number of guides in Turkey is English with 7530 guides. Then the languages with the most guides are German and French, respectively. The rare languages of the guides are Albanian, Hindi, Icelandic, Lithuanian, Thai, and Slovak. When we look at language statistics, it is necessary to provide necessary incentives to increase the number of guides in rare languages according to the changing tourist typologies.

Tourist Guiding and COVID-19

International and national crises affect the tourism sector. The tourism sector, which was affected by the crisis, continues to be affected by Covid-19, which started in December 2019. Covid-19 has directly affected people's daily routines and holiday choices. With Covid-19, various precautions are taken in the tourism sector. The first of these was the restriction of international travel. As of January 2022, vaccination is required for international flights. Travel restrictions have caused potential tourists to delay or cancel their trips. Tourists have even ended their touristic trips in their countries. The fact that all tourism activities have come to a standstill with the pandemic has made the tourist guide profession very difficult in this process. Travel agencies have reduced the number of tourists on tours so that tours can start again. The reason why travel agencies reduce the number of tourists on tours is that people do not prefer crowded places after Covid-19. Avoidance of crowded and mass tourism destinations has caused tourists to travel individually to less crowded destinations (Wang & Ackerman, 2019). It is thought that

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after the pandemic, the understanding of mass tourism will be replaced by individual tourism mobility, the all-inclusive system will be less preferred, and tourist expectations will focus on trust and hygiene (Türker, 2020).

Table 1. Number of guides by language

Language	Number
German	1632
Arabic	406
Albanian	2
Bosnian	12
Bulgarian	256
Czech	6
Chinese	340
Danish	8
Indonesian	155
Armenian	7
Persian	43
Finnish	8
French	1113
Georgian	5
Croatian	27
Hindi	2
Dutch	235
Hebrew	24
English	7530
Spanish	855
Swedish	28
Italian	544
Icelandic	1
Japanese	587
KoKoreanrean	34
Polish	54
Lithuanian	2
Hungarian	25
Macedonian	9
Norwegian	32
Portuguese	391
Romanian	24
Russian	819
Serbian	47
Slovak	3
Thai	1
Urdu	9
Greek	148

Source: TUREB (2022) <http://tureb.org.tr/tr/RehberIstatistik/>

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Ayyıldız (2020) in his study with five-star hotels in Kuşadası stated that after Covid-19, contactless transactions and digitalization will increase in hotels, they will turn to the domestic market instead of foreign tourists who cannot come due to bans, and new forms of tourism, in which smaller businesses that offer personalized service, will increase. Also, private tours are expected to increase. In these tours, tourists want to participate in tours with their close friends or only their families. Since Covid-19 is a pandemic that can be overcome by keeping hygiene at the forefront, travel agencies focus on tours where fewer groups can participate. While the guides used to serve about 45 people on a tour, they are now serving less than 20 tourists. It provided the guides with the opportunity to offer a direct personal experience by observing the special interests of the tourists participating in the tour. There are differences between serving 45 tourists and serving 20 or fewer tourists.

The role of guides was great in increasing tourist mobility, which decreased with Covid-19. Guides are not just people who tell historical destinations. The guides also ensure that tourists are aware of the precautions to be taken in terms of health and safety. Since the guides go to the destinations in a tour program many times, they know very well the elements to be considered. Therefore, it is expected that tourists should pay attention to the guided tours during their travels while the pandemic measures continue.

Entry to some museums and ruins by appointment and the guide's follow-up appointments in busy schedules have facilitated the tourist's work. The necessity of vaccination in tourists participating in the guided tour prepared by travel agencies has caused tourists to show interest in package tours.

Due to Covid-19, the demand for alternative tours has increased. Alternative tours have revealed the need for guides to specialize. The specialization training of the guides in quarantine was reflected in the experiences of the tourists. Tourists are satisfied with the tours by reaching different tastes, especially in the tours of the guides who have developed themselves in the field of gastronomy.

With the pandemic, the guides have increased the frequency of narration about destinations using headphones and microphones. It is done by maintaining social distance with the use of headphones instead of collective destination narratives made together as a crowd.

After Covid-19, the precautions to be followed by the guides have been published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In the circular, it was one of the most remarkable papers that the Tourist Guides Association (TUREB) gave online training to tourist guides about hygiene and pandemic. Following the publication of the circular, TUREB videos were immediately uploaded to the system and announced to its members via the Guide Information System (RBS). In these videos, the ministry TUREB was asked to inform the tourist guides to comply with the social distance and mask rules, to constantly warn the tourists, to inform the group, and to have sufficient protective equipment in the tour vehicles. Also, participants who showed signs of illness were asked to be directed to health institutions and to informed about their 14-day health detail (where they are, whether they have chronic diseases, etc.). Moreover, it is within the scope of the circular that tourist guides who are diagnosed with a disease or have contact with those who have a disease do not work for 14 days in health institutions (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2020).

With Covid-19, there have been changes in the practices of the tourist guiding profession and tourist guides have been affected by this process. Various studies have been conducted in the literature on the guidance profession and the Covid-19 pandemic. Türker and Karaca (2020) interviewed 109 tourist guides in their qualitative study on tourism and the tourist guiding profession after the new type of coronavirus pandemic. As a result of the study, it was emphasized that subjects such as individual travel, hygiene, social distance, small groups, and active management came to the fore.

Duzgun & Kurt (2020) interviewed the Ankara Chamber of Tourist Guides and focused on how the pandemic process affects the profession. As a result of this study, it was revealed that the guides faced various economic problems and could not benefit much from the financial support provided. On the subject of trust, the guides stated that they still felt insecure despite taking all the necessary precautions in the working environment.

Özkan & Yeşildağ (2021) investigated the level of economic, sociopsychological, and professional impact of tourist guides during the pandemic process. In this study, it was concluded that the tourist guides were negatively affected economically, sociopsychologically, and professionally by the pandemic. Also, it was stated that they experienced income losses in economic terms and therefore had to do different jobs or spent their savings and had a socio-psychological demoralization. It is another result of the research that the guides started to look for different professions after the pandemic.

SOLUTION AND RECOMMENDATION

The guides, who are the people who narrate and guide the tourists in their language in the country they go to, do not serve only to make the tourists laugh, to entertain them, and to gain experience. Guidance service provided for entertainment purposes only will be incomplete in terms of customer relations. The multi-faceted service provided by self-developed guides according to the changing tourist expectations of the developing age will contribute to tourism. Guides who have developed drama and gamification skills can plan tour activities with full participation. Guides should follow the technology closely and stay abreast of digitalized communication. While doing these, they should act by the wishes of the tourist.

Some tourists participate in tours for personal development. It should be considered that there may be tourists who are in search of spiritual development other than the purpose of intellectual development. Guides should receive training on rituals, breathing exercises, esotericism, shamanism, or healing activities in different religions to help the tourist participating in the tour with the aim of spiritual development.

In tourism, one of the most important ways to keep up with the requirements of the changing age is to continue guided tours. While investigating the role of the guide in the mediating dimensions of external experience, the guide as a mediator or facilitator of the tourist's internal journey remains largely unexplored. "Tourists sometimes may seek personal meaning, intellectual or spiritual enlightenment, or life change, and thus guides may need to develop skills as agents of change" (Weiler & Black, 2015).

When we look at the countries that attract the most tourists, have high service quality in tourism, and spend the most, the subject of tourist guide training is very important. Because it is known that tourist guides make a great contribution to the tourism sector to gain a good identity and image by ensuring tourist satisfaction. According to Geve et al. (1991) argue that tour guides are responsible for tourist satisfaction with the services provided in local destinations. Also, tour guides can influence the image of tour companies, destinations, and even other tour guides.

In the training or courses held in different countries, it is seen that the guide candidates should especially have communication skills and be knowledgeable about first aid. It is thought that there will be an increase in the number of tourists who will turn to special interest tourism rather than mass tourism. Hence, guidance training should be given, which is experts in the field of hygiene and tourist psychology.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In this book chapter, the change and transformation of tourist guides are emphasized within the scope of changing tourist experiences. In future studies, it will contribute to the tourism literature by going more specifically and testing hypotheses about all changing tourist experiences.

Also, how tourist guides should manage the development process against changing tourist demands should be another interdisciplinary subject to be studied in educational sciences. Performance analysis of tourist guides should be done by applying group studies or scenario studies focusing on customer satisfaction in the face of the changing experiences of tourists.

CONCLUSION

Guidance is one of the most important tourism employees who ensure customer satisfaction thanks to its communication skills. Also, guides have to stay in constant communication with other sector stakeholders. While performing their profession, guides also provide communication between tourists and tourism service providers. Cultural tourists who come to our country with package tours are greeted by guides at the airport. Tourists are accompanied by guides until they return to their countries. During the escort, tourists have little contact with a foreigner other than the guides. Communication between tourists and guides is very important, and the communication success of the guide plays an important role in the perceived success or failure of the tourism experience (Pereira, 2015: 131).

According to McLellan (2000), the aim of creating an experience; is purposeful, functional, interesting, intriguing, effective, and memorable. Hence, the experience must be unforgettable (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). A positive memorable tourist experience (Kim et. al., 2012: 13); is defined as “events that are positively remembered and desired again after the event has occurred”.

The changing service offerings of guides have had different effects on tourist experiences. The tourist experience is not something that can be bought with money. The tourist experience is the whole of what is formed in the mind of the tourist while consuming the touristic product he buys. To ensure satisfaction with the tourist experience, the guide has nothing to do but provide input for the tourists to create their experience.

Travel agencies should develop new strategies for the changing demands and needs of consumers to stay ahead of the competition. Since the products are similar to the developing technology, travel agencies that want to make a difference cannot add the difference to their hotels, restaurants, or vehicles, so they prefer to work with advanced and open-to-change guides.

Tseng et al. (2014) concluded that the tourist experience of the ancient city of Tainan Anping in Taiwan has a positive effect on the intention to revisit. The decision that affects the revisit of tourists depends on past experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Kim, 2014). So, a good guide will ensure customer satisfaction and make the tourist visit again. Even guides can turn a tourist's cognitive schema into a positive one who has had a negative experience in the past.

For the tourists to re-purchase a product or service or to revisit the destination, it is necessary to examine the experience that the tourists can have and to investigate what this experience can be affected by. All this will make it easier to make plans to create new services. A well-planned touristic product will result in a positive customer experience as the guide can adapt to changing situations.

It can be predicted how the tourist will be affected while experiencing the touristic product to be offered, by researching the personality traits of the tourists and the guides' knowledge of the literature on the subject. With the knowledge of the factors affecting the experience, tourists will be able to gain the advantage of choosing touristic activities where they can have a quality and unforgettable experience for themselves. It will enable travel agencies to know the personality traits of the tourist, touristic product differentiation, new product development, and the elements that the guide will pay attention to during the tour.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS


Experience: Defined as the exchange of information and emotions between customers and the business (O'sullivan & Spangler, 1998; Schmitt, 1999; Robinette & Brand, 2001; Haahti & Komppula, 2006). Also, experience is the gains of individuals from interactional processes that are meaningful for them in certain periods (Knutson & Beck, 2004: 25).

Experiences: That emerge with the use of touristic products at the touristic destination and the event of living this moment are called touristic experiences (Çelik, 2013: 4).

Chapter 11

The New Phenomenon of Authentic Experience in the Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

Global competition conditions in the tourism sector are getting more intense day by day, and tourist behavior is changing in many ways. In this respect, the ability of businesses to adapt to these situations is a prerequisite for their survival in the future. Businesses in the tourism industry need to develop strategies and understanding that will emphasize the uniqueness of the products they offer and highlight the difference of products from others. Also, businesses need to develop a different strategy or understanding to provide tourists with an unforgettable experience and competitive advantage. The facts that the basic component of the experiential marketing paradigm is experience and that experience is the essence of tourism products have led this paradigm to come to the fore in terms of tourism businesses. This study aims to reveal how businesses can adapt themselves to this new paradigm by emphasizing the importance of experience marketing for businesses in the tourism industry.

INTRODUCTION

The transition to a common market understanding with globalization has affected the tourism sector as well as many other sectors. Especially, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, global economic contraction, intense competition, and the development of new technologies and the rapid adaptation of these technologies to the sector offer opportunities as well as threats. By emphasizing the uniqueness of the products offered by tourism service providers marketing the same products, highlighting the difference of

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products from others has a main role in the selection of these products by the consumer/tourist (Rather, 2020). On the other hand, today's consumers/tourists have begun to move towards behavior based on having an irreplaceable-unique-authentic experience through personalized interaction from buying/consuming a similar product. In other words, Hollebeek and Macky (2019) state that consumers/tourists do not buy the product(s) but buy them because they enjoy the experience provided by the stories and presentations behind them. In this regard, experiential marketing (EM), produced from the experience economy, is a marketing approach that focuses on offering a more unique and personalized product that meets this behavioral change of consumers/tourists. Similarly, Yeh et al. (2019) point out that one of the most innovative strategic approaches in marketing communication is EM, which is a diverse and creative technique to intensify the consumer brand experience. This approach has emerged in recent years as a result of the significant increase in leisure-oriented. In this approach, consumers/tourists are encouraged to interact with products and brands using various sensory functions. Hence, an emotional bond is established, which results in the consumer making more rational purchasing decisions (Levy and Guterman, 2021). Likewise, the experiences are personal and exist in the minds of consumers/tourists at an intellectual, physical, emotional, and/or spiritual level, and especially a unique experience remains in the mind of the customer for a long time and affects their subsequent behavior (Rather, 2020) has turned EM into an extremely important element in terms of staying ahead of the competition and surviving. Similarly, Kim & Perdue (2013) indicate that EM should be the focus of businesses trying to offer goods and services that differentiate them from their competitors since tourism products are essentially experiential. Moreover, EM professionals argue that the consumer/tourist experience is a long-term source of competitive advantage that can be created by continually exceeding not only the cognitive but also emotional and sensory expectations of the consumer/tourist (Kim and Perdue, 2013). Besides, most of the economic values offered by tourism are essentially the experiences that tourists consume or experience during their trip. Therefore, it becomes a priority to create enjoyable and memorable experiences to generate higher levels of satisfaction and positively influence behavioral intentions. Because an enjoyable experience will stay in the mind of the consumer/tourist longer and will affect their future behavior (Trigo-De la Cuadra et al., 2019). In other words, the main element that shapes the behavior of consumers/tourists in the tourism industry is an authentic and personalized experience, and the marketing activities of businesses in the tourism industry should adopt and effectively use this approach, which sees the experience as the main component. In this context, the main purpose of the study is to create a guide or roadmap that reveals how businesses in the tourism industry can transform classical marketing elements into experience marketing. In line with the main and sub-objectives of this study, firstly the concept of experience and its characteristics were examined, then its differences from traditional marketing (TM) were mentioned. Finally, the concept of tourist/tourism experience and experiential marketing (EM) in the tourism sector has been examined in detail.

BACKGROUND

Technological developments in the last few decades have begun to cause profound changes in the way people behave in all areas. It has become essential for businesses operating in any field to analyze these changing consumer behaviors and to develop new marketing strategies for changing consumer demands and needs.

Today's consumers do not only choose or buy a product they consume based on its functional uses, but also consider their experiences with the products offered. The new approach that marketers have developed against these changes in the consumer is EM. EM is based on consumers having a different, unique, and authentic experience (Yeşilot & Dal, 2019). In this context, EM can be thought of as a marketing approach that attracts the attention of consumers with the products being marketed, touching the hearts and minds of consumers, and staging unique experiences that they will not forget. Further, the exposure of consumers to a large number of advertisements from many channels leads to the opening of psychological distances between businesses and customers, although they often compare them physically or virtually, causing customers to become both insensitive and indifferent to brands. In order to highlight their products and survive in the market, businesses bombard consumers with intense communication. However, the fact that consumers give importance to the experience they create instead of looking at the functional benefits of the products has revealed the necessity for businesses to interact with the consumer and to base on a strategy of creating an experience specific to the consumer, touching the emotions and inner world of the person, and creating an unforgettable value (Yılmaz & Vahidli, 2020). In this regard, EM is a vital strategy that emerges with the understanding that a change in nature, which is one of the basic principles of dialectical philosophy, will inevitably be met with a counter reaction-effect, and the intense existence of fierce competition in every field, it is inevitable for businesses that cannot keep up with this strategy to encounter entropy.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Conceptual Framework of Experience

Increasingly businesses in the tourism industry are starting to focus on creating and managing “experiences” for consumers/tourists. Today, it is no longer enough to offer a functional product and service level. To differentiate themselves in an increasingly commodified and competitive business setting, “experiences” must accompany what businesses in the tourism industry offer (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In other words, consumers/tourists are looking for unique consumption encounters to accompany goods and services that create unforgettable experiences, and thus, businesses need to change their focus from a “delivery-oriented” service economy to an economy that emphasizes “staged” experiences that create unforgettable consumer experiences with high-quality products and services (Walls et al., 2011). In the tourism industry setting, “everything a consumer/tourist experiences at the place where the products are presented is seen as an experience, whether behavioral or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, expressed or implied” (Oh et al., 2007). The theoretical origins of the consumer experience are rooted in cultural industrial systems, aesthetics, psycholinguistics, emotional response, and several specific areas of behavioral science, including fantasy within psychology, imagery, and multi-sensory (Walls et al., 2011). In this respect, a lot of research is being done to explain, define, and understand the nature of experience.

The word experiential is the adjective form of experience that underpins a new marketing paradigm (Erbaş, 2010). As for the meaning of the paradigm, as a noun, the word experience refers to an action (for example, observation and spatial participation in an event), an outcome (for example, emotional, psychological, or learning outcome), or entertainment, and implies that an experience is highly limited in space and time (Stienmetz et al., 2021). In contrast, Svabo et al. (2013: 316) define experience as “a process in which people are exposed to the influence of objects, environments, situations, and events,

and a wide variety of materials play active roles as mediators of experience”. Thereby, as a verb, ‘experience’ refers to a process such as an emotional sensation or a transformation (Stienmetz et al., 2021). In addition to the word meaning of the concept, after Holbrook and Hirschman’s (1982) first published the concept of experience, various disciplines tried to interpret and explain the concept in their field. To the positive sciences, experience is like an experiment based on generalizable objective facts and data. From a philosophical point of view, experience is seen as an experiment that transforms the individual, while in terms of sociology and psychology, it is a subjective and cognitive activity that allows individual development (Akkuş, 2021). In terms of anthropology and ethnology, experience is a cultural way that influences the way individuals become conscious of events. Although an experience is perceived from the perspective of the individual, it can be conceptually distinguished from the perspective of ethnology, which includes experiences that have happened to others, society, and the world. Approaches based on economic and marketing perspectives, Schmitt (1999) sees experiences as “personal events that occur in response to certain stimuli and involve the whole being as a result of observing or participating in an event” (Walls et al., 2011). Marketing science demonstrates it as a concept based on the interaction with the consumed product and service stimuli, above the personal formation with emotional importance (Akkuş, 2021).

Experience Economy

With the development of technology, consumer demands and needs have also changed. This development causes businesses to turn to new strategies that will make a difference. While there are ordinary and similar products, particularly in the agricultural sector, different and unique products have appeared in the market day by day. However, the advancement of technology has caused these products to become similar over time. Businesses that are trying to make a difference have tried to create satisfaction by diversifying their products with different services. In an intensely competitive environment, it may sometimes be insufficient to support products with different services or to offer a different service alternative. Hence, businesses try to create a unique and unforgettable experience to ensure customer loyalty and make a difference (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Businesses are trying to create experiences in the minds of consumers with their marketing strategies. The marketing world has tried to find ways to create consumer loyalty and create more interesting experiences (McCole, 2004). Because, nowadays, the competition of brands is based on providing added value to people and acquiring a “special” place in their lives (Yuan & Wu, 2008).

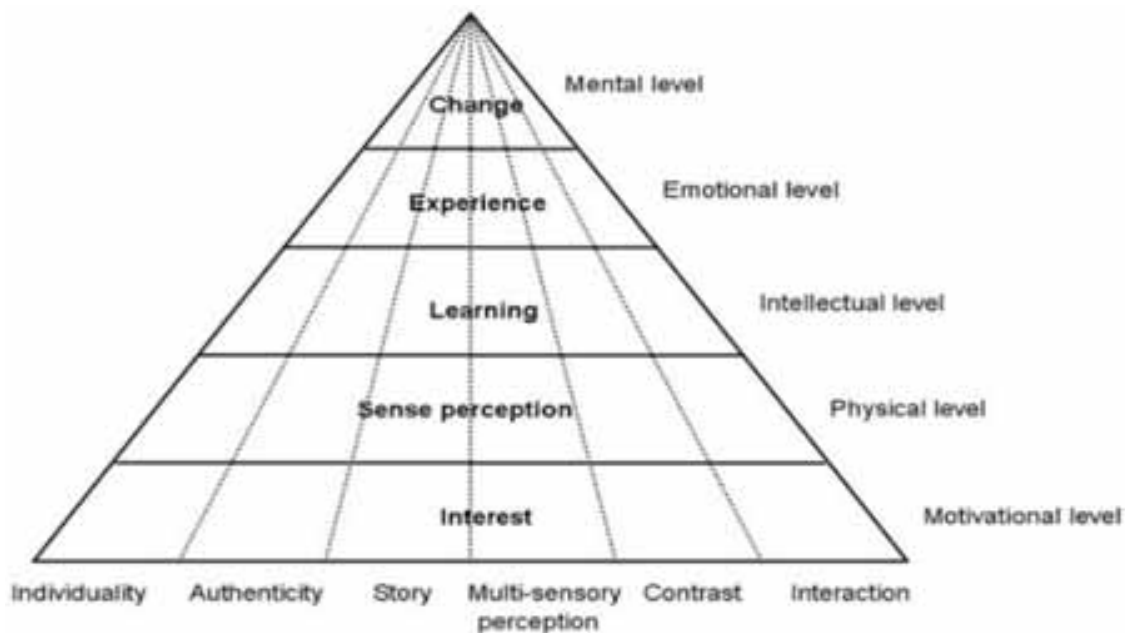
Many factors played a substantial role in the emergence of the experience economy. The necessity of ensuring the continuity of the economy, technological developments, and the speed of change is among the most important of these factors. As the economy has changed, market competition has intensified, and marketers have sought different ways to attract and engage their customers. Therefore, marketers have realized that it is important to strengthen the consumer’s personal and emotional relationship with a brand by creating a strong brand relationship. Also, the reaction to standardization, which marked the industrial period, is an important factor. Apart from these factors, individuals’ fast-paced consumption efforts, liberation, trying to express this with consumption objects of the individual who wants to reveal their difference, emotions come to the fore and post-modern effects (Jang & Jung, 2013). Pine and Gilmore used the concept of experience economy for the first time. The concept, which is evaluated in terms of economic value, has been examined in four different phases. These are goods, products, services, and experiences. Experiences emerge when the services offered start to become ordinary like the

products. This process is called the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). When the economic value series is examined, the transition from the production of goods to the production of products is expressed, while it is aimed to provide a competitive advantage in the transition from product production to service production. Lastly, in the experience creation stage, it is expressed that the experience is marketed as a product and service to make a difference. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that he should emphasize the concept of experience marketing (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Experience Pyramid

The concept of the “Experience Pyramid” has been developed to support experientialism in products and services. While the basic attributes of the product (individuality, originality, story, multi-emotional perception, contrast, and interaction) form the basis of the “Experience Pyramid”, customers perceive these basic attributes at different levels (motivation, physical, intellectual, emotional, and mental levels). While each level creates a different perception in the consumer, it has been noted that the emotional level will be formed in the consumers through experience (Tarssanen & Kylänen, 2005).

Figure 1. Experience pyramid
Source: Tarssanen & Kylänen, 2005.



As shown in Figure 1, the experience pyramid approach proposes six basic features for the product to gain an experiential dimension: individuality, authenticity, story, multi-sensory perception, contrast, and interaction.

Individuality: It includes diversification suitable for the individual, adapting to the customer, and diversifying the service. Individuality refers to the potential of the product to be adapted to the wishes and needs of the customers.

Authenticity (Reality-Reliability): It includes reliability, realism, visual harmony, and cultural aesthetic sustainability. Authenticity refers to the reliability of the product.

Story: It expresses the importance, meaning, and theme of the product. It highlights the draft plan for why the product was chosen. The story and the authenticity of the product are closely related.

Multi-Sensory Perception: It means that the product must be experienced with the five senses as much as possible. Multi-sensory perception should be visibly effective and appealing to the senses with smell, acoustics, taste, and awareness. All sensory stimuli should be natural in reciprocal harmony.

Contrast: It means being different from the customer's point of view. Being new and unusual, it is independent of social norms.

Interaction: It refers to the successful communication between the product and the manufacturers. The products are somewhere among the customer, staff, other customers, and the environment.

In addition to these basic elements, there are levels of experience that form the vertical axis of the experience pyramid. In line with the above-mentioned features of the product, customers will take their experience to the next level and reach the last stage, the mental level. Customer experience level elements are motivation, physical, intellectual, emotional, and mental levels.

Motivation Level: The first level at the base of the experience level is the motivation level. This level refers to attracting the attention of the customer. At this level, customer expectations are fulfilled by the product, and the willingness to try the product is created.

Physical Level: The second level is the physical level. We use the physical senses to understand where we are and what we are doing. At this level, the customer perceives his environment through the senses. The product is tried, noticed, and perceived. On a physical level, a good product provides a pleasant and safe experience. However, the product is not too hot or too cold, there is no reason to worry about hygiene, and it is also free of physical hazards. The technical quality of the product is tested at this level.

Intellectual Level: Third is the intellectual (rational, logical) level. At this level, the sensory stimuli provided by the environment are processed, and learning, thinking, using information, and acting in harmony in forming ideas are provided. At the intellectual level, it is decided whether the customer is satisfied with the product. A good product at this level provides the customer with a learning or educational experience, consciously or unconsciously learning something new and improving.

Emotional Level: The fourth is the emotional level. At this level, the goal is to have truly meaningful experiences. An individual's emotional reactions are difficult to control or predict. If all the basic elements of the product are considered and the physical and intellectual levels function, the customer will experience an experience that includes positive sensory responses such as fun, excitement, success, satisfaction in learning something new, a sense of victory, and influence, fun.

Mental Level: The last and highest level, the mental level, refers to a positive and strong emotional reaction to a unique experience that leads to change in the individual, creating permanent changes in the individual's lifestyle and physicality. The individual feels that he is a new person, that his personality, and worldview, has changed and developed. Thanks to meaningful experiences, the individual acquires new hobbies, a different way of thinking, or finds new abilities in himself. For example, a shy individual thinks that he is quite brave while skydiving and discovers aspects of himself that he does not know (Tarssanen & Kylänen, 2005).

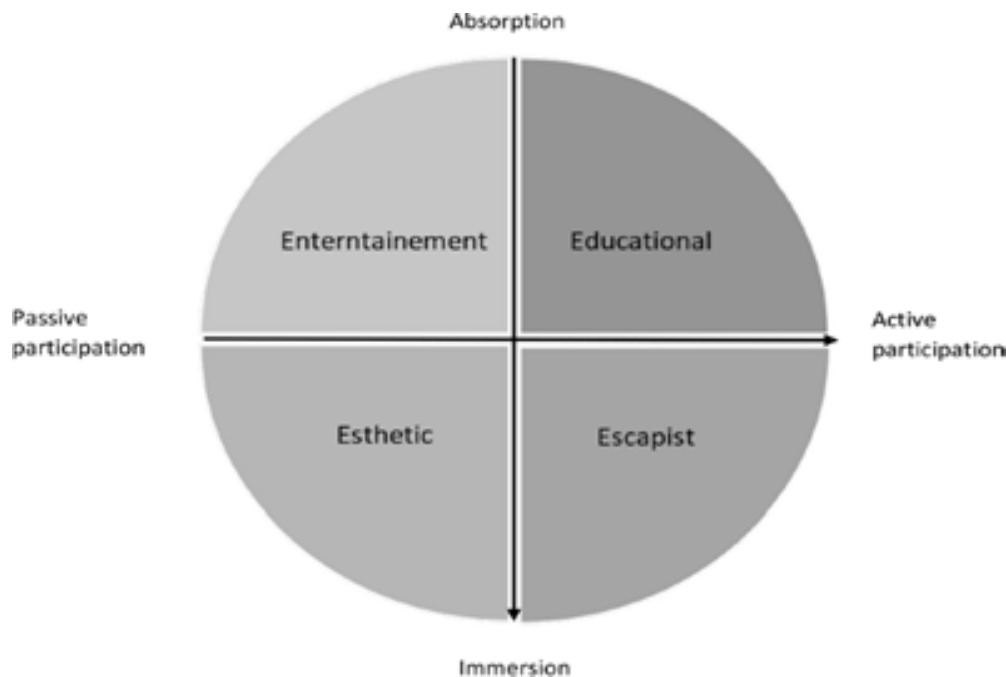
While it is impossible to guarantee that everyone has a meaningful experience, it is possible to design the product to include elements that make probability more likely. The service to be provided to provide a meaningful experience can be customized according to that experience. (Tarssanen, 2009).

Experience Realms

Arnould (2013) specified that the experiential mechanism emerges as a chronological process consisting of four stages: expectation (starts as soon as the experiential begins to seek information about the object), purchase, the experience itself, and the memory of the experience. Therefore, this parameter related to time needs to be included in the recommended experience.

Figure 2. Experience realms

Source: Haller et al. 2021



The experience dimensions focus on two different sets of characteristics, one horizontal and one vertical. The horizontal group shows the level of consumer participation. One side shows passive participation, where the consumer's performance does not directly affect, and customers participate in the experience offered by the business only as a spectator, while the other side shows active participation in which the customer is personally involved in the event. In both active and passive participation, customers become a part of the experience. For example, participating as a spectator in a theater is defined as passive participation, whereas participating in an interactive theater play can be defined as active participation. Vertical features help define the type of communication or environmental relationship that connects the event with the customer. One side focuses on being included as a brain, paying attention, and learning, while the other side focuses on being physically involved (Lin, 2006). From the intersection of the horizontal and vertical dimensions emerge four areas of experience, called the 4E. According to this horizontal and vertical axis of experience, experiences are classified into four different dimensions: entertainment, education, aesthetics, and escape. Entertainment is the oldest form of experience and experiences that people absorb through passive participation. Education is different from entertainment,

and it is through the person's active absorption and experience of events. Aesthetics is when people are in an event but not actively participating. Escape, on the other hand, is an unforgettable encounter both because the person is actively involved and because it is surrounded by experience (Akkuş, 2021). The best experience is expressed as a sweet spot that includes the qualities of all four types of experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). For instance, visiting Disneyland or theme parks can be noted as a "sweet spot experience" because it includes all aspects (4E) of these experiences (Yuan & Wu, 2008).

Comparison of EM and TM

Schmitt (1999) emphasizes that with his new marketing approach, which he calls EM, he has gained a contrary view to the TM literature. At the same time, Schmitt (1999) states that while TM sees consumers as decision-makers who focus only on functional features and benefits, experiential marketers view consumers as both rational and emotional people seeking an experience they have never had before and gravitating toward highly pleasurable experiences.

According to the TM perspective, consumers focus on features of products, and different consumers may assign different meanings and importance to the same product features. Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate products according to their characteristics. The "superiority" that the consumer prefers and sees as the reason for purchasing arises from the characteristics of the product (Grundey, 2008). In TM, consumers are defined as rational decision-makers since they make purchasing decisions according to their needs. The focus of marketing is on the benefits and tangible features of the product. Financial resources are taken into account as the product is defined verbally. Usually, information is provided on a brand or a product. From an emotional point of view, it is concerned with whether the customer likes the product or not. During the evaluation, the choice of the consumer is determined according to the benefit provided by the product (Altunışık, 2007). On the other hand, the characteristics of EM can be listed as follows: This paradigm is based on customer experiences and consumption as a holistic experience; in this approach, customers are considered both rational and emotional, and the methods and tools are diverse and at the same time multifaceted (Schmitt, 1999). Customers are people who make subjective decisions other than their basic needs, deal with consumption more emotionally, and have aesthetic criteria. At the focal point of EM are concepts such as aesthetics, elegance, and sociability. In this marketing approach, products focus on perceptual evidence that cannot be defined verbally. From an emotional point of view, the fear, hatred, sadness, excitement, satisfaction, etc. that the customer feels about consumption. Numerous emotional reactions such as during the evaluation, and the aesthetic aspects that occur because of consumption are discussed (Altunışık, 2007). Ergan (2018) states that one of the most important attributes of EM is that businesses associate their products with their customers by creating different emotions. Further, Ergan (2018) sees EM as a new phenomenon as it has a wider perspective than TM, businesses focus on their customers' experiences and lifestyles and add emotional, mental, behavioral, and relational value to their customers. For example, a hotel establishment, on the one hand, can make people or families feel like they are at home, with a design and decor suitable for the concept it offers, and can provide a holiday where they can spend a nice and authentic time, on the other hand, local food and drinks can be served in a la carte restaurants and it can provide a different experience with animation events. Through all these combined products, hotel businesses can offer unique products that appeal to all the senses of tourists.

As a result, in the experience economy, the business world has moved from traditional product-oriented to experiential consumer-centeredness. At the same time, consumers are becoming more and

more involved in the re-creation of experiences. This is accomplished by creating both value and holistic brand value (Tsai, 2005).

Tourism/Tourist Experience

Experience is a core element of EM (Alagöz & Ekinci, 2014). Businesses in the tourism industry generally create special stages for consumers/tourists to experience different stimuli such as environments, atmospheres, and layouts, and with these experiences, customers/tourists get various reactions and perceptions to these stimuli (Yuan & Wu, 2008). Although experiences tend to be intangible, immaterial, and expensive, people place great value on experiences because they are unforgettable. Delivering experiences appears to be the most important strategy for manufacturers to survive in an ever more competitive future (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009). In this regard, it can be inferred that businesses that offer a unique or personalized experience can survive in intense competition. Berry and Carbone (2007) emphasize that customers consciously and unconsciously filter a series of clues in the form of experiences and organize them into sets of impressions, some of which are rational and others more emotional. Also, Grove et al. (2000) point out that the service experience consists of four basic theatrical components, including actors (staff), audience (tourists), environment (physical setting), and service performance itself, and these components should be focused on to satisfy consumers/tourists (Chang & Horng, 2010).

In addition to the fact that the concept of tourist/tourism experience contains the characteristics of the concept of experience, the multifaceted nature of the experience makes it difficult to define it. However, some definitions explain in a general way. While Clawson and Knetsch (1966) stated that the tourism experience should include the effects and personal consequences both before and after the journey, Pine and Gilmore (1998) defined it as the emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual impressions that individuals feel during the travel. Stamboulis and Skayannis (2003) underlined that a tourism experience is comprised of the act of visiting a destination far from the tourist's home, learning about its features, and enjoying its activities (Chen & Rahman, 2018). In terms of the tourism discipline, the experience can be seen as "a mental journey that leaves memories in the consumer/tourist of doing something special, learning something, or just having fun" (Stienmetz et al., 2021). A tourism experience is a personal event that occurs in response to certain stimuli during tourism activities. The tourism experience arises from direct observation and participation in the destination marketing process and can be thought of as a response to the stimuli provided before and during the experience. In other words, tourism experience can be defined as a special relationship between tourists and experience products, in the form of consumption of products, and also represents the competitiveness of destinations to attract tourists (Choi, 2022). Hwang and Lee (2019) approached the tourism experience from a psychological point of view and evaluated the concept as an important issue in tourism and leisure domains. They also saw the tourism experience as a type of product that could encourage the voluntary and physical participation of tourists, helping to satisfy their inner desires and arouse positive emotions. Katherine and Peter (2016), on the other hand, discussed the tourism experience as a phenomenon in the context of various emotional reactions such as a variety of recreational activities, feeling happiness and visual pleasure, and designated that innovation, emotion, and entertainment should be addressed in the experience process of consumers. Like definitions, there are different sorts of classifications of consumer/tourist experiences. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) were the first to conceptualize consumer/tourist experiences as fantasy, emotion, and entertainment. After that, Schmitt (1999) presented five types of customer experiences, which are well known and widely accepted as strategic experiential modules (Hsiao

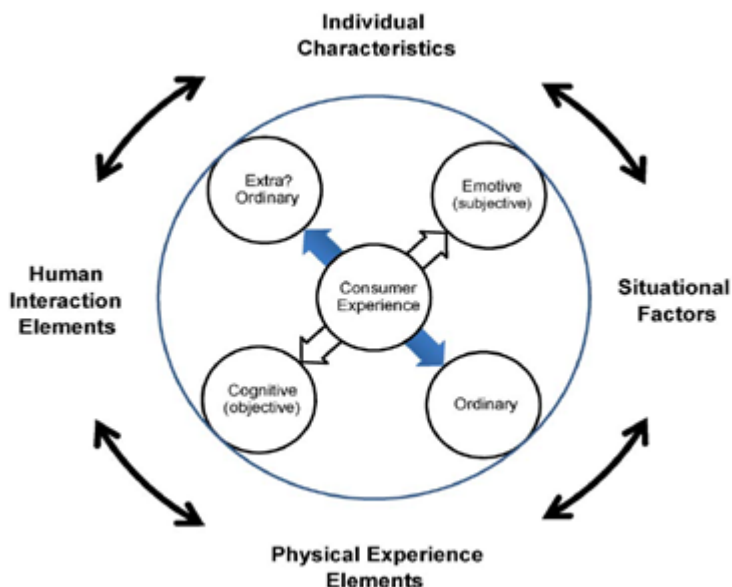
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& Tang, 2016). According to Schmitt (1999) businesses should use strategic experiential modules for their customers, which cover the five major blocks of experience: emotional (feelings), sensory (senses), cognitive creative (thoughts), social experiences associated with behavior, and a reference group culture (relationships), physical experiences associated with behavior and lifestyle (actions) (Trigo-De la Cuadra et al., 2020; Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). The main focus of the sensory experience is to create an experience for the consumer/tourist through seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. Emotional experience is a strategy that appeals to the intrinsic feelings and emotions of the person to connect the person to the brand by transforming the positive light mood into strong emotions such as joy and pride. Cognitive experience is a strategy that aims to develop the creativity of consumers/tourists and create problem-solving experiences. This strategy appeals to the minds of consumers/tourists. Behavioral experience refers to an understanding of strategy aimed at influencing people's experiences and lifestyles as a whole (Akkuş, 2021). Also, behavior-act emphasizes acting by showing customers different ways of doing things (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Relational experience, on the other hand, includes all aspects of sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral experiences and explains how people associate their individual experiences with the ideal selves of others, other people, or culture (Akkuş, 2021). Building relationships that go beyond individual feelings and fulfill the desire for self-improvement is an important key (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). To conclude, while all these strategies can be used by businesses to differentiate themselves and their products and at the same time to create added value, they can also use them to motivate consumers/tourists (Akkuş, 2021).

The experience has a broad appeal that is influenced by various disciplines and contributes to the development of the tourism experience. The concept of experience in the field of tourism has been studied by many researchers (MacCannell, 1973; Cohen, 1979; Prentice et al., 1998; Bloemer & de Ruyter, 1999; Williams & Soutar, 2000; Barsky & Nash, 2002; Uriely, 2005; Yuan & Wu, 2008; Ritchie et al., 2011; Alagöz & Ekici, 2014; Kim et al., 2015; Steinmetz et al., 2021). Experimental research in the tourism domain has taken three general directions: classifying experiences, identifying, and examining the factors that make up the experience, and revealing the relationship between the experience paradigm and other constructs. Furthermore, Walls et al. (2011) examined the studies in the tourism literature and proposed a framework in Figure 3 to describe the element of the tourist experience in the industry.

Figure 3. A framework for the tourist experience

Source: Walls et al. 2011.



It is assumed that the core tourist experience consists of two axes representing four components: ordinary, extraordinary, cognitive, and subjective/emotive. There are several factors surrounding the consumer/tourist experience that affect the consumer/tourist experience. It is assumed that tourist experiences do not operate in a vacuum devoid of external or internal influences, but are unique to each individual, and factors influencing this may also include elements of perceived physical experience, elements of perceived human interaction, individual characteristics, and situational factors. As shown in Figure 3, whereas it is stated that external factors will play a diverse and ever-changing role as tourist experiences evolve, it is emphasized that each factor can have a significant impact on the elements of the tourist experience and make each individual's experience an unforgettable one. This framework mainly focuses on merging business and consumer perspectives into the experience. On the one hand, the business creates experiences, on the other hand, it tries to build bridges with tourists through its environment or human interactions. With this bridge, it aims to attract tourists' awareness or interest to create a meaningful and at the same time satisfying consumption/transaction experience that will affect the tourist's perceived consumption values, satisfaction, and repeat visits (Walls et al., 2011).

Finally, Kyriakou (1996) and Kanellou (2000) agree that destinations' responses should focus on enriching the tourist services, along with strategies for differentiation and personalization. Yet, the nature of the content is not a closed issue. The traditional strategy of intensifying services does not offer significant opportunities for differentiation. In this regard, in the past, tourism was basically about sightseeing and living a different lifestyle or getting to know the culture. However, experience, which is a new phenomenon, adds a comprehensive, irreplaceable, and valuable life adventure during the tourist's time at the destination (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003). Nowadays, modern consumers/tourists want authentic experiences with context and seek a balance between spontaneity, freedom, and self-expression control through the experience of staging and self-determined activity (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009). In other words, when anyone in the tourism industry buys a product from a business, they want this

product to be personalized for them, to be able to express themselves freely, and at the same time to have some control of an activity they perform.

EM in the Tourism Industry

EM brings a more effective and comprehensive perspective to marketing approaches by creating a synthesis of management and marketing approaches (Leighton, 2008). One of the earliest links between experience and marketing research began with Pine and Gilmore (1998), who created the “Experience Economy”, a new era in marketing economics (Levy & Guterman, 2021). From this perspective, “Experience Economy” customers want more than high-quality products. What has desired by the consumer/tourist is satisfactory shopping and consumption experiences (Levy & Guterman, 2021). Pine and Gilmore (1998) determined that economic value moves from commodities to goods, services, and finally experiences, and also emphasized that there will be a displacement from service-based marketing to “experience-based marketing”. This paradigm understanding of consumption not only queries the rational consumption of products but also leads consumers/tourists to experience by providing a new perspective for marketing (Trigo-De la Cuadra, et al., 2020). Vargo and Lusch (2004) expressed that experience and value are perceived entirely from an individual’s point of view and are personal and exist only in the mind of the customer/tourist. It can be deduced that no two people will have the same experience (Chang, 2021). It may not be possible for an individual to have the same similar experience even from something they buy/ consume. Since the experience of the individual is specific to that moment, environment, and atmosphere, and it is not possible to re-experience the experience obtained in this respect, the result obtained from the experience can be evaluated in the context of making comparisons (transcendence-equivalent and inferior). Today, the transition to EM has accelerated due to the ubiquity and easy access to information technologies, brand superiority, communication, and entertainment (Trigo-De la Cuadra, et al., 2020). With the increasing commodification of service-based marketing offerings, businesses need to provide consumers/tourists with unique, memorable, repeatable, and enthusiastically disseminated experiences to gain competitive advantage and customer satisfaction. However, its realization depends on various symbolic meanings such as hedonic responses and a subjective state of consciousness with aesthetic criteria (Vila-Lopez & Rodriguez-Molina, 2013). Likewise, unlike the product-oriented functional features of TM (for example, price and quality), experiential benefits connect customers with product or service brands through pleasant memories. At the same time, experiential elements benefit the business with various results such as customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, brand attitudes, and loyalty or behavioral intentions (Hsiao and Tang, 2016).

Besides, the body of knowledge in consumer and marketing has recognized the importance of experience economy and experience as a core component of EM (Alagöz & Ekici, 2014). Frow and Payne (2007) outline the term as a way of engaging and enjoying an experience through the creation of emotions (Hsiao & Tang, 2016). Lee et al. (2011) define it as an unforgettable memory or experience that penetrates deeply into the mind of the customer, while Williams (2006) defines it as initiatives within marketing that provide consumers with in-depth concrete experiences and sufficiently accurate information to make a purchasing decision. Agrawal et al. (2015) see it as “an individual customer who, after observing or participating in events, perceives a particular stimulus, provides motivation and generates thinking identity or consumption behaviors to increase product value”. Levy and Guterman (2021) view the new phenomenon as a strategic technique in which they transform traditional promotional marketing to appeal to visual and sensory appeals. Etkin and Sela (2016) emphasized that EM is marketing through

senses, feelings, actions, thoughts, and relationships for an individual customer to describe the product or service to deliver a unique experience and increase overall consumption value. Vázquez-Casielles and Cachero-Martínez (2014) highlight that EM compromise of offering original activities linked to the senses that are conducive to experimentation and action. EM involves interaction with employees and other groups, and an environment and design that triggers the development of products or businesses in their services, such as quality, price, and promotion (Garcia et al., 2019). Dodds and Jolliffe (2016) discussed the concept in terms of tourism. They defined experiential tourism as a direct and intense psychological response to a particular tourism destination that elicits a unique experience. In this definition, the scope of experiential tourism is limited to experiences in the field of tourism, and these experiences can be behavioral, perceptual, cognitive, or emotional, and at the same time, various tourists prefer different types of experiences. Also, experiential tourism is seen as a kind of tourism that can be evaluated qualitatively and prioritizes tourist satisfaction, not mass tourism to be measured quantitatively. In this regard, it can be stated that the roots of the concept of tourism experience are based on the “experience economy” (Choi, 2022).

Intense competition within service industries, especially in the last decade, has led businesses to embrace the converted economic value that derives from services/goods and experiences. To stay competitive, businesses in the tourism industry must turn to satisfy the consumer’s primary impulse, the desire to experience the satisfaction associated with a service/good as authentically as they imagine it. Here, every “new” service/good is seen as a tool that provides an opportunity to satisfy this desire (Ihtiyar et al., 2018). From this standpoint, the key to the success of businesses in the tourism industry is seen as the EM approach. Because experiences form the core of the tourism industry (Trigo-De la Cuadra, et al., 2020). Furthermore, Yuan (2009) highlights that the result (purchase/consumption), customer satisfaction, and loyalty in terms of EM are not only directly related to rational experience, but also conditioned by the emotions evoked while providing services, and have extraordinary importance in the service sector, especially in the tourism sector. In this respect, the main focus of businesses in the tourism industry should be experienced, and businesses in the industry should use marketing elements effectively.

In talking about the impact of customer experience, Joseph (2010) indicates that businesses that want to fully cater to the needs, wants, and desires of their customers should tend to give importance not only to the rational but also to the emotional value of the consumer/tourist experiences. In this direction, businesses need to find the relationship between both rational and emotional motives and use them to increase customer value by including them in the marketing plan (Verbauskienė & Griesienė, 2014). Edvardsson et al. (2005) and Lenderman (2006) comprehensively stated the benefits of applying the paradigm in businesses as follows:

- Establishing healthy communication between the customer and the business,
- Increases customer participation and loyalty,
- It provides brand value to the business and creates a unique identity,
- Provides emotional and intellectual satisfaction to consumers,
- Establishing an emotional bond between the consumer and the business,
- It brings competitive advantage,
- Helping create value for customers and businesses,
- It increases sales.

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EM is a key element for businesses in the tourism industry and Williams (2006) refers to this importance by emphasizing that tourism industry products are always experiential. People gain experiences from staying in a hotel, dining in a restaurant, or visiting a destination, and today people crave experiences they've never had before instead of buying new products they don't have. Accordingly, Driver and Toucher (1970) divided the experience into five different stages: planning, going to the destination, experiencing the destination, returning, and remembering. Customers' experiences in these stages may vary, especially in the third stage, as customers' experiences are complex and affected by many factors, including factors that can and cannot be controlled by businesses. Therefore, for businesses in the tourism industry, creating memorable experiences is vital to their success (Yuan & Wu, 2008). Verbauskienė and Griesienė (2014) highlight that the following use of EM in the tourism sector has a key role for businesses:

- First, businesses in the tourism industry should learn about the stage of their customers'/guests' experience at that moment (whether they are using the service for the first time or repeatedly).
- After that, businesses should learn about the consumption phase (pre-purchase, purchase/consumption, and post-purchase). Businesses should decide which module should be implemented based on the information obtained.
- Marketing communications businesses should focus not only on the rational benefit to be gained by the customer after using the service but also on the emotional aspects of the offer (uniqueness, memorable impressions, etc.).
- When strong emotional relationships are established with customers, two-way, interactive communication opportunities should be used. Also, when planning marketing, businesses should not forget to apply sensory marketing measures that affect not only emotional but also other consumer/tourist experiences.
- Finally, the pricing policy should refer to creating value for a customer. When making marketing decisions, businesses should consider other factors that may have an impact on the behavior (experience) of a customer/guest, other customers/guests, or society.

More comprehensively and holistically, Schmitt (2010) defines the application of EM in businesses as follows:

1. *Analyzing the customer:* Analyzing the customer's wishes, needs, and lifestyle. Focus group interviews include analyzing customer expectations before, during, and after an experience with qualitative and quantitative research methods, product comparison with competitors, and determining of loyal customer group.
2. *Creation of the experiential platform:* The experiential platform creates a dynamic reflection of dynamic, multi-sensory, multidimensional, desired experiences, in other words, it includes the experiential positioning of goods and services. Considering how businesses are trying to create an interaction for the customer, they need to create a ground (experiential platform) on which the business or brand will be located. This platform refers to the handling of many elements such as brand, logo, website, products and services, personnel, and making experience dimensions and types of experience suitable for business purposes.
3. *Creation of the brand experience:* After the creation of the experience platform, this theme needs to be applied to the brand experience. This phase includes the handling of elements such as corporate identity, graphic design, and restructuring of relations with the customer.

4. *Creation of customer interaction:* It includes providing the customer with the desired information and service in an accurate, dynamic, and interactive relationship style, at all touchpoints and during the dynamic shopping process.
5. *Continuous innovation:* The rapid development and change of technology constantly create new products and new services. In this setting, it has become inevitable for companies to constantly innovate to grow profitably and even survive. Thus, it is inevitable for businesses to constantly innovate in the process of customer experience management. Continuous innovation includes making necessary changes and innovations in the customer experience process.

CONCLUSION

Experience marketing is a relatively new field that has not been fully analyzed by marketing theorists and practitioners up till now. However, there has recently been a growing interest in the phenomenon of experience marketing and its practical applications (Verbauskienė & Grišienė, 2014). Similar interest has occurred in tourism as experiences have begun to be marketed (Trigo-De la Cuadra, et al., 2020), and EM of tourism industry products has developed impressively in recent years (Kim & Perdue, 2013). The fact that the tourism industry is characterized by many products with basically similar cognitive characteristics and easily substituted services (Kim and Perdue, 2013) has become a necessity for businesses in this industry to present their products differently from their competitors (Verma & Plaschka, 2003). Kim and Perdue (2013) also support this view by emphasizing that businesses in the tourism industry are increasingly giving importance to experiential qualities for competitive differentiation or they are becoming dependent.

EM is a concept based on the consumer/tourist experience (Soliha et al., 2021). EM makes a significant contribution to tourism marketers in providing innovative techniques to promote destinations and sell tourism products/services. Today's tourists seek experiential benefits such as emotion, fun, and authenticity. TM focusing on product features and functional benefits (rational factors) may not be effective for these tourists (Le et al., 2019). At this point, EM can be more functional than TM in terms of arousing authentic, creative, and emotional reactions in tourists, and it can also be more effective on the new tourist type. Also, Alagöz and Ekici (2014) indicate that the paradigm provides necessary and sufficient information to consumers/tourists for purchasing decisions and offers deep concrete experiences. In this respect, businesses in the tourism industry now need to focus on strategies that will enable them to create personalized, unique- authentic products and especially emotional bonds that will appeal to consumer/tourist emotions, instead of focusing only on the physical aspect of product. Because experiencing a magnificent authentic holiday in a perfect hotel environment, the attractiveness of the atmosphere offered in a thematic park visit in the destination, experiencing food and drinks in a restaurant that offers local products, or visiting any place that reflects cultural elements will mean an unforgettable, unprecedented and unique experience for a consumer/tourist. Hereby, businesses in the tourism industry will be able to both survive in the competition and enable a high level of consumer/tourist satisfaction, repeat-visit/re-purchase, loyalty, and especially word-of-mouth/advertising. Moreover, for businesses, the phenomenon may provide a cost advantage, a high level of consumer/tourist satisfaction on the one hand, and the other hand, the tendency to prefer the product at a high rate as a result of the emotional bond associated with the authentic experience, and valuable and unique business identity and consumer/tourist communication may contribute.

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Rather (2020) considers EM as an emerging marketing management philosophy that has been exhibited to be effective in driving consumer/tourist behavior. Further, experiences are specific events that occur in response to stimulation of the consumer/tourist's sense(s) (e.g., sensation seeking), typically resulting from participation and/or direct observation in dreamlike, virtual, or real events. Furthermore, experiences are complex constructs that do not normally occur spontaneously but are linked to events that need to be evoked and responded to, and no two experiences are exactly alike (Rather, 2020). From this standpoint, businesses in the tourism industry need to develop marketing strategies that will appeal to the emotions of consumers/tourists. The change in consumer/tourist behavior has caused the TM approach to shift from TM to EM. Therefore, the fact that the new phenomenon is based on authentic, unique, matchless, and excellent experience and that experience and emotion have an inseparable organic relationship require businesses to redesign their marketing elements to shed light on these concepts. EM focuses on the preferences, experiences, and emotions of the consumer/tourist (Pina & Dias, 2021). In this approach, it is realized by taking into account the feeling that the products produced to the consumer/tourist and the features that people want to add to their lives. Also, Pina and Dias (2021) underline that EM includes people's self-image, social goals, dormant emotions, and their deepest desires and values. In this respect, businesses in the tourism industry should focus on the emotions of consumers/tourists rather than their rational thoughts and try to stimulate these emotions. The presence of positive unique experiences in the mind of a consumer/tourist increases the probability of choosing the business with which he/she has an emotional connection when choosing a product.

Businesses in the tourism industry need to develop strategies that consider the 4E areas of experience, namely "entertainment, education, aesthetics, and escape". These areas provide a unique consumer/tourist experience due to their harmonious and intertwined structures (Akkuş, 2021). Businesses in the tourism industry will be able to transform simple-ordinary-plain spaces into authentic spaces by integrating the four areas of experience with the setting-atmosphere-time where the products they offer are located. Also, businesses try to create sweet spots for consumers/tourists, in other words, rich-unforgettable experiences, which ensure memorability-permanence as an authentic experience in the minds of consumers/tourists. Thereby, this unforgettable experience can increase the rate of repeat visits during the decision-making stages for tourists. On the other hand, as Schmitt (1999) remarks, marketers in the tourism industry should not focus solely on individual experiences. Instead, it needs to turn to strategic thinking about what kinds of experiences to offer and how to deliver those experiences at a high level of attractiveness.

To sum up, a tourism business needs to integrate itself with current issues to increase its competitiveness, stay one step ahead and keep up with the times. It is vital for businesses to offer their services to tourists by adapting them to 4E, and to develop and implement policies and strategies that will enable tourists to have a sweet spot experience. The fact that consumers/tourists have a unique experience in the services they receive will affect their intention to revisit. Also, it will increase the service quality and brand value of businesses and create loyal tourists.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The fact that the behavior of today's tourists-consumers seek experiences such as pleasure, entertainment and fantasy rather than functional benefits has made it necessary for marketers to turn to new strategies. Businesses in the tourism industry need to use marketing elements that will activate emotional stimuli in the decision-making processes of tourists to ensure that the product they offer is preferred. Tourists,

who have an unforgettable and unique experience in their hearts and minds, are very likely to prefer the products they have experienced. It is unthinkable for a tourist who feels emotionally attached to a product, business, or destination to prefer another product, business, or destination. In this regard, marketers can encourage tourism dreams by using experiential marketing stimuli, including advertisements, mini-movies, stories, and websites that will affect tourists emotionally.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Success in EM depends on the fact that the created experience is an experience that creates positive images-memories in the mind of the tourist, beyond being ordinary, with the tourist feeling or perceiving that the product consumed is different (Demir, 2017). Businesses in the tourism industry need to focus on marketing elements that will create multiple sensory in tourists, so that the tourism product they offer is separated from substitute-similar products. In this respect, analyzes and researches should be carried out to determine some basic-vital data such as what elements make an experience unique for potential tourists in their target markets and which experience realms tourists prioritize. With the data to be obtained from the businesses in the tourism industry, the road maps to be created in the application of experiential marketing in the tourism industry, which we try to present within the scope of this study, can be enriched.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Experience: The combination of behavioral, spiritual, emotional, social, or cognitive elements with the participation of the individual during consumption. Also, special events that consist of the reactions of customers to various stimuli before and after the purchase.

Experiential Marketing: The making of marketing communications more sensory by adding imagination, tactile materials, movement, smell, sound, or other sensations. Also, it includes activities that will go beyond functional features with consumers to provide them with positive and memorable experiences.

Marketing: The planning and implementation process of developing, pricing, promoting, and distributing goods, services, and ideas to carry out exchanges that can achieve personal and organizational objectives.

Tourism Industry-Sector: Includes services such as food and beverage, accommodation, transportation, fun, health that tourists need during their travels for various purposes.

Traditional Marketing: Can be called mass marketing in general. It covers the advertising activities carried out by means of television, radio, newspaper, brochures and billboards and similar means that reach large masses.

Chapter 12

Tourism Experience Management and Marketing in Gastronomy

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ABSTRACT

The tourism experience can drive the behavior of the contemporary tourist who travels to experience unique, extraordinary destinations and events. The concepts of tourism and hospitality are often described as a concept related to gastronomy, which is closely related to culture. Gastronomy tourism has become an important concept in attracting tourists to specific destinations and offering tourists interesting, new, and unusual experiences with the spread of global travel in the 20th century. Therefore, more attention is paid to the behavioral consequences of this situation for tourists and their role in tourism and accommodation marketing and branding. In this context, experiential marketing and management issues in tourism and gastronomy are examined in this chapter. Thus, by providing a better understanding of tourism experiences, some suggestions have been presented to destination marketers and managers and businesses that provide tourism services.

INTRODUCTION

The experience economy has an important role in contemporary societies, and tourism destinations are increasingly orienting experiential services to gain competitive advantage (Rather & Hollebeek, 2020). Considering the nature of tourism, the relationship between experiential marketing and marketing are considered to be important values (Li & Petrick 2008; Ahn & Back 2018; Rajaobelina 2018). The tourism industry has undergone a significant transformation, including the sharing of social media and economy-

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based applications by the increased use of new technologies. Customers gradually shape their tourism experience with the help of these technologies, as verified by Pine and Gilmore's (1998) perspective of experiential marketing (Le, Scott & Lohmann 2019).

Tourism businesses gain advantages such as getting ahead of the competition, generating income, and providing customer loyalty by providing customers with pre-service, in-service and post-service experiences (Li & Petrick 2008; Hwangand & Seo 2016; Rajaobelina 2018). Cities are trying to highlight their competitiveness in various fields of tourism (Özkurt & Öcel, 2021). A good experience will keep for a long time in the memory of customers, and will affect the results of their tourism behavior. This is critical for managing the customer's experiential environment, for tourism companies to survive and gain competitive advantage.

Modern tourists express those different needs than travel, which has caused the emergence of certain trends in tourism. These new demands of the modern tourist are mostly based on the following objectives (Shafiee et al., 2021):

- To orient towards authentic experiences,
- To experience a destination locally,
- To search for a unique experience “gold times”.

Tourists now travel more to seek new experiences, validate their personality, and realize their self-worth. However, the modern tourist's tourism experiences are multifaceted and have a dynamic feature that attracts the attention of academics and marketers. Benefiting from factors of gastronomy is expressed as a touristic experience in visited destinations by modern tourists (Park & Njite, 2010). Gastronomic tourism, which is among the demands of modern tourists, is considered as an important tourism area. Gastronomic tourism has been considered a key element in formulating destination and marketing strategies (Dixit, 2020). Gastronomy tourism is based on an authentic product that is defined by regional characteristics that can attract tourists to the region. In this regard, it is suggested to give importance to the experience economy rather than the service economy by providing opportunities that allow tourists to be included in the service process and experience (Rijal & Gihimire, 2016). It is predicted that gastronomy tourism is an element that will meet many needs in passing through from the service economy to the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

BACKGROUND

Experience is “state of being impressed by or acquiring information through straight observer/participant” (Merriam-Webster, 1993). Customer impressions are reproduced from their quest about fun, fantasies and emotions. Experience refers to customers' amazing memories about a destination and is defined as the main element of tourism consumption. On the other hand, experience refers to a situation that links the actions of customers with the situations in which consumption will occur (Schmitt, 1999). Experiences are naturally emotional and personal, so the personal interpretation effect, cultural values, past experiences, mood, and many other factors are effective in the background of the experiences (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The tourism industry, where experience comes first, is one of the predecessor models of the service-based tourism and economy experience has been one of the most popular academic topics in social science literature since the 1970s (Cohen, 1979; Lee & Crompton, 1992; Urry, 2002).

The tourist experience includes all the feelings and everything about the tourist experience such as destination, perception, cognition, behavior and emotion (Oh et al., 2007). At the same time, the tourist experience has a combined structure (Neuhofer et al., 2014) and is individual in nature (Urry, 1990). Touristic consumers who travel for many reasons, something like seeing a very different place from what they've experienced before, having a fun time, getting to know different cultures, want to experience unusual, fun, enjoyable and unforgettable experiences wherever they go. For this reason, it is possible to focus on experiential marketing applications instead of traditional marketing applications where there is a consumer mass with different consumption tendencies especially in a complex sector such as the tourism sector (Yetiş Ardıç, 2015). Tourism destinations and tourism service providers offer different experience opportunities to tourists during their travels. Tourists generally want a range of services that give multiple opportunities and options for their different experiences. Although, tourists usually sense and appreciate their visit as an experience that different services are offered by various businesses (Middleton et al., 2009).

The development of tourism is a paradoxical process, such as the world becoming more open with globalization and digitalization (Bessarab et al., 2021) and the preservation of local resources, identity and culture emerges. Many destinations not only develop local specialties to maintain their competitiveness and retain a part of the market, but also to preserve the identity and culture in relation to the product they develop with this aspect; it also gives information such as history of the recipe (when and it was invented by whom), region to which it belongs, the features and qualities (Forleo & Benedetto, 2020).

To provide memorable experiences to tourists is essential for achievement in a highly ambitious tourism market and management (Kim, 2014). There are many stages in the management of tourism experiences from experience in design and creation management to delivering experiences that meet customer expectations by tourism destinations and businesses (Lin & Liang, 2011).

Tourists travel to escape, explore, understand and participate for a variety of reasons. However, tourists want something to keep forever and share with others, also they request from destinations or tourism businesses that all these values are at the core of their experience (Middleton et al., 2009; Sharpley & Stone, 2011; Morrison, 2013). Every tourist has a travel experience, vacation or attraction, but the class of their experience depends on providers and activities they choose. Service is an essential component of the delivery of most tourism activities. Services include functions that have many alternatives that they can or cannot perform for tourists, including but not limited to, however they can choose any alternatives to do it for themselves. Services take place where the activity is offered (such as providing transportation, accommodation, travel, meals, souvenirs and communications). Therefore, tourism activities require services provided by businesses; this set of services and activities constitute tourism experiences. It is also usually accepted that tourism experiences have multidimensional aspects.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Tourism Experience Managing and Marketing

Unlike the daily experience, the touristic experience is part of the total consumption of the tourism product. Therefore, tourist experience is associated with customer experiences in marketing/management literature (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Therefore, the increasing importance of the customer and the increase in the experience of product/service in the marketing process which has caused the experience

to become very important in marketing/management literature. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) are mentioned experience marketing origins, who put forward the effectively idea that there is an experiential dimension to consumer behavior. According to Holbrook & Hirschman (1982); it should be dealt the experience of consumption from a holistic perspective, covering the stages to decision, purchase and experience; stresses the importance of emotion and the vital role of interaction in experiences. In addition, nostalgia and imagination are shown as important impetus of the consumer participation. It is seen that studies on experience research in the field of marketing, whose main task is understanding customers and their expenditure experiences, are increasing (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). However, attention has been paid to factors related to loyalty, repurchase and satisfaction with the intention about experience. In the related research, it has been concluded that satisfaction is a very important value in terms of purchase intention (Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003).

Tourism stakeholders should determine an efficient and effective management and marketing approach and positive experience in the provision of tourism services to provide unforgettable experiences to tourists. Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggest implementing a “staging-oriented” experience economy that delivers an unforgettable experience rather than a “providing-oriented” service economy with a high product/service quality. The motivation to compose and serve for precious experience stems from have an life experience is personally perceived by the individual participating in it on a spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional level. Four domains of experience; education, entertainment, aesthetics and escape are identified by Pine and Gilmore (1999). These domains are components of the experience economy framework that has been studied in various contexts. Pine and Gilmore have presented five important points and they entitled experience-design principles: aligning positive cues, eliminating negative cues, experiential theme, shuffling memories, and appealing to the five senses.

The tourism experience scale has seven components; hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty (McCormick et al., 2010).

Hedonism

Hedonism is defined as “pleasurable emotions that excite the tourist” in their travel experiences (Kim et al., 2012). People mostly want to enchantment while consuming an element of tourism product, unlike other products and activities (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Positive feelings and emotions are related to tourism experience such as happiness and enthusiasm are very important elements of unforgettable tourism experience (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). At the same time, hedonism is a complementary part of leisure activities (Otto & Ritchie, 1995) and is an important factor in determining future conduct tourist satisfaction (Dunman & Mattila 2005).

Refreshment

Refreshing, rejuvenating or resting is very important decisive foundation tourism activities components. Travel experiences allow tourists to relax by taking them away from the responsibilities and routines of daily life (Morgan & Xu, 2009). Refreshment is the most specific feature of travel/tourism experience that distinguishes such experiences according to daily routine (Cohen, 1979; Kim, 2014) and also the feeling of refreshment influences the tourist’s travel memories (Kim, 2009).

Local Culture (Social Interaction)

Local culture is an element of social interaction that includes the mutual effect dweller and visitor in a destination, also associated with experiences of local languages and cultures (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Experiencing local culture as an important for tourist's travelling motivation and a sensitive factor is accepted (Morgan & Xu, 2009; Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017).

Meaningfulness

Meaningfulness is an important element for tourists to get to know themselves, learn something about themselves during their travels and contribute to their personal development (Ülker Demirel, 2020). Meaningfulness is defined as the feeling of major importance, value or increase in one's thoughts on life and society (Kim, 2014). This element is related to tourists' tendency to try to find expressive experiences for personal improving (Kim, 2014; Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017).

Knowledge

Knowledge is considered to be an issue that tourists care about in terms of destination choices (McCleary & Gürsoy, 2004). People request learning new affairs and developing new skill insights through special tourism experience (Kim, 2014). Sociological and psychological motivations that streamline tourists to travel is the request to get knowledge, including history, language, geography or culture in the destination (Kim et al., 2012).

Involvement

Involvement indicates degree to that individual has been committed to experience, activity or service/product quality; it is recognized as an essential feature of travel and leisure experiences (Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017). Involvement is a condition of motivation or interested to the goal (Kim et al., 2012). Tourists regard a personally significant experience as important than a meaningful experience (Rather & Hollebeek, 2019).

Novelty

A sense of psychological novelty comes from the sense of having a new experience (Kim et al., 2012). The pursuit of novelty occasionally is a central component of travel motivation and has been referred to as the motivation of curiosity, excitement and exploratory (Jang & Feng, 2007). Many tourists need to have a new experience and prefer travelling to destinations with different cultures to satisfy their desires (Pearce, 1987).

Experiential Marketing in Tourism

Experiential marketing, also known as emotional or sensory marketing, is a branch of marketing that expresses the experience offered to the customers, that is, selling in a sense or emotional way. Focusing directly on people's emotions (Moral & Fernández, 2012), it is considered as an effort to connect with

the customers (Consolación & Sabaté, 2008). Five types of experiences are mentioned under the title of strategic experiential modules (SEMs), which contribute to the creation of consumer experience and create different types of experiences. These are sense, feel, think, act and relate experiential modules (Magro Magdalena, 2013).

Sense

Sensory marketing; appeals to the senses to create sensory experiences through sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell (Çavuşgil Köse & Akyol, 2019). It is carried out through the stimulation of the sense of the customer in experiential marketing. Requires knowledge of all elements the customers' sensory experiences can perceive (Magro Magdalena, 2013). Sensory experience plays an important role for differentiating products/services, motivating customers and adding value such as aesthetics/excitement to products in an absence of a physical experience (Schmitt, 1999). The sensory module is a marketing strategy frequently used by the tourism and hospitality industry, due to its components. There are restaurants and hotels all over the world, called themed or conceptual, designed to appeal to the visual senses of customers (Çavuşgil Köse & Akyol, 2019). An experience that is connected to more senses so more effective and memorable it will be (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Crouse (2010) revealed that hotels that use scents associated with the hotel's brand image and general ambiance are perceived as cleaner and more comfortable.

Feel

Affective experience is a form of marketing that is carried out according to the reactions to an event in experiential marketing. It focuses on the goal of providing an unforgettable experience that will make the consumer feel unique and special (Magro Magdalena, 2013). Emotions emerge in their strongest form during consumption and the most intense emotions are experienced in service sectors such as travel and accommodation areas, where face-to-face communication is intense (Schmitt, 2000). Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that the best relationships with customers are sensory or emotional in nature. Shaw (2007) states that at least 50% of customer experience is about emotions.

Think

It is a form of marketing that promotes creative cognitive experiences and focuses on customer perceptions in Experiential Marketing. It is aimed to arouse interest by focusing on the reactions of the customer towards the emotional state (such as a feeling of surprise, intrigue, etc.) (Magro Magdalena, 2013). Intellectual marketing appeals to intelligence to create cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage customers creatively. Intellectual experience when considered within the scope of tourism; it can be explained by the curiosity of tourists visiting an ancient city, ancient civilization buildings or a palace/fortress used in the past, about how people lived in the past. In addition, the Egyptian Pyramids and the Maya Temple, which are still mysterious in terms of their architectural features, can be given as examples of touristic elements that surprise tourists with curiosity. (Çavuşgil Köse & Akyol, 2019).

Act

Experiential marketing offers to enrich lives of customers and their physical experiences by targeting that showing them alternative ways of doing things, lifestyles and interactions (Schmitt, 1999). It is a form of marketing that deals with lifestyle, physical experience and behavior and the consumer in experiential marketing (Magro Magdalena, 2013). Tourists participating in water sports, dart competitions and similar activities in hotels they stay are exactly within this scope (Çavuşgil Köse & Akyol, 2019).

Relate

It is aimed to create a sense of belonging related to sensory, emotional, intellectual and behavioral experiences in relational experience (Sheu vd., 2009). However, relationship marketing goes beyond the individual's personal, private feelings and associates the individual with something outside of their own particular situation (Schmitt, 1999). It is carried out through interaction based on the social-identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture in Experiential Marketing (Musa et. al., 2015). An example of relationship marketing is the relationships that tourists form with the local community and culture they visit (Çavuşgil Köse & Akyol, 2019).

It is aimed to reach the necessary information and create a pleasant experience by establishing a sincere connection of the customer with these five important strategic experiential modules (SEMs) (Moral, 2020).

There has been an increase in the number of studies on the experiential economy and the tourism industry special interest, and there has been an increase in the marketing and management literature (Titz, 2007; Mehmetoğlu & Engen, 2011). In the study by Hosany and Witham (2010), the relationships among the cruisers' satisfaction, experience and recommendation intentions were examined. In the study by Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2013), they evaluated the experiences of wine tourists in the Erie Lake region (USA). This study used an adapted version of the experiential economy domains scale to examine the effects of the four dimensions of the experiential economy about destination loyalty. In the study by Correia Loureiro (2014) experimentally investigated the effect of experiential economy on place attachment and behavioral intentions through memory and emotions on individuals living on rural holidays in Southern Portugal.

Study by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) in Experiential Marketing; they proposed an experiential perspective on consumption, arguing that experiential consumption has a hedonic, symbolic and aesthetic nature, and another component of experiences is satisfaction. Study by Otto and Richie (1995) examined satisfaction with tourism experiences and subjective, emotional and personal responses to various aspects of service comparison result in varying overall satisfaction levels, most likely based on an experiential perspective. However, the most common relationship is that experience is related to customer satisfaction and service quality (Ekinçi et al., 2001). It is thought that an overly memorable tourism experience will lead to customer satisfaction and post-consumption behavioral intentions. The relationship and connection that this situation contains has been demonstrated by different studies conducted in the context of tourism (Oh et al., 2007).

Gastronomic Experience

In the contemporary world, the service economy tends to be replaced by the experiential economy (Bashynska, 2020). In a world where ordinary product and service understanding is adopted, the most important opportunities to create value are only possible with the presentation of experiences. For this reason, actors in the tourism sector tend to offer experiences in addition to service/product that can directly affect the tourist's senses (Streifeneder, 2016).

Nowadays, gastronomy tourism has become a trend and is considered one of the most dynamic developing sectors of tourism. Also, it has been considered as an indispensable element of getting to know about the culture of a specific region. Gastronomy; authenticity, culture, respect for traditions, healthy lifestyle, sustainability, etc. It has the power to combine traditional values with new trends such as (Sormaz et al., 2016). On the other hand, gastronomy tourism is accepted as a phenomenon that emerges not only from the desire to protect and present the characteristics of destinations, but also from the influence of travelers and curious tourists seeking the new and unknown (Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020). It is thought that this interest of tourists stems from their desire to acquire new experiences and their tendency to keep their impressions in their memories longer than the moments of casual daily events (Yaroshenko et al., 2018).

Gastronomy experience is a touristic experience enriched with gastronomic elements and the lifestyle around, place perception, stories, landscape, events, as well as cultural, social and other supportive elements (Robinson & Clifford, 2012). Gastronomy experience can be originated from much activities such as gastronomic events, local foods, tourism business serving different meals, as well as gastronomic tours and routes (Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019). About research of gastronomy experience in tourism reflects, the evolution in marketing and management theory, from efficient knowledge processing approaches to hedonistic/emotional and analysis of co-creation/relationality (Richards, 2021). Santich (2004:19) has argued that "origin of hospitality is when a host's offers special gastronomy to the traveler's ". This in many forms points to the gastronomy origins, that relied on, among other elements, from the early 19th century on providing maps to guide tourists to places of different local and regional dishes.

Three generations (Staged G-1.0, Co-creating G-2.0, Transformative G-3.0) of experience development are considered as an important classification element for gastronomic experience phase in tourism proposed by Richards (2015).

Generation 1.0 (Staged) Experiences

The majority of early research about gastronomy tourism experiences carried out on the topic of service perfectionism in hospitality industry. Lashley (2009) argued that tourism and hospitality activities are based on marketing-derived principles and in particular insights into service marketing. Other researches have tended to emphasize the role of food as a basic service to facilitate tourism (Richards, 2012). Research on this issue has focused on different dimensions of experience, especially those developed by Pine and Gilmore's (1999) four dimensions of the 4E model; Escapism, Education, Entertainment and Esthetics. These dimensions have been tested in various tourism contexts and as a result; It has been evaluated as effective factors in gastronomic tourism experiences how much the food experience of tourists adapts to their habits and the level of innovation of the food they encounter with their normal routines. Studies have confirmed the positive relationship between satisfying food experiences and behavioral intentions (Richards, 2021).

Tourists' habits are an important element in their gastronomic experience. Cohen and Avieli (2004) stated restaurants serving traditional cuisine to tourists are often unaccustomed or unattractive for many tourists. By examining how many traditional cuisines has changed and has been considered "authentic", they identified various markers of authentic ingredients, cooking and presentation methods in local food experiences. They concluded aligning these elements with tourists' expectations will lead to food being considered traditional, even if it was significantly altered from the local version. Tse and Crofts (2005) observed the tendency of international tourists to try traditional foods and concluded that this was influenced by the national culture in Hong Kong. Taş Gürsoy (2020) associated memorable gastronomic experiences with non-local food consumption by tourists, stating that for tourist, memorable is more important than originality. This case study also confirms findings from tourism environments, showing that emotions play an important role in gastronomy experience (Bastiaansen et al., 2019). In research conducted by Kiatkawsin and Han (2019) on Michelin-starred restaurants, it was concluded that gastronomic participation and knowledge are important factors for unforgettable experiences. Generation 1.0 focuses on service delivery, satisfaction and memorable experiences, where tourists are analyzed by national groups or market segments.

Generation 2.0 (Co-Creating) Experiences

The role of the tourist turns from being an individual to being an actor doing something in generation 2.0 (Boswijk et al., 2007). For example, in a restaurant environment, tourists interact with both employees and each other, so the control of the restaurant (place) over the experience is very low (Walter et al. 2010). Generation 2.0 experience is approached by the 4M model which expresses gastronomic experiences as co-created by manufacturers and tourists through "mood, moment, money, meal" (Kivits et al., 2011). It is argued that strongly co-creation and softly perceived value-satisfaction relation (Richards, 2021).

Co-creativity has also been associated with memorability like originality, risk, motivation, emotions and sociability. Unforgettable gastronomic experiences, including electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) or social media (Ranteallo & Andilolo, 2017), increase the intention of tourists to share experience and recommend destination (Frost et al., 2016). It seems that gastronomic experiences will evolve in a way that will change direction with the increase in the use of next generation reality technologies (Baran & Baran, 2021). It seems possible to offer gastronomy tourists a brand-new gastronomy experience with the developing virtual reality hardware and software (Baran, 2020) in terms of experiential marketing. The integration of virtual reality and hardware software with a pleasurable tourism dimension (Baran, 2019) such as gastronomy will be an important concept that can be evaluated especially in the metaverse dimension. Ramírez-Gutierrez et al. (2020) examined tourist gastronomic experiences transmitted via e-WOM and Lanzarote concluded that hedonic and novelty dimensions came to the fore shared via social media in gastronomic experiences.

Generation 3.0 (Transformative) Experiences

Generation 3.0 experiences are shared beyond the target and have a transformative impact. Therefore, evolution of the gastronomic experience will not only unify the experience of food consumption (1.0) and the interaction of various participants around that experience (2.0), but also the development of entire food landscapes associated with places (Richards, 2021). A more holistic analysis of the gastronomic experience shows that it is embedded in networks of relationships that support entire places and com-

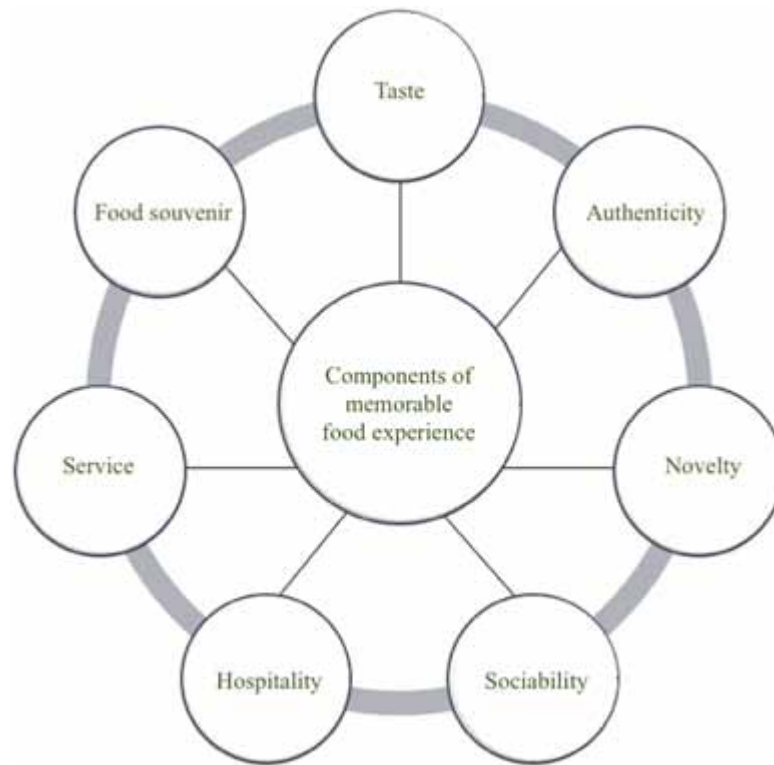
munities that transcend the narrow food or tourism system (Boswijk et al., 2007). A growing number of studies are analyzing gastronomic experience;

- Seeler et al. (2019) point out that decision-making is increasingly crowdsourcing and peer-approved, leading to the growth of diverse “communities” ‘ involving emerging user roles linked to experiences and network behavior on social media. Mkono & Tribe (2017) uncovered five different roles on Tripadvisor by using netnographic analysis; troll, activist, reviewer, information seeker and high society.
- Sthapit et al. (2019) examined the effect of service environment, co-creation, novelty seeking, experience concentration, and choice overload on memoirs about traditional food experience. In this research; found that the service environment had an important positive impact on an unforgettable experience of gastronomic. Remembrances can be expanded by purchasing taking photos and souvenirs while tasting traditional foods. It has also been found that unforgettable local food experiences are mainly enriched by the co-creation and intensification of experiences. Mixed methods approaches are also increasingly providing new insights.
- Franco et al. (2019) created Portugal’ sensory landscape through netnographic analysis of social media posts and revealed the importance of smells, touch, tastes, sounds, and sights through tourists’ survey. They concluded that 49% of tourists associate “Portuguese smell” with food, especially fish. In addition, it has stated that experiences including active participation and cooking, which offers hands-on activities, are also an important element. Experiential learning and the desire to master new skills is an element that can be preferred among gourmets who are eager to learn from gastronomes or food producers (Getz & Robinson, 2014).
- Local restaurants’ authenticity is seen as an important micro trend worldwide. Local gastronomic experiences can help build tourist authenticity and strengthen host-guest relationship and engagement (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2019).
- Developing stories based on traditional gastronomy that may be used to develop interactive games that attraction for tourists (Liberato et al., 2020)
- The blending of food and tourism by creating new narratives about heritage and traditional cuisine, providing opportunities to promote cosmopolitan street food (Amore & Roy, 2020)
- Experiential connection with a place creates a sense of ‘being in place’ like “home” goes beyond producer-tourists co-creation to register the local community as providers of authentic gastronomic experiences, allowing tourists to live, eat and cook like locals (Vrontis et al., 2020).

Management of Gastronomic Experience

The development of gastronomic cultural attractions and promotions have strategic importance in terms of gastronomic experience management. In a previous study on memorable food experiences components, which are given below in Figure 1. According to this research; It shows that food service providers should be more traditional in the selection of ingredients for cooking to preserve the characteristic flavor, novelty and authenticity of the local dishes offered to tourists. They should also encourage social interaction between service providers and guests in the catering industry, including telling stories about local food and food culture. They should also offer warm and hospitable hospitality, focus on the service industry, and sell food souvenirs to expand tourists’ memories (Sthapit, 2017).

Figure 1. Components of memorable food experiences (Sthapit, 2017)



Therefore, gastronomic experience management uses the classical methodology consisting of main stages. For this, first of all, internal and external analyzes are made, then a strategic and operational plan is created, and in the final stage, the process of dissemination of the plan takes place (Nesterchuk et al., 2021);

Internal Analysis

- Identification of gastronomic products and tourism places of special value.
- Regional and touristic context of gastronomic products.
- Evaluation and inventory of gastronomic sources.
- Determination of agents for gastronomic tourism models.
- Promotion and marketing analysis of gastronomic tourism.
- Gastronomic component analysis about tourists' desires.

External Analysis

- Gastronomic trends analysis,
- Possible tourists' desires analysis,
- Gastronomic destination analysis,
- Competitor analysis.

Strategic Plan

It is the stage of developing a general and long-term plan, which is critical to determine the way to achieve the goals according to the results of internal and external analysis of the situation (Petrov & Serdyuk, 2008). At this stage, it is important to connect with all relevant tourism actors and ensure their participation. This is the stage where strategic suggestions about the future of gastronomic experiences should be included. The development and sustainability of gastronomy tourism should visualize scenarios that increase the competitiveness of the destination in the main market and among different target groups (Zharova et al., 2021).

Operational Plan

At this stage, priorities and programs are determined for the development of the gastronomic aspect to ensure that the tourism and gastronomic potential of the region provides maximum benefit to all interested parties, both an operational development and an operational marketing plan are being created (Diachenko et al., 2021).

Expanding Plan

One of the key points of creating a tourism experience related to a destination is to deliver the reality of the region to all tourism actors in the most accurate way (Novikovas et al., 2017). A strategic gastronomic experience management plan; It should include an open, collaborative thinking process that includes domestic political leaders in the destination, communities about the gastronomy and tourism sector, tourism professionals, and leaders' vision. It is also very important to share the benefits it will provide to the sector by including gastronomy tourism in the value chain in this participatory process to achieve the goals and visualize the tourism scenario (Widana et al., 2021).

Marketing of Gastronomic Experience

When consumers buy a certain product or service, they measure their satisfaction by meeting their expectations (Woodruff et al. 1987). For this reason, Service Quality and Marketing Mix (Product and Price) practices include important factors that contribute to the experience that affects tourist satisfaction in gastronomy tourism. Service, Product and Price are important factors to increase tourist satisfaction (Saneha et al., 2021).

Service Quality

Quality of service is a measure of tourist service that measures how well service providers meet their needs in terms of tourists' expectations or overall travel experience those tourists can appreciate (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Many researches show that this has a significant effect on tourist pleasure (Manfredo et al., 1996) especially studies of restaurants and gastronomic attractions have shown that all aspects of service quality have a positive relationship with the quality of service and tourist satisfaction (Saneha et al., 2021). Quality of service for tourists is the best long-term strategy for success (Yoon & Ekinici, 2003).

Product

Product quality supplies pleasure and competitive advantages and fascinates tourists (Nuseir & Madanat, 2015). Tourism marketing product is classified as Level 1 “core” (service), Level 2 “tangible” (consumption), and Level 3 or “advanced” (value-add features) (Middleton & Clarke, 2012). In addition, previous studies show that tourist products have positive (Sudari et al., 2019) and the most critical factors effect on tourist satisfaction (Janchai et al., 2020). Hence, it is essential to improve gastronomic tourism products to invite tourists and increase their competitive advantages in the hospitality industry, so that tourists can get the best gastronomic experience (Saneha et al., 2021).

Price

Price shows the quantity of cash paid for a product, service or total values and is a trade for using that product or service (Kotler et al., 2005). Price is the cost of the products and services that tourists buy, in some money. Price is an important factor for product’s valuing, so tourists will feel more satisfied if quality pass over the costs that they pay (Saneha et al., 2021). Some studies explained a relationship between price and pleasure (Luekveerawattana, 2016). Price has been an important part of the marketing (Janchai et al., 2020) and has affected tourist satisfaction (Tanasubsinn, 2019).

Tourists’ satisfaction is defined as an individual’s cognitive and affective state derived from tourists’ experience (DelBosque & SanMartin 2008). Tourist’s experience helps to increase the level of satisfaction in service quality (Bradley et al., 2017). Tourists’ ability to co-create with a service provider and to create personalized experiences may subscribe to satisfaction (Mathis et al., 2016).

Price and product are primary factors of tourists’ satisfaction (Han & Ryu, 2009) therefore have a significant effect on the satisfaction of tourists (Christian, 2013). If price and product are poorly implemented then tourists would be unsatisfied (Azhar et al., 2019). Furthermore, price is a personal experience that provides tourists with significant efficacy (Poulsson & Kale, 2004). Tourists’ perceptions of tourism products or tourism services through direct use or indirect observation image the value of experience (Mathwick et al., 2001).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Tourists join tourism types where they can have different experiences apart from typical tourism types to have an unforgettable experience. At this point, as a result of the differentiation of the demands and needs of the tourists, the interest in special interest tourism, adventure tourism and different types of tourism is increasing. Also, it is very important to research the characteristics of a particular touristic area and to obtain detailed information about the experiences and behaviors of the tourists coming to that region to create new products and marketing touristic products. In this way, the factors that may affect the purchasing behavior of tourists can be determined and it will be easier to provide services that will provide individuals with an unforgettable experience. It can be said that enterprises producing touristic products can gain an advantageous position in today’s competition with the knowledge of the experiences and behavioral intentions of potential tourists. Social networks or personal blogs are preferred by millions of people and are of great importance in terms of promoting a brand’s product or service. It focuses on authenticity and visibility when the user searches especially for food or gastronomy. The

most important point here is to know that young and old target audiences will not search with the same parameters. For this, the use of digital marketing methods with an expert staff is important in terms of reaching the entire target audience.

Tourist experience is the fact that a situation or event experienced by someone is felt, known or witnessed. Currently, tourist experiences show that they identify more with the real tourist product. However, it shows that even if quality, service delivery is not a sufficient factor to ensure the full satisfaction and psychological well-being of tourists. In addition to unique experiences that integrate cultural value, leisure and social interaction, visitors are increasingly seeking the total experience. This situation brings experiential tourism, which is of great importance, to the fore by interacting with tourists in the tourism sector. The aim of the tourists is to discover new elements that will detach themselves from reality, to establish a sensory connection with the environment, to reach live stories and experiences that can tell them. Considering that travel itself is an experience as a whole, it seems possible to say that tourism marketing can only be successful if it works in coordination with experiential marketing.

The evaluation of new generation technologies, which have added a new dimension to tourism in recent years (Baran, 2021), in terms of experiential marketing is also considered as a very important step for the tourism sector. Especially the fact that augmented reality is a technology used in creating a special meal experience is an indication that these steps will be taken in virtual reality technology in the future (Baran & Baran, 2022). Regarding the subject, it is predicted that tourism experiences in the metaverse will increase in the future. It seems that the marketing and management perspective of the tourism sector developing in this field will also change in connection with this. Metaverse continues to develop as an important field that will affect experiential tourism and add a whole new dimension. Considering the gastronomic dimension of the subject, it can be said that the metaverse, which will present the most realistic version of the experience before visiting a destination, will add a brand-new experiential dimension for tourism.

CONCLUSION

The best way for tourism businesses to survive and succeed in the competitive tourism market is to provide tourists with unforgettable tourism experiences and thus encourage them to revisit a destination. How tourists remember their vacation memories is one of the most important factors in making their other vacation decisions in future (Karaca & Tağraf, 2021). Nowadays it is seen that the service economy is replaced by the experiential economy. Gastronomy is considered as a type of tourism that is very much related to experience. Gastronomic tourism, which is a tourism field that keeps up with the changing preferences of modern society, continues to develop rapidly. It is thought that this type of tourism can contribute to the socio-economic development of the regions in terms of creating new job opportunities, preserving the production of specialty products and ensuring continuity.

It is revealed that the subject of experiential management and marketing is closely related to gastronomy when the results of the research on these subjects are examined. Therefore, it is thought that making experiences in the field of gastronomy more interesting is an important element. For this, the existence of gastronomy elements in the destination, the importance and necessity of developing gastronomic experiences, the correct evaluation of the potential tourism demand, the development of tools that create and introduce the gastronomy elements, the creation of a working standard, the employment of qualified personnel, the support of the public and private sector, the presence of expert domestic tour operators

can be considered among important issues. It is thought that gastronomy experience as a tourism product, if properly developed and executed, can contribute to the competitiveness of destinations and will make a significant contribution to management and marketing issues, especially in experiential tourism.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Experiential Management: Experiential management is the process of managing the personalized experiences. Also creates attraction and emotional campaigns in the target market with the perception of safe tourism.

Experiential Marketing: Experiential marketing is a marketing strategy that engages the consumer and creates a real-life experience that will be remembered. This type of marketing focuses specifically on getting the consumer to experience the brand.

Experiential Tourism: Experiential tourism, also known as immersion tourism, is a form of tourism in which tourists focus on experiencing a destination by engaging with its history, culture, food, and nature in an active and meaningful way.

Gastronomic Experience: The gastronomic experience can be defined as the result of the interaction, which includes unique experiences beyond the functional reality of local cuisine and nutrition, and takes place in all processes of tourism.

Chapter 13

Theme Park Experiences in the Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

Today, high product and service quality is no longer valid for consumers to choose them. Consumers look for unique experiences beyond services and products. Customer experiences are highly related to the tourism industry. Tourism is a service sector with intense experience. Customers not only buy products but also gain experience. Theme parks are star players in the tourism industry. In the tourism industry context, theme parks are places of entertainment where visitors experience mostly hedonic goods and services and thus are characterized as real pioneers of the experience economy. Therefore, theme park experiences are of great importance to the tourism industry. Therefore, in this chapter, the concept of experience, its importance in the tourism industry, and theme park experiences will be included, and some suggestions will be made for future research by giving solutions and recommendations in terms of managerial implications.

INTRODUCTION

Today, price and functionality alone are not enough (Barners et al., 2009: 67). High product and service quality is no longer valid for consumers to choose them. Consumers look for one-of-a-kind experiences beyond services and products (Oh et al., 2007: 119). Experiences create unique value for customers, make it harder for competitors to imitate the firm, and can also heavily affect consumer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and word-of-mouth (WOM). By focusing on this aspect of customer experience, many businesses have started to design experiences to differentiate themselves from their other competitors (Ali & Omar, 2014: 176).

The word experience comes from nous, which is the Greek word that means mind or understanding, and it means knowledge directly experienced with a feeling of certainty (Lindgreen et al., 2009: 180). Various authors have defined the concept of experience in various ways (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt,

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1999; Mossberg, 2007; Oh et al., 2007). Pine and Gilmore (1999: 12) stated that experience is a state that affects the individual emotionally, spiritually, physically, and mentally. Oh et al. (2007: 120) defined experiences as “enjoyable, engaging and memorable encounters for those consuming these events”.

Experiences are part of customer behaviour associated with consumer emotions, different perceptions of customers and fantasies (Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 183). An experience is extraordinary, under one’s control, enjoyable, and a spontaneous process. The experience can be easily remembered even years later (Arnould & Price, 1993: 25). Also, experiences are personal. They include customer participation and perception, mobilize customers emotionally, are shared with other persons and are kept in memory for a while (Ali & Omar, 2014: 177). An experience dimension(s) or experience is a mixture of numerous personal dimensions that get together in the individual which can engage the customer, physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally and remain in the consumer’s mind. Since the experience dimensions are interpreted individually, two people do not have a similar experience. Dimension(s) of experience or experiences may involve the social environment (interaction with other consumers and employees) and physical environment (Walls et al., 2011a: 168). Customer experience includes each contact point in which the customer interacts with the service, product, and business (Grewal et al., 2009: 1).

Many authors have stated that customer experiences are closely related and important to the tourism industry (Ali & Omar, 2014: 176; Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 182-183). Tourism is a service sector with intense experience. Therefore, tourists are more active and open to new experiences during their travels. Tourism product is an experience in general. Customers not only buy products but also gain experience (Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 182-183).

The experiences of people in touristic environments can be directly affected by the social environment (e.g., other customers and personnel) as well as the physical environment (Mossberg, 2007: 64). In the hospitality and tourism industry, since services are inseparable, heterogeneous, and intangible, both social interactions and the physical environment gain more importance than products (Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 183). The most effective customer experiences in the hospitality industry are formed when physical cues (mechanical) are supported by desirable social interactions (Cetin & Walls, 2016: 417). Researchers state that high customer satisfaction will lead to high customer loyalty, purchase intention, WOM marketing, and market share (Yuan & Wu, 2008: 388). Therefore, companies operating in the tourism and hospitality industry need to effectively manage elements of physical and human interaction to increase their consumers’ experience (Walls et al., 2011b: 18).

Theme parks are star players in the tourism industry and have a special and important place in creating tourism demand (Raluca & Gina, 2008: 635). Theme parks try to create the fantastic atmosphere or ambiance of another time and place. The theme is primarily conveyed through visual and audible expressions as well as other senses such as smell and touch (Milman, 2010: 221). Therefore, in the tourism industry context, theme parks are one of the most famous types of tourist destinations and are places of entertainment where visitors experience mostly hedonic goods and services (Park et al., 2020: 3). Theme parks lead to the occurrence and strengthening of a postmodern concept of “themed entertainment”, which is featured by the theatrical design and the production of “emotional experiences” (Cabanas, 2020: 1). Because theme parks stimulate their visitors to immerse within a staged fantasy, visitors generally infer meaning from suchlike staged environments and this leads to developing a memorable experience. Therefore, theme parks represent the best examples of hedonic experiences (Torres et al., 2019: 135) and are characterized as real pioneers of the experience economy (Cabanas, 2020: 1).

In the economy of experience, the value of the consumption of a service or product is measured not just by tangible aspects, but by emotional dimensions of the experience as well. Therefore, understanding

the different factors of satisfaction and loyalty toward theme parks is crucial to remaining competitive (Milman & Tasci, 2018: 386). Theme park visitors are generally satisfied when they realize that their expectations regarding consumption are met by human and environmental factors in the theme park (Park et al., 2020: 3). Emotions like pleasure, are natural components of customers’ experience. The positive emotions are associated with the satisfaction and revisit intention of tourists in different sub-sectors of tourism, including theme parks because they constantly interact with the social and physical environment during the consumption experience (Ali et al., 2018: 2). On this topic, Milman and Tasci (2018: 387) stated that factors related to theme park loyalty and satisfaction include intangible and tangible variables. Intangible factors include perceived value, reliability, responsiveness, or security, as well as more subjective perceptions such as surprise, atmosphere, immersion, and general. Tangible variables include parking, exciting rides, physical environment, cleanliness, recreational areas, as well as human interactions with other visitors and staff. Many studies have been conducted by various authors to understand the theme park experiences of customers until today (see table 2). Therefore, theme park experiences are of great importance in the tourism industry. In this direction, in this chapter where the theme park experiences in the tourism industry will be explained, firstly, the concept of experience will be mentioned, secondly, the experiences in the tourism industry will be included, and finally, some suggestions will be made for future research by giving solutions and recommendations in terms of managerial implications.

BACKGROUND

The Concept of Experience

The word experience comes from nous, which is the Greek word that means mind or understanding, and it means knowledge directly experienced with a feeling of certainty (Lindgreen et al., 2009: 180). Experience has been defined in different ways by various authors, as can be seen in Table 1. For example, Pine and Gilmore (1998: 99) stated that experiences are events that affect the individual emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Schmitt (1999: 12) states that experiences emerge after encountering certain situations, or experiencing certain situations, and provide behavioural, relational, emotional, sensory, and cognitive values by replacing the functional values provided by products/services.

Table 1. Descriptions of experience by different authors

Author(s)	Experience Definition
Mcintosh & Siggs, 2005: 74.	“Events that engage individuals in a personal way.”
Mossberg, 2007: 61.	Experience is a mixture of numerous elements that coalesce and it should activate a variety of senses of consumers, physically, spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally.
Oh et al., 2007: 120.	Encounters that are enjoyable, engaging, and memorable for those who consume the events.
Yuan & Wu, 2008: 387.	Customer experience represents the total outcome that the customer obtains from the combination of the services, product and environment purchased.
Verhoef et al., 2009: 32.	“The customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction.”
Walls et al., 2011a: 167.	“The total combination of goods, services, and the environment that is purchased and/or experienced.”
Lee et al., 2020: 474-475.	“Subjective personal responses and emotions that individuals have when purchasing or using a product or service.”

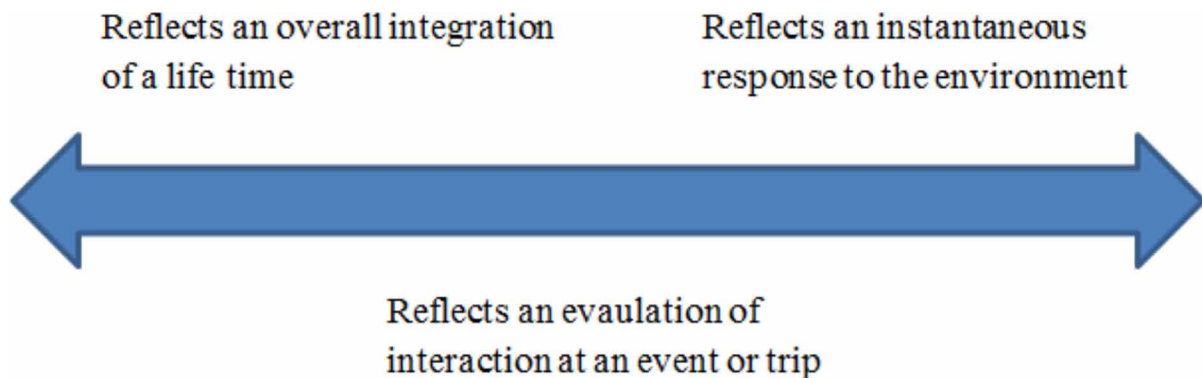
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Different types of experiences have been described by various authors (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999, Titz, 2008; Walls et al., 2011b). For example, Schmitt (1999: 13) introduced strategic experiential modules for managers may use to constitute different kinds of consumer experiences, and identified them as sense, feeling, thinking, acting (act), and relating. Likewise, Pine and Gilmore (1998: 101-102) stated that experiences may be classified into four categories like education, aesthetics, escape, and entertainment.

The notion of experience may be defined as an instant response to an event that has just taken place. From this perspective, a trip can include numerous micro experiences (e.g., think about how often you feel the sun, sand, and/or wind on the beach, or smells from a city such as Sydney, New York, Beijing, or Vienna) that are put together using the various emotional and cognitive process for creating meaning. On the other side of the spectrum, a person's experience consists of a myriad of macro or micro experiences, however, they are 'encapsulated', 'collected', or accumulated over a lifetime into an overall assessment. Finally, an experience can merely reflect a single event within a whole trip. For example, visiting a concert or the zoo could be described as an exciting experience by one (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017: 19).

Figure 1. The meaning of experience

Source: Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017: 20.



Titz (2008: 328) argued that experiential consumption can be viewed through emotional response, sensation seeking, pleasure/displeasure, absorption of experiences, and cognition. Likewise, Verhoef et al. (2009: 33) stated that customer experience comprises several determinants such as the service interface, assortment, retail atmosphere, price/promotions, and social environment. Experiences are part of customer behaviour associated with consumer emotions, different perceptions of customers, and fantasies (Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 183). An experience is extraordinary, under one's control, enjoyable, and a spontaneous process. The experience can be easily remembered even after many years, but it is difficult to define because it has remarkable emotional content (Arnould & Price, 1993: 25). Similarly, Ali and Omar (2014: 177) stated that experiences are personal and extraordinary, they include customer participation and perception, mobilize customers emotionally, are shared with other persons, and are kept in memory for a while. Many authors have argued that two people do not have a similar experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 99; Walls et al., 2011a: 168). For example, Pine and Gilmore (1998: 99) stated that two people cannot be expected to have a similar experience, since each experience derives from the interaction between the individual's mental state and the staged event (like a theatre play). Similarly,

Walls et al. (2011a: 168) stated that two individuals cannot have a similar experience since the dimensions of the experience are interpreted on an individual basis.

Today, many businesses are adding experience to their traditional offerings to better sell their goods and services. Experience happens when a business deliberately uses goods as support and services as a stage to influence individual customers, creating a lasting event in their minds (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 98). Many authors have stated that the high quality of products and services, their price or functionality are no longer valid and sufficient for consumers to choose them (Barners et al., 2009: 67; Oh et al., 2007: 119). Consumers look for unique experiences beyond goods and services (Oh et al., 2007: 119). Experiences make it difficult for competitors to imitate the firm (Ali & Omar, 2014: 176; Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 181). Therefore, companies attach great importance to creating experiences for consumers. Today, it is not enough alone for businesses to offer just goods, products, and services. Instead, they must offer memorable experiences to be distinguished from other companies in an increasingly commoditized and competitive world (Walls et al., 2011a: 168).

Although the needs and wishes of consumers are different, negative or positive experiences are an unavoidable outcome of consuming the product or service that they buy (Yuan & Wu, 2008: 387). Grewal et al. (2009: 1) stated that customer experience includes each contact point in which the customer interacts with the service, product, and business. From this perspective, the experience/experience dimensions may include the physical environment and the social environment (interaction with other consumers and employees) (Walls et al., 2011a: 168). Similarly, Ali and Omar (2014: 178) stated that customer experience can be conceptualized as an operation/function of the social and physical environment.

Experiences provide unique value to the customer, make it difficult for competitors to imitate the company, and can have a strong influence on customer satisfaction, customer intention to recommend (word of mouth marketing), and customer loyalty (Ali & Omar, 2014: 176; Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 181). Therefore, to manage customer experience, companies must realize what customer experience essentially means (Grewal et al., 2009: 1).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Experiences in The Tourism Industry

Customer experiences are closely related to the tourism industry (Ali & Omar, 2014: 176). In the context of marketing, the tourist experience is considered equivalent to the consumer experience. Every tourist is considered to be a consumer and thus the marketing importance of tourist activities lies in the consumption of goods and services by tourists. Tourists always consume and experience during their journey (Mossberg, 2007: 60). For example, Otto and Ritchie (1996: 166) defined the leisure and tourism experience “as the subjective mental state felt by participants”. Tourism is primarily associated with tourist experiences such as seeing, enjoying, learning, visiting, and living a different lifestyle. Everything that tourists experience in a destination can be an emotional, behavioural, cognitive, perceptual, and open or closed experience (Oh et al., 2007: 120). A Meaningful “experience” is considered the most important factor affecting traveler satisfaction, and travel engagement and stays in one’s memory for a long time (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017: 17). Experiences in the tourism industry involve extraordinary (peak) experiences (i.e., total immersion or flow experience) and ordinary experiences (i.e., daily life, routines, and acceptance of events). Ordinary (daily effect) experiences can be transformed into extraordinary if

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combined with human interactions and physical factors. For example, taking a walk at their home with a father and daughter can be an ordinary experience but, if they walk together in the California Redwoods, this can be an extraordinary experience (Walls et al., 2011b: 18).

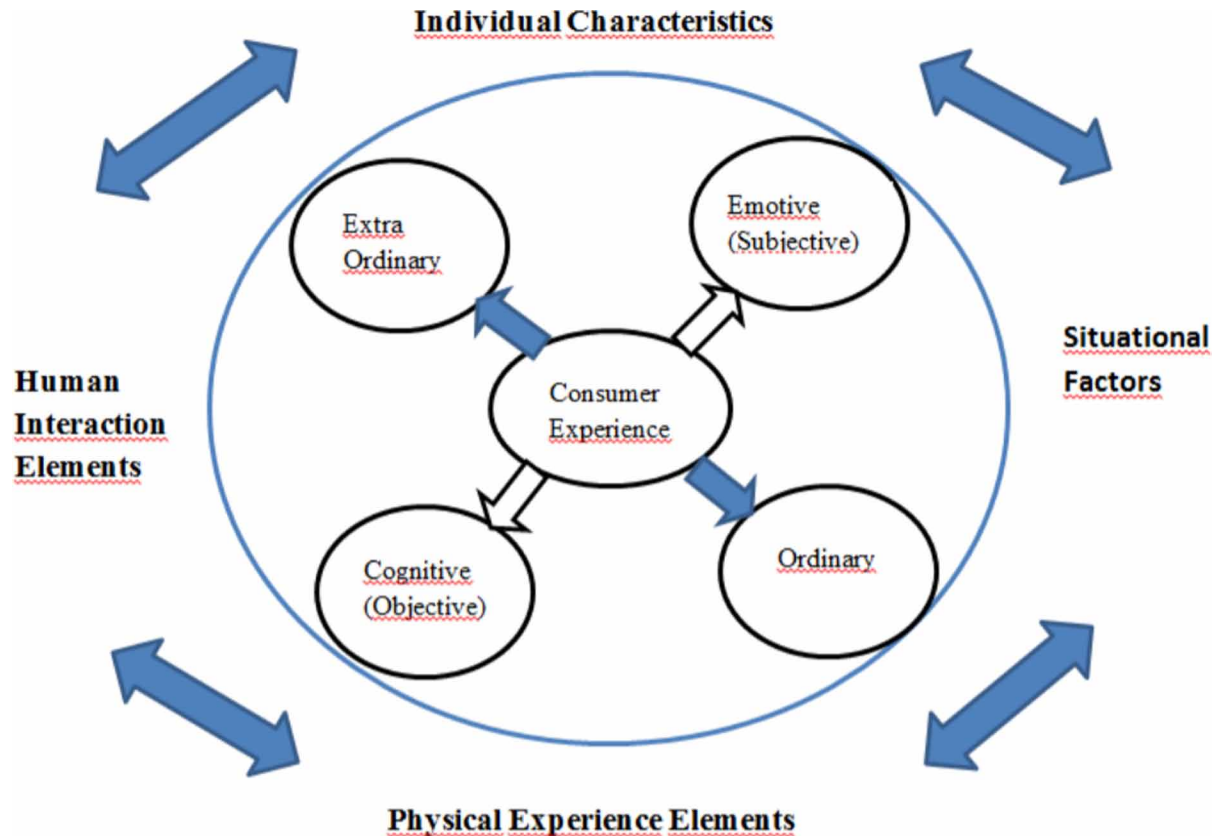
Customer experiences are significantly important for the tourism industry. Tourism is a service sector with intense experience. Therefore, tourists are more active and open to new experiences during their travels. Tourism product is an experience in general. Customers not only buy products but also gain experience (Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 182-183). The experiences of people in touristic environments can be directly affected by the social environment, where the staff and other customers, as well as the physical environment. These three elements are imported into the experience environment, in which emotional and functional characteristics play a significant role (Mossberg, 2007: 64).

Emotions play a vital role in being able to understand the tourist experience (Hu et al., 2021: 5). Emotions of customers such as pleasure are seen as natural components of their experiences (Ali et al., 2018: 2). Customer emotions are emotional reactions produced during the consumption experience (Hu et al., 2021: 5). Emotions are usually shown through facial expressions and body language in the service encounter (Torres et al., 2019: 131). Especially in the tourism experience, the nature of the experience is emotional (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017: 21). Likewise, many authors have emphasized that emotions are significant results of hedonic consumption experiences, especially in the tourism industry where many tourists are motivated to travel with the expectation they will receive pleasure (Ma et al., 2013: 359; Ali et al., 2018: 1-2). Emotional reactions and decisions are quite common among consumers in tourism. Therefore, it is very important to understand experiences in the tourism industry (Otto & Ritche, 1996: 165).

Social interactions and physical environment gain more importance than products in the hospitality and tourism industry because services are inseparable, intangible, and heterogeneous (Cetin & Dincer, 2014: 183). The most effective customer experiences in the hospitality industry are formed when physical cues (mechanical) are supported by desirable social interactions (Cetin & Walls, 2016: 417). Likewise, Walls et al. (2011b: 18) stated that hospitality and tourism firms can enhance their customers' experience by managing both components of physical and human interaction.

Figure 2. The composition of hospitality and tourism consumer experiences.

Source: Walls et al., 2011b: 17.

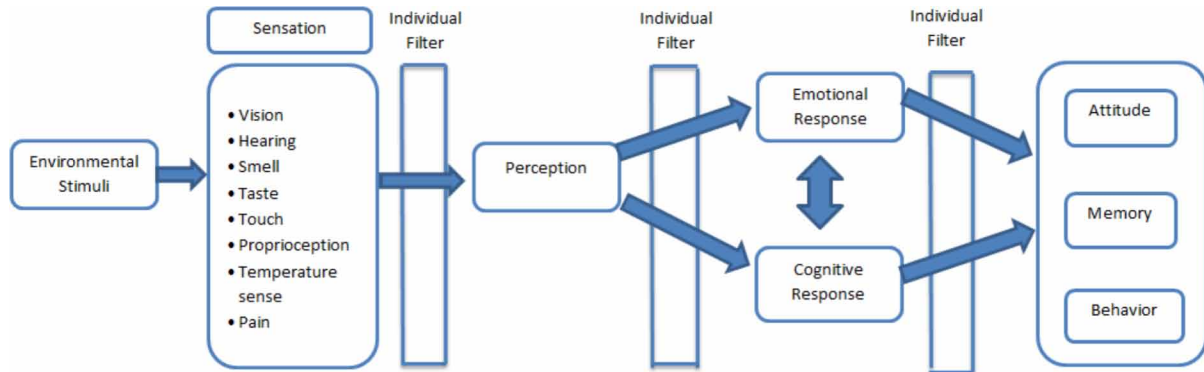


Cohen (1979: 183) developed a phenomenological typology of tourist experiences and divided the types of tourist experiences into five basic areas: recreational mode, experiential mode, existential mode, diversionary mode, and experimental mode. On the other hand, Chun (2012: 99) divided the types of pleasure in the tourism industry into 3 groups: achievement, aesthetic and sensory pleasure. Sensory pleasures arise from a pleasant sound, pleasant taste, attractive sight, smell, kinesthetic experience, or touch. Aesthetic pleasure comes from sensations, but this type of pleasure involves appreciating the beauty of nature or architecture. Achievement pleasure includes personal growth, a renovated sensation of self, and actions taken.

Kim and Fesenmaier (2017) presented a conceptual framework for the creation of tourism experiences. This framework consists of four levels: 1) A sensorial level which is below the level of consciousness, 2) A perceptual level that travelers are entirely conscious of these aspects affecting how they see and experience a place, 3) A emotional and cognitive level where the bodies, brains, and minds of travelers actively react to the world that surrounds them, 4) A level of action where transformation, information, learning, and memory take place.

Figure 3. Framework of tourism experience and creation

Source: Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017: 23.



For example, Walls et al. (2011a: 173-189) revealed that consumer experience consists of human interaction and physical environment dimensions that affect experiences. In the study, environmental conditions, multiple perceptions, space/functions, symbols, signs, and artificial texture are listed as significant dimensions within the physical environment of luxury hotels. Moreover, correct behaviours, appearances, attitudes and socialization skills such as respecting privacy) of other customers, as well as the attitudes, professional behaviours, proactive service, and appearance of the staff have been found to affect the consumer’s stay experience.

Walls et al. (2011b: 17-20) have proposed a framework describing the structure of consumer experiences in the tourism and hospitality industry. In the study, the basic consumer experience is categorized into four groups extraordinary, emotive, ordinary, and cognitive, and the factors affecting consumer experiences are listed as situational factors, perceived human interaction elements, perceived physical experience elements, and individual characteristics. The authors suggested that businesses should strengthen the physical environment to address the consumer’s five senses (e.g., providing a fresh and clear-smelling hotel surrounding, welcoming and warm colour design, and a well-designed environment that is visually and practical appealing), and should develop human interaction factors by training staff and targeting a specific type of customer to create an appealing and appropriate social environment. These human interaction elements may involve staff behaviours such as smiling at customers, having a good body posture, wearing good uniforms, and making eye contact. The author also stated that experience may be affected by interactions between customers, namely, the interactions with other customers. These elements may involve other customers’ socio-economic expectations and expected behaviour respecting personal space.

Generating memorable experiences is essential for businesses to attract new customers and retain old customers. The main component of experiential marketing is experience. Generating satisfied customers and retaining customers is critical to the business’s success. Researchers state that high customer satisfaction will lead to high customer loyalty, purchase intention, WOM marketing, and market share (Yuan & Wu, 2008: 388). Therefore, companies operating in the tourism and hospitality industry need to effectively manage human interaction and physical environment elements to increase the experience of their consumers (Walls et al., 2011b: 18).

Theme Park Experiences

A theme park is a space or place where multiple attributes such as events, restaurants, attractions, structures, shows, rides, retail stores, and landscaping, are presented along one or more specific themes to provide an inimitable ambiance and experience (Lee et al., 2020: 476). Many authors have emphasized that theme parks are entertainment attractions that aim to create a fantasy environment or atmosphere evocative of a dissimilar time and place (Milman, 2010: 221; Torres et al., 2018: 66; Tasci & Milman, 2019: 853). Millions of people of every age visit theme parks each year (Wei et al., 2021: 1). They are an important part of the tourism and hospitality industry and provide economic benefits for the local communities in which they operate (Tasci & Milman, 2019: 853). Today, most famous theme parks have grown into destinations by themselves. For instance, World-renowned Walt Disney theme parks attract approximately 138 million visitors each year and develop their nearby communities so that they become famous destinations. Indeed, some destinations (e.g., California, Florida, Anaheim, and Orlando) have been branded according to the elements of their theme parks. Because theme parks have become increasingly popular, most theme parks compete with other businesses in the entertainment sector. Therefore, they incorporate their experience offerings with complementary sectors such as recreation and hospitality to expand their market share and create ancillary economic impacts. The new integrated business model empowers theme parks into destinations by encouraging guests to visit to stay within the territory of the operator and experience restaurants, hotels, retail, and other facilities related to the brand of the theme park (Milman & Tasci, 2018: 385).

Increasing consumer expectations are among the challenges of the theme park industry, as in every industry. Today, the value of consuming a service or product is measured not only by tangible aspects but also by emotional dimensions of experience (Milman & Tasci, 2018: 385). Theme parks lead to the emergence and reinforcement of a postmodern concept of “themed entertainment” featured by the production of “emotional experiences” and theatrical design (Tasci & Milman, 2019: 853) Many authors have emphasized that theme parks are the real antecedents of the emerging experience economy (Tasci & Milman, 2019: 853; Cabana, 2020: 1). The theme park industry’s offering of experiences as a core product causes it to be known as the experience industry (Ittamala & Kumar, 2021: 191).

From the visitors’ point of view, experience is the main/primary value or benefit a visitor would derive from a visit to a theme park (Ittamalla & Kumar, 2021: 191). When experiences are concerned, people tend to remember extraordinary and remarkable events more than ordinary and regular events (Zheng et al., 2021: 3). In the context of the tourism industry, theme parks are one of the most popular travel destinations and are considered entertainment places where guests predominantly experience hedonic services/products because the experiences are driven in large part by the emotional appeal of theme parks (Park et al., 2020: 3). Exciting experiences can stay in people’s minds longer. Thus, the more hedonic experiences visitors get, they can better remember (Ittamalla & Kumar, 2021: 204).

Immersion means a psychological state in which people are profoundly involved in some activities (Wei et al., 2021: 1). Because theme parks stimulate guests to immerse themselves in a staged fantasy, guests frequently draw some sense from these staged environments and this leads to the development of a memorable experience (MTE). A memorable tourism experience (MTE) can be defined as “selectively constructed from tourism experiences based on the individual’s assessment of the experience”. Unlike a tourism experience, An MTE is related to a long-term subjective condition that is stored in his/her mind after tourist experiences a service or visits a destination (Zheng et al., 2021: 3). Therefore, theme

Theme Park Experiences in the Tourism Industry

parks try to provide memorable and inimitable experiences to their visitors to improve the competitive advantages that they have (Milman et al., 2020b: 3896).

The creation of memorable experiences has become a primary success element of the businesses operating theme parks (Ittamalla & Kumar, 2021: 190). Memorable experiences are also considered a vital determinant of customer loyalty (Ali et al., 2018: 2). Creating a positive customer experience is an essential part of the context of the theme park environment because it leads to customers being satisfied with the theme park and re-visiting the theme park (Lee et al., 2020: 475). For example, Ittamalla and Kumar (2021: 190-204) aimed to examine the role of theme park visitors' subjective experiences on their vivid memories (one's ability to recall past experiences or actions) and their theme park loyalty and found that the service experience of theme park customers (hedonic, involvement, recognition, peace of mind) considerably affects on their vivid memory and theme park loyalty. The research also found that consumers visit theme parks to have enjoyable and exciting experiences that can make them feel like they are breaking out of a daily routine. Likewise, Lee et al. (2020: 487) stated that the overall satisfaction of theme park visitors increased when they experience learning opportunities by absorbing theme park activities and participating in a variety of events through interactive engagement.

Emotions are important consequences of hedonic consumption experiences in the context of the tourism industry, where numerous tourists are motivated to travel in the hope that they will be pleased. Positive customer emotions are an important role in the creation of memorable tourist experiences that stimulate destination loyalty. For example, positive customer emotions are found associated with the intentions of tourists to return to a city (Ma et al., 2013: 359). Similarly, theme parks represent the best examples of hedonic experiences (Torres et al., 2019: 135).

Theme park guests are satisfied when they perceive or feel that their expectations of consumption are fulfilled by human interactions and environmental factors in the theme park (Park et al., 2020: 3). For example, Ali et al. (2018: 2) emphasized that positive emotions are associated with revisit intention and satisfaction of tourists in theme parks, which is one of the various sectors of tourism, due to their constant interaction with the social and physical environment along with the consumption experience. Similarly, Milman and Tasci (2018: 387) stated that factors related to theme park loyalty and satisfaction include intangible and tangible variables. Intangible factors include perceived value, reliability, responsiveness, or security, as well as more subjective perceptions such as surprise, atmosphere, immersion and general. Tangible variables include parking, exciting rides, physical environment, cleanliness, recreational areas, as well as human interactions with other visitors and staff.

Ambience factors have importance in the positive emotions of customers. Sound, lighting and aroma affect the positive emotions of customers. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on how management can combine these ambience factors to provide the best customer experience (Slatten et al., 2011: 89). The physical environment of theme parks involves restaurants, entertainment facilities, landscaping and retail stores, and these are key factors that determine the quality of service (Kao et al., 2008: 165). Wu et al. (2018: 26) found that the quality of the physical environment is considered to be the most important aspect of the experiential quality perceived by visitors to theme parks. On the other hand, Slatten et al. (2011: 88) revealed that ambience factors affect the positive emotions of customers in a winter park setting. Similarly, Torres et al. (2019: 136) stated that the arrival experience is a critical role in creating positive customer emotions, and found that the first impression at arrival is very important for the overall experience of the theme park. In this direction, the authors suggested that theme park managers must concentrate on service areas by assessing the physical setting, especially the theme park entrance, should dedicate more resources to the arrival experience at certain service trips that clients encounter,

including checkpoints, information and ticketing, and should plan sufficient workforce at the theme park entrance to supply necessary services to guests on arrival. They also stated that the first positive impression of the theme park experiences will provide satisfaction. Ali et al. (2018: 1-7) found that the physical setting has a major impact on the satisfaction and delight of customers. Kao et al. (2008: 163) found that the attractiveness of the setting was positively related to experiential quality.

Theme parks create a hedonistic atmosphere by staging experiences such as performances and spectacles that stimulate guests to explore their environment. In the discovery process, the social factors, as well as the physical elements, have an impact on park visitors' evaluations (Zheng et al., 2021: 7). In the context of a theme park, immersion can be referred to as a situation where visitors of theme parks are cut off from reality and focus on the environment and target activities. When individuals are immersed in an environment, all their senses must be entirely engaged. Thus, immersion will be evoked not just by the physical setting, but by the social elements such as other people as well (Wei et al., 2021: 4). For example, Kao et al. (2008: 165-172) stated that the clothing, attitude and professional skills of the actors, who are one of the theatrical elements in the theme parks, include all the service personnel that affect the quality perception of the consumers. In their research, the authors found that the attractiveness of the actors is one of the theatrical factors that positively affect the quality of experience, and emphasized that the language and body language of the staff are important in the quality of experience. Slatten et al. (2011: 87-89) found that interaction between customers and employees is important for the positive emotions of customers. Ali et al. (2018: 1-7) found that customers' interaction with staff has a major impact on the satisfaction and delight of customers.

Theme parks require a high level of contact and proximity between guests who are unacquainted with each other but often share joint facilities, service providers and physical service settings (Torres et al., 2019: 136). The fact that the visitors of theme parks are often physically in proximity to each other brings the presence of other customers in the theme parks more evident (Zheng et al., 2021: 2). Therefore, theme parks include interactions between customers (Tsang et al., 2016: 1089). Because visitors are an essential part of the theme park experiences, it has become important to understand that interactions between guests play a significant role in the creation of immersive experiences. In a shared and closed environment, visitors to theme parks are generally physically very proximity to each other and they can be easily influenced by each other, both through physical or verbal interactions and indirectly through non-verbal interactions such as the only presence of others, and customers perception about other people become an essential part of their all experiences. Theme parks are places that have a highly hedonic atmosphere and are characterized by high-level customer density. This leads to opportunities for visitors to interact with each other. Such indispensable and inevitable interactions can ultimately become an essential part of the overall experiences of theme park visitors. The perceived similarity in the appearance and behaviour of other customers can have a deep effect on the visiting experience of focal customers. For instance, all theme parks worldwide have started to reopen during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether visitors wear masks in the theme park considerably affects the perception of focal visitors concerning the theme park's safety measures, and visitors' overall experience, which could affect their intentions to return in future (Wei et al., 2021: 1-11).

Many studies have been conducted on other visitors to the theme parks (Slatten et al., 2011; Tsang et al., 2016; Torres et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2021). For example, Torres et al. (2019: 135-136) found that compared to interactions that occur between service providers and customers, interactions between other customers were most likely to trigger guest emotions and lead to a more satisfying visiting experience. Zheng et al. (2021: 6) found that perceived similarity among other visitors had a positive effect on the

focus visitor's sense of curiosity and arousal. In the study, it was concluded that when guests perceive highly level the similarity between themselves and other visitors, guests are most likely to feel the experience of observing other people as stimulating and fascinating, and when the focal guests perceive behaviours of others as more entertaining and amusing, they are more likely to find that moment exciting. Wei et al. (2021: 1) found that perceived similarity between customers had a positive impact on the memorability of the experience and visitors' feeling of immersion in the theme park, and memorable experiences positively affected the visitors' behavioural intentions such as intention to revisit and willingness to pay premiums. Ali et al. (2018: 1-7) found that interactions between other customers have a considerable impact on the satisfaction and delight of customers

Tsang et al. (2016: 1088-1099) in their research, which aims to search the aspects of visitors' inappropriate behaviour in interactions between customers (C2C), examined inappropriate behaviours between customers in the dimensions of controllability, stability and locus of control. The locus of control dimension indicates whether the service failure is due to external factors such as the fault of the service provider or internal factors within the clients themselves, namely, it indicates the source of the service failure. The stability dimension is associated with uncertainty and affects the consumers' future expectations regarding service performance. Especially, it relates to the perception that service failure is temporary or permanent. Customers can be prepared to forgive a one-time, minor and temporary service failure. However, multiple repetitions of service failure by service providers can enhance negative perceptions resulting in a loss of goodwill that leads to customers feeling betrayed and disappointed. Multiple service failures also cause customers to expect the same issues in the future. In the context of a theme park, the stability dimension refers to the frequency of inappropriate visitor behaviour, as perceived by other customers. If this frequency is high, visitors can assume that they will be exposed to similar behaviour in the future by service providers. The controllability dimension refers to the degree to which extent a person believes that the failure could be avoided. In this context, the authors revealed that controllability and stability have a considerable effect on the satisfaction of the customer, and the satisfaction of the customer also affects repeat purchases.

Theme parks are built environments structured to host high visitor densities that seek short-term emotional experiences (5-7 hours), through a variety of attractions, entertainment and rides (Chuo & Heywood, 2014: 59). For example, Torres et al. (2019: 136) in a study of the theme park found that rides are one of the most important factors that increase the likelihood of customers getting a more satisfying overall experience, and that shows and rides are core/ principal service and product of theme park and the reasons for visiting a theme park. However, visitor densities at the theme parks are usually very high and services are limited. This often requires customers to wait and queue for attractions, entertainment and rides. Waiting in the service queue in theme parks can decrease the customer's service satisfaction and customer's quality perception (Chuo & Heywood, 2014: 58-59). While the overcrowding of retail stores may in some cases limit visitors' access to store clerks and products, the overcrowding in food service areas and the consequent lack of seating to consume food can affect the overall visitor experience, especially when spending extra money for generally expensive items. Whereas the physical location of indoor entertainment and rides may not be seen as crowded due to the requirement for individual seating, outdoor entertainment places including parades, concerts, fireworks, and access to outdoor shopping facilities can create a negative crowding perception. This problem is an important concern for consumers seeking outdoor activities that can cause injury and sometimes death (Milman et al., 2020a: 11). For example, Torres et al. (2018: 77-79) revealed that long waiting times, queues and crowding in theme parks lead to the anger of customers. Therefore, crowding is one of the most important factors that

negatively affect the success of the theme park management as well as negatively affecting the visitors’ decision to participate in theme parks (Chuo & Heywood, 2014: 61).

Technology has been a major factor in developing the mutual dialogue between the theme parks and their visitors. Robots can replace service staff and enhance the visitor experience by easily replacing their duties, being accessible without interruption, and completing useful tasks such as ticketing, waiting times, and directions. Technology is seen not only as a tool to communicate with customers but also to mediate and create memorable visitor experiences (Milman et al., 2020b: 3896). Wei et al. (2019: 282-288) aimed to investigate the effects of VR technology on the behaviours and experiences of theme park visitors. In the research, it was concluded that the experiential aspects and functional qualities of VR systems considerably affect the virtual experience of the visitors, but to varying degrees. Specifically, in the VR experience, the sense of being in control of the VR environment was found to contribute the most to one’s sense of being there virtually. That is, the more a person feels in control when interacting with a virtual environment, the greater the feeling of VR presence is present. The study also found that the feeling of VR presence had positive effects on the overall theme park experience of visitors and their intentions to recommend and revisit.

Until today, many studies have been conducted by various authors to understand the theme park experiences of customers. The aims and results of these studies are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Various Studies on Theme Park Experiences

Study	Aims	Result
Ali et al., 2018: 1-7.	To reveal the effect of visitor experience on delight, satisfaction and loyalty of visitors to the theme park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer delight affects customer loyalty and satisfaction • Customer delight and satisfaction are the considerable predictors of customer loyalty • Interaction with personnel, physical environment and interaction with other customers significantly affect the satisfaction and delight of customers.
Bigne et al., 2005: 833-842.	To analyse how guest emotions in a theme park setting affect their behavioural intentions and satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive arousal has a positive impact on the pleasure of the visitors. • Visitor arousal promotes positive disconfirmation • Positive disconfirmation promotes consumer satisfaction • The pleasure positively affects the satisfaction of the visitors • The arousal positively affects the satisfaction of the visitor • Visitor satisfaction positive impact on the theme park loyalty • Positive disconfirmation promotes visitor pleasure • Positive disconfirmation promotes positive arousal • Positive disconfirmation promotes the willingness to pay more
Dong & Siu, 2013: 541-549.	To analyse the relationship between customer predisposition, service environment and customers’ service experience assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the communicative (includes cultural elements and service staff, and relates to how the service environment/setting is presented and interpreted) and substantive aspects (attributes to the physical creations in the service environment such as symbols, signs, and artifacts, spatial functionality and layout, and ambient conditions) of the service setting/ environment has a positive impact on visitors’ evaluations. • The predisposition of a visitor to participate and/ or fantasize (refers to a customer’s tendency to daydream during consumption) has been identified to influence the ability/capacity of servicescape elements to form a positive service experience.
Duan et al., 2019: 321-336.	Determining the perception of authenticity from the perspective of park management and park visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been found that the concept of authenticity is important for park design, and in cultural theme parks, the authenticity of the event is more important than the originality of the object.

Continued on following page

Theme Park Experiences in the Tourism Industry

Table 2. Continued

Study	Aims	Result
Hapsari, 2018: 359.	To analyze the relationships between perceived educational value, the educational image of the theme park, the loyalty of visitors to the theme park and the educational experience satisfaction of visitors in educational theme parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational experience satisfaction of visitors, perceived educational value and educational image of theme park play major roles in influencing the loyalty of visitors
Hu et al., 2021: 1-10.	To explore the relationship between the perceived experiential quality of an AR theatrical performance (escapism, visual appeal, focused immersion, education and curiosity, and heightened enjoyment), visitors' emotional responses (i.e., emotional arousal and nostalgia) and visitors' sense of belonging to the theme park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The experiential quality of AR has a positive impact on visitors' emotional arousal and nostalgia, all of which stimulated visitors' sense of belonging to the theme park
Jin et al., 2015: 82.	To reveal the extent to which the quality of the visitors' experiences affects the perceived value, customer satisfaction and the image of the water park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the visitors' experiences considerably impacts the perceived value, customer satisfaction and the image of the water park. • Image of the water park and perceived value have a direct impact on customer satisfaction and also positively influence behavioural intentions. • The effects on the satisfaction of customers of water park image and experience quality differ significantly between continuous and first-time customers to the theme park
Kao et al., 2008: 163-172.	To investigate the impacts of the theme park theatrical elements [including the charm of the setting, consistency of the theme, the attractiveness of the scripts (actors, i.e. the service personnel) and the planning of the activities] on the visitors' experiential quality (including participation, immersion, surprise and fun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most theatrical items (planning of activities (performance, the attractiveness of the scripts (actor), and charm of the setting (stage) are positively related to experiential quality • Participation, surprise, fun and immersion are positively associated with experiential satisfaction. • Experiential quality is positively associated with experiential satisfaction. • The attractiveness of the scenarios (actors), the attractiveness of the setting, and the planning of activities (performance) are three main important theatrical elements and these are positively associated with experiential quality. • Experiential satisfaction is positively associated with visitors' loyalty intentions.
Lee et al., 2020: 474-487.	To analyze how different types of experiences affect visitors' satisfaction and intentions to revisit in the context of a theme park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both education and aesthetic experiences positively and significantly impact the satisfaction of visitors • Visitors are more likely to be satisfied with their visit when they find a genuine learning opportunity that sparks their interest in learning • Escapism is the only considerable element that directly influences the future revisit intentions of visitors.
Li, S., 2021: 133-146.	To examine the impact of important element affective moments of a theme park experience on post-trip assessments of visitors that measured shortly after their visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been revealed that the enjoyment levels of visitors (i.e. average, start, peak and finish) have an impact on theme park satisfaction, which positively influences later behavioural intentions. • It has also been found that the emotional intensity (finish) and average emotional intensity of the visitors at the last moment were important determinants in determining their satisfaction after the trip.
Ma et al., 2013: 359- 373.	To empirically test the ability of cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) to explain the antecedents of emotions from tourism experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delight can occur when tourists consider their theme park experiences either as unexpected or as important to their personal well-being or special needs, or their interests, or as highly compatible
Manthiou et al., 2016: 362.	To analyze the impact of experiences of theme park visitors on their recall-based memories, loyalty and satisfaction using a basis of script theory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction partly mediates the relationship between recollection and experience of visitors • Recollection and satisfaction of visitors affect their loyalty behaviours.

Continued on following page

Table 2. Continued

Study	Aims	Result
Milman, 2009: 385.	To determine a consumer-focused inventory of properties to evaluate theme parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Characteristics that consumers consider when evaluating theme parks: (i) quality and variety of entertainment; (ii) the variety and availability of family-oriented events; (iii) cleanliness, security and safety, courtesy (core operation issues) (iv) theme quality and design quality; (v) variety of food and value for money; (vi) the variety and quality of theme park attractions and rides; and (vii) value and pricing for money
Milman & Tasci, 2018: 385-386.	To detect experiential consumption factors of satisfaction and the revisit intentions of visitors to the theme parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overnight visitors who perceived their visit as a good price-performance measure (i.e., a good value for money) and experienced the FEEL dimension of experiential consumption are more likely to be satisfied with their visit than people that felt otherwise. ● The number of past visits by visitors, their overnight stay at the theme park destination, and their experience of the feel dimension of the experience are the main drivers of their likelihood of returning or loyalty.
Milman et al., 2020a: 1-12.	To determine the relative effects of perceived popularity and perceived crowding on theme park product perceptions that influence subsequent behavioural intentions and satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceived crowding negatively impacts on the internal access aspect or dimension of the theme park experience (i.e. visitors' perceptions associated with the entrance and exit gates, security screening and main walkways inside the park) ● Perceived popularity positive impact on aspects of overall theme park experiences such as internal access, outdoor entertainment (consumer perceptions of outdoor shows and entertainment, nighttime spectacles, or souvenir/gift stores located outside the gate of the park), and retail practices (consumers' perceptions of retail facilities such as food and beverage services, outdoor and indoor shopping outlets and, seating areas for consuming food and beverage) ● Internal access, retail practices and outdoor entertainment aspects or dimensions of theme park experiences have significant effects on visitor satisfaction. ● Theme park satisfaction has a significant impact on behavioural intentions such as intentions of revisit, word of mouth, willingness to pay price premiums
Park et al., 2020: 1-13.	Effectively visualizing the emotional state and experiences of theme park visitors using Twitter data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tweets are grouped into four emotional domains based on pleasure and arousal. ● Most of the tweets (93.8%) consist of emotional expressions that contain both high arousal and pleasure in the first field. ● The most frequently used emotional expressions in the first area are happy and excited. ● 4.1% consists of emotional words (containing both low arousal and displeasure) in the third domain ● 1% consisted of emotional expressions in the second area (containing both displeasure and high arousal) and the fourth area (containing both pleasure and low arousal). ● The most common words in the second field are angry, scared, and angry. ● The most frequently used words in the 3rd field are tired and sad. ● The most frequently used words in the 4th area are relaxed and calm.
Romli et al., 2015: 264-266.	To determine the satisfaction of visitors to Sunway Lagoon Theme Park in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The quality of service, the wide selection of recreational activities (attractiveness of the park section and the suitability of the park for family outings, etc.) and queue management have an impact on visitor satisfaction
Slatten et al., 2011:80-89.	To explore the potential of customer experiences in the context of the tourism industry to influence customer emotions and thereby generate positive mental imprints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Both the ambient factors (smells, sound and light) and interactions between customers are important for creating the positive customer emotions ● Interaction between customers and staff has an impact on customers' positive emotions

Continued on following page

Theme Park Experiences in the Tourism Industry

Table 2. Continued

Study	Aims	Result
Tasci & Milman, 2019: 853-871	To develop a measurement scale to determine dimensions of experiential consumption in the context of theme parks and to ascertain visitors' experiences while they visit a theme park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the overall mean of the Peripheral Perception (SENSE) and Emotional Involvement (FEEL) factors are higher than the other factors. • Social Involvement (RELATE) and Cognitive Interest (THINK) have the highest variance in the original items. This can mean that although visitors consciously place greater consideration on peripheral and emotional aspects of their experiences, the social and intellectual elements form the main background of their overall experience.
Torres et al., 2018: 65-81.	To discover the main drivers of consumer outrage and delight by examining reviews from visitors to North America's top 20 theme parks on TripAdvisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer delight has been associated with products that are the theme park's themes (such as rides, shows, and roller coasters). • Food experiences and the theme park's highlighted story or theme delight customers. • Enjoyment, love, amazement, delight, fun and thrill are critical elements of customer delight. • Customer outrage stems from problems with missing, defective and outdated core products, long waiting times, queues, crowding, low price-performance ratio and perceived overpricing, service and staff
Torres et al., 2019: 128-136.	Identifying various emotions of visitors' throughout the theme park experience using the Positive and Negative Impact Chart (PANAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emotions most likely to create a satisfying theme park experience arise when dining, enjoying rides, and interacting with others • Emotions that take place when purchasing tickets have a negative impact on the theme park experience • Retail experience is less likely to increase overall satisfaction with theme park visits, and visitors are more likely to engage in core/main activities (hedonic consumption, e.g. socializing with others, rides, and attending programs and shows) than retail purchase • The arrival experience (the guest's first impression of the theme park) is critical in creating positive customer feelings, and the first impression on arrival is paramount to the customer's overall experience. • Compared to interactions between service providers and visitors, interactions between visitors (i.e., interactions with other visitors) are more likely to spark the emotions of visitors and lead to a more satisfying visiting experience.
Wei et al., 2019: 282-288.	Investigating the effects of VR technology on the experiences and behaviour of theme park visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The experiential aspects and functional qualities of VR systems considerably affect visitors' virtual experience but to varying degrees. • In the VR experience, the sense of being in control of the VR environment was found to contribute the most to one's sense of being there virtually (i.e., the more a person feels in control when interacting with a virtual environment, the greater the feeling of VR presence is present) • The feeling of VR presence has positive effects on the overall experience of visitors with the theme park and their intentions to recommend and revisit.
Wei et al., 2021: 1.	To examine whether other visitors can create an immersive environment and thereby create memorable experiences for visitors of the theme park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The perceived similarity between customers has a positive effect on visitors' feeling of immersion in theme parks and the memorability of the experience. • Memorable experiences positively affect visitors' behavioural intentions such as intention to revisit and willingness to pay premiums).
Zheng et al., 2021: 1-6.	To analyze the impact of the theme park visitors' view towards social service setting on their overall theme park experiences and their affective states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus visitor's perception of similarity between him/herself and other visitors to the theme park positively affects the focus visitor's sense of arousal and curiosity, and this contributes to memorable theme park experiences.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Visitor experiences play a very important role in theme park management. Memorable experiences can increase visitor satisfaction, and contribute positively to their loyalty to the theme parks and their subsequent behavioural intentions such as return intention and WOM.

Theme parks are one of the places where hedonic consumption experiences are most intense. Hedonic experiences are experiences that can stay in the memory of customers for a long time. Emotions have an important place in hedonic consumption experiences. Theme park managers are aware of the fact that each entertainment department will create different emotions in the customers, and they should review the places of interest by the customers to improve the service quality. To enhance the hedonic experiences of customers, theme parks should offer products and themes that take people away from the daily routine and offer a variety of exciting entertainment opportunities. Managers should identify the activities that customers prefer the most and highlight them in their advertising and marketing efforts.

In theme parks, immersion is an element that triggers visitor emotions. The theme parks offer entertainment focused on hedonic consumption, allowing customers to immerse themselves in these entertainment activities. Therefore, managers need to develop and design high-tech entertainment programs that allow visitors to actively participate in the events and keep them alive in their memories. Managers should periodically run ads and design online animations and interactive games to keep visitors' hedonic experiences alive. Such programs will also allow increasing memorable guest experiences.

To keep the theme park experiences vivid in the customer's memory, certificates, visitor brochures and other memorabilia can be sent through after-sales services. Staff who greet customers in entertainment costumes at the entrance of the park can make the visitor's experience memorable. The fun moments that visitors have in the park can be photographed and presented online. Discounted coupons may be distributed to encourage visitors to download these images.

Learning experiences are as important as entertainment experiences in customer experiences. Theme parks are generally preferred by families with children. Parents who come to the theme park generally want their children to have a learning experience in the park. Managers should be aware of this, and they should design programs and activities that are interesting and have the characteristics of acquiring knowledge that can attract the attention of families with children. Themes and educational activities based on history, technology and science, animals or space can effectively arouse the curiosity of visitors.

Communication between staff and customers plays a very important role in customer experiences. Therefore, personnel should be constantly motivated, trained and rewarded at regular intervals.

Crowding and waiting times are among the main problems that have negative effects on the experience by encouraging negative emotions in visitors. To address such problems, managers can be expected to develop mobile applications that suggest tour routes based on the waiting times of attractions. Managers should invest heavily in queuing design and queuing technology to reduce waiting times and crowding at theme parks. Staff should be strengthened on issues such as crowd control and complaint management. Also, high paying passcards can be issued that offer less waiting times, allowing them to skip the queue and sit in priority rows at events and shows.

The physical environment has a very important place in the customer's service experience. A hedonic environment in which customers are actively involved in physical environments can increase customer satisfaction with the theme park. Therefore, theme park managers must give priority to physical environmental regulations. Aesthetics, cleanliness, lighting, sounds and decor of the facility should be given priority and outdated entertainment tools should be updated.

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Technology plays an important role in theme parks. Especially augmented reality and virtual reality applications have a great impact on customer experiences. Therefore, managers should focus on the design of products and services that can give control to customers and make them feel in the environment in such applications.

Security is one of the most important issues of theme parks. Theme park managers must ensure that they ensure the safety of both their customers and employees. The theme park entertainment area must be constantly monitored by security cameras. Alternative transportation methods should be developed to reduce the travel time between recreational activities in the theme park. Robots can be used to ensure the security situation in large and crowded theme parks. Robots that act as humans can enhance guests' experiences by performing specific tasks, such as welcoming guests at the gates, providing them with specific information, telling stories, and serving food and drinks.

Especially in recent years, the Covid-19 pandemic that has surrounded the world and the accompanying social distance issue has caused the security measures of theme parks to come to the fore. During the pandemic period, theme park managers can develop a reservation system to limit the increasing customer density. Also, illuminating signs and signs should be placed in the park emphasizing social distance and where customers should stand. Moreover, innovative technology can be used to monitor the social distance situation in the park. Programs can be developed that allow visitors to view the social distance rules or see their contact status with infected people.

In addition to the physical environment and actors (personnel) in customer experiences, interactions between customers have an important place. Other customers can increase or decrease the guest's experience. Therefore, a customer-to-customer monitoring system can be developed to detect and monitor the developing interactions between customers and to provide preventive interventions where necessary. Staff should be trained to solve the problems that occur between customers. Customers generally want to interact with other customers who are similar to them and are satisfied with their experience. Therefore, managers need to develop a service environment that allows them to interact with people with whom customers are similar. Managers can design special interest groups to bring together like-minded visitors. Creating events and promotions for specific groups can contribute to increasing homogeneity among visitors. Similarly, target market segments should be created to increase homogeneity. As visitors' perceived similarity to each other increases, they will find it fun to watch each other and be satisfied with their experience.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research can explore the effects of cultural atmospheric elements of theme parks on visitor experiences. The effects of visitor experiences on post-experience behaviours such as experience intensification (e.g., by taking photos, collecting and storing signatures, souvenirs) and expanding experience (e.g. word of mouth advertising, etc.) can be examined. The effects of fantastic imaginative orientation and active participation on experiences and subsequent behavioural intentions can be examined. The relationships between experiential quality elements (immersion, surprise, participation and fun, hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition) and memorable guest experiences can be explored. Other critical variables such as delight, pleasure, surprise, and the connections between experiences can be examined in detail. More studies can be conducted on the effects of experiences on memory (such as vivid memory and recollection). For example, the effect of negative experiences on the vividness of

memory can be investigated. It can explore other dimensions of memory such as emotions, recollection, narrative reasoning and so on.

For consumers with different demographic or psychographic characteristics, experiential processes may differ. Different segments of people show different preferences for theme parks. Variables such as age, gender, personality, education, income, lifestyle, participation, membership, and place of residence can be taken into account when examining experiences.

It can investigate text processing techniques for languages other than English. Thus, more reviews from more visitors can be included to get more representative and comprehensive results. Reviews from other review sites and platforms may also be considered in future work. New topics can include new games, new technologies, or new types of services that visitors expect to experience at theme parks.

In addition to the positive emotions of the visitors, the effects of negative emotions such as anger and disgust on the experiences can be examined. Experiences can be examined together with variables such as service quality and perceived value. More studies can be done on the impact of AR and VR technologies on experiences. The relationships between technology, emotions and experiences can be further investigated.

The social environment in the theme park, such as staff and other visitors, has an impact on visitors' experiences. The effects on customer interactions and experiences that occur in theme parks can be examined according to the cultures of the guests (e.g., Hofstede's cultural dimensions (individualism-collectivism)).

CONCLUSION

Today, price and functionality alone are not enough for customers to choose them, and consumers are looking for unique experiences beyond products and services. Tourism is an industry closely related to customer experiences. A tourist's experience in touristic environments can be affected by both the physical and social environment. Memorable consumer experiences can increase customer satisfaction, resulting in behavioural intentions such as customer loyalty, repurchase intention, willingness to pay more, and word of mouth. To create memorable consumer experiences in tourism, companies need to be able to effectively manage the physical and social environment.

Theme parks have become one of the most important tourist attractions that attract millions of tourists all over the world and provide economic benefits to the regions where they are located. Therefore, theme parks are an important part of the tourism and hospitality industry. Theme parks are a real measure of the emerging experience economy and represent the best examples of hedonic experiences.

Emotions are important outcomes of hedonic consumption experiences. Positive emotions play an important role in creating memorable tourism experiences. Theme parks are entertainment venues where visitors experience mostly hedonic products and services. Therefore, theme parks encourage visitors to immerse in a staged fantasy, and visitors make sense of such staged environments. This leads to the development of memorable tourism experiences. Memorable experiences are one of the most important success factors of theme parks. Memorable guest experiences lead to increased customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Visitors are disconnected from reality in theme parks and focus on target activities and the environment. When individuals immerse themselves in an environment, all their senses are stimulated by physical and social environmental components. In addition to physical environmental components such as ambience, sound, light, decor and general environment, social environmental components such

as personnel and other customers have a great impact on customers. For example, overcrowding at parks, waiting times for service, and queues are the most important factors that cause customer dissatisfaction and have an impact on experiences at theme parks. Also, the staff and other customers also impact the experiences of the customers. Therefore, physical and social environment elements should be managed effectively in theme parks. Moreover, technology theme parks are an element that plays the most important role. Robots in the theme park replace the employees and take on useful tasks such as ticketing, waiting times and directions, improving the theme park experiences of visitors and contributing to the creation of memorable guest experiences. Furthermore, AR and VR technologies have a considerable impact on customers' experiences.

Security measures in theme parks have a huge impact on visitors' experiences. Especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, all theme parks around the world have started to serve again. In this sense, providing the necessary social distance in the theme park or not, wearing masks or not and ensuring the general safety of the park or not significantly affect visitor experiences.

This book chapter has provided a general framework for theme parks, one of the most important attractions within the tourism industry, and the experience of theme park visitors. In the section, the concept of experience and experiences in the tourism industry are emphasized and detailed information about theme park experiences is presented. Therefore, it is thought that the chapter will make an important contribution to the literature. To this end, this book chapter will consist of the introduction, background, main focus of the chapter, solutions and recommendations, future research directions, and conclusions.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

COVID-19 Pandemic: An infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which started in China in December 2019 and spread worldwide and was declared a pandemic by the world health organization on March 12, 2020.

Customer Experience: A total combination or outcome of the goods, services, and environment that the consumer purchases and experiences.

Customer Loyalty: A customer's deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service by a customer consistently in the future.

Customer Satisfaction: The feeling of pleasure or disappointment that results from the consumer comparing the actual/perceived performance of a product or service with their expectations before using the product.

Experiences: States or events that stimulate the senses of individuals and affect and occupy them emotionally, spiritually, physically, and mentally.

Extraordinary Experiences: Experiences that disrupt routines, go beyond the confines of everyday life, and are characterized by a high level of emotional intensity.

Hedonism: Very emotional, fun, and emotional aspects of the consumers' product and service experience. It refers to the consumption of pleasure and gratification obtained from a pleasant experience.

Memorable Experience: An experience that the tourist stored in his/her mind in long term and positively remembered after experiencing a service or visiting any destination.

Ordinary Experiences: Common and frequent experiences that take place in everyday life.

Other Customers: People who are not familiar with each other and who are in the service facility at the same time.

Theme Park: A park with a dominant theme around which architecture, landscape, rides, shows, catering, costumed personnel, and retailing activities are organized.

WoM: Communication occurring between customers about products, services, or companies.

Chapter 14

The Phygital Experiential Marketing Practices: The Conceptual Framework and Applications for Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, the swift pace of digitalization and the pressure of new era technologies have not only transformed the perception and expectations of new generations but also completely created a new world of experiences. Today, the new generations are ready to experience a hybrid world described as phygital that combines digital and physical spaces. This new phygital world also provides unique value for the tourism industry to establish a new channel of interactivity with its consumers. This chapter examines the phygital concept and its impact on tourism experiences and tourism destination management. Therefore, a conceptual framework is given to deeply understand the state of the phygital. Firstly, the chapter explores augmented reality and virtual reality technologies triggering this concept, and afterward, the chapter cites the phygital-based experiential marketing practices for tourism pioneers.

INTRODUCTION

The world has been coming a long way, surrounded by the miracles of emerging technologies. At the beginning of this fantastic technology journey, while the technologies were just assisting humans in performing their tasks, today, societies and technologies are growing hand in hand. There is no doubt that technology will gain a dominant role on human behalf and lead societies in the nearest future. This will be the inevitable reality of human and technology cooperation in the future. Therefore, governments, business pioneers, and individuals have to be ready to respond to this disruptive transformation by redefining and reshaping all their ecosystems.

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As it is known, the biggest transformations start in the societies. The new era technologies, evolving generations, and global challenges are the primary triggering factors behind the inevitable transformation of the world. These three disruptive factors globally cause the shocking mega changes directly affecting today's societies. Today's generation feels this transformation deeply which rapidly changes the way of living in the world. In particular, the emerging technologies do in fact have caused noticeable changes in the way generations look at their world. The changing expectations and preferences of individuals – especially in technology-focused new generations (evolving generations) – are driving them to rearrange their lifestyles and redefine their need patterns and consumption habits. Indeed, the expectations of generations for this future of the world undoubtedly signal a major transformation also for the industries which play a supportive and directive role in a sustainable world.

The tourism industry is under the influence of social changes and technological developments (Fayos-Solà, 2012) due to its inextricable integration with the technological and socio-economic fabric of society. Therefore, the industry has to be at the forefront of integrating its whole ecosystem players into technological transformations. Moreover, due to being a highly information-intensive and human-centered industry, technology-focused generation and their changing demand are the primary drivers of the transformation of the tourism industry. Hence, the evolution of the tourism industry is closely connected to the advancement of customer-centered technologies. Therefore, with the development of disruptive technologies - artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IoT), virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), etc., tourism industry develops a broad range of innovative solutions to transform conventional experiences and result in the emergence of new types of tourism experiences.

AR and VR are two of the most functional technologies that create value for customers and will deeply influence the service industries in the near future. Although they have not yet become mainstream, increasing awareness of VR/AR technology and coming into use of VR devices by individuals have been boosting the applications of these technologies in various industries in recent years. In the world of tourism, the integration of AR and VR technologies into the industry has created new instruments for quite different tourism experiences by integrating the digital and physical worlds. They have changed the physical tourism experience concept to one that enables individuals to immerse themselves in a hybrid world experience concept with possibilities for virtual interaction. Thereby, this phenomenon, blending the physical and digital world, is described as 'phygital' by the technology pioneers. Indeed, the impact of the Phygital approach is being felt throughout the entire tourism ecosystem. Nowadays, rebuilding the destinations and rebuilding their strategy requires a joined-up approach with Phygital technologies. In this regard, a new phenomenon 'phygital' is being discussed in the tourism industry to create significant experiences for their customers in a hybrid world. Today, business pioneers need a clear understanding of which technologies will shape the tourism business environment in this hybrid world.

Therefore, the focus of this paper is an examination of AR and VR technologies and also their applications in the tourism industry, concerning the 'phygital' approach. It is also aimed to shed light on AR/VR technologies for tourism pioneers to confront themselves with the future of the tourism industry and adapt innovative technologies, especially in a destination management context.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

What Does Phygital Mean?

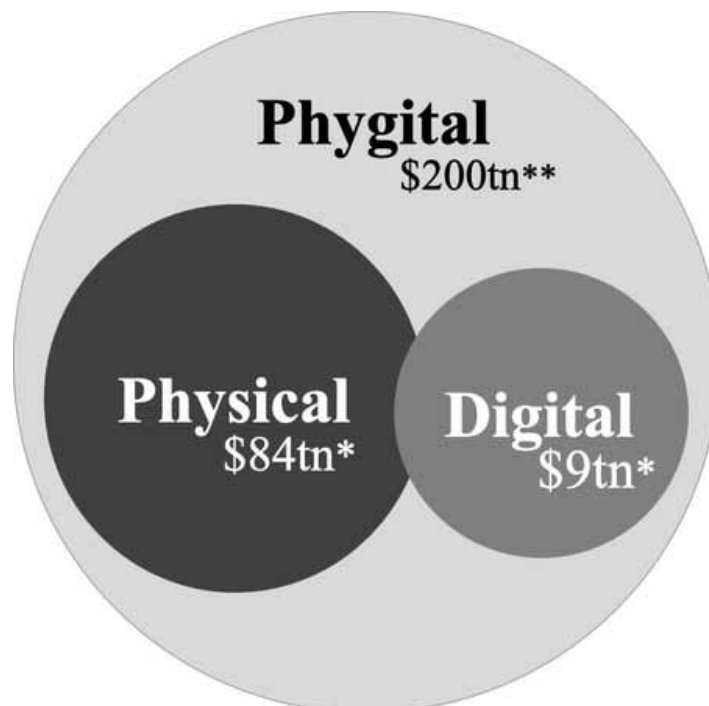
These recent technological developments demonstrate how the digital world is now integrating deeply with our physical reality. This means that the technologies are now physical assets of the real world that can exchange information and interact with each other as well as with people. Indeed, it is not far away for them to be emotional assets in the nearest future. This is the convergence of digital and physical worlds. They are coming together to be one. Thus, an overarching term “phygital” has been proposed to define this hybrid realism.

The term “phygital,” is simply the blending of the “physical” and “digital” words. This new phenomenon is used to describe a new space interwoven by physical and digital realms and reflects hybridity in user experience (Aker, 2021; Nofal et al., 2017). This phygital realm can be achieved by re-designing the physical spaces with sensors and transforming the places into a type of information system. Thus, Phygital is an evolution of the way individuals live, work, communicate, travel, entertain, and much more. According to Leta Capital, an IT venture company, all physical objects in the future will be Phygital, i.e. powered by emerging technologies (AR, Vr, IoT, etc.). While online environments (social media, eCommerce, etc.) exist today in the digital form only, they will finally merge with physical objects. The global market sizes of digital and phygital in 2020 and the expected market size of phygital for the future are given in Figure 1 as pictured below.

Figure 1. Phygital concept and market size, (Leta Capital, 2021)

** Global Market Size in 2020, \$US trillion*

*** Upside Potential in the next 5-10 years*



What Does Physical Mean for Marketing? and What is Physical Experience?

Today, in most cases “phygital” is generally used by omnichannel marketing. However, phygital is an evolution of the way individuals live, work, communicate, travel, entertain, and much more.

The marketing field uses “phygital” as a conceptual term to explain the circumstance of creating a physical reaction by consumers through digital actions. It refers to a conceptual approach that uses digital tools in physical stores/destinations, to result in the digital presence of a product or service to an immersive physical experience or vice versa.

The businesses have many individual contacts with their customers at every distinct point called touch-points (Schmitt, 2003; Homburg et al. 2015). These touch-points in a customer’s decision process or purchasing journey build up the customer’s experiences (Pucinelli et al. 2009; Verhoef et al. 2009). At every touch-point, the consumers might meet different responses. Therefore, it can be concluded that customer experience is a multi-dimensional continuum focusing on not only behavioral and cognitive components but also emotional and social ones (Schmitt, 2003; Verhoef et al. 2009, Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In this regard, while digital marketing enables businesses to offer more personalized experiences for their customers through digital data, physical environments - such as stores- enable businesses to offer more emotional and sensual experiences through face-to-face communication with the customers. Thus, the ultimate aim of gathering the physical and digital experience is to take advantage of the best aspects of being digital and physical to create a unique highly-personalized experience for the users.

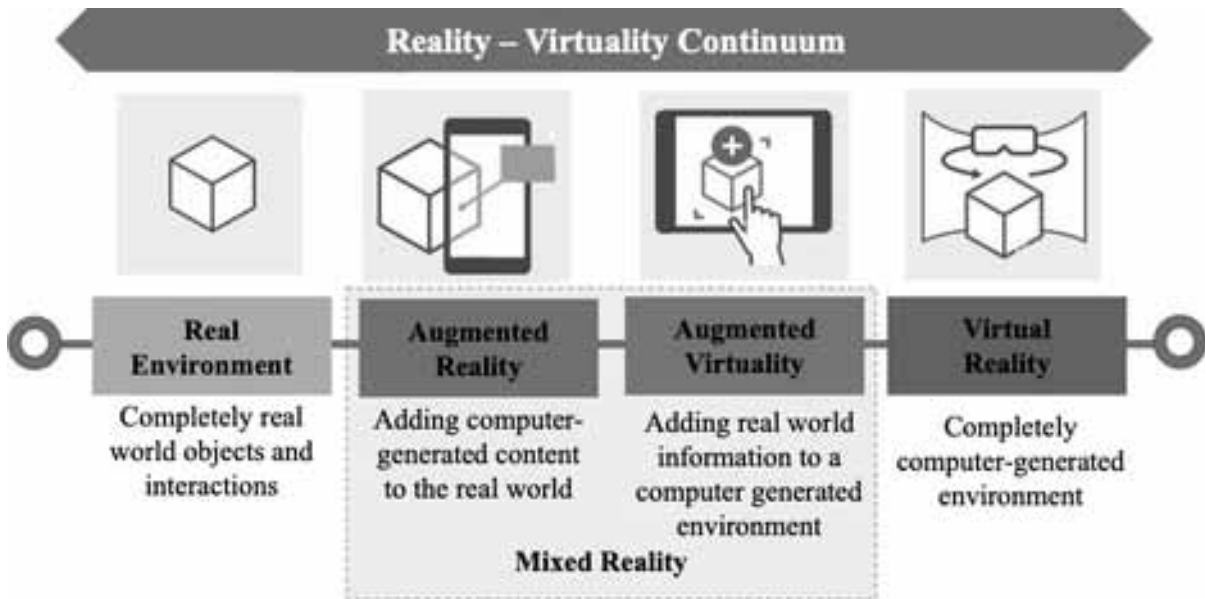
Shortly, the phygital experience consists in gathering the physical and the digital components at the same time and in the same place and reflects hybridity in user experience. Moreover, in the phygital realm, while a digital action triggers a physical reaction, vice versa, a physical action results in a digital reaction itself (Teo, 2013). Therefore, this is an immersive approach that works to the benefit of both parties involved– the customers and the businesses. Not only does phygital benefit the customer experience, but it’s also a way for brands to seamlessly integrate their physical and digital marketing efforts and get more opportunities to contact potential customers.

Phygital is an evolution of everything that will dramatically change the future of the world. To understand this evolution of the phygital in detail, it is essential to examine the basic technologies: Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR).

The Basic Technologies of Phygital: AR and VR

Augmented reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) are two piers of the bridge between the digital and physical worlds. They are state-of-the-art technologies in the relationship between technology and humans which redefine the human perception of real and virtual spaces by creating phygital spaces that differ from the real world. While AR augments the real tourist space with information, VR provides a new and different virtual space to the technology users. Milgram and Kishino (1994) pointed out the actual relation between AR and VR, and advised considering the two concepts together under the reality-virtuality (RV) continuum approach. They presented the reality-virtuality (RV) continuum approach (Figure 2) and advise the researchers to view two concepts as lying at opposite ends of a continuum rather than being regarded as antitheses. The hybridity of the phygital concept is also based on the reality-virtuality (RV) continuum approach.

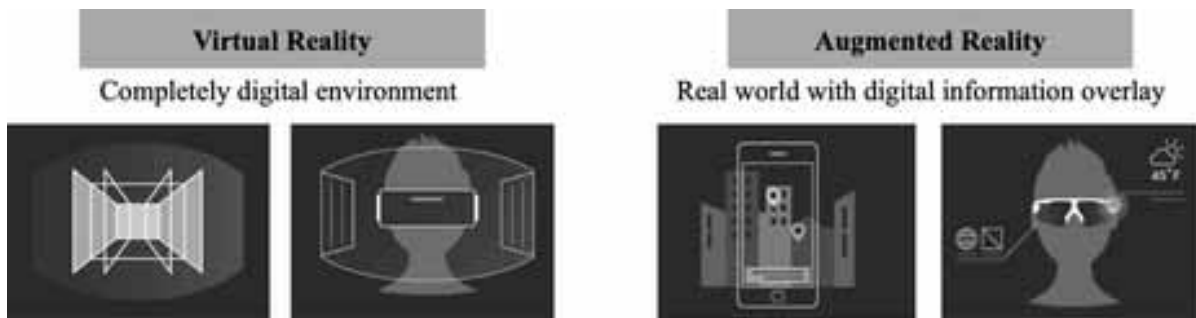
Figure 2. Reality - virtuality continuum (Adapted from Milgram & Kishino, 1994)



For the past decades, most people have been spending much of their time looking at screens. The average person spends a total of 6 hours and 55 minutes looking at a screen each day - just for internet-connected activities (Comparitech, 2021). Computers, smartphones, and televisions have all become a big part of our lives. A human life that is so fused with these technologies also increases the expectations for the future of the tech-world. On the other hand, human intelligence supported by technology or vice versa does not hesitate to produce disruptive technologies.

Today, both of them are the leading technologies in creating experiences in physical and digital realm - phygital experiences. These immersive technologies are changing not only the individual but also the industries and societies. To understand these immersive technologies better, a short description and some remarkable features of technologies are given below. Besides, an illustration (Figure 3) is given below to see the differences visually.

Figure 3. Virtual reality and augmented reality (Adapted from Laghari et. al., 2021)



Augmented Reality

Augmented reality is an interactive technology that enhances the user's real-world environment by providing context-sensitive information about immediate surroundings and overlaying computer-generated content onto the field of view of users through a device (smartphones, heads-up displays-HUDs, hand-held displays, projectors, etc.) (Guttentag, 2010; Jung et al., 2016; Yung & Khoo-Lattimore, 2017). AR is based on the idea of enriching the user's environment with images, videos, or other information to increase the joy, quality, value, and benefits of the environment. Through this technology, the augmented image of the real world's 2D or 3D images (objects, avatars, sounds, video, graphics, etc.) is transmitted to a camera, smart glasses, smartphones, tablets, etc. through a visor. Azuma (1997) defined three main characteristics of AR to mention its benefits: (1) blending real and virtual objects in a real environment; (2) interacting in real-time; (3) aligning real and virtual objects with each other. Three aspects of this specification are important to understand that AR potentially can apply to users' all senses, including touch, smell, and hearing.

The concept of AR emerged as a new field of VR and computer technology towards the end of the 90s and has spread to a wide area (Pagani et al., 2016). Since 2009, people began to use AR technology with smartphone apps to overlay digital information and content onto their physical surroundings. Thus, these first AR experiences allowed the users to use their smartphone camera to grab images, context, or a guide from the outside world in a more engaging way. Today, AR has succeeded to turn real-world experiences into multiverse experiences through hardware technologies. Through AR technologies, the users direct their devices to the point of interest and the app augments them with additional information about the environment. This inspirational technology (invention) has also already gained popularity in many Hollywood movies since the 1980s -such as Terminator, TopGun, Minority Report, Avatar, Marvel movies, etc. Moreover, popular dramas succeeded in inviting their followers into the experimental world of AR. Memories of Alhambra (Ahn Gil-Ho, 2018), as K-drama series, was an AR-gaming-based drama where the followers could also see some interesting examples of tourism applications in a fighting game. Thereby, there has been an increasing awareness of its unique ability in providing an extended perception of the real-world environment by integrating it with computer-generated content (Han et al., 2019).

AR has a wide variety of uses, as it can clearly demonstrate spatial and temporal concepts, and contextual relationships between both real and virtual objects (Woods et al., 2004). There have been an increasing number of studies exploring the practices of AR technology and its added value in many industries. Although AR is still in the phase of improvement, AR-user relations have already moved out of the early-adopting stages and it is predicted to become one of the supreme technologies of the nearest future thanks to its ability on users' perception.

Virtual Reality

Although "virtual reality" seems to be a futuristic phenomenon, the term emerged in the mid-1950s (Maples-Keller, 2017). From those years forth, the technological advancements made in hardware and software development have powered VR to have a tremendous impact on the future of the world.

Many various definitions and concepts have been proposed to understand VR technology and its features necessary to constitute an experience for practitioners and scholars. Some scholars defined VR as the sum of hardware and software systems. For instance, Coates (1992) defines VR as an electronic simulation of environments experienced via head-mounted eye goggles and wired clothing enabling the

end-user to interact in realistic three-dimensional situations. Differently, Greenbaum (1992) described VR as an alternative world that is filled with computer-generated images by responding to human movements and which are usually visited with the aid of high-end hardware such as stereophonic video goggles and fiber-optic data gloves. However, Steuer (1992) defined VR, without reference to any particular hardware system, as a real or simulated environment in which a perceiver experiences telepresence. This approach reminded practitioners and scholars to deeply consider the importance of including human feelings in the simulation environment. Williams and Hobson (1995) defined VR as a computer-generated medium that gives people the feeling that they are being transported from a physical world to a world of imagination. Similar to this approach Ijsselsteijn and Riva (2003) built VR term on the humans' wishes to escape from the real world and go anywhere or do anything they desire. According to Guttentag (2010), VR applications do not only enable users to escape from their everyday life but also stimulate their senses and provide opportunities for virtual interaction. Although these definitions have different perspectives, they all include core concepts of presence, immersion, and interactivity (Walsh & Pawlowski, 2002). These concepts help to clarify the importance of virtual experiences that only virtual environments might offer.

For this paper, VR is defined as a computer-generated 3D environment (virtual environment) designed with objects and surroundings that appear to be real, allowing users to navigate in virtual space and provide interaction with the images in real-time and with real-feelings simulation. Although it has not yet become mainstream, increasing awareness of VR technology and coming into use of VR devices by individuals have been boosting the applications of these technologies in the industry in recent years. Tourism is one of the prior industries in which VR technology is effectively used. VR is generally used to capture tourism destinations such as cities, popular places, hotels, museums, entertainment places, etc., and view them to create a unique and immersive digital tourism experience. In the nearest future, it is expected to become a significant position not only for creating new experiences but also for struggling with global threats such as overtourism, climate change, or similar pandemics as COVID-19.

A Brief Overview of Today's Tourism Industry

Over the last decade, the tourism industry is accepted as an important driver of national development and competitiveness. Tourism is a significant economic and social phenomenon for many countries due to its ability to contribute to GDP and stimulate employment. The industry was also defined as an important contributor to sustainable development thanks to its close linkages to other industries, and its ability to create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities in the Rio+20 outcome document "The Future We Want". According to the data shared by World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the industry contributed 10.4% to global GDP and accounted for 10.6% of all jobs created worldwide (including its direct, indirect, and induced impacts) in 2018 (just before the pandemic in 2019). However, during the last decade, tourism has also faced intensified competition and global challenges, promoted by global threats such as COVID-19 (declared as a pandemic by WHO, 12 March 2020) and climate change. Being one of the major GDP contributors for several countries, tourism was the epicenter of all international discussions of economies during COVID-19. The industry crawled to a standstill during the COVID-19 pandemic for the first time. The measures taken by governments regarding closing borders of several destinations temporarily and imposing restrictions on international travel have created a deep upheaval for the tourism industry. COVID-19 had an enormous international economic impact on the tourism industry. It is estimated that international tourist arrivals are to drop by 74% causing a loss of US\$ 1.3 trillion in export revenues (UNWTO, 2020). On the other hand, many tourism destinations struggle with

overcrowding through increasing tourism and travel activities. Although it is not a prior issue today for the countries -especially the countries ensuring their economic sustainability through tourism income, it will obviously be a serious threat for all the countries in the nearest future due to its negative impacts on climate change.

Thereby, due to the importance of its economic, social, and environmental impacts on achieving global sustainability, the tourism industry deserves serious “rethinking” in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, it is essential to examine and understand the evolution of technology-focused new/next generations, and technological transformation of the future world, to manage the industry in a sustainable manner. Today, both tourism consumers and the stakeholders of the industry are now on the corner of experiencing disruptive technologies (new-era technologies) augmenting human capabilities such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, autonomous vehicles, virtual reality, augmented reality, etc. All these technologies are expected to succeed in building a new hybrid world that integrates both the digital and physical world in the near future. This hybrid world is expected to provide an overall solution not only for changing the expectations and preferences of tourism consumers –especially technology-focused generations- but also for struggling with global threats such as climate change or similar to COVID-19 pandemic.

To be ready for this hybrid world, it is important to examine the relationship between the generations and these disruptive technologies, and so deeply understand the impacts of these technologies on the tourism experiences.

‘PHYGITAL’ EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING FOR TOURISM

Phygital-Enhanced Experiences

“The experience itself is the core product provided by the tourism industry. In contrast to rational problem-solving and utilitarian functions, experiential consumption involves pursuing; fantasies, feelings, and fun” (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

There is a common agreement that the experience concept is key to understanding consumer behavior (Addis & Holbrook, 2001). The term ‘experience’ has also been defined in various scientific fields as a popular construct. In the specific context of tourism, it is defined from different perspectives. For instance, it is defined as a sensation resulting from interaction or an outcome of participation in tourism within a social context. In other definition, experience is defined as the moment of value creation in the meeting of tourism production and consumption meet (as cited in Neuhofer, 2012, p. 38). However, today, tourism experiences do not only depend on the individuals or tourism business efforts but mostly depend on global evolution. Both the convergence of individuals and technologies and the convergence of industries and technologies have been attempting to differentiate all the perceptions, expectations and so experiences. Therefore, the tourism pioneers have to keep pace with the technological transformations for providing consumers with unique and memorable experiences. This is also the key element for sustainable competitive power.

Over the last decade, emerging technologies have revolutionized how tourists choose the communication channels, determine destinations, plan their journeys, and also experience all the touchpoints during travel. Today, AR and VR technologies are evolving and expanding at a rapid rate to create new experiences for tourism consumers. The industry is discussing the new phygital experience which lets

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the consumers be in both the digital and physical world at the same time and in the same place (Belghiti et al., 2017) through AR and VR technologies.

For the tourism industry, phygital also refers to digital technologies usage in physical destinations to offer tourism consumers a better experience during their journey. Phygital combines the immediacy, speed, and immersion characteristics of digital experiences with the characteristics of offline experiences such as human interaction and sensory stimulation. Therefore, it seems that phygital is the best way to meet the demands of hyper-connected but physically active new generations. The scholars and practitioners also believe that these technologies have already demonstrated their potential for the industry and therefore, many innovative phygital experiences will be offered for tourism consumers in the nearest future, and, it is obvious that the phygital concept for tourism customer experience will certainly be in the future. Therefore, all stakeholders in the industry have to quickly adjust their strategies to this concept including all touchpoints.

Phygital Applications in Tourism Industry

As mentioned before, as individuals become more and more technology-oriented, the perception of consumers on tourism experiences is changing. ICTs and smart devices have changed in particular, the travel behavior and perceptions of tourists and so their way of making decisions. Zhang et al. (2019) note that with increasing technological advancement and its permeation into all aspects of human life, the tourism industry has applied a variety of technologies to facilitate travel activities and enhance destination experiences. For example, Neuhofer et al. (2012, 2014) reported a number of practices of technology-enhanced destination marketing experiences. These studies illustrate how destinations increasingly use technologies for engaging and encouraging potential tourists to come to visit their sites and attractions.

In recent years, emerging new-era technologies, such as AR and VR are changing the way of getting inspired by travel experiences (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Moreover, they are rebuilding touch-point experiences of the physical and the virtual world during the whole journey of tourists. Therefore, adopting the phygital approach starts by looking at the tourism customers' journey in a different way and examining their changing expectations and demands in detail. In this regard, the first step of being phygital is to grasp the sequential customer journey from the inspiration period to post-trip deeply. In this study, Figure 4 illustrates all the stages of a tourist's journey. The figure shows all the potential experiences of tourism consumers (upper part) at touchpoints and the potential services that might be given by service providers (down part). This chart also allows tourism service providers to provide insights into the steps of the decision-making process of any journey in detail to be able to develop their strategies for the future of their businesses. Therefore, this chart can also be used as a strategic tool, as it shows all the touchpoints that can be strengthened through the phygital approach.

Figure 4. Enhanced customer journey under phygital approach (Prepared by Author)

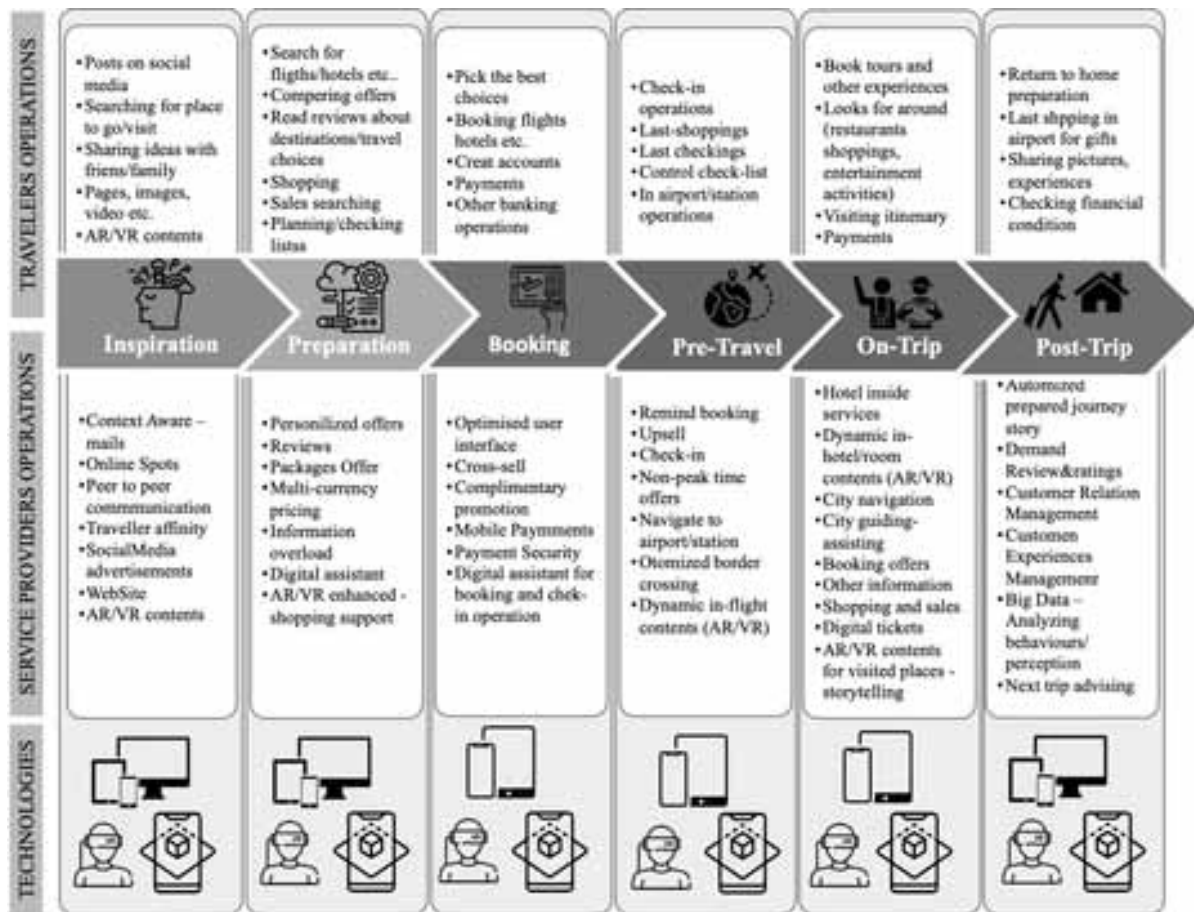


Figure 4 is prepared for visualizing the customer experience in a clear and concise manner. It also allows the tourism pioneers' to be aware of all individual points where they get in touch with customers digitally. Most of these points are suitable to implement Phygital applications achieved by AR and VR technologies. The author discussed current applications in the tourism industry along all these stages of the customer journey below.

Phygital Applications During Inspiration Stage

As it is accepted by many scholars and industry researchers, the customer journey starts from a dreaming and inspiring stage. Although the dreaming and inspiration stage has received little attention compared with other stages of the consumer journey, they are vital stages during the customers' decision-making process. Dreaming is an important phase for prospective travelers, looking for inspiration and fantasizing about future vacations without immediate travel needs and plans (Gretzel, 2021). Inspiration is a motivational phrase that drives an individual to transform a newly obtained idea into action (Thrash et al., 2014). Therefore, the dreaming and inspiration stage has a unique position for the beginning of any customer journey. During this stage, prospective travelers are at the thinking stage about their trip and

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exploring holiday destinations. This is the moment of the “I-want-to-get-away” decision. Individuals at this stage search actively for the information about their journey on their devices (Think with Google, 2016). However, most tourism consumers do not exactly decide the destinations to travel to or choose the brands they’ll engage with. They are generally open-minded and not brand-focused at this stage. Therefore, this is the prime time for companies to make their first connection with prospective customers.

AR and VR enable destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to get in touch with prospective travelers at an early stage of the journey. According to Beck and Egger (2018), VR has great potential to create positive reaction and emotions in tourism marketing. VR allows travelers to explore the destinations before physically traveling there. This virtual travel experience enables travelers to feel as much like being there. Moreover, it also gives tourists a solid idea of other tourist attractions such as restaurants, entertainment, etc. around the hotel. In other words, tourists can try out various experiences to decide how they want to spend time and money on their vacation before going there and spending money. Virtual tours, therefore, help tourists get more efficient experiences out of their vacation time. Thus, the travelers dream and get inspired to travel to the destination. On the other hand, AR makes it possible to visualize tourism-related destinations such as museums, entertainment centers, and museums as well as more personalized products and services through extracting information from the real world. Therefore, AR and VR can play a persuasive role in taking quick decisions (by creating inspiration through virtual images) as well as informing the travelers about their destinations (Tussyadiah et al., 2016; 2017). Travelers can virtually choose which hotel, museum, or any place to go after taking virtual tours of various destinations just by using their smart devices. For instance, Expedia, the online worldwide known travel agency, carried out a “Try before you buy” project for hotel demonstrations that are presented with the HTC Vive in 2017. Users have the possibility to walk around a hotel room and control the doors as well as look at the scene from the balcony. Exploring hotel rooms with VR prior to booking can help to reduce the risk and make travelers more secure about their decisions. Expedia was planning to provide the content to the public soon via all corresponding websites including Hotels.com, Trivago.com, etc (Beck, 2017). Another best practice is Airbnb, an online marketplace for lodging, primarily homestays for vacation rentals, and tourism activities. Recently, they have revealed its early stages of incorporating VR and AR into its services. They will allow guests to take a virtual tour before booking and use AR upon arrival to enhance their experience (Truong, 2021).

By offering this AR and VR experience, travelers can reduce the risks of making a bad decision before booking and enrich their travel experiences. Moreover, they can directly book the places and do not wait in a queue during the travel. In recent years, many hotels have begun to use these technologies widely on their booking applications so that their customers can have a virtual tour of the room and book it with satisfaction. In this sense, destination management organizations can provide travelers with digital-based content to support VR hardware and can combine these with websites and social media tools. Moreover, they can combine the content with a call-to-action link for triggering the travelers to go through the booking step.

Phygital Applications during Preparation Stage (Booking and Pre-Travel)

During the preparation stage, travelers want to receive information and details about the upcoming trip (flight tickets, check-in, booking confirmations, etc.). This information is mostly delivered to the customers in standardized ways such as e-mail, SMS, or mobile apps. DMOs can use this stage to trigger the expectations of travelers by providing personalized itineraries of activities through AR or VR. In terms

of AR, information booklets can be enhanced by containing links to virtual videos about the destinations. Hence, in terms of AR and VR images could be sent to travelers, to remind them the destinations. This allows travelers to establish a personalized connection to the virtual space and make them look forward to the traveling experience. Travelers can virtually choose which hotel, museum, or any place to go after taking virtual tours of various destinations just by using their smart devices. They can directly book the places and do not wait in a queue during the travel. On the other hand, AR-VR integrated hotel apps allow visitors to survey the many different rooms without physically being there in the form of virtual 3D tours and get various information about them such as the size of the room, price, features, etc. Thus, visitors have a clear idea about the hotel that they are going to stay in and its amenities before check-in.

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Phygital Applications during On-Trip Stage

During the traveling phase, AR and VR have begun to be applied to entertain travelers or to overcome difficulties and obstacles encountered by them during the journey, especially during the travel period. According to Amadeus, a global company provides IT solutions for the industry, VR will be a standard service of in-flight entertainment by 2030 (Lundy, 2015). For example, in 2016 Qantas Airlines introduced a VR application to allow travelers to explore their destination, in particular Australia, even before they arrive (Mofokeng & Matima, 2018). The application allows the company to share the story of Australia to travelers and offer them new insight into the country's culture and heritage by the means of engaging and interactive content with amazing visuals and audio.

At the destination, VR and AR allow tourism businesses and DMOs to create highly qualified services by building real-world experiences through mainstream technologies for their visitors. Since 2009, smartphone apps began to use AR for adding a layer of content (guidance, entertainment, etc.) to physical locations which can be seen through the camera. Due to the location-sensing capabilities of mobile devices, these apps can build an interactive and real-time digital map and guidelines intended to enhance the visitor experience specifically for all tourism locations such as hotels, historical points, walking routes, museums, shopping points, theaters, or cinemas, etc. Therefore, AR applications can filter travel information according to the demands of travelers and allow travelers to confirm where to find nearby attractions or other destinations dynamically to explore touristic space differently (Kourouthanassis et al., 2015).

VR can also allow travelers to have a historical experience in tourism destinations. Travelers could walk the streets of destinations today and see what they looked like centuries ago. The network of European institutions, including the European Commission, is carrying on "European Time Machine Project" to map 5000 years of European history by building a large-scale historical simulator. The project aims to bring Europe's cultural heritage into the future. The data and images are collected and new forms of VR are developed to drive innovative historical experiences. It is expected to have a large impact on Europe's 600 million annual visitors (Time Machine Organisation [TMO], 2021). On the other hand, AR also has an informative role for visitors in learning about cultural heritage. The possibility of seeing historical or cultural venues virtually by visualizing their images can have a significant impact on the

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transfer of knowledge to visitors. Moreover, it contributes to the preservation of these heritages. With the application of AR, the real story behind historic sites can be explored in a personalized way, and therefore added value is created (Fritz et al., 2005). AR does not only enhance the tourist experience, but AR games can also improve the level of interactivity at the destination. gamification is also one of the innovative areas of AR technology. The “digital points” or “badges” taken in real-world tourism activities, encourage visitors to experience more of the hotel or destination. It may also lead to earning more information about the history and story about the destination points. For example, visitors can earn badges or special offers as they visit different attractions, or a DMO can create educational games to entertain children on long drives and. For example, location-based games Pokémon Go represents one of the best game practices that can make a significant contribution to tourism destinations to develop their attractions while raising awareness of digital tourism potential for sustainability. Pokémon Go, the world’s leading location-based game, has been setting new standards for augmented reality games since appearing three years ago. On the other hand, Memories of Alhambra, an AR-gaming-based K-drama series, used historical characters and places in a fighting game. The content of the drama is an interesting example of AR’s contribution to the tourism industry through the gaming. Similar to the applications in the drama, gamification combines the concept of immersion and real-time interaction with the places in games and can be used to intensify the interaction between the tourist and destination. Creating interesting challenges and achievements can immerse the tourists in the game, and intrinsically motivate them to play the game throughout the whole trip. This motivation leads tourists to constitute an affinity with the destination (Xu et al., 2015). Moreover, the AR drama ‘Memories of Alhambra’ also shows the impact of gaming and AR applications on the behavior of users’ purchasing intentions in restaurants, shops, etc. in the destination. On the other hand, museums can also use AR applications to enhance their visitor experiences. Delivering meaningful contexts like interactive pictures, texts or videos provides visitors to get deeper information about the exhibited artifacts. Providing this content through the personal devices of users can also make the visitor experiences even more natural and intuitive (Neuburger & Egger, 2018). This experience could enhance the participation motivation in a more in-depth manner compared to experiences received from displays or audio guides. Another potentially significant application in the tourism businesses is beacon technology. The application is already used in some hotels with growing popularity. The hotels can use beacons to share information and ads with their guests such as: the map of the hotel, the surrounding points with information about local sights; a virtual key to lock or unlock the door of their room using their phone or tablet; an advertisement for a free drink at the hotel restaurant, etc.

On the other hand, VR applications for non-travelers to participate in tourism experiences; VR can offer innovative solutions, especially for non-travelers who demand to participate in tourism activities but have limited opportunities to realize - such as the disabled, people working intensively, low-income people, etc. Similar to the Google Street View service, the VR can allow non-travelers to experience many tourism activities virtually through a “telepresence tourist” in real-time. Non-traveler users can communicate with the human avatar to visit destinations, contact other people, and to some degree, to shop at destinations. The company Omnipresenz’s “AVATAR” Telepresence Project which enables organizations to create interactive telepresence experiences, is a good example for the tourism industry (Omnipresenz, 2022).

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The future will show whether the real world will be replaced by the virtual world or the real world will become more important for travelers to experience. However, it is seen obviously that phygital technologies of today and tomorrow have considerable power to change the tourism industry and influence the whole consumers' journey map. Therefore, the digital transformation and expectations of today's societies compel tourism pioneers to question their traditional thoughts and services of operating. The tourism industry has to adapt to these global changes and modify its business models by focusing on inspiring innovations, and mindfully applying current technologies. Embracing the innovative technologies and opportunities, in terms of the 'new phygital world' provides many significant chances for tourism managements not only to offer personalized services before the actual visit but also to enhance their real-time experiences on-site at the destination for better customer engagement.

In this long-term adaptation, tourism destination management has a crucial mission in managing successful transformation. As it is known, destinations are considered the focal points for activities of the tourism industry (Fyall & Garrod, 2019) to be the main communication point of tourism ecosystems where a variety of tourism products and services are offered for contributing to the overall tourism experience. They are also defined as a unit of action (Saraniemi & Kylänen, 2011) in which different stakeholders, and parties involved, collaboratively deliver the products of destinations (Fyall, et al., 2002). Due to their multi-elemental and complex structure, marketing and management of any destination is a challenging process (Buhalis, 2000; Fyall et al., 2006). In this regard, DMOs have to be the starting points due to their key role to manage this technology transformation. Phygital applications have many innovative potentials to transform every aspect of tourism services, especially for DMOs and hotel management. There are numerous ways for DMOs and other businesses to take advantage of AR and VR. These managements can develop and test new innovative applications for every touchpoint as given in Figure 4. by inspiring from the application examples, given in this study. Then, businesses have to incorporate the related technologies - AR and VR, and particular hardware. Moreover, the Phygital approach is now a cultural force that is changing the role of the tourism businesses and DMOs, so these organizations need to be aware of the current trends. Thus, businesses need to incorporate both digital and physical data into their CRM systems.

On the other hand, it should be overlooked that although VR and AR have significant impacts on services and provide innovative solutions for all tourism partners, they are still at their testing stage for many countries. However, it is predicted that AR and VR technology will be capable of creating all illusions of senses soon. Thus, the governments should support the new techno-start-ups to develop R&D projects on VR/AR technologies. This digital road should only be rebuilt with the engagement of whole industry partners.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The Phygital concept is quite a challenging but promising research area because of comprising both technical and behavioral issues for practitioners and academicians. This paper shows the importance of the phygital concept by focusing on its application in the tourism industry. However, there is a clear need for more detailed and rigorous research papers on business values or strategies for the Phygital concept. Researchers who are considering working on Phygital concept and its applications can conduct specific

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research on future possible application for various industries. In this paper, we demonstrated the usage areas of the Phygital concept and its applications in tourism experience marketing. However, there are no actual studies on how consumers use phygital applications and how they develop behavioral intentions for these applications. Therefore, future research should evaluate the tourism consumers' perception of being phygital and how the phygital concept and its activities could enhance their travel experience for different demographics.

On the other hand, ethical and legal problems which can be referred to as behavioral issues are other significant research areas for the development of new emerging technologies. However, there are no papers dealing with these issues for the Phygital concept. Researchers should also work on this issue.

CONCLUSION

Information given as background for this research reminds us that the tourism industry is part of a large ecosystem and focusing on tourism also contributes to the wider ecosystem. It is important to take an ecosystem perspective on technological transformation, and acknowledge that transformation in the industry may indirectly assist the other industries' transformation and can have a significant impact on social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Tourism is accepted among the priority industries in which technological innovations have to be realized for industrial sustainability. Therefore, also being part of the service industry, tourism has inevitably been associated with developments in new technologies and refreshed by innovations (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003). Since the early 2000s, digital technologies such as the internet, mobile devices, etc., and today's emerging technologies have been creating a significant revolution in the industry. This revolution has brought along many new tools and solutions to be used by consumers and stakeholders.

The industry is now on the corner of experiencing disruptive technologies (new-era technologies) augmenting human capabilities such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, autonomous vehicles, virtual reality, augmented reality, etc. Technological and software developments continue to develop the efficiency of technologies both in devices and in interface design. Moreover, developmental trends and adoption of smart destinations and tourism services, AI, robotics, and other digital advances are now accelerated to combat the COVID-19 tourism implications (Sigala, 2020). In particular, the last developments in phygital technologies significantly support businesses by providing new tools and opportunities to attract and retain their customers in a hybrid way of experiencing. In particular, AR and VR will much more influence the tourism sector in the nearest future as being significant contemporary technological inventions. In the future, they will be able to provide many innovative solutions to build immersive tourism experiences. Therefore, it is obvious that the phygital concept for tourism customer experience will certainly be in the future.

To be ready for this hybrid world, it is important to examine the relationship between the generations and these disruptive technologies and so quickly adjust the sustainable strategies. The research discusses the effects of AR and VR technologies under the phygital approach during the tourism consumer journey. Therefore, explanations of these technologies in a tourism context as well as demonstrating the examples of various AR and VR applications along this journey can also serve as inspiration for tourism partners to encourage themselves to adapt to these innovative technologies. On the other hand, the tourism pioneers have to be aware of the big challenges in the future of the world such as overtourism, climate change, and health crises similar to COVID-19. In this sense, it is also essential for pioneers to

examine and understand the evolution of technology-focused new/next generations, and the technological transformation of the future world, to manage the industry in a sustainable manner.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Artificial Intelligence: A computer intelligence similar to human intelligence which is concerned with performing tasks by managing smart machines.

Disruptive Technology: A terminology used for all innovative technologies that significantly alter the ways of doing business for businesses and industries and also create new opportunities for consumers.

DMO (Destination Marketing Organization): An organization which promotes a location as an attractive travel destination.

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Internet of Things (IoT): Describes the communication network between physical objects that are equipped with sensors, software, etc. It contributes to the objects connecting to each other or exchanging data with other devices via the internet.

TMO (Time Machine Organization): The leading international organization for cooperation in technology, science and cultural heritage and the institutional governing framework that ensures the sustainability and economic independence of the Time Machine project.

UNWTO (The World Tourism Organization): The United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of sustainable, responsible, and universally accessible tourism.

WHO (World Health Organization): A specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health.

Chapter 15

Evaluation of the Experiences in the Restaurants With Multi-Criteria Decision- Making Methods

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ABSTRACT

The restaurant selection is an important multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) problem. Because many conflicting criteria affect the customers' restaurant selection, there are many alternatives to meet the customers' different and changing needs. The focus of this chapter is to search the criteria that influence the customer decisions to select a restaurant and evaluate the restaurants by utilizing the experiences of the customers. For this purpose, the restaurants located in Istanbul with online reservations that offer first-class dinners are considered as a sample case. The importance of the criteria is defined with the IVIF-CRITIC method, and the restaurants are ranked with the IVIF-CoCoSo method. IVIF sets are used to overcome the uncertainty due to the involvement of human judgment. It can be stated that the proposed methodology can be useful to analyze the human judgments in MCDM problems and develop the weak criteria for the restaurant managers and decide on restaurant choices for the customers.

INTRODUCTION

“Experiential marketing” was developed by Schmitt (1999). It is one of the marketing strategies that include consumers' emotions and feelings by forming memorable experiences for consumers to become fanatical about the product. Shortly, it depends on consumer experience (Oliha et al., 2021). By applying experiential marketing strategies, businesses can maintain relations with existing customers, have new

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customers, and form customer loyalty. Loyal customers are very important not only for making a profit, but also for advertising the business (Zena & Hadisumarto, 2012). Today, one of the main reasons for the positive results of experiential marketing strategies is technology (Urdea & Constantin, 2021). One of the businesses that are directly or indirectly affected by the developments in technology is restaurants since the starting point of the restaurants' marketing activities is customers. Restaurants meet not only the customers' nutritional needs but also meet their needs such as having a good time, relaxation, and socialization (Albayrak, 2014). Regardless of the reason for this need, individuals will have to research the restaurants that offer the desired service to be able to compare the available alternatives and make a service purchase decision. Services are 'experiences' and therefore, their evaluations are difficult before their purchases. If the customers have not experienced the restaurant's service, they will resort to obtain relevant external information (Pedraja & Yague, 2001). In this manner, the customers get information through printed materials. Also, the restaurants' websites and social media, recommendations, or experiences are the information sources that are used in restaurant selection (Yılmaz & Gultekin, 2016).

On the other hand, there are too many restaurants for similar purposes, and it is important to get a competitive advantage in this environment. Restaurants' performances are increasingly dependent on online reviews with the development of technology. Many people use online reviews as reference points when deciding on restaurant selection. However, due to the nature of the decision-making process and subjective judgments, the evaluations contain uncertainty. In this chapter, Interval Valued Intuitionistic Fuzzy (IVIF) sets are used to incorporate the uncertainty. Intuitionistic Fuzzy Sets (IFSs) are one of the theories developed by different researchers to model the uncertainty after Zadeh's (1965) development of fuzzy set theory. IFSs developed by Atanassov (1986) are defined by degree of membership, degree of non-membership, and degree of hesitancy (Zhang et al., 2016). IFSs are able to represent the uncertainty in a more comprehensively and meaningfully than fuzzy sets. Then, Atanassov and Gargov (1989) developed IVIF sets defined by membership and non-membership functions whose values are intervals (Zhang et al., 2016; Xu & Gou, 2017).

Determining the criteria that affects the customers' restaurant preferences will allow restaurant managers to maintain their presence and determine more accurate marketing strategies (Albayrak, 2014). In this case, there is a need for scientific methods that can handle the selection in all its aspects, and process the data in the problem. Therefore, in this chapter, MCDM methods and IVIF sets where uncertainty can be handled are combined. From this perspective, the goal of this chapter is to analyze the criteria influencing restaurant selection and then, find the best restaurant based on the desired criteria in an uncertain environment. There are studies on this subject including statistical methods. There are few studies with MCDM methods. Yıldız and Yıldız (2015) evaluated the service quality of three restaurants that operate in Trabzon with AHP (Analytical Hierarchy Process) and TOPSIS (Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution) methods. Stanujkic et al. (2019) determined customer satisfaction in traditional Serbian restaurants with the PIPRECIA (PIVot Pairwise RELative Criteria Importance Assessment) method, WSPLP (Weighted Sum Preferred Levels of Performances) approach, and dominance theory. MCDM methods do not require as much data as statistical methods. In this chapter, two well-known MCDM methods, CRITIC (CRITERIA Importance Through Intercriteria Correlation) and CoCoSo (COMBined COMpromise Solution), are combined with IVIF sets for the restaurant selection problem. CRITIC method was developed by Diakoulaki et al. (1995), and it is used for finding the objective weights in multiple criteria problems. It is based on the intensity of the contrast in the decision-making problem (Diakoulaki et al., 1995). In the method, correlation analysis is performed to determine the contrasts between the criteria (Yılmaz & Harmancıoğlu, 2010; Tuş & Aytaç Adalı,

2019). On the other hand, CoCoSo method was developed by Yazdani et al. (2019). It is the combination of two MCDM methods, SAW and EWP (Zolfani et al., 2019). Also, the compromise solutions for ranking and selecting the purposes are derived from applying the different aggregation strategies in the CoCoSo method (Alrasheedi et al., 2021).

In this chapter, the restaurants located in Istanbul with online reservations that offer the first-class dinners are considered. IVIF-CRITIC method is utilized to compute the weights of criteria, while IVIF-CoCoSo method is utilized to rank the alternatives and select the most desirable restaurant. With the help of the IVIF sets, the fuzziness in the structures of the decision problem and decision-making processes are overcome. So, IVIF sets are asserted in these MCDM methods to get more realistic results. In this chapter, the reviews received on TripAdvisor.com for the defined restaurant alternatives are analyzed with the MCDM methods. For simplicity, the number of restaurants is reduced by using location information and restaurant classification. Therefore, the first-class restaurants in Istanbul that provide the dinner and online reservation services, and the reviews of all people who have experienced these restaurants have been taken into account regardless of the traveler type, time of year, and language. Interpretation-based reviews are expressed in the linguistic variables, and the corresponding IVIF numbers are assigned to these linguistic variables. After processing the values as IVIF numbers, the criteria weights are found, and the best restaurants are defined, respectively. The main contribution of this chapter can be summarized as follows:

- The chapter allows the information extracted from a well-known website. From this perspective, the customer reviews that reflect their experiences are the main inputs of the current chapter. By processing main inputs, this chapter offers an alternative solution that will meet the need for experience-based research in parallel with the increasing use and importance of experiential marketing by most sectors.
- The CRITIC method is extended to the IVIF environment and used as the IVIF-CRITIC to identify the weights of criteria. In this way, the uncertainty in user reviews is modeled with the IVIF sets, and the weights of criteria are calculated using the customers' experiences without the need for any further information or opinions. These results are important for marketers. The use of uncertainly expressed experiences in the context of online reviews and the results obtained by processing these experiences are expected to be used by experiential marketers as an alternative way to attract and retain new customers.
- The CoCoSo method is extended to the IVIF environment and used as IVIF-CoCoSo to perform the restaurant selection. It is thought that an applicable and practical solution methodology has been proposed for the customers on this subject. Otherwise, the results of the study are important for restaurants in terms of following new digital consumer experiences to survive in the long run. In addition, making decisions based on customers' experiences allows restaurants to improve their services and make the best use of their capital.
- The integration of IVIF-CRITIC and IVIF-CoCoSo methods in restaurant selection is new in MCDM literature. This integration provides clear and efficient problem modeling.
- With this chapter, the data has been reorganized and made more understandable, so, as an advantage, it has been tried to avoid wasting time by reading all the comments.

Evaluation of the Experiences

The organization of the chapter is as follows: Section 2 presents the related literature; Section 3 provides the proposed methodology; Section 4 highlights the proposed method for the restaurant selection problem. Lastly, the results are discussed, and the contributions, the limitations and the suggestions for further studies are given.

RELATED LITERATURE FOR “RESTAURANT” CONCEPT FROM THE EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

The role of restaurants is important in having the advantage in the experiential marketing context, as all senses can be engaged, and personalized experiences can be presented directly to the customer (Lekstutyte, 2016). People want to have different experiences and have a good time, apart from the need to eat, in the restaurant preference. Based on this conceptual framework, the goal of this chapter is to search the experiential marketing criteria that affect expectations, customer satisfaction and loyalty, and also to reveal the most preferred criteria as a result of the experiences of customers and the effect of the importance they give to these criteria on their restaurant selections with the proposed method. In this context, the literature review has been carried out in two stages in this part of the chapter. Firstly, a summary of the recent studies on experiential marketing and restaurant concepts is given. Then, the related literature on experiential marketing criteria that are influential in restaurant selection has been reviewed since this chapter focuses on the experiences only and their impact on restaurant selection decisions.

Zena and Hadisumarto (2012) analyzed one of the cafés in Indonesia in terms of experiential marketing, satisfaction and loyalty. The structural equation model (SEM) was used as an analyzing tool. Araci et al. (2017) found out that experiential marketing, feel experience and relate experience affect customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. Their analyzing tool was SEM, and their population was from the customers in İzmir's 1st class restaurants. Yanto et al. (2020) used SEM for examining the experiential marketing effect on repurchase behavior for the restaurant. Wola et al. (2021) analyzed the effect of experiential marketing and e-commerce on customer loyalty for a restaurant in North Sulawesi with a multiple linear regression model. Nopus and Jamjuri (2022) tried to find out the relationship between experiential marketing, brand image and product innovation on consumer purchasing behavior for the restaurant in Indonesia. Multiple regression analysis was performed to find out the relationship. When the studies that were included in this chapter or could not be included due to the page limit are examined in detail, the most preferred method in the literature is SEM.

Customers' restaurant preferences are also influenced by a wide variety of criteria. A potential customer seeks information on desired criteria to compare the alternatives and make the best decision. It is important to know the behaviors of the customers regarding the restaurant selection so that the restaurants can recognize their target markets and develop the appropriate marketing strategies (Pedraja & Yague, 2001). For this reason, related studies on the criteria that affect the customers' restaurant choices have been reviewed. Lewis (1981) suggested the criteria as convenience, price, food quality, atmosphere, and menu variety (Cho et al., 2020). June and Smith (1987) defined the criteria as service, food quality, atmosphere, price, and liquor availability while Auty (1992) defined them as value for money, facilities for children, opening hours, recommended new experience, speed of service, image and atmosphere, food quality, location, and food type. According to Knutson and Patton (1993), the most important criterion for restaurant selection is food quality. Qu (1997) defined the criteria as promotion, service and courtesy, location, advertising, food and environment, price, and value. Kivela (1997) stated the criteria

as prompt handling of complaints, new experience, friendliness of waiting staff, prestige, speed of service, cleanliness, menu item variety, comfort level, cost and quality of food, competent waiting staff, ambiance, type of food, and location for affecting restaurant purchase behavior. Clark and Wood (1998) found the most common five criteria as the speed of service, atmosphere, price, range, and quality of food. Koo et al. (1999) defined the criteria as service, decoration, quality or taste of food, price, car park, uniqueness, variety and type of food, and location. Elder et al. (1999) defined the criteria as liquor license, ethnic speciality, language, “low-calorie” dishes, price specials/coupons, low-fat dishes, distance from home, salad bar, fun place for children, convenient hours, nutritional content, menu variety, fast service, children’s menu, price, service quality, atmosphere, taste, and cleanliness. Pedraja and Yague (2001) examined the external information search activities carried out by potential customers and made a survey to analyze the services of the restaurants in Zaragoza. Heung (2002) indicated the five important restaurant selection criteria as word-of-mouth, atmosphere, value for money, servers’ attitude, and food quality. Jacobsen and Haukeland (2002) identified three main criteria as physical standard and ambiance, food, staff quality, and views. Yüksel and Yüksel (2002) defined smoke and visibility, location and appearance, healthy food, atmosphere and activity, price and value, adventurous menu, product quality, and hygiene, and service quality and staff attitude that are likely to affect tourist restaurant selection and evaluations. Cullen (2004) identified the main restaurant selection criteria as reputation, location, cleanliness, food type, and quality. Knutson et al. (2006) classified the dimensions of restaurant choice for seniors into two categories as experience and incentives. Upadhyay et al. (2007) considered the popularity of chefs, vegetarian cuisine availability, specialized cuisine facility, innovative recipe, separate bar, cuisine tariffs, ambiance, separate place for family, convenient operating time, parking facility, less time in serving, menu, location, safety, and food quality. Law et al. (2008) defined attraction, environment, price, service, and food and beverage as the main criteria. Myung et al. (2008) defined the meal choice criteria as value for the price, variety seeking, familiarity, and foods. Njite et al. (2008) identified five fine dining restaurants criteria as convenience, employee competence, customer relations, atmosphere, and price. They indicated that the most important criterion is customer relations and the least important criterion is price in fine dining restaurants. Kim et al. (2010) investigated the restaurant choices and related dining-out behaviors of mature tourists for different restaurant types. They defined the criteria as the taste of food, speed of service, consistency of food and service quality, friendliness of employees, the knowledge of servers about menu, comfortable seating, enough place for parking, price, variety of menu items, atmosphere, location, comfortable place to socialize, size of portions, healthy menu options, food presentation, hours of operation, the recommendation from other people, carryout availability, coupons, special discounts for seniors, choices of ethnic cuisine menu items, nutrition information for menu items. The taste of food is the most important criterion for all types of restaurants. “Coupons” is the least important criterion for fine dining restaurants while “nutrition information for menu items” is the least important criterion for buffet restaurants and casual/family restaurants. Harrington et al. (2011) described six fine-dining restaurant selection criteria as variety/innovative characteristics, dietary, setting, quality expectation, price/value, and promotion. Ali and Nath (2013) identified seven eating out preference criteria; ambiance and services, value for money, food variety, additional facility, timing and security, food quality and safety, and convenience. Alonso et al. (2013) defined quality and variety of food, price, service quality, reputation, “local” aspect of the restaurant, beer selection, the atmosphere of the restaurant, nutrition, healthy choices/options, health inspection and health rating, location, clean environment, convenience, and taste. Albayrak (2014) determined the main criteria that affect the first-class restaurant choices of the customers in Istanbul as restaurant characteristics, food and beverages,

Evaluation of the Experiences

services, and monetary value, and revealed that the criteria affecting the restaurant choices differ in terms of income, education level, and frequency of going to the restaurant. Jung et al. (2015) took into account quality and price criteria while analyzing compensatory and non-compensatory decision-making strategies in restaurant selection. They found that the most important criterion in restaurant selection is food quality. Yıldız and Yıldız (2015) used past experiences, value, loyalty, tangibles, reliability, ambiance, empathy, responsiveness, assurance and food quality criteria to measure the service quality in restaurants. Yılmaz and Gultekin (2016) investigated the consumers' restaurant preferences factors and information sources for this selection. Stanujkic et al. (2019) considered the restaurant selection criteria as the price of service quality, including the manner of serving, the variety, quality and taste of the food and drinks, friendliness and helpfulness of the staff, the interior of the building and the friendly atmosphere. Chua et al. (2020) derived nine restaurant selection criteria as location convenient with dining occasions and restaurant segments, sales promotion, menu price, variety of menu items, personal or past experience, brand popularity, reputation, online reviews from customers, and word-of-mouth recommendations. They found that brand reputation, word-of-mouth recommendation and menu price are the most important criteria for quick meal and convenience, social occasion, business necessity, and celebration, respectively. Palimbongan et al. (2021) evaluated service, employee, freshness, design, decor, appearance, variety, presentation, and cleanliness criteria. Fang and Partovi (2021) presented the topic modeling approach for the reviews in determining the hotel and restaurant selection criteria within an AHP setting. Akhil and Suresh (2021) evaluated restaurant service quality by performing Multi-Grade Fuzzy (MGF) approach. They considered tangibles, reliability, responsiveness assurance, and empathy. It is understood from the detailed literature review that there are various criteria that affect the restaurant selection. The main criteria considered in many studies are food, value (price), atmosphere (environment), and service. Table 1 is the summary of the detailed literature review based on these main criteria. This chapter is also formed by considering these main criteria.

Table 1. The literature review summary on the main criteria affecting consumers' restaurant selections

Author(s)	Food	Value	Atmosphere	Service
Lewis (1981)	✓	✓	✓	
June and Smith (1987)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Auty (1992)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Knutson and Patton (1993)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Qu (1997)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kivela (1997)	✓		✓	✓
Clark and Wood (1998)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Koo et al. (1999)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elder et al. (1999)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pedraja and Yague (2001)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heung (2002)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jacobsen and Haukeland (2002)	✓		✓	✓
Yüksel and Yüksel (2002)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cullen (2004)	✓		✓	✓

continues on following page

Table 1. Continued

Author(s)	Food	Value	Atmosphere	Service
Knutson et al. (2006)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Upadhyay et al. (2007)	✓		✓	✓
Law et al. (2008)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Myung et al. (2008)	✓	✓		
Njite et al. (2008)		✓	✓	✓
Kim et al. (2010)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harrington et al. (2011)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ali and Nath (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alonso et al. (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Albayrak (2014)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jung et al. (2015)	✓	✓		
Yıldız and Yıldız (2015)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stanujkic et al. (2019)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chua et al. (2020)	✓	✓		
Palimbongan et al. (2021)	✓		✓	✓
Akhil and Suresh (2021)				✓

METHODOLOGY

IVIFs are explained in detail in this part of the chapter. In addition, the two methods that are used in the application section, CRITIC and CoCoSo, and the IVIF extensions of these methods are mentioned under these headings.

IVIF Sets

Zadeh (1965) firstly proposed the fuzzy sets theory, then Atanassov (1986) stated that the membership degree used in fuzzy set theory is not sufficient to reflect a fuzzy object. To make up for this deficiency, the intuitionistic fuzzy set was developed, and it integrates the degree of non-membership with the degree of membership to define an element in a set. Then, Atanassov and Gargov (1989) developed Interval Valued Intuitionistic Fuzzy (IVIF) sets (Zhang et al., 2016). The membership degree and the non-membership degree of an element that belongs to an IVIF set are expressed with the interval values in [0, 1].

Let X be non-empty finite set. An IVIF set in X is an object \tilde{A} represented as in Eq.(1) (Atanassov & Gargov, 1989):

$$\tilde{A} = \{x \in X\} \tag{1}$$

$[\mu_{\tilde{A}}^L(x), \mu_{\tilde{A}}^U(x)]$ is the membership degree of $x \in X$ and $[v_{\tilde{A}}^L(x), v_{\tilde{A}}^U(x)]$ is the non-membership degree of $x \in X$. They are interval numbers, and the following situations must be satisfied;

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$$[\mu_A^L(x), \mu_A^U(x)] \subset [0,1], [v_A^L(x), v_A^U(x)] \subset [0,1] \text{ and } \mu_A^U(x) + v_A^U(x) \leq 1$$

(Büyüközkan et al., 2018).

On the other hand, $\tilde{\pi}_A(x)$ denotes the hesitation degree of an intuitionistic fuzzy interval of $x \in X$ in \tilde{A} . It is represented as follows (Atanassov & Gargov, 1989; Büyüközkan et al., 2018):

$$\tilde{\pi}_A(x) = 1 - \tilde{\mu}_A(x) - \tilde{v}_A(x) = [\pi_A^L(x), \pi_A^U(x)] = [1 - \mu_A^U(x) - v_A^U(x), 1 - \mu_A^L(x) - v_A^L(x)] \quad (2)$$

The basic operations of IVIFNs are defined in Eq.(3)-Eq.(6). Let

$$\tilde{A}_1 = ([\mu_1^L(x), \mu_1^U(x)], [v_1^L(x), v_1^U(x)]) \text{ and } \tilde{A}_2 = ([\mu_2^L(x), \mu_2^U(x)], [v_2^L(x), v_2^U(x)])$$

be two IVIF Numbers (IVIFNs) in an IVIF set. Then (Xu & Gou, 2017),

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{A}_1 + \tilde{A}_2 = & ([\mu_1^L(x) + \mu_2^L(x) - \mu_1^L(x) * \mu_2^L(x), \mu_1^U(x) + \mu_2^U(x) - \mu_1^U(x) * \mu_2^U(x)], \\ & [v_1^L(x) * v_2^L(x), v_1^U(x) * v_2^U(x)]) \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{A}_1 * \tilde{A}_2 = & ([\mu_1^L(x) * \mu_2^L(x), \mu_1^U(x) * \mu_2^U(x)], \\ & [v_1^L(x) + v_2^L(x) - v_1^L(x) * v_2^L(x), v_1^U(x) + v_2^U(x) - v_1^U(x) * v_2^U(x)]) \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

$$\lambda \tilde{A}_1 = ([1 - (1 - \mu_1^L(x))^\lambda, 1 - (1 - \mu_1^U(x))^\lambda], [(v_1^L(x))^\lambda, (v_1^U(x))^\lambda]), \lambda > 0 \quad (5)$$

$$(\tilde{A}_1)^\lambda = ([(\mu_1^L(x))^\lambda, (\mu_1^U(x))^\lambda], [1 - (1 - v_1^L(x))^\lambda, 1 - (1 - v_1^U(x))^\lambda]) \lambda > 0 \quad (6)$$

λ is a real number in Eq.(5) and Eq.(6).

The score and accuracy functions of IVIFN were defined by Xu (2007). The score function of IVIFN is used for measuring purposes, and the accuracy function of an IVIFN is used for addressing the accuracy degree of an IVIFN. For convenience,

$$\tilde{\alpha} = ([\mu^L(x), \mu^U(x)], [v^L(x), v^U(x)])$$

represents an IVIFN. The score function $S(\tilde{\alpha})$. (Liu & Wang, 2007) and accuracy function $H(\tilde{\alpha})$ (Xu, 2007) of $\tilde{\alpha}$ are defined, respectively as (Xu & Chen, 2007; Wang, 2021):

$$S(\tilde{\alpha}) = \frac{1}{2} \left[\mu^L(x) + \mu^L(x)(1 - \mu^L(x) - \nu^L(x)) + \mu^U(x) + \mu^U(x)(1 - \mu^U(x) - \nu^U(x)) \right], S(\tilde{\alpha}) \in [0, 1] \quad (7)$$

$$H(\tilde{\alpha}) = \frac{1}{2} \left[\mu^L(x) + \mu^U(x) + \nu^L(x) + \nu^U(x) \right], H(\tilde{\alpha}) \in [0, 1] \quad (8)$$

If $S(\tilde{\alpha}) = 1$, it means that $\tilde{\alpha}$ is the largest IVIFN $\tilde{\alpha} = ([1, 1], [0, 0])$; otherwise, if $S(\tilde{\alpha}) = -1$, it means that $\tilde{\alpha}$ is the smallest IVIFN $\tilde{\alpha} = ([0, 0], [1, 1])$.

On the other hand, $S(\tilde{\alpha})$ and $H(\tilde{\alpha})$ are performed to compare any two IVIFNs. The comparison principles of any two IVIFNs ($\tilde{\alpha}_1$ and $\tilde{\alpha}_2$) are as below (Xu, 2007; Xu & Chen, 2007):

$$\text{If } S(\tilde{\alpha}_1) < S(\tilde{\alpha}_2) \text{ then } \tilde{\alpha}_1 < \tilde{\alpha}_2 \quad (9)$$

If $S(\tilde{\alpha}_1) = S(\tilde{\alpha}_2)$ then, two situations are evaluated as:

$$H(\tilde{\alpha}_1) < H(\tilde{\alpha}_2), \text{ then } \tilde{\alpha}_1 < \tilde{\alpha}_2$$

$$H(\tilde{\alpha}_1) = H(\tilde{\alpha}_2), \text{ then } \tilde{\alpha}_1 = \tilde{\alpha}_2$$

IVIF-CRITIC Method

The CRITIC (Criteria Importance Through Inter-criteria Correlation) method was proposed by Diakoulaki et al. (1995), and it is used for computing criteria weights, objectively. CRITIC method is based on the ideas of intensity contrast of each criterion and conflict among criteria. Standard deviations and correlation coefficients are the main tools for determining these values, respectively (Tuş & Aytac Adalı, 2019).

Since the first development of the CRITIC method, it has been used in many studies in the literature. In this chapter, the studies with the traditional CRITIC method are not mentioned, but only a summary of the studies in which the CRITIC method is used in a fuzzy environment is presented. Keshavarz Ghorabae et al. (2017) combined CRITIC and WASPAS methods with Interval Type-2 Fuzzy Sets. They solved 3PL provider evaluation with a combined methodology. Rostamzadeh et al. (2018) presented an integrated fuzzy TOPSIS-CRITIC integration for risk management evaluation of sustainable supply chain. Li and Wang (2020) used IVIF-CRITIC and IVIF-EDAS methods for the service quality evaluation of the of wireless sensor networks. Wang (2021) performed IVIF-CRITIC and IVIF-TOPSIS methods for the evaluation of College English teaching effect. Peng et al. (2020) evaluated the 5G industry with Pythagorean fuzzy CRITIC and CoCoSo methods. Rani et al. (2021) proposed an integrated method including CRITIC and MULTIMOORA methods under single-valued neutrosophic sets. Mishra et al. (2021) solved the sustainable 3PRLP problem by integrating Fermatean fuzzy information with CRITIC and EDAS methods.

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IVIF-CRITIC method requires the following application steps involving m alternatives, A_i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, m$), n criteria C_j ($j = 1, 2, \dots, n$) (Li & Wang, 2020; Wang, 2021):

Step 1: The IVIF decision matrix is generated as in Eq.(10):

$$\tilde{X} = [\tilde{x}_{ij}]_{m \times n} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{x}_{11} & \tilde{x}_{12} & \dots & \tilde{x}_{1n} \\ \tilde{x}_{21} & \tilde{x}_{22} & \dots & \tilde{x}_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \dots & \vdots \\ \tilde{x}_{m1} & \tilde{x}_{m2} & \dots & \tilde{x}_{mn} \end{bmatrix}_{m \times n} \quad (10)$$

\tilde{x}_{ij} presents IVIF number for the performance value of i th alternative on j th criterion;

$$\tilde{x}_{ij} = [\mu^L(\tilde{x}_{ij}), \mu^U(\tilde{x}_{ij})], [v^L(\tilde{x}_{ij}), v^U(\tilde{x}_{ij})], (i = 1, 2, \dots, m; j = 1, 2, \dots, n)$$

Step 2: IVIF decision matrix is normalized, and normalized decision matrix $\tilde{N} = [\tilde{n}_{ij}]_{m \times n}$ is computed.

Eq.(11) that was proposed by Mishra and Rani (2018) is used for the computation:

$$\tilde{n}_{ij} = [\mu^L(\tilde{x}_{ij}), \mu^U(\tilde{x}_{ij})], [v^L(\tilde{x}_{ij}), v^U(\tilde{x}_{ij})] \text{ if } j \text{ is beneficial criterion}$$

$$\tilde{n}_{ij} = [v^L(\tilde{x}_{ij}), v^U(\tilde{x}_{ij})], [\mu^L(\tilde{x}_{ij}), \mu^U(\tilde{x}_{ij})] \text{ if } j \text{ is cost criterion} \quad (11)$$

Step 3: Correlation coefficients between criteria are found as:

$$Corr_{jj'} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^m (S(\tilde{n}_{ij}) - S(\tilde{n}_j))(S(\tilde{n}_{ij'}) - S(\tilde{n}_{j'}))}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^m (S(\tilde{n}_{ij}) - S(\tilde{n}_j))^2} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^m (S(\tilde{n}_{ij'}) - S(\tilde{n}_{j'}))^2}}, (j, j' = 1, 2, \dots, n) \quad (12)$$

$$S(\tilde{n}_j) = \left(\frac{1}{m}\right) \sum_{i=1}^m S(\tilde{n}_{ij}) \quad (12a)$$

$$S(\tilde{n}_{j'}) = \left(\frac{1}{m}\right) \sum_{i=1}^m S(\tilde{n}_{ij'}) \quad (12b)$$

The role of criteria correlation coefficients is the determination of criteria contrast (Madic & Radovanović, 2015).

Step 4: Standard deviation of each criterion is found as:

$$SD_j = \sqrt{\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m (S(\tilde{n}_{ij}) - S(\tilde{n}_j))^2} \quad (13)$$

Step 5: The weight of each criterion is obtained as:

$$w_j = \frac{SD_j \sum_{j'}^n (1 - Corr_{jj'})}{\sum_{j=1}^n (SD_j \sum_{j'}^n (1 - Corr_{jj'}))} \quad (14)$$

where $w_j \in [0,1]$ and $\sum_{j=1}^n w_j = 1$. The high numerator value of Eq.(14) means that more information is obtained from a certain criterion, and the weight of this criterion is higher than the weights of other criteria.

IVIF-CoCoSo Method

CoCoSo (COMbined COMpromise SOLUTION) method was proposed by Yazdani et al. (2019). Yazdani et al. (2019) combined multiple methods to reach compromise scores and make an efficient decision (Liao et al., 2020). Namely, the CoCoSo method performs the WASPAS, SAW, and MEW methods with the different strategies of aggregation (Lai et al., 2020).

There are studies in the literature that include MCDM problems solved with the traditional CoCoSo method. In this chapter, as has been done in the previous section, only a summary of the studies using the CoCoSo method in a fuzzy environment is presented. Karasan and Bolturk (2019) proposed the neutrosophic CoCoSo method for the waste disposal site selection problem. Erceg et al. (2019) proposed the Interval Rough CoCoSo method, and they solved supplier selection problems with ABC analysis, FUCOM, and Interval Rough CoCoSo method. Wen et al. (2019) combined the CoCoSo method with hesitant fuzzy linguistic term sets, and solved a personnel selection problem with the hesitant fuzzy linguistic CoCoSo method. Alrasheedi et al. (2021) evaluated the indicators of green growth in the manufacturing sector by using IVIF-CoCoSo method. Peng and Huang (2020) extended CRITIC and CoCoSo methods to a q-rung orthopair fuzzy (q-ROF) environment, and the proposed algorithm was applied to financial risk evaluation problems. Peng et al. (2020) proposed to use Pythagorean fuzzy sets in the CoCoSo method, and presented applicability of the Pythagorean fuzzy CoCoSo method with a case including 5G industry evaluation. Similarly, Liao et al. (2020) extended the CoCoSo method to the Pythagorean fuzzy environment, and they integrated the Pythagorean fuzzy CoCoSo method with the cumulative prospect theory and combined weights. Ecer and Pamucar (2020) selected sustainable suppliers with fuzzy BWM and fuzzy Bonferroni CoCoSo methods. Peng et al. (2021) proposed the usage of interval-valued fuzzy soft sets in CRITIC and CoCoSo methods for the evaluation of intelligent health management. Peng and Luo (2021) proposed to employ picture fuzzy sets in the CoCoSo method, and the proposed algorithm was shown with a case study including the stock market bubble warning evaluation.

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IVIF-CoCoSo method requires the following application steps involving m alternatives, A_i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, m$), n criteria C_j ($j = 1, 2, \dots, n$) (Alrasheedi et al., 2021):

Step 1: The IVIF decision matrix is generated as in Eq.(10).

Step 2: Normalized decision matrix $\tilde{N} = [\tilde{n}_{ij}]_{m \times n}$ is computed as in Eq.(11).

Step 3: Weighted comparability sequences are computed as shown in Eq.(15) and Eq.(16),

$$\tilde{S}_i = \sum_{j=1}^n (w_j \tilde{n}_{ij}) \quad (15)$$

$$\tilde{P}_i = \sum_{j=1}^n (\tilde{n}_{ij})^{w_j} \quad (16)$$

\tilde{S}_i and \tilde{P}_i are the weighted sum sequence and the weighted power sequence, respectively. For finding the values of \tilde{S}_i and \tilde{P}_i , Eq.(5) and Eq.(6) are performed, respectively. w_j presents the weight of j th criterion. These criteria weights can be obtained by different methods, but in this chapter, the criteria weights obtained from the IVIF-CRITIC method described in the previous section will be used. Then, the weighted sums are performed by Eq.(3). The values of \tilde{S}_i and \tilde{P}_i are in the form of IVIF numbers.

Step 4: Relative appraisal scores of the alternatives are computed as in Eq.(17)-(19).

$$k_i^1 = \frac{S(P_i) + S(S_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^m (S(P_i) + S(S_i))} \quad (17)$$

$$k_i^2 = \frac{S(S_i)}{\min_i S(S_i)} + \frac{S(P_i)}{\min_i S(P_i)} \quad (18)$$

$$k_i^3 = \frac{S(S_i) + (1 - \lambda)S(P_i)}{(\lambda \max_i S(S_i) + (1 - \lambda) \max_i S(P_i))}, 0 \leq \lambda \leq 1 \quad (19)$$

where $S(P_i)$ and $S(S_i)$ are score function values of \tilde{S}_i and \tilde{P}_i , respectively. These values are computed with Eq.(7). On the other hand, Eq.(17) is the arithmetic mean of $S(P_i)$ and $S(S_i)$ scores. Eq.(18) is the sum of relative scores of $S(P_i)$ and $S(S_i)$. Finally, Eq.(19) is the comprise solution for $S(P_i)$ and $S(S_i)$. The threshold value (λ) is decided by the decision-maker, but it is often observed as 0.5 in the literature.

Step 5: The overall score of each alternative is computed as in Eq.(20):

$$k_i = \left(k_i^1 k_i^2 k_i^3\right)^{\frac{1}{3}} + \frac{1}{3} \left(k_i^1 + k_i^2 + k_i^3\right) \quad (20)$$

The alternative is assumed as the best that has the highest value of k_i , and ranking is also obtained by ascending order.

CASE STUDY

In this chapter, it is aimed to select the best restaurants under predefined criteria. For this purpose, the IVIF-CRITIC method is utilized to determine the weights of criteria, whereas the IVIF-CoCoSo method is utilized to rank the alternatives and select the most desirable restaurant. The fuzziness in the structures of the decision problem and decision-making processes is overcome with the help of IVIF sets. The first-class restaurants operating in Istanbul, offering the dinner with the opportunity to make online reservations are included in the scope of the study. Besides, the reviews received on TripAdvisor.com for the restaurant alternatives are taken into account, and these are analyzed with IVIF-CRITIC and IVIF-CoCoSo methods. The role of online reviews in influencing consumer behavior is an important research topic in the literature (Park et al., 2021). TripAdvisor.com is a well-known and widely used tourism website with a large number of travel reviews. These reviews are the unbiased and honest opinions of travelers who share their experiences. Food, service, value, and atmosphere which are the main concerns of guests are the criteria offered by TripAdvisor.com when evaluating restaurants (Fang and Partovi, 2021). Also, the literature review on the criteria affecting customers' restaurant selection reveals that these are the main criteria considered in many studies, and support the literature. Therefore, these criteria and the overall rating criterion are used to evaluate the alternatives. The brief descriptions of these five criteria are as follows:

Food (C_1): It contains the quality of the food and beverages served in the restaurant, the variety of the menu, and the nutritional values of the dishes.

Service (C_2): It is the behavior of the employees, the speed of service, the competence of the employees, and extra customer services such as valet, free parking, and children's playroom.

Value (C_3): It is the price or 'monetary value' which refers to the value of money paid and the ability to use credit cards.

Atmosphere (C_4): It is the ventilation and air conditioning system, music/volume level, obstructive lighting, the architecture of the space in a way that reflects the general atmosphere of the restaurant, and furniture conformity for sitting and eating.

Overall rating (C_5): This is the value that the researchers and different studies have largely agreed on. Namely, it is indicative of the summary of user reviews.

After determining the criteria, the restaurant alternatives are determined. The study is carried out in Istanbul since it has the highest population in Turkey, and most of the food and beverage businesses are mostly located in Istanbul. On the other hand, the reason for including the first-class restaurants in

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the study is that these restaurants give more importance to customer preferences, and it is assumed that customers coming to these restaurants are more selective. The study is limited to restaurants that provide dinner and online reservation services. It is observed that some restaurants have missing data so they are eliminated. Accordingly, the number of restaurants serving their customers with different cuisines has been determined as nine.

The linguistic variables used in considering the reviews on TripAdvisor.com are in Table 2. The reviews of all people who have experienced these restaurants have been taken into account, regardless of the traveler type, time period, and language.

Table 2. Linguistic variables

Linguistic terms	IVIFNs
Absolutely High (AH)	([0.75, 0.90], [0.00, 0.10])
Very High (VH)	([0.65, 0.80], [0.05, 0.20])
High (H)	([0.55, 0.70], [0.15, 0.30])
Medium-High (MH)	([0.45, 0.60], [0.25, 0.40])
Fair (F)	([0.50, 0.50], [0.50, 0.50])
Medium Low (ML)	([0.25, 0.40], [0.45, 0.60])
Low (L)	([0.15, 0.30], [0.55, 0.70])
Very Low (VL)	([0.05, 0.20], [0.65, 0.80])
Absolutely Low (AL)	([0.00, 0.10], [0.75, 0.90])

Source: Adopted from Zhou and Lu (2012), and Seker and Aydin (2020)

Table 3. Decision matrix

Restaurants		C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	C ₄	C ₅
A ₁	Deraliye Restaurant	VH	AH	VH	VH	AH
A ₂	Frankie İstanbul	H	H	MH	H	H
A ₃	Şans Restaurant	VH	VH	VH	H	VH
A ₄	Matbah Ottoman Palace Cuisine	VH	VH	VH	VH	VH
A ₅	Neolokal	VH	H	H	VH	H
A ₆	City Lights Restaurant & Bar	H	VH	H	VH	VH
A ₇	Çırağan Palace- Bosphorus Grill	VH	VH	H	AH	VH
A ₈	Sunset Grill & Bar	H	H	MH	VH	H
A ₉	Nusr-Et	VH	H	MH	H	H

Source: Adopted from <https://www.tripadvisor.com.tr/Restaurants-g293974-Istanbul.html>

The evaluations of each restaurant under five criteria given in Table 3 are firstly translated into the numbers corresponding to each linguistic variable in Table 2, and the IVIF decision matrix is formed as in Eq.(10). Then, IVIF decision matrix is normalized. In this chapter, IVIF decision matrix and normalized IVIF decision matrix are the same since all criteria are beneficial. In fact, the third criterion

indicates the price, and it can be considered as a cost criterion. However, a high score has been assigned to the low-priced restaurant in the source of the data, so C_3 is considered as a beneficial criterion. Then, the IVIFNs are converted into the score function values with the help of the formula given in Eq.(7) to start the process with the IVIF-CRITIC method. Score function values are shown in Table 4. Then, correlation coefficients between criteria are calculated by Eq.(12), and the results are shown in Table 5. The standard deviation of each criterion is found by Eq.(13), and shown in the last row of Table 4. Finally, criteria weights are found with Eq.(14), and Table 6 shows the results.

It is seen from Table 6 that the most important criterion is atmosphere (C_4) whereas the least important criteria are service (C_2) and overall rating (C_5).

After the criteria weights are found, the second part of the chapter is the ranking of restaurants by the IVIF-CoCoSo method. Firstly, the IVIF decision matrix shown in Table 3 is considered. Then, it is normalized and weighted. For forming the weighted IVIF decision matrix, the criteria weights in Table 6 and Eq.(5) are used. Weighted sum sequences and the weighted power sequences are computed with Eq.(15)-(16) then, score function values of them are found. Three relative appraisal scores of the alternatives are computed with Eq.(17)-(19). Finally, the overall score of each alternative is computed with Eq.(20). All these values are given in Table 7.

Table 4. Score function values

	C_1	C_2	C_3	C_4	C_5
A_1	0.823	0.919	0.823	0.823	0.919
A_2	0.708	0.708	0.593	0.708	0.708
A_3	0.823	0.823	0.823	0.708	0.823
A_4	0.823	0.823	0.823	0.823	0.823
A_5	0.823	0.708	0.708	0.823	0.708
A_6	0.708	0.823	0.708	0.823	0.823
A_7	0.823	0.823	0.708	0.919	0.823
A_8	0.708	0.708	0.593	0.823	0.708
A_9	0.823	0.708	0.593	0.708	0.708
<i>Std. dev.</i>	0.054	0.073	0.094	0.068	0.073

Table 5. Correlation coefficients matrix

	C_1	C_2	C_3	C_4	C_5
C_1	1.000	0.353	0.577	0.111	0.353
C_2	0.353	1.000	0.827	0.367	1.000
C_3	0.577	0.827	1.000	0.229	0.827
C_4	0.111	0.367	0.229	1.000	0.367
C_5	0.353	1.000	0.827	0.367	1.000

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Table 6. The weights of criteria

	C_1	C_2	C_3	C_4	C_5
w_j	0.203	0.151	0.207	0.287	0.151

Table 7. The results of IVIF-CoCoSo method

	\tilde{S}_i	\tilde{P}_i	$S(S_i)$	$S(P_i)$	k_i^1	k_i^2	k_i^3	k_i	Ranking
A_1	(0.684,0.838),(0.000,0.162)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.869	1.000	0.117	2.266	1.000	1.769	1
A_2	(0.531,0.682), (0.167,0.318)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.686	1.000	0.105	2.000	0.902	1.577	9
A_3	(0.624,0.775), (0.069,0.225)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.796	1.000	0.112	2.159	0.961	1.692	4
A_4	(0.650,0.800), (0.050,0.200)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.823	1.000	0.114	2.198	0.975	1.720	3
A_5	(0.602,0.754), (0.088,0.246)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.771	1.000	0.111	2.124	0.948	1.667	6
A_6	(0.612,0.764), (0.078,0.236)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.783	1.000	0.111	2.140	0.954	1.678	5
A_7	(0.665,0.822), (0.000,0.178)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.855	1.000	0.116	2.245	0.992	1.754	2
A_8	(0.564,0.717), (0.122,0.283)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.729	1.000	0.108	2.062	0.925	1.622	7
A_9	(0.554,0.707), (0.133,0.293)	(1.000,1.000), (0,0)	0.717	1.000	0.107	2.044	0.919	1.609	8

The ranking of alternatives is given as A_1 - A_7 - A_4 - A_3 - A_6 - A_5 - A_8 - A_9 - A_2 . So, A_1 is the best restaurant as a result of the IVIF-CoCoSo method. The same ranking is also obtained by removing the overall rating criteria. However, when it is desired to make a ranking based on only the overall rating criteria, it is very difficult to choose among the alternatives, since there are very close evaluations. In this sense, the method used provides convenience to customers in decision making.

The atmosphere is the most important criterion, and A_1 (Deraliye Restaurant) is the most desirable restaurant under predefined criteria. In the literature, Heung and Gu (2012) also stated that the atmosphere has a significant impact on customers' behavioral intentions and food satisfaction. Regarding the atmosphere criterion, it can be recommended to the restaurants to create a suitable ventilation and air conditioning system, prevent unwanted odors and especially food odors, keep the music/volume level at a level that does not disturb the guests, prefer non-verbal music as much as possible, use stagnant and non-obstructive lighting, arrange the architecture of the space that reflects the general atmosphere of the restaurant, and choose the furniture that allows comfortable sitting and eating.

When the results obtained from this case study are compared with the results of Yıldız and Yıldız (2015) and Stanujkic et al. (2019), who evaluated restaurants with MCDM methods in the literature; the food criterion is in the first place, even if the criteria and alternatives discussed are different. For this reason, it can be said that customers give more priority to the criteria related to food (food type,

food quality, etc.) when selecting a restaurant. Value is usually a criterion that is given priority after the food. However, the fact that the atmosphere criterion is in the first place in this chapter and in the study of Yıldız and Yıldız (2015), while it is in the last place in the study of Stanujkic et al. (2019), is the best example of the fact that the priority of some criteria may change depending on the restaurant type chosen and the preferences of the customers, and that changing priorities will also affect the restaurant selection.

This case study demonstrates that the proposed method can be applied practically and effectively to help customers for finding restaurants based on their preferences. In this chapter, there are five criteria and nine alternatives. However, the proposed method allows adding additional criteria to the problem and calculating the corresponding weights. In addition, data from TripAdvisor.com is used in this chapter. Information from websites with similar content to TripAdvisor.com can also be processed.

CONCLUSION

The criteria that affect the customers' restaurant selections can vary from individual to individual, and at the same time, the selection criteria of the same individual may differ under different conditions. Criteria such as the purpose of individuals going to the restaurant (entertainment, socialization, work, celebration, time-saving, etc.), the people go with (family, spouse, friends, etc.), the type of restaurant (luxury restaurant, cafe, fast-food establishments, etc.) can also have an impact on customers' choices. The importance given to each criterion by different customers may be at different levels. The criteria that affect the customers' decision on the restaurant where they will eat, and the importance of these criteria are also affected by various criteria such as the personality, age, income, gender, marital status, and family life period of the customers (Kivela et al., 1999a; Kivela et al., 1999b; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002; Njite et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2010; Harrington et al., 2011).

In this chapter, it has been researched which criteria customers give importance to in restaurant selection, and how they select among alternatives so that restaurants can successfully carry out their activities and meet the needs of customers. Customers compare the restaurant alternatives and choose one among them. In making this decision, they evaluate restaurants in terms of a set of criteria, and the importance of each criterion is not same for each customer. Therefore, restaurant managers should pay attention to how important the determined criteria are perceived by customers (Chua et al., 2020). This chapter not only enable the managers of restaurants to recognize their current positions, identify gaps and explore improvement areas but also help customers to choose a restaurant in an uncertain environment.

Although this chapter provides the mentioned contributions, it has some limitations. The restaurants are limited to the first-class in Istanbul that offer dinner with the opportunity to make online reservations. It should be noted that not all criteria have been included, which have consistently and intuitively shown to be extremely important to restaurants. Food, service, value, atmosphere, and overall rating criteria are used only. Therefore, the data obtained as a result of the study, undoubtedly, do not fully reflect the generality. For this reason, in future studies, different types of restaurants can be considered, and the differentiation in the selection criteria of customers coming to restaurants with different characteristics can be compared taking into account the traveler type and the period.

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Chapter 16

An Experiential Investigation on Product Sampling in Retail Stores

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ABSTRACT

In-store product sampling is one of the most effective sales promotion tools by creating an impulsive urge to buy and interacting with the potential consumers at the point of purchase; however, it remains an understudied area for the academy. This study aims to investigate the difference in the purchase decision of the demographic/behavioral variables such as previous experience, gender, and age groups. In addition, the effects of in-store product sampling on sales are also examined. The findings demonstrated that the significant difference in purchase decisions is only between age groups. Furthermore, it is observed that the sales volume of the sampled product increased 10.8 times during the research week; however, the effect has not lasted long.

INTRODUCTION

There is an ongoing fierce rivalry in gaining customers among brands in all sectors that cause companies to struggle in responding to increasingly complex consumer needs under great stress. Retailing business has been showing significant growth because of the dynamic consumption behaviors of the present day (Tendai and Crispen, 2009: 102). As a marketing tool, advertising is getting more expensive and nowadays consumers are prone to be more rigorous. In this competitive environment, manufacturers need to connect to the potential customers at the place named the point of purchase where the purchase decision is made (Quelch and Cannon-Bonventre, 1983) to support their success with other promotion elements.

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Differentiation of the retail stores is a key indicator (Kiran et al. 2012: 36) to achieve success since the shopping environment positively influences purchase decisions with store ambiance elements including scent, cleanliness, and music (Tendai and Crispen, 2009: 103, Rajagopal, 2009: 271).

Points of purchase are the main physical locations where all marketing efforts and the results can be observed. It is also the last place to touch and influence the potential and the actual customers (Naimark, 1965). In other words, this point determines whether you win against your opponents by using the impulsive side of the consumers. Impulse buying is an unexpected and unplanned behavior that occurs spontaneously (Rook, 1987: 193, Tinne, 2011: 209). Consumers are unaware of most of the marketing campaigns in stores. They encounter product promotions in the store for the first time. Point of purchase campaigns focuses on impulse buying behavior.

Point of purchase activities meets all elements that comprise the proper purchase: consumers, money, and product at the same place and at the same time (Quelch and Cannon-Bonventre, 1983). When the requirements are met, marketers have a great opportunity to interact with the customers and the potential customers in various ways. Stores are physical places where sales promotions take the stage and are superior to other communication options.

Sales promotions are one of the most favored marketing activities to establish a connection between customers and products (Pawar et al. 2016: 304). There are a variety of suitable sales promotions for use in stores at the point of purchase such as product sampling, on-pack promotions, in-store demonstrations & displays, and discount coupons. Sales promotions are competitive marketing tools that reward loyal customers and encourage potential customers to purchase products by creating interest and raising awareness (Pawar et al., 2016: 304). These applications aim to reveal the deeper urges of the consumers at the point of purchase (Tendai and Crispen, 2009: 102). According to the experiential concept of Carù and Cova (2007: 5), consumption is more than mere purchasing activity and, consumers are not only users but also seekers of the meaning. It implies that companies must offer much more than products to fulfill needs. Consumers willingly encounter a variety of experiences at the point of purchase besides shopping (Carù and Cova, 2007: 6). Manufacturers widely use in-store promotions to enhance customers' in-store experience (Chandukala et al. 2017: 493) as much as they can.

Free product sampling provides the purest consumption experience compared to the other in-store sales promotions. In this study, we conducted product sampling campaigns to investigate effects on sales at the point of purchase within a retail store and search for the differences between variables in the purchase decision. Findings are discussed with the support of the research observations.

BACKGROUND

In this section definition, the overall process, and the benefits of the free product samples are discussed in terms of experiential marketing. Afterward, the relation between impulsive buying behavior and point of purchase practices is presented.

Background of the Free Product Sampling

Product sampling is a marketing activity that is offering a sample of a product without any charge to the customers for trial purposes before it is purchased (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002). Recently, it is getting more favored as a marketing communication tool (Chen et al., 2016: 4) as it was in the past (Marks and

Kamins, 1988: 266). Consumers perceive the product sampling positively as it is a free offering and presents a high contribution to the process if they are addressed (Sedliacikova et al. 2020: 140).

Free product samples are considered an experiential marketing practice. The experience is very close to the post-purchase product usage since the trial is already the actual product itself. The time and the place are the only difference between pre-purchase and post-purchase experiences.

When new products or services are launched, the consumer feels uncertain about the purchase decision because of performance doubts. This uncertainty is due to a lack of knowledge or previous experience with the product. Many retailers offer free product samples as an opportunity to overcome the uncertainty and create an experience (Wu et al. 2018: 192). The sampling efforts will decline at the late stages of the product's life cycle, however, It is not a necessity that sampled brand must be new, an existing product can also be part of the sampling campaign (Heiman, 2001: 533, 542).

By conducting free product sampling, brands are simply announcing the utilitarian benefits such as taste, smell, and performance (Shimp and Sprott, 2005: 409). Especially tasting a food product is one of the most useful methods to present information and cue to the customers (Dunković, 2016: 54,) and helps to create awareness (Sayman, 2008: 96). Furthermore, a study by Chandukala et al. (2017: 493) also accepts the existence of hedonic as well as utilitarian benefits in product sampling campaigns. According to the study by Heilman et al., (2011) most successful tasting occurs on products that provide high hedonic and utilitarian benefits.

Product samples can be delivered in various ways such as mail, in-store delivery, or add-on to another product (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002, Kotler and Armstrong, 2012: 483). In-store sampling and mail delivery samples are very different from each other in terms of delivery times thus impact on sales also varies (Yao et al. 2017: 600). Furthermore, mail delivery samples have lack of point of purchase where consumers are ready to buy. At this point, e-commerce appears to be a weaker alternative to the point of purchase in terms of triggering urges.

Nowadays, e-commerce platforms are also being used to deliver physically free product samples (Yao et al. 2017: 599). Sampling campaigns are conducted in various markets such as grocery stores, supermarkets, software, etc. (Chen et al., 2016: 2, Heiman et al. 2001: 532) and include many product categories such as food, health, cleaning products, etc. Besides them, vendors in farmers' markets also use free samples as a promotion tool to increase revenue (Chen et al., 2016: 1).

In-store sampling is quite suitable for retailers; customers are ready to buy at the point of purchase just beside the products which are already being displayed. The only gap in this scheme, which is not difficult to put into practice, is free product trials. Considering the practical benefits, Sprott and Shimp (2004: 313) emphasize that it is also an economic way of meeting private brands with consumers.

Companies try to create a deeper experience by designing the environment and atmosphere at the point of purchase for their brands (Carù and Cova 2007: 7). Product sampling as a point of purchase marketing tool requires a special design to take the attention of the potential customers. The first step is convincing consumers to join the sampling with the attractive design however, it is not enough to achieve a successful campaign. Other variables determine the participation rate. Consumers tend to show higher participation in the sampling activities that they trust (Chen et al., 2016: 17). The trust appears to be towards two different elements in this sense; the store and the brand sampled. A successful campaign must provide both. Another important factor is the properties of retailer staff who work in sampling campaigns. This is the key person who introduces your product, communicates with consumers, and invites them to the campaign. Pawar et al. (2016: 305) states that the introduction will be more effective when it is done by trained staff at the point of purchase. According to Chen et al. (2016: 18), the friendly attributes of the

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staff at the tasting stand is also important as well as staff education. Tinne (2011: 217) emphasizes the importance of friendly staff to create impulse buying behavior by attracting consumers. According to Sedliacikova et al. (2020: 141) being communicative is a trait that the tasting staff must have to create better interaction. It is also important to note that traits such as being friendly and communicative can be learned through education as well. Another factor that determines the success of the free product samples is related to the product. According to Heilman et al. (2011) type of the product that is being sampled is important, for example, consumers are less willing to participate in food samples that need to be cooked. Moreover, the quality of the product samples is also a strong determinant of achieving better purchase intention and more actual purchases (Shimp and Sprott, 2005: 409).

Heilman et al. (2011) emphasized three main reasons why consumers are engaging in product tasting activities. A consumer may have all or simply any of the reasons in different weights. These reasons are:

- Experiencing more enjoyable shopping as a hedonic reason
- Collecting information about the sampled product as a utilitarian reason
- Communicating with the other shoppers at the tasting stand as a social reason

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Advantages of the Free Product Sampling Process

Retailers interact with the consumer in various ways to enhance the in-store shopping experience (Dunković, 2016: 54). The experiential side of the in-store sampling adds value to the products by eliminating price pressure on consumers (Chandukala et al. 2017: 503). Shoppers satisfy their curiosity without any risk to their budget while participating in a product sampling campaign. It is an opportunity to gain a free experience.

This experience is related to hedonic and utilitarian values by containing senses such as touch, taste, and smell. Repeating in-store samples can strengthen the positive perception (Chandukala et al. 2017: 493, 494) however, free samples may cause disadvantages if consumer expectations are not satisfied. The unsatisfied consumer will deservedly switch to competing brands (Wu et al. 2018: 193) which in turn creates negative competition.

The main goal of product sampling is to encourage consumers to try products to increase sales (Pawar et al. 2016: 304). According to the study of Chandukala et al. (2017: 503) in-store sampling increase not only short-term sales but also long-term sales however the results will highly depend on the type of product sampled. In their study about in-store sampling, Pawar et al. (2016: 307) observed an important increase in sales and also a rise in brand awareness. Another study about sales is from Lawson et al. (1990: 2), according to their findings product sampling greatly increases sales for various types of products however the effect did not last long for the post-sampling period. They also mentioned that in-store sampling may decrease future sales by pulling them forward (Lawson et al., 1990: 5). Previous studies find similar results on short-term effects on sales however long-term results vary.

In-store product sampling has many benefits to the retailers besides increasing sales. First of all, it is one of the most known in-store marketing activities which shorten the distance between consumers and brands (Pawar et al., 2016: 304). Consumers are so close to the brand that they can give immediate feedback just after the sampling. It creates a great opportunity to introduce the brands and demonstrate

the products to the potential customers (Chandukala et al. 2017: 494, Heiman et al., 2011: 533), improve awareness (Heiman et al., 2011: 533), and increase purchase intentions (Shimp and Sprott, 2005: 409). Consumers are also motivated to make better choices (Dunković, 2016: 55).

Product sampling catches the attention in a fun way by creating an enjoyable shopping experience (Kiran et al. 2012: 40, Dunković, 2016: 54). Trial experience can increase perceived quality and form quality judgments (Sprott and Shimp, 2004: 306-307, Shimp and Sprott, 2005: 409) which in turn reduces the perceived risk (Dunković, 2016: 55) and product uncertainty (Heiman et al., 2011: 533). The process is different from traditional advertising forms that work on one-way communication. A participant is an actor in this campaign with judgmental power. Furthermore, in-store product sampling is also useful as an aggressive competition tool. According to Lawson et al. (1990: 5), in-store sampling decreases the sales of the close substitutes that belong to the competitor brands.

Sampling has an educational role by changing the consumption habits of the different consumer groups. In the study of Lakkakula et al (2011), different vegetables were sampled repeatedly by the elementary students and it was observed that students liked all vegetables in 8 weeks. Paine-Andrews et al. (1997: 94) succeed to direct consumers to lower-fat products through various sales promotions including product sampling and its reinforcing properties. It is also a good way to train consumers about how the product sampled should be consumed (Heiman et al., 2011: 533). There are strategies to decrease consumption trends of unhealthy foods called junk food (Jensen and Schwartz, 2021, Liu et al., 2021). Authorities may use product sampling for the well-being of the general public.

Although product sampling is a widely known marketing tool with all the benefits to the retailers and the brands, practices such as gifts, free samples, and trials have been overlooked by researchers (Heiman et al. 2011, Wu, 2010: 93). Companies also behave reluctantly to sharing information related to the performance of the product sampling activities (Lawson et al. 1990: 1) resulting in a decrease in research on this topic. Wu (2010) also mentioned the lack of scholarly research and emphasized the importance of uncovering the most effective way for product sampling since most of the purchase decisions were made in-store at the point of purchase.

Heiman et al. (2001) also point to the fact that the sampling remained an under-researched area. This research aims to make a contribution to this area with a focus on tasting food samples.

Product tasting activities are the vast majority of sampling within stores. It appeals not only to the taste but also to the smell.

Consumers may experience negative consequences as a result of impulse buying (Tinne, 2011: 209). If performance expectations are not met, consumers may regret their purchases. In-store product sampling is naturally related to impulse buying as well as other sales promotions. Most of the interactions between consumers and the staff at the tasting stand are random and unplanned. Product sampling is superior to other sales promotions in this regard. It eliminates the expectation performance risk by offering an actual experience before the purchase happens. However, Heiman et al. (2001: 544) noted that consumers may like the samples and purchase the product just because of professional serving and cooking, or simply because they are in a good mood. These reasons create an unrealistic performance expectation and therefore create a disappointment in consumers' choices at home resulting in a bad attitude towards products and brands. Moreover, product sampling is an expensive strategy for long-term campaigns with a limited exposure rate compared to advertising (Marks and Kamins, 1988: 267). Potential drawbacks should be investigated to avoid risks before launching a campaign.

Impulse Buying

Stern (1962) emphasized the increasing tendency to impulse buying a long time ago. Nowadays, it is still a matter of marketing. All the marketing promotional mix elements; advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing affects impulse buying behavior (Priyanka and Rooble, 2012: 1). Changing consumer patterns have emerged impulse buying as a new category that leans on spontaneous or unplanned shopping behavior. Consumers suddenly experience a persistent urge to purchase products (Pawar et al. 2016: 305) without seeking information or evaluating other available substitutions (Tinne, 2011: 209). Consumer decision-making studies rely on the rationality assumption and categorize them from low to high in purchase behaviors. Impulse buying is considered one of the lowest rational ranks among them (Cinjarevic et al., 2011: 5). This type of purchase doesn't have to make sense; it also may include many non-rational behaviors (Pawar et al. 2016: 305). For example, a consumer who plans to buy meat and bread from a retailer will also buy fruits if he thinks the fruits are cheap (Stanton et al, 1991: 115). Although fruit is not on the shopping list, the urge is triggered by low price offers, and impulse buying occurs. The consumer may not need fruit, maybe has a fridge full of the same kind of fruits already. These possible scenarios make the purchase unnecessary.

Impulsive buying is a behavior that commonly occurs at the point of purchase within the retailers. Point of purchase campaigns are approaching the consumers to influence them at the time and the place of purchase. Consumers are generally unaware of the in-store sales promotions until they face them. Therefore campaigns primarily focus on impulse buying behavior rather than planned. The main goal is not to change the overall shopping plan, but to create additional changes in the minds of consumers.

Impulse buying is a frequently encountered behavior. According to the study by Rook (1987: 193), 32 percent of the participants mentioned the sudden urge they felt. The study of Pawar et al. (2016: 305) reached parallel results, approximately one-third of all sales from the traditional stores are observed to be an impulse. Gutierrez (2004: 1074) stated that the majority of the consumers in urban prefer to make planned purchases and found only 10 percent of the population behave impulsively in shopping.

Impulse buying is affected by many variables such as income, personality, time, place, and culture. Even the purchase attitude of an individual towards the same product may vary under different conditions (Stern, 1962: 59). Product category, purchase frequency, and in-store design are also important to determine the impulse buying ratio (Gutierrez, 2004: 1075).

According to Tinne (2011: 217) pricing strategies and promotional campaigns strongly influence impulse buying. Banerjee and Saha (2012: 20) also found that price discounts are the strongest trigger. Priyanka and Rooble (2012) emphasize another factor related to purchasing power, they stated that an increase in people's income will affect impulse buying behavior. Excluding the price-related promotions, in-store sampling seems to be superior to the other impulsive promotion tools (Chandukala et al. (2017: 503).

This type of urge may be triggered by a stimulus, but it doesn't have to (Rook, 1987:193). According to Tinne (2011: 209), these stimuli comprise internal or external factors. In these circumstances, Stern (1962: 59) identified and classified four different types of buying behavior under the name impulse mix. In his classification, the first element is "pure impulse buying". This is the very basic purchase behavior that purely occurs without a known trigger. It accounts for a very limited part of the overall impulse buys. The second one is "reminder impulse buying". It occurs when a consumer sees a product and reminds anything about it including product-related information, advertising, or previous experiences. The third one is "suggestion impulse buying". It derives from the first time meeting with the product. When con-

sumers think that the product is useful or satisfies a need, suggestion impulse buying occurs. The last one is “planned impulse buying”. When consumers start shopping with a purchase plan in mind but with the expectation of the in-store sales promotions, planned impulse buying occurs. The first hypothesis is derived from the difference between reminder impulse buying and suggestion impulse buying.

H1: There is a significant difference in the purchase decision between consumers with and the without previous experience after product tasting

Gender was studied in many purchase behavior researches, and it will be also part of this research. The studies of Gutierrez (2004) and Banerjee and Saha, (2012) couldn't support gender as an influencing factor in impulse buys however, Priyanka and Rooble (2012) found a significant difference between males and females, implying that female consumers are more impulsive in shopping behavior. According to Yılmaz and Koçoğlu (2018: 82), female consumers behave more hedonic in traditional shopping. The study of Tinne (2011: 213) also states that purchases of female consumers are more impulsive. Saleh et al. (2013: 90) found that female consumers show higher purchasing responsiveness following product sampling campaigns. These results lead to our second hypothesis:

H2: There is a significant difference in the purchase decision between genders after product tasting.

Age is another important demographic factor that is frequently studied. According to Gutierrez, (2004: 1075) age is an important demographic variable that affects planned/impulse buying behavior, suggesting that younger consumers will be more responsive to the marketing efforts that will lead them to be impulsive. Saleh et al. (2013: 90) also found younger consumers more responsive to the free product samples, by highlighting youngers to be more open to new experiences. The findings of Tinne (2011) are in the exact opposite direction, all age groups are impulsive except the youngest group which consists of consumers between 18-25 ages. The result of Sedliacikova et al. (2020) suggests that adults of older ages are more responsive to the participating product sampling upon an invitation. However, in the study of Priyanka and Rooble (2012), there is no difference found related to age in impulse buying behavior. The third hypothesis is:

H3: There is a significant difference in the purchase decision between age groups after product tasting.

As mentioned in the previous literature, performance is one of the main determinants in purchase decisions. Product sampling is one way to overcome uncertainty. Consumers create performance expectations and would not buy a product they don't like. The taste of the product is a performance indicator in food sampling. The last hypothesis is about the perceived performance after product sampling.

H4: There is a significant difference in the purchase decision between consumers who like and dislikes the product after product tasting.

RESEARCH

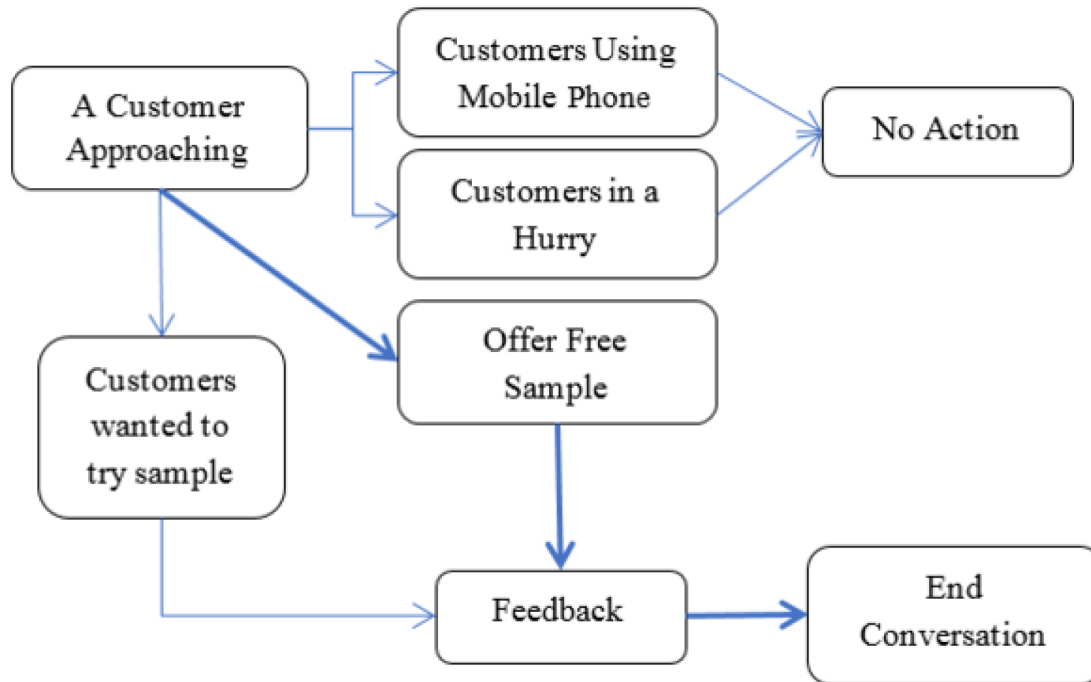
This study aims to investigate the influence of in-store product sampling on sales at the point of purchase within the retail store. Furthermore, the difference between the purchase decision and demographic/behavioral variables are examined. The sampled product is one liter of fruit juice. The brand is unrevealed in this paper for privacy reasons. The researcher participated in a free product sampling activity for a week with covert participant observation and pretended to be working in a retailer and distributed free samples to the customers for tasting purposes. The notes were taken about the sampling process, purchase decisions, customers, and feedback derived from observations and conversations. Conversations with consumers are essential to reveal opinions about the experience, even an unsatisfied consumer may give perspective for future practices (Sedliacikova et al., 2020: 144). These notes are converted into quantities and adjusted for statistical analysis. Chi-squared tests are employed to investigate the significant differences. Gender and age are used as demographic variables. Previous experience and product liking are used as behavioral variables. This research has one research question and four hypotheses explained above. The research question is:

How does the product sampling process affect the sales compared to the previous and the following week?

The free product sampling process is designed step by step to maintain the process standards and avoid random interactions. The main principle is making customers feel comfortable. In this concept, every step is determining the next one according to the customers' situations and responses. The first step starts when a customer approaches to the tasting stand. The researcher invites the customer to taste free samples with a standard sentence. According to the study by Sedliacikova et al. (2020), most consumers ignore the tasting stand if they are not addressed. Furthermore, consumers have a positive perception of the sampling invitations. A gentle invitation is an important part of the process.

During the tasting, the researcher asks about the previous experience, product performance, and other kinds of feedback. If an approaching customer is in a hurry or using a mobile phone at first, the researcher skips the conversation and takes no action to avoid disturbing. There are also customers willing to try samples even before it is offered. Even though these variants cause minor deviations to the process, they are also included in the research. The overall process path is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. The research interaction frame with the customers



Data and Methodology

Two types of data are used in this study first-hand data and second-hand data. First-hand data is collected via covert observation by a researcher who pretends to be retailer staff at the tasting stand of the predetermined one liter of fruit juice.

Observations and conversations with the participants are the frame of the data collected. A glass of fruit juice is offered to the customers that shop in the retailer for tasting purposes for 7 days and approximately 3 hours a day. Research hours, which are determined by considering the busy hours of the retailer to reach high numbers of consumers, are decided to be between 4 pm and 7 pm. 94 female and 109 male customers participated in the free product sampling process. While 48 participants had previous experience, 155 participants tasted the product for the first time. 47 participants decided to purchase the product after the tasting and 69 participants stated that they liked the taste of the product. Converted demographic and behavioral themes are tested by chi-squared tests using The SPSS software package version 16.0.

The store manager provided the second-hand data in encrypted form because of the privacy concerns of the retailer. Encrypted data includes sales volume of the one liter of fruit juice that is used in tasting stand and other substitutes. The second-hand data contains three time periods; research week, previous week, and the following week.

RESULTS

Notable Observations

The hidden identity of the researcher in the covert participant observation process created a great opportunity to appeal to consumers. Many observations are conducted during the research however, only a few of them were found to be important to the purpose of the research. The most common subject is related to health. There are two groups of participants are observed, the first group consists of consumers who shape their purchase decision based on their current health issues. The most common health issue expressed by consumers is diabetes. The other group consists of consumers who adopt a healthy lifestyle. This group assumes that processed products contain unnatural substances. Both participating groups have negative attitudes towards sampling fruit juice without examining the ingredients. Instead, consumers prefer to check the front side of the products. Furthermore, the higher fruit ratio is a notable indicator that proves the product to be preferable and healthy.

There are several thoughts that emerged in the mind of consumers related to product sampling. Some of the participants asked whether fruit juice is a new product. Another question is if the product is discounted. These assumptions reveal that product sampling needs a supportive cause in the mind of consumers. Furthermore, some of the consumers asked if the products used in free sampling are expired. Trust issues seem like an important determinative in product sampling. In the study of Chen et al. (2016: 17), trust has also a significant impact on food sampling decisions. It is obvious that, consumers don't trust retailers. Trust is an important topic that should be discussed in future studies.

Another important observation is about the interactions with the free product tasting stand. Most consumers ignored the sampling and kept their distance from the tasting stand during the research. It is generally known that free samples are part of the communication crowd led by marketers. However, there could be many other reasons for reluctance. According to Chen et al. (2016: 18), overcrowded stores and unfriendly staff in the tasting stands may lead to the passive rejection in participating in product sampling.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Chi-Squared Test Analysis

In order to test hypotheses related to the significant differences in the purchase decision between demographic/behavioral variables, chi-squared tests are conducted respectively.

The first hypothesis H1 is about the previous experience of the participant. According to the chi-squared test result $p = 0,258$ in Table 1, the hypothesis of significant difference at the one percent significance level is rejected. In other words, there is not any significant difference in purchase decisions between consumers with and the without previous experience after the product sampling process.

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Table 1. Cross table and chi-squared test Results for the previous experience and the purchase decision

$\chi^2: p= 0,258$		Purchase Decision		Total
		Negative	Positive	
	N	122	33	155
First Time	%	78,7	21,3	100
	% Purchase	78,2	70,2	76,4
	N	34	14	48
Experienced	%	70,8	29,2	100
	% Purchase	21,8	29,8	23,6

The second hypothesis H2 is about the gender of participants. According to the chi-squared test result $p = 0,799$ in Table 2, the hypothesis of significant difference at the one percent significance level is rejected. In other words, there is not any significant difference in the purchase decision between genders after the product sampling process.

Table 2. Cross table and chi-squared test results for the gender and the purchase decision

$\chi^2: p= 0,799$		Purchase Decision		Total
		Negative	Positive	
	N	83	26	109
Male	% Gender	76,1	23,9	100
	% Purchase	53,2	55,3	53,7
	N	73	21	94
Female	% Gender	77,7	22,3	100
	% Purchase	46,8	44,7	46,3

The third hypothesis H3 is about the age groups of participants. According to the chi-squared test result $p = 0,004$ in Table 3, the hypothesis of significant difference at the one percent significance level is accepted. In other words, there is a significant difference in the purchase decision between age groups after the product sampling process. The age group 35-44 shows the highest purchase response to the product sampling.

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Table 3. Cross table and chi-squared test results for the age groups and the purchase decision

$\chi^2: p= 0,004$		Purchase Decision		Total
		Negative	Positive	
	N	38	5	43
7-24	% Age	88,4	11,6	100
	% Purchase	24,4	10,6	21,2
	N	34	14	48
25-34	% Age	70,8	29,2	100
	% Purchase	21,8	29,8	23,6
	N	28	18	46
35-44	% Age	60,9	39,1	100
	% Purchase	17,9	38,3	22,7
	N	56	10	66
45+	% Age	84,8	15,2	100
	% Purchase	35,9	21,3	32,5

The last hypothesis is H4 about liking the product sampled. According to the chi-squared test result $p = 0,993$ in Table 4, the hypothesis of significant difference at the one percent significance level is rejected. In other words, there is not any significant difference in purchase decision between consumers who likes and dislikes the product after the product sampling process.

Table 4. Cross table and chi-squared test results for product liking and the purchase decision

$\chi^2: p= 0,993$		Purchase Decision		Total
		Negative	Positive	
No	N	103	31	134
Comment or Dislike	%	76,9	23,1	100
	% Purchase	66	66	66
	N	53	16	69
Like	%	76,8	23,2	100
	% Purchase	34	34	34

The Impact of In-Store Product Sampling Research on Sales

Investigating the effect of in-store product sampling on sales was one of the main purposes of the research. It is observed that the sampled product is in a highly competitive sector. It has many substitutions in both fruit juice and soft drink sectors. The store manager encrypted the sales volume data of the sampled product as X for the pre-research week. It is observed that the sales volume data increased 10,8 times for the research week with a total of 21 hours of product sampling. The increased sales volume did

not last long, the sales decreased sharply back to the very close number to the pre-research period, 1,1 times of X. According to Burnett and Moriarty (1997: 336) free product samples and tasting activities increase sales volume by 5 to 10 times during sampling, and 10 to 15 times on post sampling period. These findings are only supporting the increase in the first part, the one during the sampling process.

The sharp increase created a new question about the source of increased demand. Two options explain the origin of sales; a newly created demand or an existing market share of the substitutions. To shed light on this question, the encrypted sales volume of the market brand and the other substitution products of the sampled brand were also examined for the same period. The data shows that sales of the competitor market leader brand were not affected by the product sampling however, sales of the other substitution products from the same brand which is sampled were decreased as 1,6 times of X. Considering all sales, the decrease was found to be slight. Although our findings are not supporting the results of Lawson et al. (1990: 5) about the decreasing competitor sales, the comparison in this study is only between the market leading brand and the sampled brand. This study is not focusing on substitute brands, for this reason, the data is not enough to make clear explanations in terms of competition.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

In-store food sampling activity is one of the purest experiential marketing tools. It is the only way to overcome the performance doubts in the food category. There are a few limitations to this research. Future studies will achieve more proper results by eliminating these limitations. The research was conducted for a very limited time. The findings of research designed for at least a month may give better results instead. Since the consumer budget is also limited and very dependent on the time and the date, average results will provide a better understanding. Secondly, the research campaign was run by a male researcher on the field as a retailer staff at the tasting stand. Using both genders as staff respectively would increase the number and the variety of the participants reached. Furthermore, this study pointed to the behavioral differences between age groups, future studies should also focus on the same direction to reveal better understanding.

CONCLUSION

Consumers are exposed to unlimited marketing messages within their daily routine. Traditional advertising activities are inadequate to reach consumers in the competitive market. Experiential marketing holds a complementary role in general strategy. Free product sampling at the point of purchase is one of the most effective experiential marketing tools that directly link to the consumers in this concept. The tasting activity is the purest form of product sampling; it instantly creates a product experience.

The research observations clearly show that consumers have trust issues with both the products and the retailers. The distrust situation is due to the suspicion of unnatural substances in the ingredients and the suspicion of unethical practices such as sampling the expired product. Consumers tend to investigate the front side of the products which points to the importance of packaging design. According to the observations, giving information about the ingredients and the products will reduce the risks by overcoming the prejudices explained above. Trust is a very important issue that prevents establishing a strong link with

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the consumers in the long term and should be carefully researched in future studies. Being transparent with potential consumers will help build a positive sustainable relationship.

According to the empirical results, age groups were found to be related to the purchase decision during the free product sampling process. In this study, the highest purchase rate belongs to the consumers in the 35-44 age group and the lowest purchase rate belongs to the consumers in the 7-24 age. This result indicates that beverage tasting stands designed for the 35-44 age group will succeed more than a generic age focus. The design includes both the general layout of the tasting stand and the staff communication plan. There is no significant difference found in the purchase decision between the other variables; previous experience, gender, and product liking. Liking the taste of the product is an important factor for both purchasing and re-purchasing behavior, an unsatisfied consumer would not buy the same product for the second time. According to the study of Sedliacikova et al. (2020: 144) majority of the participants tend to answer truthfully about the taste of the product however, the minority that answers falsely may still affect the result of a quantitative study. There is a fact that this study assumes all the participants responded truthfully to the question about if they liked or disliked the product. Moreover, enjoying the product is not enough to convert intention to the actual purchase. It should be supported with the additional properties that are important for the consumers such as price, naturalness, amount, and packaging. The product improvements also should be conducted in the same direction. A positive health perception must be emphasized at all stages of food sampling.

The effect of in-store product sampling on sales is the main research question. It is very clear that the sales are greatly increased during the research week however; the increase is observed to be temporary. According to the data, while the sales of competing brands remained constant, the sales of other substitution products of the sampled brand slightly decreased. This suggests the presence of cannibalism risk among close substitutions in the same brand. It should be noted that the sampling process was only for 3 hours a day during a week, results may differ in longer campaigns or research.

Observed unwillingness to the free product sampling is another important issue; however, the causes are hidden at the very deep of the consumer black box and cannot be explained in this study. There could be dozens or maybe hundreds of reasons that keep the consumer at a distance from the tasting stand. If, for example, consumers are in a hurry, they are certainly but why? We can create many scenarios from the situation of simply “being in a hurry”. The consumer might be shopping for urgent needs, might be a shy person, or has a friend waiting at the entrance. It might even be that the consumer just disliked the staff that runs the sampling and ignores the campaign. More research is required to reveal consumer attitudes and perceptions.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Hedonic: Pleasure related approach.

Impulse Buying: An unplanned purchase that occurs with a sudden urge.

Points of Purchase: A place where customers may purchase goods and services.

Product Sampling: Distributing the trial samples of the product.

Shopping Experience: All the perceptions and emotions that consumer feels during a purchase.

Tasting Stand: A small structure where people taste the trial food samples.

Utilitarian: Usefulness related approach.

Chapter 17

Customer Experience Management in the Digital Marketing Era: An Omnichannel Retailing Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Developments in digital marketing technologies have caused the channels in which retailers communicate and interact with their customers to be fragmented. Retailers provide products, services, and information to their customers by using traditional, digital, and social media along with sales channels such as physical stores, websites, and mobile applications. In this context, it is necessary to create integration and synergy between all these channels and touchpoints interacting with the customer. The omnichannel retailing strategy helps companies create a seamless customer experience by addressing all channels and touchpoints within a unified approach. Therefore, in this chapter, the customer experience and omnichannel strategy are defined, and the applications, attributes, or components that should be provided in the omnichannel environment for a comprehensive retail customer experience are discussed with a literature-based exploratory research approach.

INTRODUCTION

The acceleration of technological developments and especially the advances in digitalization trends allow diversification of the channels where consumers can interact with retailers. Consumers obtain information about products or services, communicate with sellers, and perform purchasing behaviors using multiple channels such as the internet, mobile devices, social media, and physical stores. Consumers follow brands on social media, research on the internet before going to a physical store, use their mobile phones to search for their shopping while in a store, or buy products online at cheaper prices after they examine and try them in stores through showrooming (Hansen & Sia, 2015, p. 51). Therefore, retailers

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need to provide customers with the opportunity to research, buy, communicate, and interact with the brand by obtaining a perfect customer experience from the website, physical store, mobile application, social media, and communication channels (Palmatier et al., 2020, p. 345). Omnichannel management is the synergetic management of all channels and touchpoints that interact with the customer in a way that optimizes customer experience and performance (Verhoef et al., 2015, p. 276). Customer touchpoint refers to any situation where a customer interacts with a product or brand, from physical trial to mass media communication, mobile app notification to in-store observation (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p. 168). Each touchpoint can be associated with a specific channel, for example, customer reviews can be linked to the website or blog of the company. However, a channel should not characteristically be associated with a specific customer touchpoint. Thus, the website of the company is seen as a channel where the consumer can leave comments, as well as buy products (Roederkerk & Kok, 2019, p. 52).

Single channel management refers to the situation where a retailer sells through only one channel, for example, in the beginning, Walmart only reached customers through its physical stores and Amazon through its website (Jasin et al., 2019, p. 16). In multichannel management, retailers offer information, products, services, and support to their existing and potential customers through two or more channels (Rangaswamy & Van Bruggen, 2005, p. 6). For example, Walmart initially fulfilled its online orders through a warehouse separate from the store channel (Jasin et al., 2019, p. 17). Therefore, in multichannel management, there is a coexistence of several channels that are considered separate and competitive (Shen et al., 2018, p. 62). Cross channel management is defined as the integration of more than one channel to ensure inter-channel movements of customers and create synergy (Picot-Coupey et al., 2016, p. 342). This allows consumers to take advantage of the different benefits of each channel along the customer journey, such as searching for product information online or receiving an online purchase instantly from the store. Moreover, they avoid the inherent costs of each channel, such as the cost of effort to gather information for evaluation or the shipping costs required to receive an online order (Chatterjee, 2010b, p. 11). In omnichannel management, there is a seamless flow of customers, information, and inventory between multiple channels throughout the consumer's shopping experience (Jasin et al., 2019, p. 17). This system offers consumers a consistent, uniform, and integrated service and experience regardless of the channel they use. It also allows consumers to move seamlessly between channels depending on their preferences, current situations, or product category (Juaneda-Ayensa et al., 2016, p. 3). Thus, a unified view of the brand can be created in terms of a product purchase, return, and exchange transactions via the traditional store, online website, mobile application, call center, or social media (Shi et al., 2020, p. 325). This retail model refers to the management of multiple channels owned by the retailer as intertwined touchpoints that allow consumers to have a seamless experience within a brand ecosystem (Picot-Coupey et al., 2016, p. 342).

In recent years, changes in digital technologies, especially within the framework of marketing 4.0 activities, have increased significantly. In this context, the integration of technologies such as big data, cloud computing, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence into retail business models causes the scope of omnichannel management to expand even further (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014, p. 6; Cai & Lo, 2020). In an omnichannel system, the management of the touchpoints where the customer interacts with the brand is the most important process. These touchpoints range from non-personal interactions such as traditional advertising, social media, loyalty programs, paid and organic search results, digital catalogs, e-mail communications, website, to personal interactions such as in-store communications, phone calls, live chats, in-store returns (Payne et al., 2017, p. 187). Also, it is seen that perceptions of the quality of customer experience and channel integration provided to consumers through an omnichan-

nel management systems positively affect customer engagement and purchase intention (Kazancoglu & Aydin, 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Shi et al., 2020). Based on this information, it is important to clarify the differences between multi, cross and omnichannel models and to reveal the components that allow the customer experience to be increased within the framework of omnichannel management. Accordingly, in this chapter, a literature-based conceptual study is carried out with an exploratory research approach.

Firstly, the concept of customer experience is comprehensively defined, and a literature review is presented to identify the components and touchpoints that should be considered for designing customer experience in the omnichannel retail environment in the era of digital marketing. Also, to gain a better understanding of the scope of omnichannel management, the relationships between single, multi, cross and omnichannel retailing systems is focused. Secondly, the strategies and tactics of implementing omnichannel management are discussed within the framework of the integration of information and fulfillment. Also, a research framework is presented on the effects of omnichannel integration quality capabilities on customer experience. Finally, an overall assessment is presented in the light of literature-based information reviewed in the main sections of the chapter and some practical statistics from the retail industry.

BACKGROUND

Customer Experience

In the current fierce competition environment, one of the main factors for success in retailing seems to be creating a superior customer experience. Many different retailers around the world include customer experience in their value propositions and adopt the concept of customer experience management. Customer experience is composed of activities and events that engage consumers in a personal way (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 12; 2011, p. 3). This experience can take place on an emotional, physical, intellectual, and even spiritual level (Pine & Gilmore, 2011, p. 17). Schmitt (1999, p. 53) proposes five dimensions of customer experience composed of sensorial, affective, cognitive, physical, and social experiences. Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398) add pragmatic experience in addition to these experience dimensions and define it as the practical act of doing something, including usability. In this sense, customer experience includes the cognitive, affective, social, and physical evaluations of the direct or indirect touchpoints with the retailer throughout the entire customer journey (Verhoef et al., 2009, p. 32; Kranzbühler et al., 2018, p. 438). The customer journey, which takes place as the stages the customer goes through to reach the retailer's product or service, consists of integrated touchpoints (Folstad & Kvale, 2018, p. 207; Zeithaml et al., 2018, p. 114; Tueanrat et al., 2021, p. 336). Touchpoints are face-to-face or electronic interactions associated with the product or service that form the link between customers and retailers throughout the experience cycle (Dhebar, 2013, p. 200). Accordingly, several touchpoints can be identified including print ads, in-store observations, call center communications, sales reps' presentations, catalog, payment transactions, social media recommendations, organic search results, banners on the website, word of mouth, and return procedures (Payne et al., 2017, p. 187).

Due to developments in digital technologies, in turn, changes in consumers' purchasing behavior, retailers are introducing new channels and touchpoints so that customers can get a seamless customer experience from a variety of devices, regardless of time and place (Heuchert et al. 2018, p. 440). Retailers are faced with rapid communication and distribution channel fragmentation, and omnichannel management is becoming the new competitive factor (Verhoef et al., 2015, p. 175; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p.

69). This allows retailers to interact with their customers through multiple touchpoints and expose them to much richer offline sensory information and online content (Brynjolfsson et al., 2013, p. 23). Digital technologies simplify and accelerate work with large consumer data sets, automate the marketing and sales activities of the retailer and enable more effective communication with customers (Shpak et al., 2020). Marketing strategies realized with new technological opportunities are interactive marketing communications created with techniques such as e-mail, social media, or mobile marketing (Kannan & Li, 2017, p. 25; Payne et al., 2017, p. 186; Bala & Verma, 2018, p. 329; Peter & Vecchia, 2021, p. 254) and the integration of digital and traditional marketing channels that manage sales, distribution, and customer services within the framework of a multichannel approach (Neslin et al., 2006, p. 96; Frasquet et al., 2019, p. 94, Silva et al., 2020, p. 417). The purpose of utilizing these technologies is to acquire accurate and timely information about customers, products, the marketplace, and the overall environment, with a more market-oriented perspective, and to react flexibly to market changes and customer needs and wants (Bala & Verma, 2018, p. 322; Peter & Vecchia, 2021, p. 254; Venkatesan & Arunachalam, 2021, p. 293). To keep up with the digital transformation, retailers move their communication to digital environments (internet, mobile, social media) and integrate digital systems (big data, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, etc.) into their online (internet and mobile) or offline (physical store) service activities. Omnichannel retailers offer digital channels by utilizing social media, mobile, and internet technologies to interact with customers and allow consumers to communicate without boundaries of time and place, access multitudes of information worldwide and make multiple transactions in real-time (Straker & Wrigley, 2016b, p. 276). These value-producing new innovative business models have enabled customers to obtain products, services, and information through a variety of channels including the internet, mobile phones, tablets, social media, telephone, as well as physical stores (Shen et al., 2018, p. 61). Therefore, customers utilize multiple channels in the current retail environment and expect to move freely from one channel to another from the information search stage to the post-purchase stage and to get a seamless and contentful customer experience among channels (Frasquet et al., 2019, p. 102).

Omnichannel Retailing

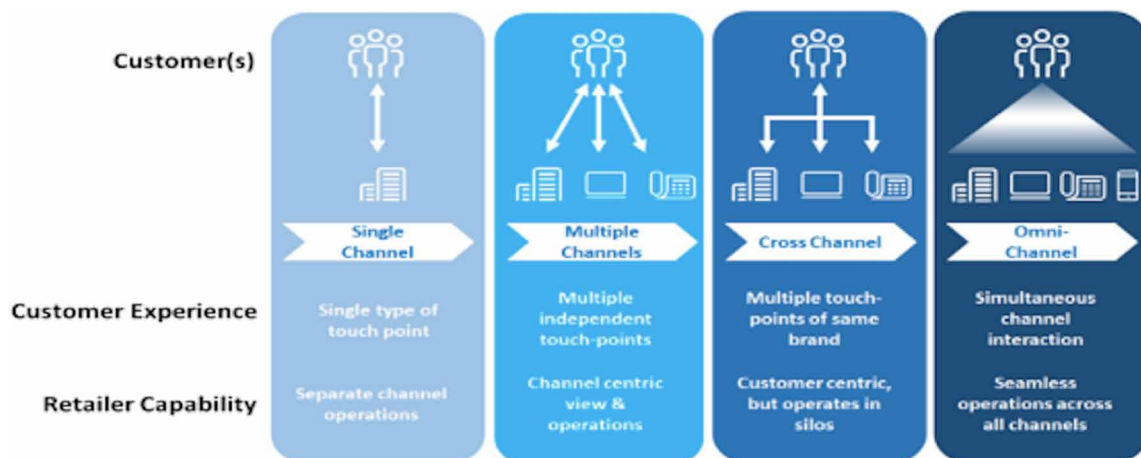
In today's omnichannel retail environment, customer experience encompasses all offline and online activities, including pre-purchase activities (such as exposure to a website or television ad) and purchasing, consumption and engagement behaviors (commenting or photo-sharing) (Bolton, 2016, p. v). Customers' experiences in one channel (e.g., physical store) are influenced by experiences in other channels (e.g., the internet) (Verhoef et al., 2009, p. 33). Moreover, advanced digital technologies such as mobile, location-based, augmented reality, machine learning, internet of things and artificial intelligence are being adopted by retailers to create more customer experience for consumers (Bolton et al., 2018, p. 779; Iftikhar et al., 2020, p. 78; Cakir et al., 2021, p. 123; Verhoef, 2021, p. 112; Bruni & Piccarozzi, 2022, p. 821). Therefore, the omnichannel strategy, which is the management of all channels and media in a consistent and coordinated manner, becomes a competitive business model for retailers (Stone et al., 2002, p. 40). Omnichannel management is defined as the harmonious integration of functions that allow customers to carry out their shopping activities in online, mobile, social and offline physical channels. In an omnichannel approach, retailers seek to create a seamless customer experience through efforts based on social media, e-mail, weblinks, mobile platforms, store visits, and promotion (Palmatier et al., 2020, p. 14). The developments in mobile devices, social media platforms, industry 4.0 based technologies (machine learning, artificial intelligence, big data) and in-store digital technologies (augmented reality,

Customer Experience Management in the Digital Marketing Era

internet of things) have blurred the boundaries between offline and online channels and the silos between the internet, catalog, mobile or physical store have disappeared (Strang, 2013, p. 32; Verhoef et al., 2015, p. 175). In this context, the omnichannel strategy includes the integrated management of various communication channels in addition to the distribution channels used for the physical transfer of products (Palmatier et al., 2020, p. 14). The foundation of the system is based on multichannel marketing and integrated marketing communication strategies (Cummins et al., 2016, p. 3; Payne et al., 2017, p. 186). In the literature, the concepts of multi, cross and omnichannel management have emerged and there are distinctions between them. The evolution of channel management is driven by increasing integration and managerial decision complexity (Hajdas et al., 2022). Channel integration is defined as the retailers' coordination of channel objectives, design, and distribution to create synergies and deliver value to their customers (Cao & Li, 2015, p. 200). Figure 1 illustrates the differences between single, multi, cross and omnichannel management strategies.

Figure 1. Comparison of single, multi, cross, and omnichannel

Source: Visser (2017).



In the single channel approach, which is the first level of channel integration, retailers use one type of channel (e.g., physical store) and have separate channel operations that can be optimized (Jasin et al., 2019, p. 16). In the second level, channel management turns into a multichannel approach. Multichannel management refers to the retailer's delivery of services through more than one channel, or through all possible channels at a given time. In this setting, each channel is operating in silos and the channels are not integrated in terms of inventory, pricing, or fulfillment decisions (Jasin et al., 2019, p. 17). The retailer serves its customers through both physical and online stores, but these channels are managed and considered separately with a channel-centric view (Hickman et al., 2020, p. 267). The retailer cannot control integration between the channels, and customers are not likely to trigger interaction (Beck & Rygl, 2015, p. 174). The third level integration is cross channel management, also called an integrated multichannel management system. This approach integrates multiple channels to allow the cross channel movements of products, money, and information (Chatterjee, 2010b, p. 10). It intensifies potential existing cross channel synergies, resulting in distinct use of the entire multichannel system based on customers'

purchasing preferences and needs in purchase processes (Schramm-Klein et al., 2011, p. 509). Through cross channel integration, customers can use different channels for reasons such as seeing, touching, feeling the product, comparing product prices, getting more interactive suggestions or advice, and sharing about their shopping experiences, in addition to purchasing (Cao & Li, 2015, p. 201). However, in cross channel retail organizations, the customer experience is not entirely seamless, as online and in-store experiences are often managed by separate departments with different priorities (Palmatier et al., 2020, p. 14). Because the retailer has partial integration between channels that can be controlled by itself or triggered by customers, or it has full integration that does not work across all existing channels (Beck & Rygl, 2015, p. 173). In this case, customers still perceive the channels separately (Jasin et al., 2019, p. 17). Finally, at the fourth level of channel integration, there is an omnichannel strategy. Omnichannel management is defined as the selling of goods and services through all widespread channels, which have been seamlessly combined to allow full interaction from the customer's perspective and establish full integration between channels from the retailer's point of view (Heuchert et al., 2018, p. 441). The points where multichannel management fundamentally differs from omnichannel management are the focus on synergy rather than coordination, the holistic customer experience rather than customer conversion, and the unification of sales channels and brand touchpoints (Rosengren et al., 2018, p. 99). Therefore, omnichannel retailing includes more channels than other channel management strategies, and the customer brand experience is at the focal point of the channel management as the boundaries between channels have completely disappeared (Picot-Coupey et al., 2016, p. 339). Omnichannel customers can take the advantage of digital channels with almost unlimited product selection, price transparency and personalized recommendations from other customers and experts. They also exploit the advantages of physical store channels such as face-to-face interaction with sales personnel, availability of products for trying on, and the social experience of shopping as an activity (Rigby, 2011). Omnichannel level of channel integration requires optimizing customers' seamless shopping experience across all channels and providing customers smooth transition, mutual support, and interchangeability between online and offline channels at different stages of customer journey (Chiu et al., 2011, p. 271; Heuchert et al., 2018, p. 441). Table 1 shows the differences between multi, cross and omnichannel management strategies based on the information mentioned above.

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Table 1. Multi, cross and omnichannel retailing concepts overview

	Multichannel retailing	Cross channel retailing	Omnichannel retailing
Definition	An isolated approach that operates channels separately	An interdependent approach that integrates multiple channels to enable cross channel movements and create synergies	An integrated approach that runs channels as entangled touchpoints to provide consumers with a seamless experience
Focus	Selling channels	Selling channels and interactive communication channels	Selling channels and interactive and mass (one-way) communication channels
Integration	No transition between channels	Some degree of transition between certain channels	Seamless transition between all channels and touchpoints
Characteristics	Presence of several disjointed and competing channels	Removing the frontiers between certain channels to improve their functionality and make it easier to switch between them	Informational, functional, transactional, sensorial, physical, social, and affective touchpoints are integrated within a unified channel system
Scope	Physical store, website, and direct marketing (e.g., catalog, phone)	Physical store, website, direct marketing, and mobile (e.g., smart phones, tablets, apps)	Physical store, website, direct marketing, mobile, social media, customer touchpoints (e.g., print ad, online banner, phone call, e-mail)
Articulation	Separation between channels	Synergies among certain channels	Unique channel
Management	Discrete management optimizing the experience on each channel	Integrated management of certain channels that benefits customers through cross channel movements	Synergetic management of all channels and customer touchpoints optimizing the holistic experience
Objectives	Increasing sales and optimizing experience per channel	Increasing the integration and synergy between specific channels to bring more benefits and cross channel experience to customers	Ensuring interoperability of all channels and touchpoints to deliver a holistic customer experience

Source: Adapted from Verhoef, P. C., Kannan, P. K., & Inman, J. J. (2015, p. 176); Mirsch, T., Lehrer, C., & Jung, R. (2016), Picot-Coupey, K., Hure, E., & Piveteau, L. (2016, p. 342); Shen, X. -L., Li, Y. -J., Sun, Y., & Wang, N. (2018, p. 62).

One of the points that distinguishes omnichannel management from other channel management strategies is that it expands the scope of channels. In omnichannel strategy, digital or traditional interactive communications such as, text messaging, e-mail, call center, mobile notifications, live chat, face-to-face interactions and traditional or digital mass communications such as, TV advertising, customer to customer recommendations, social media, print media, search advertising, affiliates, referral websites are interconnected (Verhoef et al., 2015, p. 176). Omnichannel retailing also incorporates integrated marketing communications as it encompasses owned, paid, and earned media (Ailawadi & Farris, 2017, p. 120). In this sense, retailers need to provide both information and order fulfillment integration (Jin & Huang, 2021).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Omnichannel Retailing Strategy in the Digital Era

The advances in digital technologies cause consumers to be much more demanding. Accordingly, consumers utilize multiple channels to obtain much more benefits in their transactions with retailers (Chiou

et al., 2017, p. 2). In response to this demand, retailers are introducing new channels and touchpoints that allow consumers to transact and interact independently of time and place (Heuchert et al., 2018, p. 440). To provide a seamless customer experience, they establish an omnichannel system where they can fully control the integration between these channels and touchpoints, and customers have the ability to initiate full interaction (Beck & Rygl, 2015, p. 174; Hickman et al., 2020, p. 269). Omnichannel retailing considers the customers' buying process from the customer journey perspective and allows customers to interchangeably switch between the channels they prefer at each stage of their journey (Gasparin et al., 2022). This customer-centric view enables retailers to ensure that customers experience the brand in a holistic way regardless of the channel rather than the channel within the specific brand (Payne et al., 2017, p. 187).

In omnichannel management, retailers have offered practices that enable click and collect, showrooming, webrooming, in-store ordering, buy online return in store, or easy payment (Bell et al., 2014, p. 47; Verhoef et al., 2015, p. 175; Kang, 2018, p. 146; Rey-García et al., 2018, p. 101; Gao & Su, 2019, p. 35; Alexander & Kent, 2022). Click and collect application indicates that customers order from the online store or mobile application and then pick up their product from a physical store, or collection point (Beck & Rygl, 2015, p. 177; Jara et al., 2018, p. 431). These pick-up stations can also be a reception desk in store, an attached collection point like drive-through next to the retail store, an automated collection point in a shopping mall, a pre-determined kiosk, or third-party centered solitary pick-up point (Victor et al., 2018, p. 3; Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2019, p. 271). After ordering through online channels, products are collected from a central warehouse or in-store inventory, then packaged and shipped to the pick-up location (Hübner et al., 2016a, p. 239). This function allows the seamless integration of physical and digital stores, eliminating the time and expense associated with transporting a product to a customer (Tubridy, 2017). When retailers can access real-time data on in-store stock levels and order processing capabilities, they can apply the click and reserve concept and serve online orders directly from in-store inventory (Hübner et al., 2016b, p. 273). In this way, consumers can lock the product online to avoid stockout in the store, while obtaining a convenient shopping experience with a newer shopping method (Xu et al., 2021, p. 2497). When customers come to the physical store by making online reservations or purchases anywhere and at any time, retailers can sell additional products and services to them and establish a closer relationship (Beck & Rygl, 2015, p. 177). Therefore, the click and collect concept enables traditional offline retailers to create a new online consumer interaction and a different customer experience leading to sustainable value creation for customers through a meeting point (Jara et al., 2018, p. 430). The application that allows customers to switch between channels in the other direction, is to order in-store and have item delivered to the home service (Chatterjee, 2010a, p. 438).

Since consumers can use multiple channels simultaneously and interchangeably, they can switch to different channels at different stages of the purchasing process for information provision, transaction fulfillment, or post-purchase support (Van Bruggen, et al. 2010, p. 331). The concept of research shopper has been developed for customers who research the product from one channel (e.g., online store or catalog) and purchase it from another one (e.g., physical store) (Verhoef et al., 2007, p. 129). Among the reasons that push consumers to become research shoppers are their search for the most convenient channel option, the low correlation between the channels used for obtaining information and purchasing, and the unique benefits and costs of each online or offline channel (Verhoef et al., 2007, p. 132). In this sense, showrooming refers to customers evaluating products in a physical store to identify the suitability of the product, but then purchase from the online channels (Mehra et al., 2018, p. 3076). Specifically, in omnichannel retailing, showrooming behavior indicates that a consumer inspects at a retailer's physical

store and buys from the same retailer's online store or mobile application (Li et al., 2020, p. 677). This practice helps customers avoid returning a product by solving the uncertainty of product evaluation offline (Zhang et al., 2021, p. 1). Moreover, customers can get the opportunity of social interaction by obtaining recommendations from a real person in the store, as well as accessing reviews and ratings through social media or brand communities (Kang, 2018, p. 162). Other reasons that lead consumers to showrooming behavior include offline search convenience elements such as personalized service, special attention, customized information, relevant and detailed product descriptions. Online purchase convenience factors including less time and effort spent on product possession, delivery to the address, easy access to after sales services (toll free number, live chat, and e-mail), and convenient complaint tracking and product return process are also crucial for customers' showrooming behavior (Shankar et al., 2021, pp. 5-6). On the other hand, webrooming is defined as a shopping behavior in which consumers research products online and then visit physical stores and purchase them offline (Flavián et al., 2016, p. 459). One of the reasons that drives consumers to webrooming is their motivation to make the best possible purchase (Flavián et al. 2019, p. 11) and gain access to the immediate possession of products (Arora & Sahney, 2019, p. 351). Omnichannel customers who want to gain more information, experience social interaction, and choose from a high variety of products are likely to engage in webrooming (Kang, 2018, p. 18). This practice provides consumers with the opportunity to reduce purchasing uncertainty and make decisions with a high degree of confidence (Flavián et al., 2016, p. 460). Online information search reduces information asymmetries and empowers consumers during their purchasing journey (Flavián et al. 2019, p. 11). In omnichannel retailing, both showrooming and webrooming behaviors combine online and mobile channels with in-store retail opportunities (Kang, 2018, p. 146).

Mobile devices have significant market potential in the omnichannel retail environment because of their characteristics such as, ubiquity, customization, and flexibility (Kim & Hahn, 2015, p. 169). Customers collect information and place their orders in-store by using their own (e.g., smartphones) or retailers' mobile devices (e.g., tablets) as shopping assistants (Verhoef et al., 2015, p. 176; Rippé et al., 2017, p. 733). The mobile purchasing behavior in the store is similar to the showrooming behavior. Because the use of mobile technology while in-store for showrooming helps establish a close causal link between physical store visits and resulting electronic commerce sales of the retailer (Fulgoni, 2014, p. 379; Rapp et al., 2015, p. 360). Omnichannel retailers tend to lead consumers from offline examination to online purchase with the support of various methods such as in-store tablets, sales reps' referrals, and quick response (QR) codes (Verhoef et al., 2015, p. 175; Li et al., 2020, p. 677). For example, Amazon Beijing showroom displays imported goods from Amazon's UK and US websites. In addition to browsing, testing, and consulting with experts, customers can purchase a product via Amazon's Chinese site by scanning the barcode with their mobile device (Li et al., 2020, p. 677). Offline showrooms increase the demand of an omnichannel retailer overall and through the online channel and reveal operational efficiency by reducing product returns (Bell et al., 2018, pp. 10-12). Furthermore, buy online and return in store option helps retailers enjoy better salvage capabilities in store and a wide store network (Nageswaran et al., 2020, p. 5559). Because this service can bring more store footprints and in-store purchases (with an opportunity to cross-selling and up-selling), which offset and sometimes exceed the cost of returns. It also helps retailers integrate their online and store channels' after-sales services (Zhang et al., 2010, p. 175; Huang & Jin, 2020). With this option, customers can exchange or return the product that was purchased online to a physical store without cost or fee (He et al., 2020, p. 271). On the other hand, unlike the traditional single channel return policy, it allows customers to receive the refund immediately, avoid a shipping fee, and achieve more convenience (Huang & Jin, 2020; Li et al., 2021, p. 11691; Yan

et al., 2021, p. 975). For example, Walmart allows customers to use mobile apps and dedicated express lanes at the store to speed up and simplify returns on products purchased in physical stores and online (Nageswaran et al., 2020, p. 5558). Table 2 demonstrates the practices many retailers use to integrate their online and physical channels.

Table 2. Examples of an omnichannel strategy

Retailer	Omnichannel strategy examples
Apple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apple is expanding the omnichannel experience with devices that flawlessly communicate with each other through customers' iCloud accounts. - A streamlined payment system not only helps customers complete their purchases easily, but also allows Apple stores to send customers product updates or personalized loyalty program notifications. - A new store and online concept, Shopping Sessions allows customers to receive personalized support and assistance from an expert at an Apple Store regarding new products, shipping options or financing opportunities. - Through Genius Bars in Apple Stores or via phone, online chat and e-mail, customers can get support from Apple Support for any issue such as hardware repair, device setup, screen replacement, or Apple ID recovery. - Customers can set up a specialist appointment via the app, be notified when a representative is ready to assist, receive automatic notifications when a Genius Bar is nearby, and receive instant order information when they enter an Apple Store.
Sephora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sephora creates the omnichannel experience by integrating customers' online shopping with their store visits. - In the stores, customers can attend beauty workshop sessions and benefit from free makeovers. They can also use in-store tablets to access their Beauty Bag accounts while shopping. - This account allows customers to obtain detailed information about products and to try products virtually using digital software. - Consumers can shop, see their favorite lists, any of their past purchases and how many reward points they have, browse items in-store to see other options available online, watch educational videos, and find a store next to them.
Walgreens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walgreens offers a loyalty program where customers can earn loyalty reward points by making in-store or online purchases, connecting fitness apps to the Walgreens app and tracking activity, completing health information surveys, getting in-store vaccinations, and a variety of other ways. - The app also allows customers to manage their pharmacy prescriptions, fill out quick refill requests, find deals on products in stores and place orders that can be picked up from the nearest location. - Once a customer has collected enough points, they can turn them into cash by redeeming them during purchases in store or online.
Starbucks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starbucks Rewards loyalty program is a great example of an omnichannel approach. The retailer streamlines the transaction process through ordering, payment, tipping, and reward tracking features through this program. - Customers can check out the menu, get push notifications with promotions, news, and updates, check and reload their rewards account via multiple channels including mobile app, website, and store. - The program offers rewards to encourage customers' purchasing behavior and collects massive amounts of data about each customer's orders and visit history to create marketing tactics.
Ikea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ikea integrates physical and electronic commerce experiences to make one, familiar brand experience. Mobile app feature allows customers to save digital catalog products to their in-store shopping list. - The retailer has activated pick-up and order points to bring deliveries closer to customers' homes and enhance the brand experience. - Ikea Place augmented reality application offers a complete visual of the Ikea catalog so that they can proceed with their order easier and with more confidence.
Amazon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amazon, which started business as an online-only venture, has quickly grown into one of the largest omnichannel instances in commerce. - Customers can not only access their profiles through the Amazon website, but also access the same information by mobile app, Alexa devices, smart watches, and in the store. - In the grocery category, Amazon Go cashierless stores allow customers to get convenience by using the Amazon Go app to enter the store, log in with their Amazon credentials, select the items they want, and exit the store. - Amazon's smart speaker Echo, coupled with their personal assistant technology Alexa, provides direct access to customers in a way similar to mobile devices. Consumers can easily ask Alexa to purchase anything from groceries to tech items.

Continued on following page

Customer Experience Management in the Digital Marketing Era

Table 2. Continued

Retailer	Omnichannel strategy examples
Disney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disney uses beacon technology, mobile apps, and wearable technology to provide experiences for vacationers, from planning a trip to managing an ongoing trip. - Visitors can plan park activities, and manage hotel and dining reservations through the My Disney Experience application on the web and mobile devices. - Visitors can pair their My Disney Experience account with a smart wristband, the MagicBand, to access theme parks and hotel rooms, find attractions, facilitate purchases, and view photos taken. - Utilizing beacon technology, Disney tracks the movements and behaviors of visitors and obtains traffic data that can be used to improve the customer experience over time.
Nike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nike implements omnichannel retailing with practices such as the Nike+ app, which offers personalized recommendations, and the custom-made NikeiD product line. - Based on data from the daily behavior of customers through the app, Nike can easily identify their favorite shoe brands, sports, product types, etc. - Nike's New York store offers customers a personal sport experience with the promise of personalized performance. - It includes a mini basketball court, indoor soccer field, and running simulations, as well as personnel to provide services to customers such as performance evaluation, right product recommendations, and hassle-free payment.
Walmart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walmart provides advanced e-commerce capabilities such as faster express home delivery services and a variety of pick-up options such as lockers and towers to provide a seamless, safe, and convenient shopping experience. - Through geofencing technology that connects customers' loyalty accounts with their mobile devices, Walmart receives alerts when a customer enters the parking lot to pick up their online order. - Through the Walmart app, customers can access simplified shopping features, including quickly finding items, checking prices, and accessing weekly ads and coupons. - Walmart's Intelligent Retail Lab (IRL), a fully operating store through artificial intelligence-activated cameras, interactive displays, and a large data center, establishes good inventory management, ensuring regular stocktaking, full inventory knowledge, forecasting demand, and rapid response to changing conditions. - A series of educational displays and small kiosks are scattered throughout the store, where customers can interact while they shop at the IRL. The Welcome Center at the front end of the store allows customers to dive deeper into technical specifications and frequently asked questions.

Source: Compiled by the author.

Omnichannel retailers also adapted technologies such as, internet of things, artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and augmented reality to their offline and online channels (Cai & Lo, 2020; Iftikhar et al., 2020, p. 86, Verhoef, 2021, p. 112). The internet of things (IoT) is the communication of objects with each other and with other devices and services over the internet to generate real-time data and perform certain operations (Whitmore et al., 2015, p. 26; Yerpude & Singhal, 2021, p. 95). The IoT technologies in retailing include components or devices such as RFID (radio frequency identification) systems, WSNs (wireless sensor networks), NFC (near field communication), bluetooth devices (e.g., beacons), QR (quick response) codes, smart devices (e.g., mobile phones, tablets), location-based services, cloud computing, wireless fidelity (wi-fi), digital signage, artificial intelligence and camera networks (Dlamini & Johnston, 2016, p. 431; Balaji & Roy, 2017, p. 8; Caro & Sadr, 2019, p. 49). Customers are included in this system with their smartphones, tablets or other devices connected to the internet (Hossain et al., 2021, p. 76). While in the physical store, they can scan the barcodes to check product information, browse inventory through the touchscreens, find their way around the store based on their digital shopping list with smart shopping carts, receive personalized contents via digital signage in real time, get customized offerings (e.g., digital coupons, discounts) according to their past purchases and individual preferences through the beacons, and make contactless payments. (Patil, 2016, p. 405; Kamble et al., 2019, p. 156; Fagerstrøm et al., 2020). For example, Amazon Go checkout-free automated stores utilize

innovations such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, internet of things sensors, integrated payment systems, QR code identification, image cognition, and GPS (global positioning system) technology. In these stores, every item is tracked and recognized without allocating a specific chip to each product. Also, customers can automatically make purchases via their smartphones without going to the cashier and leave the store with their products (Xu et al., 2020, p. 147728; Hossain et al., 2021, p. 78). With the internet of things, a large amount of data is collected through sensors regarding the online searches, social media activities, mobile application transactions, purchasing preferences, and satisfaction levels of customers (Shankar, 2019, p. 37). Retailers can collect this data from millions of customers, for every moment, associated with each transaction and touchpoint, and linked across distribution channels. It is estimated that Walmart collects around 2.5 petabytes (1 petabyte = 1,000,000 gigabytes) of information every hour about transactions, behaviors, locations, and devices of customers (Bradlow et al., 2017, pp. 79-80). By leveraging this data, Walmart uses the products customers buy on a weekly basis to make predictions to create automated shopping lists for them (Cao & Manrai, 2014, p. 28). While retailers utilize cloud computing technology to store such large-scale data, they use machine learning techniques to analyze it (Lee, 2017, p. 593; Verhoef, 2021, p. 114). Big data and analytics help retailers design more appealing and personalized recommendations and dynamic prices to their customers, leverage customer relationship management through an integrated database, and enrich customer experience by making better predictions about customers' preferences and choices (Akter & Wamba, 2016, pp. 185-187; Grewal et al., 2017, p. 1; Shankar, 2019, p. 40; Verhoef, 2021, p. 114). For example, Amazon uses big data about customers' purchases to create offers such as "products that are often bought together" and "customers who bought this product also bought this" (Fisher & Raman, 2018, p. 1667). Also, a growing number of retailers leverage augmented reality (AR) applications to enrich their omnichannel strategy through online and offline channels and touchpoints. AR overlays computer-generated virtual images on objects in the physical environment in real time (Zhou et al., 2008, p. 193). With the increasing prevalence of smart devices, AR applications are increasingly being adopted by retailers as a tool to improve customers' sensory perceptions and create immersive customer experiences (Watson et al., 2020, p. 433). While early implementations of the technology used in-store installations (e.g., virtual fitting rooms, virtual mirrors) to overlay virtual clothing or cosmetics, newer AR initiatives use consumers' own mobile devices (Scholz & Duffy, 2018, p. 11). AR enhances the customer experience by combining the sensorial stimulation of the physical world with the animated, customized and customer-related content of digital objects (Hilken et al., 2018, p. 512). In online setting, customers can interact with products dynamically by virtually try products on their body or in their space (e.g., Ray-Ban sunglasses in a virtual mirror or Ikea sofa in a real-time view of the living room) (Scholz & Duffy, 2018, p. 11; Fan et al. 2020; Kowalczyk et al., 2021, p. 357). In offline environments, AR provides seamless access to digital content, additional information, and virtual objects (e.g., Lego's product visualizer) available only to online shoppers, providing an opportunity for new in-store experiences and increased customer engagement (Cuomo et al., 2020, p. 429; Hilken et al., 2018, p. 514).

Customer Experience in Omnichannel Retailing Environment

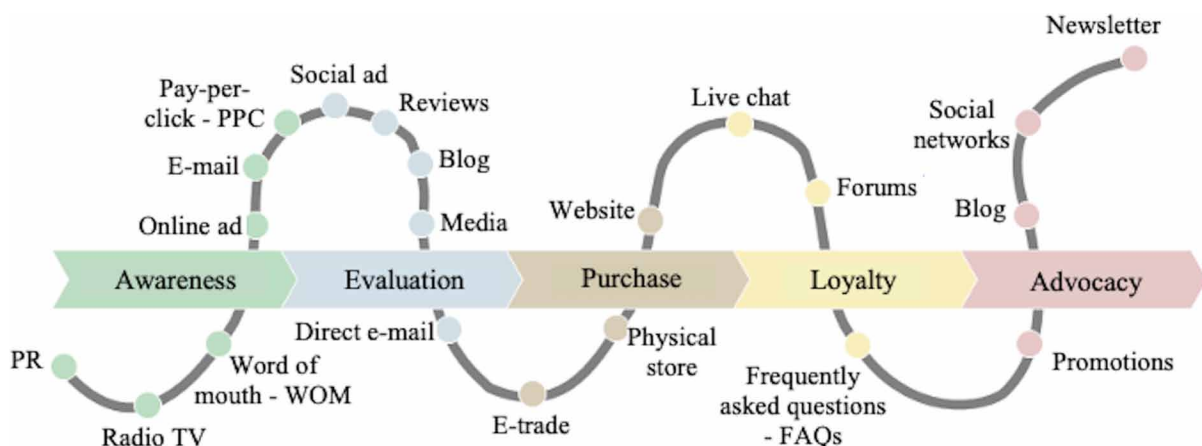
Customer experience management is defined as the process of strategically managing the entire experience that a customer obtains from touchpoints related to a product, service, or brand throughout the purchasing journey (Schmitt, 2003, p. 17). Retail customer experience includes cognitive, affective, social, and physical components including determinants such as social environment, service interface,

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retail atmosphere, assortment, price, promotions, and loyalty programs (Verhoef et al., 2009, p. 33). It has a multidimensional structure consisting of constituents such as providing entertainment and pleasure, creating positive feelings during and after shopping, creating calming and stress-reducing effects, having unique, technological processes and distinctive offerings (Bagdare & Jain, 2013, p. 792). Therefore, the customer experience management process consists of value-creating components, intangible customer emotions, and cognitive customer responses at different touchpoints (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2019, p. 10). In omnichannel retailing, customers are interacted with brands through numerous different touchpoints, from the physical stores, online and mobile channels. In this context, retailers need to integrate customer service, order processing and fulfillment, product and price information, promotional offerings, purchase transactions and collected data across multiple channels (Iftikhar et al., 2020, p. 86, Gao et al., 2021, p. 14). At different stages of the customer journey, customers prefer different channels for all their interactions during the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phases (Barwitz & Maas, 2018, p. 117; Gasparin et al., 2022). Channel integration is seen as a promising way to ensure consumers have a seamless and integrated customer experience from all communication and distribution channels (Zhang et al., 2018, p. 183; Son et al., 2021, p. 378). In this sense, omnichannel customer experience is closely related to channel integration quality and customer touchpoint management (Hsia et al., 2020). Digital customer experience includes any touchpoint (social media, website, mobile apps) that the customer chooses to interact with the retailer (Bilgihan et al., 2016, p. 103). Figure 2 illustrates hypothetically the channels and touchpoints where the customer can communicate with the brand throughout the customer journey in an omnichannel setting. Several touchpoints have identified including traditional media advertising, in-store observations, telephone calls, catalog displays, customer service supports, word of mouth communications, social network reviews, website browsing, return operations, payment transactions, loyalty programs, paid and organic search results, and so forth (Baxendale et al., 2015, p. 238; Ieva & Ziliani, 2018, p. 311; Hickman et al. 2020, p. 268). Activities such as researching the product through a search engine, receiving technical support via live chat using the mobile application, shuffling the online catalog on the website to stay up to date with trends are all considered digital customer experiences (Borowski, 2015). In this context, when designing digital channels, omnichannel retailers must choose the right digital touchpoints to communicate brand value as well as to address customer needs and preferences.

Figure 2. Customer touchpoints in omnichannel retailing

Source: Adapted from Kantarci, Ö., Özalp, M., Sezginsoy, C., Öztaşkınlı, O., & Cavlak, C. (2017, p. 24).



Omnichannel experience is a holistic and subjective process that occurs in line with the interactions between consumers (e.g., in-store or online brand communities), online and offline shopping practices (e.g., in-store digital displays, chatbot in mobile application, buy online and exchange in store option), and the digital market environment (e.g., search engines, social media, blogs, consumer review sites) (Trevinal & Stenger, 2014, p. 324). Creating an appropriate omnichannel experience requires designing not only for a functional purchase behavior but also for an emotional stimulus (Straker & Wrigley, 2016a, pp. 343-344). Hence, the holistic experience created for customers should contain cognitive and affective elements (Rose et al., 2012; Trevinal & Stenger, 2014; Bilgihan et al., 2016; Kumar & Anjaly, 2017; Mbama et al., 2018; Bhattacharya et al., 2019; Jaiswal & Singh, 2020). These two experiential states are explained within the framework of flow concept (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; 2009). Flow is simply stated as the optimum experience (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989, p. 817). In digital environments, flow is a cognitive state associated with the consumer's uninterrupted response to the stimulus due to the seamless interaction (Hoffman & Novak, 1996, p. 57). Flow in a technology-mediated environment can be expressed as the customers' ability to seamlessly switch across multiple touchpoints (Parise et al., 2016, p. 413). In addition to its cognitive structure, flow can completely immerse consumers in digital activity in an affective context, depending on the enjoyment level of the stimulus (Novak et al., 2000, p. 24). In omnichannel retailing, the antecedents of digital touchpoints in creating a flow experience might be usability, convenience, interactivity, timeliness, content richness, playfulness, and attractiveness (Hoffman & Novak, 2009; Bilgihan et al., 2014). The cognitive and affective omnichannel experience is created by the fact that consumers can easily navigate and search information, obtain a personalized form of the channel appearance, stay connected with social media, capture high interaction with the retailer, perform compatible transactions between different devices, and obtain aesthetically animated digital contents through digital channels and touchpoints (Rose et al., 2012; Trevinal & Stenger, 2014; Bilgihan et al., 2016; Bhattacharya et al., 2019; Frassetto-Deltoro et al., 2021, Gao et al., 2021). In the customer journey, especially for the post-purchase customer experience, timely delivery, inventory processing capability, appropriate return and exchange policies, and customer service support of the retailer are crucial omnichannel factors (Kumar & Anjaly, 2017).

Although studies on the dimensions of omnichannel customer experience have overlapping findings in the literature, the precision of the components that make up the construct remains unclear. The omnichannel experience depends on the connectivity of the cross channel service content and information, integration of all information systems and service content offered to the customer, consistency of processes, continuity of cross channel transitions, and provision of personalized attention and customized service to customers (Shi et al., 2020, p. 328). Consistency between retail touchpoints, freedom of customers to choose channels for their various interactions with the brand, and synchronization between touchpoints that customers encounter at all stages, such as information seeking, purchasing, delivery or returns are all dimensions of seamless omnichannel interaction experience (Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2020, p. 1735). According to Chang & Li, (2022) perceived seamless omnichannel experience consists of availability of product or purchase links on social media or mobile application; consistency in price, product variety or promotion information between channels; visibility of stock or delivery status and transaction history information across all channels; convenience or easiness of payment procedures; flexibility of delivery and returns processes; and customers' ability to easily share product-related links or experiences across different touchpoints (e.g., social media accounts). Rahman et al. (2022) indicate that perceived seamless omnichannel customer experience across different channels includes confidence of customer reviews; appropriateness of product variety and pricing; ability to customize services, products, and transac-

tions; supportiveness of customer service at any stage of the customer journey; consistency of product availability and pricing; safety of payment transactions and personal information; accuracy of delivery and pick-up services; convenience or flexibility of product returns; and synchronization of loyalty or reward programs. On the other hand, Frassetto et al. (2021, p. 392) emphasize the dimensions of omnichannel brand experience as aesthetic impact appealing the customer's senses; ability to elicit positive emotions and feelings; capability to satisfy the customer's curiosity and to increase problem-solving capacity; creating opportunities for interaction with other customers and sales representatives; and usability and convenience qualifications. More specifically, utilitarian aspects such as ease of use, convenience and customization, and enjoyment and timeliness factors are determinants of customer experience for mobile applications (McLean et al., 2018, p. 331). Accordingly, by combining offline and online channels and touchpoints, customers expect transparency, accessibility, flexibility, interactivity, customization, convenience, functionality, consistency, and entertainment which enriches the customer experience they get throughout their omnichannel customer journey (Hoffman & Novak, 2009; Rose et al., 2012; Klaus, 2013; Bilgihan et al., 2014; Bilgihan et al., 2016). Customers are constantly switching between channels due to the diversity of channel attractiveness, recommendations of social groups, high perceived risk, enhancements of shopping benefits, and desire to benefit from augmented features such as retailer reputation, location, low price, and after-sales service (Van Nguyen et al., 2022). Therefore, in addition to the flawless management of customer touchpoints, the level and quality of cross channel integration is of great importance for the omnichannel experience (Lee et al., 2019; Son et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Gasparin et al., 2022). In establishing the channel integration quality, channel-service configuration consisting of breadth of channel options, transparency and convenience of channels; content consistency including the integration of information and transactions; process consistency, which refers to the interrelatedness of brand elements and systems; and assurance quality which consists of privacy, security, and easiness or accessibility of service recovery form essential components (Hossain et al., 2020, p. 229). According to Gao et al. (2021, p. 15), channel integration involves qualifications such as integrated advertisements and promotional information, consistent product and price information, synthesis of customers' transaction information, accessibility of all related information, ability to complete a transaction process including order, payment, and delivery, and consistent service support across all channels. High perceived consistency means that customers see omnichannel retail elements replicated across touchpoints and high perceived connectivity indicates that customers move easily from one touchpoint to another (Hsia et al., 2020). To sum up, customers expect the content and processes they obtain from different channels and touchpoints are consistent with each other, to be able to choose different channels for various transactions (e.g., purchase, return, delivery, information search) they will and to continue the transaction they have started in one channel without interruption in the other (Hossain et al., 2020, p. 229; Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2020, p. 1735). Also, retailers should pay attention to the personalization of certain services according to customers preferences, and interconnectedness and integration of the information and service content between the channels and touchpoints to create seamless omnichannel customer experience (Hsia et al., 2020; Shi et al., 2020, p. 328).

Conceptualized within the framework of different perspectives, the omnichannel customer experience has significant effects on consumers' attitudes and behaviors. It increases customer satisfaction, repurchase intention, word of mouth communication, customer engagement, perceived value, customer loyalty and omnichannel shopping intention (Lee et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2020; Quach et al., 2020; Shi et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2021; Le & Nguyen-Le, 2021; Chang & Li, 2022; Chen et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2022; Riaz et al., 2022). Therefore, the impact of the construct on consumer responses confirms

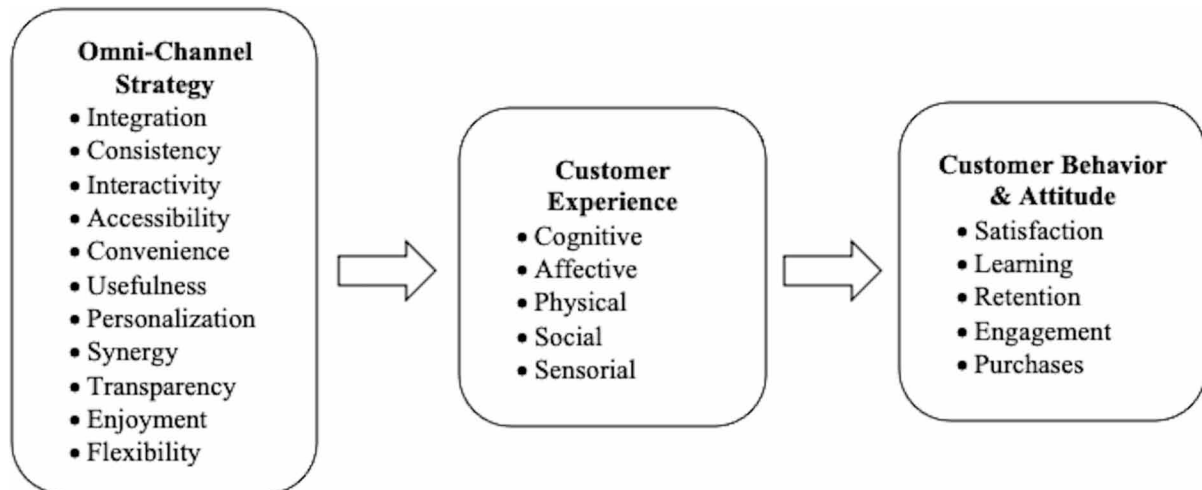
that companies that aim to be successful and stay ahead of the competition in today's competitive environment should embrace the new omnichannel based retail approach.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, it is discussed that the differences in the communication and interaction preferences of consumers, together with the changes in digital technology, push retailers to transform their channel organization and management. For this reason, retailers utilize omnichannel management to integrate distribution and communication channels and provide customers with a seamless experience. According to one research, 47% of electronic commerce companies operating in North America and Europe state that the omnichannel strategy is "very important", while 20% express that it is "quite important" (Statista, 2021). Also, in 2021, global retail sales through physical stores totaled \$19.1 trillion, while online retail sales amounted to \$5.1 trillion. In 2025, global retail sales through offline channels are expected to reach \$22 trillion, while those through online channels are expected to reach \$8.5 trillion (Statista, 2022). Moreover, while 7% of customers who participated in omnichannel research stated that they purchase only from online channels, 20% remarked that they shop only from physical stores. The remaining 73% expressed that they use more than one channel during their shopping journey (Sopadjieva et al., 2017). In a study conducted in certain countries, adults stated that they prefer to shop in-store rather than online shopping everywhere except in China. While 54% of Chinese consumers prefer to shop digitally, only 16% prefer physical stores. In 2022, it is predicted that 46.3% of the China's retail sales will come from online channels (Lebow, 2022). Although online shopping continues to increase rapidly, this does not mean that physical retail is obsolete. On the contrary, offline retail continues to grow rapidly, enabling retailers to shift more towards omnichannel integration (Cheung, 2021). This movement is driving retailers to transform their stores into art galleries, creative and experimental centers, and innovation labs to create strong emotional connections with customers and provide them with immersive experiences (Achim, 2021). For example, Alibaba's new retail vision is driving the digitization of their Hema Supermarkets. They allow customers to view product information by scanning QR codes on their phones and arrange their orders for direct home delivery. To provide customers with a sensory, immersive and interactive grocery shopping experience, Hema Supermarkets staff can cook their groceries for customers to try on the spot (Han, 2020). These statistics and information show that in the omnichannel setting, retailers should create all transactions, processes, services, and information they offer through channels and touchpoints in a consistent, integrated, and synergistic way. Figure 3 demonstrates that in an omnichannel retailing context, customer benefits through the interconnection between channels and touchpoints influence the customer experience, which leads to customer behaviors and attitudes.

Figure 3. Transforming of the customer experience in omnichannel context

Source: Adapted from Parise, S., Guinan, P. J., & Kafka, R. (2016, p. 413).



In the current omnichannel retail environment, companies often use physical stores, websites, mobile apps, catalogs, newsletters, blogs, and social networks to communicate and interact with customers (Silva et al., 2020, p. 424). Therefore, it is crucial to integrate all product, price and transaction information, promotion offerings, customer services, order fulfillment practices and information access opportunities across channels (e.g., physical stores, online and mobile commerce), media (e.g., social, digital, and traditional) and direct marketing tools (e.g., catalog, text messaging, phone calls, flyers, coupons, kiosks, e-mail) (Zhang et al., 2018, p. 183; Gao et al., 2021, p. 14). Retailers can use physical stores as omnichannel environments that offer a full-fledged experience to customers, as well as distribution and order fulfillment centers (McKinsey & Company, 2014). They can make in-store, online and mobile channels consistent and integrated to create synergy, interactivity, usefulness, and enjoyment with QR codes, contactless payment methods, digital displays, augmented reality implementations, interactive screens, live chat and chatbot applications, and personalized service and offerings (Alexander & Kent, 2022). Moreover, with order fulfillment services such as click and collect, order in store and deliver home or order online return to store, customers can achieve a great deal of convenience, accessibility, and flexibility (Bell et al., 2014, p. 47; Jin & Huang, 2021).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study considers the opportunities that the omnichannel strategy offers to retailers in creating a seamless customer experience, conducting a literature-based exploratory research approach. Therefore, the study, in its current form, is the premise of an empirical research to be carried out in the future. With the advanced digital technologies, there are significant fragmentations in the channel structures of the retailers. This creates a digital marketing-based market environment where customers are exposed to communication and interaction through numerous touchpoints both offline and online channels. In this context, investigating the specific effects of different omnichannel components (e.g., integration,

connectivity, flexibility, consistency, personalization) (Lee et al., 2019; Hickman et al., 2020; Shi et al., 2020) on customer experience dimensions (cognitive, affective, physical, sensorial, social) (Schmitt, 1999; Verhoef et al., 2009; Frasquet-Deltoro et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2021; Alexander & Kent, 2022) in terms of different retail industries and customer segments will make significant contributions to the literature and practice.

CONCLUSION

Firstly, developments in internet technology and later in mobile technology and social media networks have transformed the purchasing behavior of consumers. Accordingly, consumers have started to use different communication and sales channels at different stages of their purchasing processes (i.e., customer journeys). In this context, they expect consistency between the transactions and processes they carry out through different channels, and the information and services they receive, and desire to switch between channels and touchpoints flexibly and seamlessly. The omnichannel strategy provides retailers with the opportunity to meet these customer expectations. Providing integration and creating synergies between channels and touchpoints benefits retailers by expanding the experience they provide to customers. Therefore, customer experience and its components or dimensions, which have been studied in the retailing (Verhoef et al., 2009; Bagdare & Jain, 2013) literature for many years, are transforming with the omnichannel approach. Enriching the experience provided to customers enables them to enhance their attitudes, engagement and loyalty towards the product, service, or brand (Grewal et al., 2009; Klaus & Maklan, 2013; Hwang & Seo, 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Also, in the omnichannel perspective, customers who utilize various channels alternately during the customer journey become more valuable for retailers through transactions such as cross-selling and up-selling (Zhang et al., 2010; Sopadjieva et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2018). Accordingly, it is important to understand the implementations, services or attributes that create a broader and richer experience for customers throughout their omnichannel purchasing journey.

In this context, in this study, firstly, the concept of customer experience is discussed comprehensively, and the omnichannel organization is evaluated in comparison with the multi and cross channel structures. Then, the omnichannel strategies and implementations used by retailers are reviewed within the framework of online and offline channels. Finally, the components that retailers should consider when creating omnichannel applications, processes, and services to provide customers with a seamless experience are discussed. It is expected that this study will guide the empirical and conceptual research to be carried out on omnichannel customer experience in the literature. Also, it is thought that it will help companies operating in different retail sectors in the evaluation of their omnichannel structure and organization.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Cross Channel Strategy: The interconnection of multiple marketing channels in a way that allows customers to move between them to some degree and achieve synergy.

Customer Experience: Internal and subjective customer responses such as feelings and cognitions aroused by the stimuli associated with a product, service, or brand.

Customer Journey: The path that a customer takes to access a product or service, consisting of pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages.

Customer Touchpoint: All direct and indirect face-to-face or electronic instances in which the customer interacts with the product, service, or brand during their experience with the company.

Digital Marketing: The use of the internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, display advertising and other electronic or digital technologies in the marketing of products and services.

Multichannel Strategy: The use of two or more marketing channels (for example, physical store and website) without integration or coordination between them to reach customers.

Omnichannel Strategy: The ability of multiple channels to work together seamlessly to provide customers with consistent product information and integrated customer service whether they are online, in-store or in the mobile app.

Retailing: All the activities in selling products and services directly to consumers (i.e., end users) for their personal needs and wants.

Chapter 18

Customer Experience in the Banking Industry

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ABSTRACT

The integration of environmental factors and the total output of products and services demanded by the customer constitute the concept of customer experience. Due to the intensity of competition, banks' adaptation to technological innovations to meet customer expectations increases the sustainability of banks. This process must be compatible with the existing infrastructure and activities of the bank to meet customer experiences. Moreover, increasing the service quality of banks based on customer experiences depends on proactive solution proposals. This chapter discusses digital transformation in the banking industry, ICTs for strategic management, and the opportunities that marketing presents to customer experiences. The main purpose of this chapter is to focus on the development of proactive digital applications in the industry in explaining the concept of customer experience. Therefore, it is thought that this chapter will make an important contribution to the literature.

INTRODUCTION

Customer experience refers to customer communication channels, different marketing and sales techniques, and the period from production to purchasing. The banking industry is one of the priority and important industries that affect customer experience with digital tools. In the banking industry, digital transformation is defined as a time-saving concept by reduces transaction costs with the optimal use of ICTs in all processes. The digital transformation brought about by the globalization process in the economy increases the frequency of use of alternative distribution channels by making use of digital bank branches. Alternative distribution channels are expressed as the provision of individual and corporate banking goods and services through electronic channels (Scalzi, 2000: 7). Therefore, the number of employees in operational jobs is reduced, thus providing banks with a significant cost advantage. Since

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this affects the socio-economic structure of the industry, it requires meeting the innovative service habits of customers in a digital environment suitable for the developing competitive environment.

There are three stages in a bank's digitalization process, respectively. First, the development of new channels and products; Second, it involves adapting the technological infrastructure, Finally, it involves far-reaching changes in the organization to achieve strategic positioning in the digital environment (Cuesta et al., 2015: 1). It is very important in terms of customer experience that banks develop compliance programs that increase competition with their innovative digital applications. Increasing the loyalty of the customers towards the bank is related to the presentation of the products to the customers at the right time and through the right communication channels. Also, improving customer satisfaction is possible with an analytical and data-oriented understanding based on the principle of transparency of customers with the bank.

The development of ICT infrastructure in the banking industry affects the rate of economic development of the industry. On the other hand, strategic opportunities are offered with innovations provided at the national and international levels for the development of ICT policy. ICT strategies offer various opportunities for customer experiences when they provide industrial sustainability (Gurău, 2005: 343). These various opportunities are expressed as the ability of global technology to adapt to local needs, the ability to strengthen public support for e-finance, the ability to establish the necessary level of the regulatory institutional framework, and the ability to orient small and medium-sized enterprises to e-finance (United Nations, 2002). All these opportunities shape the customer experience, which combines rationality and emotion in purchasing decisions. Based on the interactions between a bank and customers and customer experiences, it establishes the customer's conscious and subconscious organizations. For example, the higher the service speed the customer receives, the more permanent and highly motivated the loyalty between the bank and the customer (Pillai & George, 2015: 66). For a sustainable digital economy, bank managers and employees follow the developing ICTs, offering customers the opportunity to experience various portfolio opportunities. Choosing a service suitable for the target market for customer experiences is possible with the use of appropriate ICT by the end customer. Expressing their opinions about the service and product they experience through ICT creates awareness for other customers (Çakaloğlu, 2021: 35). Moreover, customer feedback on banking products and services affects the position of banks in the market against their competitors. Having a continuous customer-oriented approach, banks ensure that service marketing processes are carried out effectively and efficiently with proactive developments.

ICTs create changes in the performance of banks in terms of customer service. Banks reduce transaction costs to adapt to global developments and improve the services offered to customers. Also, banks make high-cost ICT investments. Offering a wide variety of value-added products and services to customers through investments is due to their widespread adoption of ICT. The development of ICT has a significant impact on the development of more flexible and user-friendly banking services. In light of this information, the effect of ICT on bank performance in the banking industry and customer feedback within the scope of the service they receive increase customer satisfaction. Advanced digital methods used by banks to acquire online customers, and strategies to retain customers by increasing their wallet share are key parameters that increase customer satisfaction (Aliyu & Tasmin, 2012: 80). With these parameters, banks enable their brands to develop ICT technologies by stimulating the five senses of their customers and making a difference among their competitors. The use of digital technologies to increase the purchasing capacity of customers from the goods and services offered by the bank increases the role of ICT in customer experience.

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The attitudes and habits of individuals and institutions change depending on technological developments. Changes in technology bring about changes in marketing. Technological changes have also changed banks' relations and communication with their customers. This change has led to the development of different marketing strategies. Correct positioning of banking services and ensuring correct communication with prospective customers are turning points in service marketing (Beckwith, 2009: 13). ICTs are another important factor in service marketing and are related to Industry 4.0. Industry 4.0 offers different roadmaps for the development of customer experiences in the banking industry with cyber-physical systems, the internet of things and services, cloud-based manufacturing, and smart production, with the increase in the globalization process. Industry 4.0, which contributes to the development process of digital transformation, affects the production processes and marketing strategies by changing the way banks work. Due to the rapid adaptation of the entire customer base to smart devices, new web-based products, channels, and mobile internet access, banks have concentrated on providing services through digital channels. This situation facilitates service availability and time management and offers banks and customers opportunities to reach maximum benefit and efficiency (Aydın & Onaylı, 2020: 646). Based on this information, banks have developed measures to encourage marketing and competition by reducing investment costs with high customer satisfaction. Also, banks that make innovative progress to achieve customer loyalty can be better positioned than their competitors in the face of substitute services. It is important for banks that produce high-quality substitutes to improve their R&D activities by increasing their industrial success in terms of providing customer support (Porter, 2000: 47-48).

Increasing the industrial success of banks depends on the optimum use of marketing mix elements such as product, price, promotion, and distribution and the implementation of different marketing innovations. Reaching a higher target market for these innovations requires the existence of ICTs. Industrial activities of banks in areas such as experiential marketing and social media marketing through digital transformation increase their sustainability (Çakaloğlu, 2021: 47-48). Based on customer experiences, banks' implementation of different advertising strategies is due to the lack of information asymmetry between bank employees and customers. Hence, customers can establish a bond between the service and the bank through their expectations through advertisements. Aiming to focus on potential customer actions, banks carry out their service marketing strategies within the framework of planning. Interactive marketing emerges within the scope of this purpose. This marketing is a low-cost marketing technique that creates a competitive advantage for banks in globalizing economies in providing social welfare. With interactive marketing, banks provide added value to their marketing and sales targets with advanced technologies and offer different services to customers. This situation accelerates the feedback of customers from the bank's product and service portfolios (Demir & Artar, 2021: 64-65). Banks increase customer productivity and profitability with an interactive marketing system that takes into account customer profiles and increases the target market of interactive channels. E.g; Technologies such as interactive marketing, creation of customer-oriented websites, e-commerce, intranet, extranet, and internet are used, aiming to offer positive solutions to marketing activities. Hence, interactive marketing is the most intense marketing technique in the advertising industry today (Karaca, 2010).

This book chapter discusses digital transformation in the banking industry, ICTs for strategic management, and the opportunities that marketing presents to customer experiences. This book chapter consists of an introduction, background, the main focus of the chapter, solutions, and suggestions, future research directions, and conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Customer experience is a concept that strengthens companies' brand perceptions, improves the purchasing process of products, and creates awareness by increasing the value perceived by customers (Barbu et al., 2021: 1417). Developments in ICTs require the adaptation of core technologies such as smart people, objects, and organizations, and digital technologies consisting of hardware and complementary technologies to market conditions (Hahn, 2019: 1436). The stable development of banks in the markets depends on the technological innovations and various marketing activities in the roadmaps they apply in the industry. Technological innovations; consists of principles such as interoperability, service orientation, and virtualization that companies take as a basis, thanks to Industry 4.0 components such as cyber-physical systems, the internet of things, and smart factories. The fact that these principles work as a whole with each other increases the function of features such as management functioning, organizational charts, and customer profiles (Lom et al., 2016: 1).

Banks create differences in service processes to increase their competitiveness with globalization and technological developments. Digitalization and developments in information technologies are counted as two main factors that reflect these important differences. With these factors, the share of banks in the functional income distribution is increasing. On the other hand, developments in ICTs improve the e-commerce functions of banks and reduce costs by providing time management through services such as operations and marketing. Thus, by increasing the efficiency and brand awareness in business processes between banks and suppliers, it can create ease of connection with potential customers in the global market (Jahanshahi et al., 2013: 851). Another advantage of ICTs is that banks use smart specialization strategies effectively. With smart specialization strategies, banks aim to grow in value chains and services. Thus, knowing the comparative advantages of banks over other banks is possible with optimum management of R&D activities. The sustainability of R&D activities is since banks give priority to innovative studies in their services. Thus, banks can contribute to customer experiences with the understanding of an industrial common vision. Eriksson et al. (2008) argue that ICTs are significant in observing and predicting the performance of strategic business units and in most cases determining which markets the relevant banks should communicate with. Chironga et al. (2011) state that there are three tools in obtaining the customer service advantages of information technology. These tools are office efficiency/automation; operational efficiency; and/or knowledge production and strategic effectiveness or transformation. It is also claimed that strategic pricing and earning management are supported by running complex algorithms through ICT to create the best performance and profitability levels.

Chauhan et al. (2022) may aim to evaluate the evaluation of digital banking and evaluate the evaluation of banks. It tries to find in this product the digital marketing literature, which is intended to combine the customer service profit chain with its model. Also, this study is one of the first in the clarity of growing a product from technology services for development for customers. Shahid et al. (2022) examine the antecedents and consequences of customer experience with mobile banking applications. In the study, an online survey technique was used to understand the connection of customer experience with other structures. The sample of 473 participants was analyzed using structural methods. Moment Structure Analysis was used in the modeling in which the hypotheses were tested. The results of the analysis revealed that convenience, trust, and social impact play an important role in improving the customer experience with the use of mobile banking applications. Mosa (2022) examines the importance of the effect and correlation relationship between E-CRM and customer experience in the field of e-banking service. In the study, a structured questionnaire was used with a sample of 472 customers using e-services

in commercial banks operating within the administrative borders of Basra Governorate of Iraq. Analysis results show that E-CRM is an important variable in creating an experience that the customer sees differently. Abadi et al. (2021) establish a model in customer experience management in the mobile banking industry for customers of commercial banks in Dubai. Data were collected by using semi-structured interviews from qualitative (theory-based) and quantitative (cross-sectional) survey methods. The data analysis at the quantitative stage confirmed the qualitative research findings according to the chi-square, goodness-of-fit index, adjusted goodness-of-fit, and root mean error squares indices.

El-Gohary et al. (2021) investigate how artificial intelligence technology in the banking sector affects the overall experience of customers. The study focuses on how customers' personal digital transformation affects digital banking development and its impact on customer expectations and experience. The findings have been that digital transformations increase consumer expectations from banks. In addition, it has been determined that neobanks do not operate at the expected speed due to customer information gaps caused by the lack of information advertised to customers. Vallejo-Bojorque et al. (2021), aim to explain the pre-production customer's confidence and benefit from the trust's customer. In the study, the model and PLS (partial least square) method were used for data analysis. It is similar to analyzes where there is an affinity over the customer's credibility and accordingly, the customer's loyalty is something similar. It is also validated as in a view that precedes the fidelity of the examined, trust.

Çavuşoğlu & Uslu (2021) conduct their studies to determine the effect of customer experience management dimensions (physical, virtual, and service interaction management) on customer loyalty. The universe of the research consists of the customers of the banks located in Bingöl. The hypotheses in the research model were analyzed with Consistent PLS Bootstrapping structural equation modeling via PLS-SEM. Within the scope of the analysis results, it has been determined that physical, virtual, and service interaction management positively affects customer loyalty. Aydın & Onaylı (2020) examine the effects of the digital transformation in the banking sector and the changing customer experience on the attitudes of customers such as loyalty, satisfaction, and recommendation tendency. In the study, in which the sample number was determined as 364, the survey technique obtained from data from digital banking customers was used. In the study, where the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) method was applied, it was determined that customers did not make a significant difference between digital banking applications in terms of speed, customer support, security, and information content.

Tutkunca (2020) provides an in-depth understanding of the concept of digital transformation by examining the basic elements and components from the perspective of businesses. The method of the study is the use of a relational approach, thematic analysis, and machine learning within the quantitative content analysis. In this study, 568 studies on digital transformation in businesses were analyzed and the connections between the concepts are established. Also, the concepts encountered in the digital transformation process in terms of businesses and their connections with each other are examined. Indriasari et al. (2019) state that banks' preference to focus on customer experience while performing digital transformation is an important step in achieving their goals. In the study, in which artificial intelligence and big data analytics applications were investigated to benefit from customer experience in banking, literature review and interviews were used to collect data. In addition, the study reveals the best practices of global banking and Indonesian banking in the application of AI and BVA. The contribution of this study to the literature is the proposed corporate architecture and proposed digital innovation in AI and BVA, which enables banking institutions to benefit from customer experiences. Handro (2018) states in his study that with the rise of financial technology, a new era has entered in customer experience. In this study, he states that the latest developments in ICT and financial technology have changed

customer demands and expectations intensively. Cooperation between banks, financial technologies, and regulatory agencies create a good customer experience and a good working environment. The adoption of financial technologies by customers is very important for the change in the banking system. Thus, benefiting from the advanced financial technologies of the banking system according to the demands of the customers positively affects their experience.

Opportunities offered by banks to their customers with advanced information technologies and various marketing opportunities improve customer perception in the industry. For customers' experiences, banks pay attention to the difference between customers' expectations and perceptions to improve the services they provide. In this context, customers will be satisfied because their expectations are met and they will be able to purchase the same service again (Akbaba, 2006: 18). Teichert (2019) defines digital transformation as the process of adapting to a dramatically changing digital environment to meet the digital expectations of customers, employees, and partners. Banks targeting digital banking should pay attention to this digital transformation to create an effective positioning in their industrial ecosystem. According to a similar definition, Ebert & Duarte (2018) states that increasing digital transformation, productivity, value creation, and social welfare is about adopting disruptive technologies. Matt et al. (2015) define digital transformation as a concept that includes technologies, and organizational and strategic changes. With the integration of these concepts with each other, new business models emerge and customer expectations are formed by these business models. Lotriet et al., (2020); Diener (2021: 3) refer to digital transformation as a driving factor for banks to offer solutions to current challenges. Digital transformation practices such as customer focus, leadership, digital strategies, digital trends, application of digital technologies, and digital transformation skills affect the level of digital maturity.

Banks want to create an improved process in customer experience with digital transformation. Customers' new technology-based service demands and expectations require banks to develop their technological infrastructure on the way to becoming digital banks. In this context, ICTs create infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of banks. Also, the development of ICTs is related to customers' ease of access to services, managerial decision-making ability, data, information, and strategic management (Adeosun et al., 2008: 135). Developments in ICTs increase the market size of banks and give banks a competitive advantage. Under the conditions of increasing competition, banks go through some processes that have a certain organizational function to create a perception of value for their customers. These processes require banks to give importance to planning in their marketing processes (Kotler & Keller, 2006: 5). The use of technologies, which became widespread in the banking industry primarily for the improvement of internal operational processes, then expanded to redesign the products and services offered to customers, access to customers, and customer acquisition. Studies on products and services offered to customers are handled with the product-oriented approach of Marketing 1.0. Creating changes that meet corporate goals based on customer feedback is related to Marketing 2.0, which targets a customer-oriented approach. In the customer-oriented approach, it is important how and how the product reaches the customer and how to establish permanent relations with the customer in the long run. Marketing 3.0, expresses a people-oriented era where values originate from marketing; its virtual marketing-oriented approach is explained by Marketing 4.0 (Tarabasz, 2013: 130).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Digital Transformation in the Banking Industry

In the banking industry, digitalization refers to a modular process in which the technology infrastructure is created and new technologies are integrated. In this process, banks are flexible in their efforts to develop new products faster the services (Cuesta et al., 2015: 6). Banks can provide services to their customers through digital channels through digital technologies such as smart devices and mobile internet access. Thanks to easy access to services, customers can easily handle their transactions without going to bank branches. Hence, banks can find a chance to hold on in markets where competition is intense by benefiting from different customer experiences and attitudes. Banks' emphasis on advertisements to increase their industrial awareness can differentiate customer experiences. Thanks to this changing service environment, the concept of customer experience in the banking industry has been reconsidered. This has led banks to act as digital solution partners in their customers' financial transactions and engage in a continuous improvement effort to provide their customers with the best experience. In Table 1, digital transformation goals are given in two groups social and economic. Socially, banks provide customers with structural adjustment programs and convenience in terms of governance, accessibility, service quality, and affordability in digital communication channels. In terms of economy, banks can improve their service standards by increasing the added value of their products with innovative business models. Providing optimum benefit to customers in the services they receive in the perspective of banks' digital transformation goals encourages the development of a collaborative culture in the industry. Also, transparency in digital data increases the trust between bank employees and customers.

Table 1. Digital Transformation Goals

Perspective	Objective
Social	Foster the development of a more collaborative and innovative culture in society and industry
	Change the education system to provide future orientation and new skills to persons so that they can reach excellence in society and digital work
	Create and continue digital communication infrastructures and ensure their governance, accessibility, affordability, and quality of service.
	Reinforce digital data transparency, protection, trust, and autonomy.
	Enhance the quality of digital services and accessibility offered to the population
Economic	Implement innovative and new business models
	Increase productivity, value addition, and income generation in economy
	Developing the technical standards and regulatory framework

Source: Ebert & Duarte, (2018: 17)

Optimization of the product lifecycle management process is becoming increasingly important for banks to develop their sustainable competitive advantages in the process of digitalization. AI and BDA enable us to be more customer-focused. Since products in AI can be easily identified and positioned, they have the opportunity for optimum cost, flexibility, and individual mass production (Hofmann & Rüsçh, 2017: 25). In BDA, products can bring more revenue to banks, and banks can find the potential

to gain a more holistic view of the market and customer. Banks use these technologies to benefit from customer experience in the development of digital banking innovations. The basic elements of these technologies are as follows (Indriasari et al., 2019: 865):

- Technologies enable banking institutions to analyze the entire customer portfolio and experiences in each digital banking channel.
- Technologies enable it to be used for sales and analysis of low-performing digital banking channels. Banks create strategies to optimize each digital banking channel.
- Technologies provide customer satisfaction, loyalty, efficiency, and financial improvement.

The effectiveness of these technologies in digital channels depends on the development of Virtual Intelligence (VI) applications in the banking industry. A corporate infrastructure in the banking industry is to improve the mobile banking experience by making arrangements in market value and cost control. Developing customers' mobile banking competencies shapes their bank preferences. Therefore, the process of customers actively experiencing digital banking; mobile loan processes require optimum fulfillment of needs such as corporate payments.

ICTs for Strategic Management in the Banking Industry

For the development of ICT and for the areas where maximum economic impact can be created, a strategic approach should be used, the main priorities of which are determined at the national and regional levels (Singh, 2011: 86). For example, ICT applications provide direct information to banks by offering strategic advantages. In modern times, strategic management in the banking industry requires long-term planning, response management, and innovation. Banks' planning strategy depends on effective budgeting and resource allocation. Response management is a strategy that focuses on the bank's quick response to protect itself against a competitor's move. However; banks offer innovative changes that give them a competitive advantage in the short term.

In the development of banks' information communication technologies, the need for all branches to communicate effectively and efficiently with each other and with other branches of other banks is important. This situation affects the successful performance of banking transactions. ICT has different applications in banks. Teleconferencing, which improves faster decision-making, is an ICT application developed for the joint efforts of different parties in different locations. Video teleconferencing is an enhancement to teleconferencing that allows attendees at one location to see attendees at another or several locations. Electronic mail is a multi-access communication that allows letters to be sent to any person connected to the system. Electronic data exchange is an application that can also be used to communicate electronically within all branches of a bank and supporting service organizations. Public network services and bulletin board, public network services accessible via telephone line, and an application that allows people with personal computers to access large amounts of private information. Another example of ICT's applications in banks is telecommunications. With these services, bank personnel has the opportunity to work remotely (Adeosun et al., 2008: 137-138).

Advances in ICT encourage developments in E-CRM. E-CRM covers all customer relationship management functions through the use of the internet (Kumar & Mokha, 2021: 127). The main purpose of e-CRM is to determine customer preferences to establish sustainable relationships with customers and gain potential customers through ICT. Aiming to maximize customer satisfaction by meeting customer

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expectations at the optimum level, banks strive to improve their marketing activities and customer services. Another purpose of E-CRM is to create added value by creating a database for customer information on the online platform. Also, banks take into account the feedback of customers in their portfolios with different reporting techniques. Table 2 gives the objectives of a successful E-CRM application.

Table 2. Goals of Successful Electronic Relationship Management

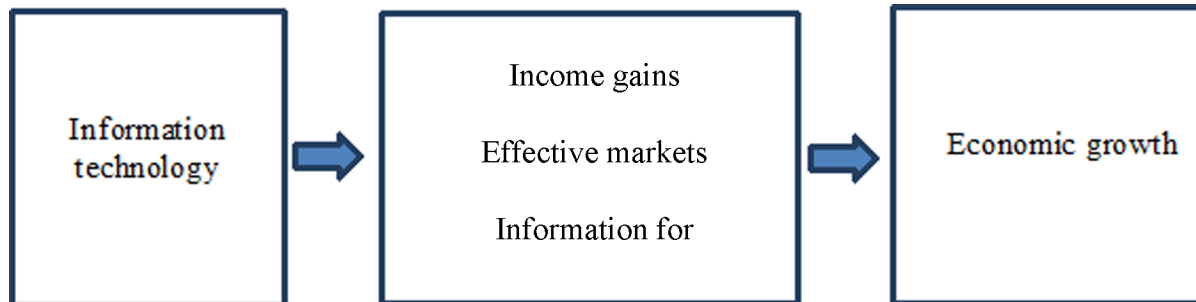
Goals	Examples
Increasing customer loyalty	The effectiveness of the E-CRM system allows a bank to communicate with its customers using a single and consistent voice, regardless of the communication channel.
More effective marketing	Obtaining detailed customer information from the E-CRM system allows a bank to estimate the types of products in its portfolio that its customers are likely to purchase and the timing of their purchase.
Improved customer service and support	With the E-CRM system, a bank provides the necessary support to its customers with its systematic service providers.
Greater efficiency and cost reduction	A bank's integration of customer data into a single database enables effective marketing.

Source: Scullin et al. (2002: 4)

Increasing customer loyalty and providing quality service for banks depend on the development of the E-CRM and ICT. Banks that know their customers transfer their resources to their customers in the most profitable way with time management. With E-CRM software, everyone in an organization can access the same transaction history and customer-related information, enabling a bank to gain more individual customers. Thus, banks can provide services according to customer profiles. This increases the customer's loyalty to the bank. With more effective marketing, banks can analyze customer data from different perspectives to evaluate marketing mix elements in terms of sales and profitability. On the other hand, improved customer service and customer service support enable banks to thrive by viewing their contracts, and searching for proven solutions and best practices. Sharing information and working towards common corporate goals and measuring the return on investments are among the goals a bank sets to increase its profit margins. Therefore, sales forces and other departments within banks have strategies such as greater efficiency and cost reduction using the same basic statistics. In Figure 1, digital enabling factors for banks' customer experiences are given. These factors cover the period from IT to economic growth. During this time, it is very significant for banks to be knowledgeable about their income earnings, effective markets, and economic decisions, in terms of banks' use of digital factors in their customer experiences.

Figure 1. The Digital Provider Factors for Banks' Customer Experiences

Source: Eggleston et al. (2002: 71)



ICTs contribute to the strategic and operational management of financial institutions around the world. Thanks to ICT, banks improve their customer service, operation, and management processes. It requires banks to make effective planning with their strategic partners to meet customer demands. Thus, banks organize R&D activities to increase their production capacity and contribute to the development process of ICTs. Developing customer-oriented business strategies, such as R&D activities, is for banks to try to create opportunities for each of their customers. Meeting customers' current demands and predicting what they will demand in the future will be possible by determining customer profiles (Scullin et al., 2002: 6)

The Effect of Marketing on Customer Experience in the Banking Industry

Customer experience has a distinctive role in the success of a bank. Customer experience management is a business strategy that focuses a bank's operations and processes around needs (Sharma & Chaubey, 2014: 18). Also, customer experience management represents a strategy that results in a win-win value exchange between the retailer and its customers (Grewal et al., 2009: 1). This concept, which is also expressed as a marketing strategy, provides a simultaneous meeting of customer needs in the digital environment with advanced ICTs.

Advancing technological infrastructure and planning in the banking industry affect the marketing decisions of banks. Developing technological infrastructure and planning provide benefits to banks in achieving marketing targets and implementing activity programs. The fact that customers are at the focal point of the banking system is important in determining factors such as cash usage and deposits that will affect the relations of customers with the bank. These factors directly affect the decisions of customers from the perspective of economic developments and as a result of innovative developments (Ulukus, 2011: 55). For example, electronic banking is a service that facilitates customers' relationships with the bank. The fact that banks, which actively use innovative digitalization tools, provide services according to the needs of their customers, requires the development of their knowledge of their customers regarding electronic and especially mobile services. The development of electronic banking services through multiple electronic channels has made it possible to create a new added value, especially for customers in the retail industry. The quality of the mobile service offered by banks to their customers is an important criterion in determining customer motivations, attitudes, and evaluation criteria (Laukanen & Lauronen, 2005: 326).

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Schmitt (2000) states that there are five types of experiences that marketers can offer to customers: sensory experience (sensation), emotional experience (feeling), cognitive experience (thinking), physical experience (action), and social identity experience (relationship). With experiential marketing, customers are included in bank services and an opportunity is created for customers to experience these services simultaneously. The ultimate goal here is the capacity of bank products to meet the needs of the target market. In experiential marketing, it is desired to create a holistic experience that integrates all individual experience types into the total customer experience (Chahal & Dutta, 2015: 59). Dynamics that are effective in providing a multidimensional customer experience, which includes different dynamics such as emotions, senses, behaviors, and social values, affect customer loyalty through web-based channels and marketing (Brun et al., 2017: 327). Marketing 4.0, which expresses the transition process to a customer-oriented virtual marketing-oriented approach, plays an important role in maintaining long-term relationships with customers. In this context, banks are getting closer to their marketing targets by expanding their production networks (Cruceru & Moise, 2014: 157).

Customer experience emerges with external dynamics such as the internal dynamics experienced by the customer and the social environment. Difficulty in market conditions and increasing competition in banks depend on the functionality of these dynamics in their financial sustainability. Also, banks strive to increase their awareness and become the focus of the customer through the factors that determine the customer experience (Çal, 2018: 117-118). Based on the literature, the experiential components considered as the dimensions of customer experience were examined in 6 dimensions (Gentile et al., 2007: 398):

- **Sensory Component:** The purpose of this component; is to demonstrate that sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell can be addressed to provide effective sensory experiences and evoke a sense of beauty.
- **Emotional Component:** The purpose of this component, which includes the person's emotional system through the generation of emotions; is to create an emotional experience to create an emotional relationship with a company, its brand, or its products.
- **Cognitive Component:** The purpose of this component, which is related to thinking or conscious mental processes of the customer experience; is to involve customers in using their creativity or problem-solving situations.
- **Pragmatic Component:** The purpose of this component, which is based on the principle of being pragmatic; is based on the usability feature of the current product by customers. It is a component that extends from post-purchase to all product lifecycle stages.
- **Lifestyle Component:** This component aims to gain an appreciation of one's value system and beliefs through the adoption of a lifestyle and behavior. The product itself and its use become tools for sticking to certain values embodied by the business and brand and shared by customers.
- **Relational Component:** This component includes the person and their social context, their relationship with other people, or their ideal self.

Customer experience is a concept that takes place at all stages of customers' decision-making and service processes (Jain et al., 2017: 652). The maximum benefit from the service provided by the customers depends on the improvement of the corporate image of the banks. Banks benefit from the experiences of their customers in order to increase the quality of their corporate images. In this perspective, banks have emotional dimensions such as customer focus, product management, increasing employee motivation, customer satisfaction, physical infrastructure, and internet banking (Kumar, 2020: 39). Using

these customer experience dimensions, banks present successful marketing strategies. Banks state that their active marketing strategies and financial success are developed by service providers who depend on perceived service quality and experience (Andaleeb et al., 2016: 460). The correct determination and positioning of the service are very important in the analysis of customer profiles. Also, observing the purchasing behavior and communication patterns of customers towards different services is considered necessary for the development of service marketing (Beckwith, 2009: 13). It is accepted as a strategy that provides value and satisfaction, differentiation, image, loyalty, and word-of-mouth communication as a result of the experience of customers in the service marketing process (Jain et al., 2017: 652). Also, the ability of banks to establish relationships with customers is an important determinant of customers' bank preferences. Hence, an interbank competitive advantage can be achieved and a value chain can be created. The experience economy is the sum of the benefits gained during and after the service when the customers have sufficient information about the current bank before purchasing the service they want. With the experience economy, banks can offer customized products and services to their customers. The quality and quantity of these products and services depend on the level of development and performance criteria of banks. In service marketing, banks take their brand images to the next level with promotional mix elements such as advertising, sales promotion, and personal selling, depending on their corporate values.

It increases the importance of corporate governance practices in the banking industry in bank strategies. The fact that banks engaged in domestic and international investment activities attach importance to cooperation with efficient and reliable financial institutions that shape the markets shows their commitment to their corporate values. Capital mobility of banks in global markets, which is based on an effective corporate management system, brings along the control process in their financial structures. Fulfilling these features ensures that values such as corporate continuity, increased productivity, adherence to ethical principles, and professional management structure are included in the management process. The stable continuation of these processes enables customers to be supervisors within the organization, necessitating the existence of a transparent management approach to the parties related to the institution. This can increase the trust between the bank and the customer with positive customer experiences (Akin & Aslanoglu, 2007: 28-29).

Customer value is a concept that creates awareness as it affects the development process and preferability of a bank, like corporate governance practices. In global economies, COVID-19 accelerates the digitalization speed of the banking industry and provides the emergence of different customer experiences. To increase and improve customer value, banks aim to regularly develop investments made as a result of customer experiences every year. For this reason, the fact that banks offer the most innovative customer experience technologies increases the preferability of digital banking and telephone banking. For example, advances in AI add a new dimension to banking and help banks provide more customized services to customers. The 3 areas that will develop the most in the banking industry with AI technology are examined below (Pisano Academy, 2021):

1. **Customized Service:** With the increasing use of AI technology in the banking industry, banks offer new products and services according to their customer profiles. Thus, banks that offer a customized experience can establish more interactive communication with their customers. For example, a bank offers extra installments or special discounts to its customers who shop with a credit card from a contracted company.

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2. **Robo Consulting:** It enables banks to provide consultancy services to their customers with AI technology. Robo Consulting aims to make calculations with certain algorithms and enable customers to invest in the most profitable areas. This service is found to be quite reliable according to research. In light of developments in ICTs, the application of Robo Consulting includes labor-intensive technologies in addition to capital-intensive technologies.
3. **An Improved Support Service:** Another advantage of AI is the chatbot technology used to increase the quality of support. Chatbot technology is used extensively in the banking industry, where support services are heavily used. This technology provides effective time management and communication in terms of directly solving customer questions and resources provided by customers. Also, chatbot technology enables to increase of transparent information about the customer by providing customer segmentation. This feature is related to meeting the needs of the current customer in a shorter time. A more consistent customer experience is created as all information is recorded with controlled chatbot technology.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The new strategies and corporate infrastructure developed by banks on the digital platform has created different customer profiles. The determination of banking products and services according to the opinions obtained from customers through measurement and evaluation methods is possible with effective marketing and sales activities. The fact that customers prefer digital and mobile banking applications more in the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the need for banks to differentiate in service marketing. Banks aiming to meet customer demands at the optimum level should define promotional mix elements such as advertising and personal selling by their customer profiles.

This book chapter contributes to the customers so that they can evaluate and use their time management effectively. Customers can benefit more from digital technologies while demanding products and services, by increasing the level of development of banks on the online platform. The adoption and application of advanced marketing strategies for the target market can increase the loyalty of customer perceptions to the existing bank. On the other hand, eliminating customer experience deficiencies in banking requires the existence of a comprehensive customer strategy. Effective customer analytics is provided by closely monitoring digital technologies. In this context, increasing the service quality of banks based on customer experiences depends on proactive solution proposals. Creating a customer-oriented culture is possible by constantly measuring the perceived value of bank services and products.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Customer perception in the banking industry has changed with the COVID-19 pandemic. The products and services offered by banks, which are trying to adapt to the changing conditions of the pandemic, have increased the perception of the value of different customer experiences. In addition, offering different offers by banks to determine roadmaps based on customer experiences is possible by increasing personalized services.

Studies to increase the usage areas of AI technology can be recommended by different researchers. Studies in different areas of use of AI technology can enable the determination of different services in the banking industry. This can increase the motivation of customers to the industry.

CONCLUSION

Customer experience is defined as the total value customers provide to banks. In this perspective, the fact that banks provide added value with the total value created in their brands positively affects their sustainability in terms of the industry. Adapting to increasingly competitive conditions depends on a stable attitude as a result of customer experiences. In this context, it is necessary for banks to protect their existing customers and gain new customers, and offer products and services that create innovation in their brands. Adapting to technological innovations to meet customer expectations is related to the socio-economic performance of digital transformation, ICTs, and marketing processes. Studies in these areas strengthen the customer perception in the industry and support the portfolios of banks.

COVID-19 has also shown its effects on the banking industry from a socio-economic perspective. During the pandemic process, lockdown, social distance, and flexible working hours have changed the working conditions of banks. Offering more advanced digital services to customers due to pandemic measures has resulted in the creation of different customer profiles. Hence, banks used capital and labor-intensive technologies to provide maximum benefit in the global economy and digital environment. These technologies have led to more use of digital and mobile banking applications. While capital-intensive technologies have increased the importance of Industry 4.0 components, labor-intensive technologies have increased the importance of the human touch to digital in consultancy services. As a result of customers' experience of such technologies before and during the pandemic, strategies have been determined to take the digitalization dimension of banking to the next level. Also, banks have produced alternative policies to eliminate the simultaneous supply and demand contractions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic all over the world and in Turkey. These policies increase the financial performance of banks by using ICTs effectively in their career process and giving importance to customer experience, satisfaction, and loyalty. With the use of advanced digital technologies, banks' effective, efficient and consistent policies in their business and operational processes have improved customer experience.

This book chapter deals with customer experiences in the banking sector in terms of digital transformation, information communication technologies, and marketing. The association of customer experience dimensions, especially with the banking sector, ensured that the study had unity with the literature. The main purpose of this book chapter is to focus on the development of proactive digital applications in the industry in explaining the concept of customer experience. Therefore, it is thought that this chapter will make an important contribution to the literature.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Customer Experience: A concept that reflects the customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social reactions and emerges from a series of interactions between the customer and the product.

Digital Transformation: A strategy that can significantly change the way industries operate, such as the use of technologies, changes in value creation, and structural and financial improvements.

E-CRM: One of the most important information systems that enable companies to communicate with their customers and to collect, store and analyze customer data to enable a more detailed analysis of customers.

Experiential Marketing: Focuses on adding value to the lifestyles of the target group, making the consumer remember the brand, and providing consumers with a brand-related customer experience as a result of the experiences.

ICT: Has enabled the development of different production techniques (thanks to globalization, developments in technology, and scale economy). The use of capital-intensive technologies to increase the depth of existing commercial relationships affects competitiveness.

Section 3

The Experience of Technology and Experience in Digital Games

Chapter 19

Online Game Experiences: The Perspective of Experiential Marketing

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ABSTRACT

The fact that businesses begin to reach consumers through online media and digital channels triggers consumers to experience new experiences. Therefore, creating new experiences for consumers in the online environment and determining which factors affect consumer experiences in the online environment gain importance for marketing managers in determining forward-looking strategies. With the digital transformation experienced, the game industry's becoming an increasingly important market has enabled the concept of games to become a marketing tool. This affects consumer behavior, experience, and satisfaction. So, one way to create new experiences for consumers online is to use games and new digital marketing tools integrated into the game concept. From this point of view, in this chapter, game market, game concept, game experience, gamification, product placement advergame, flow theory, and motivation theory will be discussed in terms of experiential marketing.

INTRODUCTION

With digitalization, businesses and consumers can directly communicate and interact in marketing activities. In addition, various campaigns and advertising messages can be carried out interactively, sometimes with the participation of consumers, and consumers are rewarded for fulfilling various tasks. It makes communication between businesses and consumers much more enjoyable and effective. Consumers feel similarly while playing games. Many activities such as completing the tasks given in the game, rewarding and appreciating the consumers who enter the game rankings through competitions and similar events, and giving the target audience a sense of competition and excitement take place while playing the game. Consumers share the online game content they are interested in by tagging their close friends on their social media accounts and announcing this content on their social media accounts. This interest of consumers in online games makes the gaming industry more and more popular.

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Online Game Experiences

Seeing that the game industry is becoming more and more popular and wanting to continue its marketing activities on digital platforms, businesses have started to benefit from the game industry for their marketing activities. More and more businesses are adding gaming apps to their marketing activities. With digital marketing, the analysis and measurability of consumer data and campaigns make game content a suitable marketing tool to deliver the right message to the right consumer. Research shows that games and gamification activities are more effective in reaching consumers than traditional marketing and other digital marketing activities (Hofacker et al., 2016). From this point of view, it can be stated that the use of the game element in the marketing activities of the enterprises will provide essential opportunities and competitive advantage so that the consumers can cooperate with the brands they know and trust.

This book chapter examines how businesses are using game-based experiential marketing practices, taking the core gaming experience from an experiential marketing perspective. To this end, this book chapter consists of an introduction, background, main focus of the chapter, solutions, and recommendations, future research directions, and conclusions.

BACKGROUND

Game Market

The developments in communication technologies, the increase in the use of smartphones and other mobile devices, and the mobile internet have remarkable popularity in the game industry. This glamorous rise of the gaming industry has been tried to be explained with the following statistics.

The consumption of video games has grown to be a significant economic, cultural, and global phenomenon. Furthermore, it has now become one of the most popular internet activities. This trend is spreading globally (Lenhart et al., 2008), and the gaming industry's role in the overall economy is becoming increasingly important (Zhu & Zhang, 2010; Landsman & Stremersch, 2011).

By 2025, the gaming market is expected to be worth more than \$268 billion (WePC, 2022). Given the importance and economic importance of the game market, gaming experiences have begun to pique the interest of academics from various disciplines, such as marketing, computer science, and media studies, as well as marketing managers who want to provide experiences to consumers (Hsiao & Chen, 2016; Li et al., 2019).

Game playing times have also increased by 30% during the pandemic period. During the pandemic, Steam, one of the world's largest game distribution networks and platforms, set an all-time high by surpassing 23 million instant active users in the preceding months. Density has increased not only on Steam but also on all game platforms and games (Berktan, 2021).

According to Unity Technologies, the 30-day retention rate increased by 7.1% from 2016 to 2020. Also, conversion rates for in-app purchases increased by approximately 7.7% over the same period. Looking at the gender statistics for mobile games, it is seen that female players make in-app payments at a higher rate (4.5%) than male players.

According to the report, the most successful period for casual games was 2020. Many people have turned to casual games during the pandemic. The reason for the rise of casual games is that these games are simple to play and allow people to have fun and relax in difficult times like the pandemic. The report also stated that the demand for Hyper casual games is still strong, and this trend is expected to continue through 2022 (Mordor Intelligence Game Report, 2021).

According to the game report conducted by Mordor Intelligence (2021), the statistics around the world show that mobile games have become the most popular game category, leaving console and PC games behind. The frequency of users using smartphones explains the most important reason for this situation. Nowadays, almost everyone has a smartphone, and they carry these devices with them everywhere in the house. Therefore, when these users want to play games, they prefer to play mobile games downloaded to their smartphones. Also, %74,9 percent of gamers play online games via smartphones and others. Also, it is seen that people's interest in online games has increased in different age ranges. With the pandemic, it can be stated that the number of players over the age of 50 is increasing (Kemp, 2021).

When the statistics given above are evaluated, it is seen that the gaming industry is already shining, and this situation accelerates with the pandemic period. Online games have become popular with young users as well as adults, with both male and female users increasing. Users are affected by in-game advertisements and have started to subscribe to games. The importance of this situation in terms of marketing will be discussed under different headings later in the chapter.

The Game Concept and Types of Games

Games can be defined as informal activities where people participate voluntarily, with their own rules and social ties. The votes take place in an artificial conflict environment. While playing the game, the players get specific scores, reach gains of a particular value, and interact with each other interactively. Thanks to the games, the players make a specific effort, invest, and bargain, and this process can also affect their real lives (Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1971; Salen et al., 2004; Juul, 2010; Seaborn & Fels, 2015).

Games have been seen as a part of society since the early ages and have been a means of transferring cultural characteristics from generation to generation. Games also have an effect that changes and develops the culture and is accepted as one of the common values of the whole society. The fact that the game's concept has such a significant social impact makes games and activities related to games a vital tool for marketing and many sectors to reach people (Huzinga, 2017; Okmeydan, 2018). Games can be categorized as follows, according to their various characteristics.

Digital Games

The concept of digital games is a concept directly related to technological developments. The foundations of digital games are based on game consoles. However, computers and mobile phones, which are used extensively for gaming experiences today, have become more preferred devices with each passing day. Digital games; "*video games, arcade games, computer games, console games, mobile games, Etc. includes all its different types*". Computer game refers to games played on a computer, console games, games played with a device specially designed for the game, and video games, a general term for all, refers to games that can be played on all portable devices. For this reason, all educational or non-educational games played in the virtual environment are defined as digital games. In this context, a digital game can be defined as a unique communication environment that includes the digitality, interaction, virtuality, variability, and modularity features of the new communication environment and integrates these features with the act of playing games (Yumrukuz, 2021; Fidan, 2020; Digital Game Report, 2020).

Games also can be categorized as; action games, adventure games, role-playing games, simulation games, strategy games, FPS games, TPS games, MOBA games, platform games, MMO games, RTS games, and open-world games, sports games (Huizinga, 2017). From this point of view, it can be said

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that there is a wide variety of game preferences for every player with different wishes and needs. People play games for many purposes and reasons, such as relieving stress, enjoying, achieving success, socializing, taking on different roles, spending their spare time, earning money, or emotional stimulation. These people are called “*players*” (Bae et al., 2016; Taydaş & Karakoç, 2019).

In their daily lives, people are consumers as well as players. Therefore, while playing games, as a consumer, the demands and expectations arising from consumer behavior can come to the fore (Kahn et al., 2015).

The fact that the players are also consumers, brings up some issues to be discussed. First of all, the fact that players are consumers, who buy games has made it essential to evaluate some issues such as the production, pricing, distribution, and promotion of games in terms of the marketing activities of game companies. Another aspect of this situation is the emergence of a new tool for businesses looking for different and new tools in their digital marketing activities with the increasing popularity of the gaming market.

The use of games as a marketing tool in marketing activities has become a new and effective strategy to reach consumers. Thus, players and, indirectly, consumers will gain awareness of the businesses that reach them with new and different tools, and they will perceive the product introduced with the game content marketing activity as more valuable and valuable, and they will be able to combine many different components to gain new experiences.

On the other hand, online games are games that can be played with single or multiple players by connecting to a network over the internet. With the development of technology, online games have become a type of game that everyone can play worldwide. With the development of technology, the increase in the use of devices such as phones and tablets that people can carry with them has led to a new revolution in the digital game industry. Mobile games have become a game that people of all ages and genders can play by occupying a prominent place globally. Educational games on mobile platforms have been the most played game type by users. These games stand out as paid and free games that can be played both online and offline (Digital Oyun Raporu, 2020). Detailed information about the game types is explained in the following sub-titles.

Online Games

All games share some standard features. Having a common end goal, acting according to specific rules, receiving instant feedback, and participating voluntarily can be given as examples of these characteristics. Online games are generally expressed as multiplayer and internet-based games that allow users to dream and have fun. The most important feature of online games is that they create communication between people from all over the world who are not physically in the same environment (Lee, 2009). Today, it is in demand by people worldwide and from all age groups (Liao et al., 2020). The fast-growing online gaming industry has quickly become a billion-dollar industry (Meagher & Teo, 2005). Online games, which commonly allow players to compete with each other individually and as a team, also differ within themselves (Hsu & Lu, 2004).

Due to the nature of online games, the fact that they can connect people around the world and establish friendships among these people turns these games into an essential recreational activity and the most popular entertainment application in the virtual world (Trepte et al., 2012; Chen, 2010). Online games are usually multiplayer and internet-based games that allow users to dream and have fun. The most important feature of online games can be expressed as creating communication between people from all

over the world who are not physically in the same environment (Lee, 2009). Today, it is in demand by people worldwide and from all age groups (Liao et al., 2020).

The online gaming industry has become the largest entertainment industry in recent years, has reached a revenue volume of approximately 21 billion dollars, and has become a sector with a high-profit potential (Lee et al., 2004; Teng, 2017; Statista, 2020). Oğuz et al. (2021), in their study, concluded that online games increase the recall of brands and consumers' intention to buy the brands they see in the game. It is seen that as people's commitment to the game they play increases, their purchase intentions increase (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2018).

Mobile Games

With the developing communication technologies, mobile devices, which have begun to be defined as intelligent, are widely used by adults and various age groups for the functions such as communication, obtaining information, having fun, and filling their spare time as well as playing games.

Frequent use of smart devices has led to the diversification of mobile games. This situation ensures that the share of mobile games in the gaming industry is gradually increasing. The increasing importance of mobile games has enabled the market share of the advertisements in these games to reach remarkable dimensions. Although the phenomenon of games and advertisements may seem like separate fields, advertisements with game content on smart and mobile devices bring these two phenomena together.

Through the advertisements in the games, users can switch from one game to another by playing games and experiencing different types of games in various ways. Since this new advertising strategy is presented to consumers in a much more innovative and creative way than traditional advertisements, it also eliminates the forced exposure of people to advertisements and ensures that people are less disturbed by advertisements. For this reason, digital gaming environments have started to become suitable areas for digital marketing activities and advertising campaigns (Özüölmez, 2019).

With the games downloaded from the application stores, the profit from digital games is also increasing. Although most mobile games are downloaded for free from the virtual stores, the profits from the advertisements come back as financial gain to both the game manufacturers and the advertisers. The fact that the Internet enables an interactive communication environment has also helped businesses and consumers to communicate and interact with each other. Therefore, businesses have the opportunity to convey the messages they want to convey to the right target audience in a short time and to follow the feedback from the consumers instantly. Mobile devices can be considered the most critical tools in forming this environment (Altunbaş, 2001).

Compared to online computer games, mobile games have several advantages. These benefits include convenience, portability, and a lower cost. These benefits enable mobile games to be recognized as a leading form of entertainment. The growing popularity of mobile games has prompted businesses to concentrate their efforts on this market. Businesses have begun to devote significant resources to developing free-to-play mobile games, particularly those with in-game purchases (Cheung et al., 2021).

Mobile games include all video games that can be accessed via a mobile channel, such as online games on smartphones or tablets. These games can be played solo or in multiplayer mode (Zhang et al., 2018). User interaction is encouraged by integrating smartphones with mobile internet and technological advancements. People became more involved in online interactive platforms due to this (Cheung et al., 2021). Mobile gaming trends have encouraged users to download and constantly update mobile games in app stores, allowing players to interact socially, play games asynchronously, and experience

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digital currencies (Hsiao & Chen, 2016). As a result, mobile games have evolved into critical platforms for interaction.

When evaluating mobile games in terms of marketing activities, it can be stated that in-game purchase intentions of mobile game users are related to perceived value and consumer loyalty (Hsiao & Chen, 2016). Hsiao & Tang (2016), discovered that the experiential elements that users encounter while playing mobile games and the pleasure they derive from them have a positive effect on attitudinal loyalty. Hamari et al. (2017), mentioned that the importance of mobile games' economic and functional factors increases in-game purchase intention.

According to Merikivi et al. (2017), game design elements and playability increase users' perceived enjoyment, strengthening players' intent to continue playing the game. According to Lee et al. (2018), the perceived value of mobile games increases user adoption and in-game purchase.

Economic variables, functional characteristics, perceived ease of use, and motivating aspects such as gameplay and usability have all been identified as drivers of customer loyalty to mobile games in studies published in the literature. As a result, companies that wish to use games in their digital marketing strategies should carefully assess the incentives for playing games and the value of these motivations for experiential marketing. The antecedents of mobile game loyalty intentions are extrinsic benefits (connection quality, competitive pricing, and virtual prizes), the intrinsic utility of perceived gameplay, loyalty, and in-game purchase intention, which are the incentives for playing mobile games. These premises can also include perceived usefulness (monetary motivation) (Davis et al., 1992). When players perceive high connection quality, they can perform better in a mobile game (Cheung et al., 2021).

Furthermore, price (monetary incentives) impacts the players' motivation. Extrinsic rewards for boosting game performance are virtual benefits delivered within a mobile game, such as game coins, equipment, items, or sector rewards (Hsiao & Chen, 2016). Factors such as social media use, e-shopping, web portal use, e-learning, mobile commerce, and online game acceptance are also considered motivators in the associated literature (Wamba et al., 2017; Cheung et al., 2021). As a result, the findings of studies on motivation theory and games in the literature might guide companies looking to include games in their marketing efforts.

Experiential Marketing and Gaming Experience

Experiential Marketing

Experiences generally refer to all the direct and indirect relationships consumers establish with the brand before, during, and after purchasing a product (Deligöz, 2016). Experience is defined as the sum of consumers' past consumption activities, and the researched knowledge about the product includes the stages of consuming, using, and owning the product. The experience actually includes subjective concepts expressing what consumers know and objective concepts including how much they perceive.

According to Holbrook & Hirschmann (1982), the concept of experience and experiential marketing emerged when consumers, who were described as rational decision-makers until the beginning of the 80s, began to be perceived differently from being rational. Experiential marketing focuses on fantasies such as dreams, dreams, unconscious desires, emotions such as love, hate, anger, fear, sadness, pleasure, and entertainment. Experiential marketing started to become more prevalent in the 90s.

Providing a unique experience to consumers has come to the fore in gaining a competitive advantage by delivering goods and services to consumers for customer-oriented businesses. Experiences; It

is crucial for customer loyalty with its features of being unique, memorable, and making you want to live again. At the same time, experiences create relationships between consumers and businesses in an individual and memorable way (Ekici, 2020). Businesses transmit various stimuli in order to provide consumers with an experience. It is no longer enough for consumers to buy products. Consumers want to experience experiences such as happiness, excitement, pleasure, and fun, as well as the emotions of purchasing. Therefore, businesses should develop a new set of marketing strategies that can provide these experiences. Today, many variables stimulate consumers, and consumers can access information very quickly, so trying to reach consumers with traditional marketing methods cannot gain a competitive advantage for businesses. For this reason, businesses try to create a bond with consumers by providing them with unforgettable experiences. The main reason for creating this bond is to try to create brand loyalty in consumers.

A successfully developed experiential marketing campaign provides several benefits to businesses. These benefits can be listed as follows (Odabaşı, 2004; Edvardsson et al., 2005; Howard, 2007; Smilansky, 2009; Kabadayı & Alan, 2014);

Experiential marketing primarily helps in the formation of brand personality. Experiential marketing also activates word-of-mouth about the brand, creating a brand experience and brand recall. Therefore, it creates brand loyalty. Experiential marketing provides brand awareness. It helps to attract the attention of more consumers along with the word-of-mouth communication that takes place. It ensures that the services offered to consumers are unique and create personalized value. Experiential marketing helps businesses connect with consumers and reinforces the business image. Therefore, it also provides information to businesses about the expectations of consumers. Experiential marketing also helps businesses increase sales by gaining more customers. Therefore, it is a very logical strategy for businesses to use games to increase brand loyalty by creating new and different experiences for consumers. It is a beneficial strategy to use games in digital marketing activities to reach consumers who spend most of their day using smartphones and play mobile games in this process and achieve the experiential marketing objectives listed above.

Schmitt (1999), evaluates the dimensions of experiential marketing under five headings within the scope of Strategic Experience Modules. These dimensions are an essential element in the development of experiential marketing understanding. The features that experiential marketing activities must have to be beneficial form the basis of experiential marketing and play a vital role in forming experiential processes. The strategic experience modules and their relationship with the game experience can be summarized as follows;

Sensory Experience (Perception)

Sensory experience refers to experiences that occur through sensory perceptions such as seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. The first impressions created in terms of experience in consumers take action through these perceptions. Marketing campaigns prepared according to experiential marketing aim to reach consumers' five senses in a sustainable way. Experiences presented to consumers through the senses enable them to remember topics that suit their tastes more easily and associate new experiences with old ones (Schmitt, 1999).

The sensory dimension of experiential marketing creates a suitable environment for creating different and creative campaigns (Schmitt & Simonson, 2000). By appealing to consumers' senses, businesses can establish more lasting bonds with them and increase their loyalty. So games are essential to create

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new experiences for consumers. Games are new marketing tools for experiential marketing campaigns that appeal to their senses (such as sight, touch, or hearing) to reach consumers who are bored with traditional marketing methods and spend most of their day online. When consumers are reached with game content and experiential marketing campaigns, consumers' positive perceptions of the business can be triggered (Günay, 2008).

When an unforgettable experience is created for consumers with game marketing campaigns, both consumers are motivated, and businesses can gain a competitive advantage by making a difference (Schmitt, 1999).

Emotional Experience (Feeling)

Today, when consumers buy any product, they also want to experience the emotional experiences they will get from the product. Experiential marketing strategies are critical so that consumers can experience new, unusual and exciting emotional experiences (Odabaşı, 2004). Therefore, digital games and game content marketing applications are practical tools for creating new, creative, and emotional experiential marketing campaigns. Experiential marketing campaigns with game content that will trigger emotions such as excitement, entertainment, curiosity, and interest will increase brand awareness by attracting consumers' attention. Consumers who reach positive perceptions about the brand will become regular customers of the brand.

Cognitive Experience (Thinking)

The purpose of cognitive experience is to arouse interest and curiosity in the consumer with the experiences it creates and encourage them to think about the brand (Günay, 2008). According to Schmitt (1999), cognitive experience is to surprise customers, attract their attention and activate their thoughts. Thus, awareness about the brand is created. The cognitive experience strategy, which differs by including the consumer in creative processes, aims to establish more positive relationships with the consumer.

Thanks to cognitive experience strategies, consumers' thoughts about the brand and product can be learned. In this way, businesses can collect data about the demands and expectations of consumers and act in a target audience-oriented manner. With cognitive experience strategies, processes in which consumers are integrated can also be created. Cognitive marketing aims to encourage consumers to think through and creatively to re-evaluate products. Consumers involved in new and creative processes will change their perspectives on the product and brand, and their purchasing decisions will be affected. From this point of view, it can be stated that the use of game content marketing and advertising campaigns will be practical tools in the process of creating a cognitive experience for consumers. Games are innovative and creative applications and have the necessary motivation to create a cognitive experience for consumers.

Physical Experience (Activation)

Beyond the sensory, emotional, and cognitive experiences, physical experiences are behavioral experiences that will enable them to interact with customers and appeal to their lifestyles (Schmitt, 1999). Physical experience marketing aims to influence consumers' lifestyles and social experiences and create a life value for consumers.

Physical experience marketing campaigns focus on delivering a rational message to consumers. This message turns into a source of motivation in persuading the consumer. With the message given in the campaign, it is tried to create a behavioral change in consumers. Campaigns with the game content designed for physical experience marketing allow consumers to have physical experiences. Virtual reality games specially developed for health applications, various step counting, Etc. Games and various sports games can be used to mobilize consumers.

Social Experience (Association)

Social experience marketing encompasses all experiences, such as emotional, cognitive, and physical experiences. This type of marketing, also known as relationship marketing, refers to a situation beyond consumers' personal and private feelings. In this type of marketing, advertisers deal with the emotions that the consumer wants to be and belong to. Social experience marketing seeks to create a sense of belonging to a group or brand. The ideal self that consumers want to achieve defines the need to be positively perceived and liked by the social environment. In social experience marketing, a link is established between the brand and the consumers in line with this need. Therefore, the basic message of marketing campaigns is established in this context (Schmitt, 1999).

Brands that shape their marketing strategies according to the social experience module offer a particular lifestyle to their consumers and see them as a part of their brand identity. This is also true for consumers. Consumers of brands that give them such an experience begin to feel a sense of belonging to the brand. In particular, online brand communities point to brands that have achieved the social experience element (Young, 2009).

The transformation of the Internet into an interactive platform, along with the phases it has gone through, has caused the concept of experience to gain a new meaning. In order to reach people living in the virtual world, businesses have also started to take place in the virtual world. Digital platforms and the virtual world have created the opportunity for businesses to carry out marketing campaigns that they cannot perform in traditional channels. However, the fact that more and more businesses expose consumers to various promotional messages through online channels causes consumers to be uncomfortable with such messages and sometimes to have problems focusing. Therefore, instead of sending frequent messages to consumers about digital marketing campaigns, marketing messages that will enable them to have an experience that impresses them have become more critical. Due to the nature of the Internet, a well-prepared campaign message can spread to enormous masses instantly. From this point of view, the content of a campaign that will give consumers a good experience can go viral and introduce the brand to large audiences. When consumers are satisfied with the campaign content offered to them, their experience with the brand can make them advocates of the brand (Kotler et al., 2017).

From this perspective, it is clear that the internet environment provides the necessary conditions for organizations and consumers to experience newer and more immersive experiences than ever before (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). For example, image interaction technology (IIT) allows viewers to interact with expanded product information through visuals (non-textual), such as changing a product's design features, background, context, viewing angle or distance, and simulating product operation. Therefore, gaming content marketing campaigns in which this technology is integrated become essential for creating unique experiences.

With today's technologies, consumers' fast and easy access to information reveals once again the importance of experience in differentiating the products and services of businesses. Therefore, marketing

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managers are developing new strategies for applying experiential marketing to the virtual world - the Internet. Game marketing campaigns used at this stage can be considered the newest strategies for businesses in applying experiential marketing to the virtual environment.

The Game Experience

According to Ryan & Deci (2001), the game experience can be explained in two ways, based on the positive psychological ideas of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. While hedonic experience is concerned with game enjoyment, eudaimonic experience is concerned with feelings other than simple pleasures, such as self-acceptance and human decency (Possler et al., 2020).

The hedonic aspect is only about achieving happiness and pleasure. In contrast, the eudaimonic aspect is about meaning and self-actualization (Ryan & Deci, 2001). So focusing only on the hedonic aspects of gaming can only provide a narrow perspective on the experience. Because players seek self-acceptance and meaning from their games, namely the eudaimonic aspects of the experience (Oliver et al., 2018).

The primary psychological paradigm in the entertainment experience for describing human intentions is self-determination theory. One explanation is that psychology and media studies both agree that addressing basic psychological requirements can enhance an individual's entertainment experience. The quality of a game's experience is primarily determined by whether it can satisfy a person's three basic psychological demands. Competence, autonomy, and relatedness are three of them (Liu & Chen, 2006).

The need to be pushed and effective, manifested in the game environment to the extent that games provide ideal challenges and opportunities for positive feedback, is known as the need for competence. When executing a task, a sense of will is part of the urge for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Because games are frequently played willingly, views of autonomy may be influenced by factors such as game design, content, and personal attractiveness. The drive to connect with and care about people is referred to as the need for relationships (Liu & Chen, 2006).

When these features are evaluated, it can be stated that the gaming experience is not a concept far from experiential marketing. The gaming experience is closely related to the sensory, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of experiential marketing.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The Relationship between Experiential Marketing and Online Games

Today, game mechanics are also used to create standardized service for customers. Marketing activities represent the most dynamic aspect of businesses. These activities have always tried to adapt to the world of consumers by adhering to the environmental factors it is in and even managed to direct consumer behavior. Every technological, cultural, and social change changed the perception of marketing activities and forced marketing managers to explore new areas to increase the return on investment.

Within the scope of modern marketing, it is seen that several new approaches have started to be used in marketing activities, especially with the digital transformation in marketing. Today, with the increase observed in gaming activities in general, it is seen that marketing has turned to game applications (Consalvo, 2006).

The fact that technological developments allow individuals to have more than one device with which they can access the internet, social media, and various digital applications contribute to the increasing trend of individuals' interest in games and the continuity of this process.

Today, games have become applicable to each of different platforms such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, and even smart televisions. This has made it possible to implement activities carried out using gaming applications in a total area. Online games have not only been popular with users but have also managed to create a market for viewers. Online games host millions of users from different regions around the world to establish virtual connections and friendships. For this reason, it is considered both an important recreational activity (Trepte et al., 2012) and the most popular entertainment application in the virtual world (Chen, 2010).

Gaming activities such as gamification, advergame, in-game ads, product placement, or AR/VR games used by businesses in marketing activities are marketing activities that can be carried out simultaneously with separate applications for each of the devices owned by individuals or between devices. In particular, the fact that there are players with different characteristics in terms of demographic factors also increases the impact of the games. For this reason, games and other gaming activities are considered strategic tools for businesses to achieve their goals.

There are several reasons why businesses use the game theme in their marketing activities. These reasons are; the ability of businesses to interact directly with the target audience, to have the opportunity to answer any question or share managed about the brand, to announce new tasks and awards created for users within the framework of the marketing strategy, and to make the interaction more effective and enjoyable.

It can also enable many activities such as completing the tasks given in the game, rewarding and appreciating the consumers who enter the game ranking in competitions and similar events and allowing the target audience to experience the feeling of competition and excitement. Therefore, such enjoyable activities make it possible for consumers to tag their close friends on their social media accounts and to announce them on their own volition.

Players' experiences are essential for marketing activities. The locations in the games consist of real cities or are designed with inspiration from these cities. Again, items such as cars, equipment, food, and prizes used in the game are in-game items. Especially when product placement activities are used in games, players will encounter certain brands according to the game's content as long as they stay in the game. To give an example of constantly encountering brands during the gaming experience, when the player is hungry, he eats a hamburger from X brand fast food or if he wants to escape from someone, he runs away with his Y brand running shoes. This allows players to have a virtual experience with brands. This virtual experience affects consumers' attitudes towards the brand and their intention to purchase the brand, especially with the increase in the number of mobile devices, mobile games that have become mobile and can be played online and offline increase the playing time of consumers. Therefore, the marketing elements placed in the game, whether in the form of in-game product placement or in-game advertisements, are in constant interaction with consumers (Oğuz et al., 2021).

Also, consumers pay more attention to messages from brands they are interested in. Therefore, one of the most important motivations to reach consumers through games is to ensure that consumers show interest in the brands in the game by triggering the entertainment experience they experience while playing games. Another motivation can be explained as reducing consumers' resistance to advertising by integrating creative advertising content into games (Mccoy et al., 2004).

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The way a player perceives a given ad can influence their thoughts toward advertising. Consumers' gaming experiences have a big influence on how they react to ads (Mehta, 2000).

The Flow Theory

When the concepts of game experience and experiential marketing and their relationship are mentioned, it is essential to mention the "flow theory", another subject related to these concepts.

Flow experience, proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1975), is accepted as a unique psychological phenomenon when individuals engage in activities such as sports, work, shopping, gaming, hobbies, and computer use. When the literature on flow experience is examined, it is seen that flow; can be attributed to electronic commerce applications, online stores, mobile television applications improving learning performance, and other online applications (Koufaris, 2002; Jiang & Benbasat, 2004; Zhou, 2013; Yen & Lin, 2020). Flow experience is also defined as an optimal experience that enables the development of desired behavior towards games (Liu, 2017).

According to Kim et al. (2005), flow status is also used to measure the intention of online game users to continue such activities and their repetition power. The reason for this is that the flow experience is an experience that enables users to get rid of external pressures as well as time and other interests when they are cognitively immersed in the game (Chen, 2007).

Players add value to games based on whether they stream online games or not. Thus, an actor who experiences the flow tends to repeat the activity he has performed before (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). From this point of view, the flow experience can be expressed as the experience that enables the development of the desired behavior toward online games (Kim et al., 2005; Liu, 2017). It is thought that the streaming experience provides positive outcomes as it causes the desired behaviors towards specific digital technology to be exhibited

Game-Based Experiential Marketing Applications

As mentioned above, the gaming experience is closely related to experiential marketing in many ways. Therefore, it can be said that there are some game-based marketing applications that can be used by businesses as a marketing tool to provide consumers with an unforgettable experience. When Businesses use games as a marketing tool, they use games mainly as part of their promotion strategies.

Businesses that want to create an experience for consumers through games try to reach consumers with different advertising strategies. Advertising strategies realized through digital games accept advertising as a source of income. In-game ads and product placement, gamification, and advertising games are advertising strategies that businesses use by integrating games. Experiential marketing practices with game content can be grouped under five headings. These are; in-game advertisements, product placement in games, advergame, gamification, AR-VR in Games applications.

In-Game Advertisements

Games have become the new advertising medium. The pandemic has also affected the advertising strategy of many brands. Delivering location-based push notifications or mobile ads is became more important than ever.

In-game advertisements are defined as “placing a brand in games, usually in the form of outdoor, banner or sponsor advertisements in games” (Chang et al., 2010). The gradual diversification and differentiation of games have enabled in-game advertisements to be integrated into the games in various forms, not just in the form of outdoor, poster, or sponsor advertisements, as stated above. For example, in-game advertisements can be placed in games as dynamic live content or as real-time viral messages.

According to a study by AdInMo, there are two popular types of in-game ads. The first of these; Full-screen ads that appear between levels and events and cover the app’s interface, and the latter are ads that reward users for watching full-screen ads in exchange for an in-app reward. The mobile application market is growing day by day. AppsFlyer research spent \$74.6 billion worldwide on mobile app marketers driving users to install mobile apps in 2020. As the sector grows, business models related to the sector also diversify. More than 46 percent of mobile game developers state that in-game advertising is a new and vital monetization platform. Six out of ten mobile game players (62%) regularly engage with a video ad for in-game rewards. According to the research, one-third (34%) of gamers say that a rewarded video ad is the app most likely to prompt in-game purchases, compared to 11% who prefer static interstitials (Polat, 2021).

Rewarded videos are the most well-known technique for monetizing in-app ads. Unlike other ad formats, rewarded videos offer players some type of advantage or reward, making them attractive to players. Hybrid monetization models, an approach that combines in-app purchases, in-app ads, and subscriptions, have also become popular payment methods in many game genres. Therefore, businesses can develop target audience-based advertising strategies by taking advantage of such in-game ads.

According to Ha & McCann (2008), exposure to too many advertisements due to advances in advertising technology has begun to increase the irritability of advertisements. So, perceived in-game advertisements can affect a player’s attitude towards the in-game advertisement and the games (Tina & Buckner, 2006). Players who have a positive attitude towards in-game advertising find the ads fun and enjoyable (Eze & Lee, 2012).

Sometimes, in-game advertisements and product placement in games can be used interchangeably. The relationship between these two concepts is explained in the following chapters.

Product Placement in Games

Games are a new medium for advertisers who want to include their brands or products in the game. Like product placements in movies, game providers place brands’ products in games, allowing players to experience those products (Terlutter & Capella, 2013).

Sometimes, product placement and the concept of in-game advertising can be confused. While in-game product placement refers to placing products into games, the concept of in-game advertising can be expressed as placing advertisements in games (De la Hera Conde-Pumpido, 2021).

Product placement in digital games is a remarkable strategy because it provides players with the opportunity to interact with a product in its natural environment while at the same time implying that the product is validated when an actor or character uses the product in the game (Kuhn et al., 2002).

For example, if a character in the game drinks X brand of soft drink or drinks Y brand of coffee when thirsty, the player will also experience these brands. Similarly, driving a famous brand car in the game, staying in a famous hotel, or designing the product of a famous sneaker brand according to their wishes offers an unforgettable experience to the players. In some games, product placement and in-game advertisements are used together.

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Although the first examples of product placement applications started with the cinema sector, product placement applications, including all mass media, are seen in all areas of life over time. With the reflection of innovations in communication technologies on marketing and advertising activities, product placement activities, games Etc. It has become an innovative and creative promotional tool on digital platforms. Although product placement is known as an advertisement type, it has some differences compared to traditional advertisements. The ability of product placement applications to persuade the consumer is less noticeable than traditional advertisements (Chan et al., 2016). Product placement applications allow the target audience to stay focused on the broadcast flow, and while providing this, they use several inspiring emotions. These emotions are created by copywriters, editorial directors, or other creative professionals and become a means of bringing the messages desired by the brands to the audience (Liang et al., 2015).

The product placement strategy is a marketing strategy that will combine advertising and entertainment to position brands in the minds of consumers (Eagle & Dahl, 2018). The increasing interest in video games around the world has increased the strategies of brands to use video games as a way to approach consumers effectively and indirectly. Today, video games attract the attention of people of all ages, so when a product placement strategy is used in games, product placement studies suitable for different ages and target audiences can be done (Martí-Parreñoa et al., 2017).

Looking at the studies on product placement in games in the literature, it has been concluded that product placement in games has a positive effect on brand awareness and brand recall. It is seen that product placement activities in games include products from many sectors such as finance, insurance, real estate, automotive, and technology.

In particular, it is stated that large-sized product images are remembered more when product placement is carried out on outdoor billboards (Chaney et al., 2018).

The successful results of the product placement strategy have enabled more and more brands to incorporate this strategy into their marketing activities. Especially the growth experienced in the gaming industry, the fact that the games can be accessed either online or offline with the developing technologies, and the increasing duration of the players in the game make the gaming platforms suitable platforms for ironing. Product placements made in the game vary according to the type of product and can take place in different categories. Another reason why games are preferred for product placement strategy can be explained as interaction. Brands can reach and interact with their target audiences very quickly through games (Karaçor & Öztürk, 2021).

There are three common elements in the definitions of product placement in the literature. It is the use of existing brands in the product placement application. Product placers (advertisers or marketing managers) engage in an intentional activity to place products. It is the effect of product placement practices on the target audience. Businesses do product placement to present their products and raise awareness of the target audience (Nakıboğlu & Serin, 2016).

Three different strategies can be used for product placement applications. These strategies are; visual, verbal, and both verbal and visual product placement strategies (Argan et al., 2007). In visual product placement strategy, it is the presentation of a product, brand, logo, or another visual element to the screen without a verbal message, or auditory factor that will direct the focus of the target audience directly to the product or brand. Visual product placement can be described as the product itself or the image of the product brand (Mazıcı et al., 2017).

In the auditory and verbal placement strategy; it is possible to say the product or the brand of the product during the speech. Auditory product placement varies according to the situation in which the

product or brand is displayed, the repetition of the said expression, the tone of voice used, and the place and moment in the speech.

In the strategy where visual and audio product placement are used together, the product or brand is an element of the plot. The product is placed in an important moment in the event it is placed in (for example, during a level in the game or in an important scene of the movie). Or it is the type of placement of the product to create the characteristic features of a figure. In the visual and audio product placement application, visual and auditory elements are used. In the course of the event, the product is both shown and mentioned (Akıncı & Çakır, 2014).

Advergame

The term *advergame* relates to the delivery of advertising messages through electronic games and is defined as “the combination of the phrases advertisement and video game” (Grossman, 2005). *Advergames* are online games that are expressly designed to promote a brand or a product (Winkler & Buckner, 2006). *Advergames*, like other mobile games, are mainly casual games in which players are enticed to play for a short period of time. Product placement within commercial games, known as *in-game advertising*, can be distinguished from *advergames* (Redondo, 2012).

Advertisements with game content, also called *Advergame*, are one of the new applications produced in this field. The purpose of *Advergame*; is to provide consumers with a fun environment that is produced for today’s consumers, able to provide long exposure to advertisements, and motivate them to concentrate directly on the game and indirectly on the advertisement in the game.

Advergames are branded games specifically designed to achieve an advertising purpose. The contents of the prepared *advergames* are completely controlled by the advertisers. The point of this is that the entire experience in the game is designed to accommodate the advertising message (De la Hera Conde-Pumpido, 2021).

In-game ads and product placement are the main techniques used in *advergames* to achieve the advertising goal. However, in *advergames*, marketers can persuade players by manipulating other game elements such as the story of the game, characters, or rules. The reason for this situation is that the game played is basically designed for the advertisement of a brand. *Advergames* are participatory environments, so the communication process between brands and customers differs from the one-way communication process in traditional media, where the brand is the sender and a group of consumers is the receiver. In *advergames*, the communication process is two-way and the final result depends not only on the preferences of the players in the designed interaction but also on the personal interaction of the players with the game environment, their decisions that are not part of the designed interaction. Therefore, the interactive nature of digital games turns players into co-authors of advertising discourse. While playing an *advergame*, players interpret the non-repeatable message as a result of their performance during their gaming experience.

Three elements draw attention to the communication process of *advergames*. These are the brand that wants to convey the advertising message to the consumers, the platform was chosen to convey the advertising message (Game environment), and the players to whom the advertising message will be delivered, namely consumers. While the communication process between these three elements takes place, first of all, attention should be paid to the relationship between the brand and the consumer, that is, the player. There is a relationship between the brand and the consumer. The brand wants to convey an advertising message to consumers, and it conveys this message by using the game as a platform. In

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this process, the consumer, that is, the player, plays the advergame and tries to interpret the advertising message that the brand wants to convey to him. Thus, an interaction is created through the advergame played between the player, the consumer, and the brand. The brand must place the message it wants to place on an advergame in a way that is fully suitable for the game. Thus, by playing an advergame, players will both receive the advertising message and experience the brand. In this process, while the player makes his own choices in the game, he experiences an unrepeatably performance and gains experience. Therefore, the player's interpretation of the advertising message depends not only on his personal performance in-game but also on the way the advertising message is incorporated into the branded experience (De la Hera Conde-Pumpido, 2021).

According to traditional advertising forms, it can be said that advergames can create engagement more effectively. Also if the target audience consists of young consumers, advergames will be the best alternative to engage them. One of the reasons for this is that advergames are special online games that have special purposes and are created to promote brands (Cicchirillo & Mabry, 2016).

In recent years, mobile devices (smartphones and tablets), whose use is becoming almost compulsive among many people have also become an increasingly popular way to access advergames (Tuten & Ashley, 2016). To take advantage of mobility opportunities, marketers are creating mobile advergames to capture players' full attention anytime and anywhere.

Gamification

The "*psychological effect of using a successfully gamified service*" is referred to as a gamified experience (Eppmann et al., 2018). Gamified experiences are infused experiences that are also known as "*game-like*" (Hammedi et al., 2017) or "*game-filled*" (Leclercq et al., 2020; Wolf et al., 2020) experiences. Interactions between the user(s) and the gamified service co-create gamified experiences (Hogberg et al. 2019; Hamari et al., 2017; Huotari & Hamari, 2017). The ultimate purpose of providing gamified experiences from a business standpoint is to inspire "*firm-beneficial user behavior*" (Wolf et al., 2020). Customers' readiness to accept higher pricing and customer loyalty (Wolf et al., 2020) or customer engagement (Hogberg et al., 2019; Jang et al., 2018) are instances of such behavior.

Gamification is one of the newest trends in marketing activities to create a unique interaction with consumers. According to Deterding et al. (2011), gamification is "*the use of game design elements in non-game contexts*". The term gamification focuses on either the game design aspect of the experiential aspect, namely the game experience. From the perspective of experiential marketing, gamification emphasizes involving customers in different activities related to a product or brand by transforming the regular customer experience into a game experience (Eppmann et al., 2018).

Today, gamification is used in many fields and sectors. Businesses have started to benefit from gamification activities in many areas to increase both employee motivation and consumer motivation. Gamification has become an appropriate tool to create experiences such as entertainment, productivity, change, and performance increase. Gamification applications have been developed and used in areas such as marketing, public relations, advertising, employee performance, innovation, rehabilitation, work efficiency, resource and time management, and leadership (Connil & Karlsson, 2015; Juárez & Carballo, 2016; Mora et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2020; Hsiao & Tang, 2021; Windasari et al., 2021).

There are many reasons for using gamification in marketing activities. The most important of these can be explained as interaction. As online platforms have become the most important dynamic of interacting with consumers, gamification has become increasingly popular in creating consumer experiences

(Huotari & Hamari, 2017). Gamification can be used to retain consumers, involve them in innovation processes, create customer loyalty, trigger repeat purchase behavior, and create brand awareness and brand awareness. Gamification can be used to reach new generation consumers and influence their attitudes towards brands (Baiturova & Alagöz, 2017; Shang & Lin, 2013). Gamification has begun to be used as an effective tool to attract both current and potential customers to the business (Xu et al., 2013).

Advertisements' intrusiveness has the potential to affect people's goals. Customers may interpret pop-up advertising as an ad intervention, especially when they appear in the middle of consumers' online games. People may react badly to ads they see when marketers forcibly prohibit them from viewing the material they desire with ads or only enable them to close a certain ad after a certain amount of time has passed owing to a perceived lack of control (Ha & McCann, 2008). The most important effect on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral avoidance behavior, according to Seyedghorban et al. (2016), was the perceived goal barrier. Therefore, instead of constantly exposing consumers to advertisements, the presentation of gamified advertising content about brands can reduce consumers' perceived discomfort and negative attitudes toward advertisements (De Pelsmacker et al., 2019; Varnali et al., 2012).

When the relationship between experiential marketing and gamification is examined, it is seen that three basic elements come to the fore. These elements are the emotional bond developed with the brand, brand loyalty, and brand awareness (Kotler & Keller, 2009; Lucassen & Jansen, 2014; Rappaport, 2007). The presence of these three elements in marketing combines marketing and gamification. The use of gamification applications in marketing facilitates the achievement of marketing goals and ensures permanence in these goals. Some technologies, such as mobile applications, cloud data programs, Web 2.0, and augmented reality, are affecting businesses to use gamification applications in their marketing activities. With the developing technologies and digital transformation, e-commerce gains momentum, making gamification an option for reaching consumers.

Any consumer's experience gained through gamification is extremely important to the business because any customer's experience with gamified content can affect the value of the interaction for other participating customers (Grove & Fisk, 1997).

Customers' willingness and ability to participate in information seeking and information sharing is necessary to create value for them (Delpechitre et al., 2018). Therefore, it has become extremely important for businesses to access information related to consumers to understand their purchasing behavior. When the studies in the literature are examined, it is stated that gamified experiences to affect consumer behavior are very successful in providing high levels of participation (Kuo & Chuang, 2016).

And when evaluated in terms of creating experiential value for customers, it can be said that the concept of gamification is attracting more and more attention (Eppmann et al., 2018; Hammedi et al., 2017).

Also, according to the literature, gamification makes it easier to reach potential customers and establish bonds with them (Xi & Hamari, 2019). Consumers' gaming experience also affects product acceptability and gamified advertisements affect consumers' purchase intention (Müller-Stewens et al., 2017). Gamified interfaces affect the brand and consumers (Berger et al., 2018).

VR-AR in Games

The concepts of AR and virtual reality, which can also be expressed as the different and latest forms of virtual reality (Virtual Reality) or virtual environment (Virtual Environment), can often be confused with each other. In virtual reality or virtual environment, real-world objects are transferred to a digital environment as 3D and similar by computer, while in AR it is the opposite. Data/objects prepared in

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a digital environment in AG are transferred to the real world, on a real-world image. Thus, users can interact simultaneously in the real world by using the data of the virtual world.

AR technology, which is formed by integrating virtual and real objects and ensures the reinforcement of reality, enables users to create a participatory experience and increases the effect of the experience by using technologies that appeal to different senses such as movement, watching, touching, smelling, and sound (Stapleton & Hughes, 2006). Johnson et al. (2011), emphasize that AR has an important potential for experiencing research and discovery experiences, while Dunleavy et al., (2009) emphasize that AR technology is one of the most important features of providing an environment that is ready for use anytime, anywhere. Liao & Humphreys (2014), similarly stated that AR technologies are an extremely convenient platform for content creation. Therefore, AR technologies have become extremely suitable tools for experiential marketing activities (Küçüksaraç & Sayımer, 2016).

Technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality have also increased the number of experiences and interactions people can have via the internet. One of these interactions is the interaction that takes place through online games. Online games have not only been popular with users but have also managed to create a market for viewers. The most important reason for this is that online games are also considered within the e-sports genre. With the developments in the gaming industry, it has been observed that the interest of the players who want to transform their virtual experience into a real experience has increased in purchasing a holiday. The meeting of virtual reality and augmented reality technologies, which have become widespread especially in recent years, with both games and tourism has made the effects of online games on tourism interesting (Lacka, 2020; Yung & Khoo-Lattimore 2020).

A growing number of businesses on digital platforms have started using VR marketing applications such as branded VR games to promote their businesses (Boyd & Koles, 2019). VR enriches consumer experiences when integrated into marketing activities. This makes the marketing activities of the enterprises more effective. When VR and marketing are combined, it can be stated that the consumer experience is positively affected.

When the studies in the literature are examined, it is believed that virtual reality is an ideal platform for experiential marketing (Loureiro et al., 2019). The most important reason for this is that its technological developments also improve consumer experiences. VR marketing affects consumer behavior. Therefore, games with VR content, gamification applications, or advergames can positively affect consumer experiences and be beneficial for the digital marketing strategies of businesses. Due to technological developments, both the quality of virtual products and the interfaces that allow interaction with virtual products have changed significantly in the last two decades. Currently, photorealistic virtual products are relatively easier to integrate into VR applications than before, allowing players to interact with a hyper-realistic virtual model of a product (Petit et al., 2019). Also, desktop-based VR works allow consumers to interact with virtual products using a keyboard or computer mouse to rotate the products, while HMD (head-mounted display) VR allows consumers to pick up products and view them from different angles. When this type of interaction with a VR app or game is created using two hand controllers, it simulates a real-world interaction with a product and consumers get a much better experience this way. For example, consumers can gain experiences such as seeing products from a 360-degree angle, interacting with products in an interactive way, and seeing how products will look in space.

Augmented Reality (AR) applications seem to come to the fore in new technological experiences where human-vehicle interaction is gradually increasing. AR is defined as “a new generation technology in which simultaneous interaction is created between objects of both types by connecting the real world and the virtual world” (Azuma, 1997). AR applications can be used in many sectors (such as art, health,

architecture, education, and marketing) and through different mobile devices. AR, which strengthens and supports reality, provides the opportunity to create a participatory experience by incorporating olfactory or tactile information into the perceptions of real-world users, as well as transferring digital objects to the real world. Therefore, in recent years, it is seen that it has come to the forefront as an experiential marketing tool by brands.

AR technology can offer different experiential values to consumers in experiential marketing practices. In these experiences, which are carried out independently of time and place, consumers can get information about the product, experience the product, and have a pleasant time with the games, competitions, and similar entertainment elements offered by the application, by using this technology on the product itself, its advertisement or another platform connected with the product, before purchasing it. And can share this activity on platforms such as social media and buy the product.

In the research, it has been concluded that the experiential marketing campaigns carried out with AR affect the brand experiences. The creative contents of AR applications affect the user experience and the space experiences of the users.

AR applications are used in museums, restaurants, stores, advertising, and tourism areas to create experiences for people. Being able to visit museums in another country from one end of the world offers a unique experience to users. Likewise, they have the opportunity to see how the products of textile brands or optical brands stand on them. In the same way, applications prepared for furniture brands or retailers allow them to experience how furniture or other items will look in spaces. Another example can be given from the food and beverage industry. With the AR application in the restaurant's food menu, customers can access the videos of the dishes, the comments of those who have tried that food before, and share information about the food or the restaurant on social media. Similarly, a famous cosmetics brand gives users the opportunity to try 10 different make-ups in 10 seconds with the Makeup Genius AR application, a real-time make-up simulator. AR, which strengthens and supports reality, provides the opportunity to create a participatory experience by incorporating olfactory or tactile information into the perceptions of real-world users, as well as transferring digital objects to the real world.

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Marketers aim to create a positive brand perception and establish an interactive interaction with AR marketing applications. Sometimes, the products themselves can turn into AR channels. Brands make products interactive by turning their product packaging into AR applications (Küçükşaraç & Sayımer, 2016).

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The developments in communication technologies, the mobile internet, the increase in the use of smart phones and the fact that consumers spend most of their time online affect the digital transformation of marketing activities. Digital marketing activities take place in a more dynamic competitive environment, and since the speed of consumers' access to information is much faster than in the traditional marketing environment, businesses aim to provide consumers with a unique shopping experience on digital platforms as well as in the physical environment. In this direction, businesses benefit from a number of interactive, innovative and creative marketing tools in their digital marketing activities. Among these tools, the new and creative ones can be defined as game-based experiential marketing applications.

Although the basis of businesses starting to benefit from game-based experiential marketing applications is to create unforgettable online experiences for consumers, the fact that the gaming industry has become an increasingly rising sector, the increase in online shopping rates and the fact that more and more people are playing games with the pandemic period, also play a role in the marketing activities of businesses. Influences the start of benefiting from experiential marketing tools.

The fact that game experience and game-based marketing activities provide interactive, fun, social, cognitive and physical experiences to consumers positively affects purchase rates, brand awareness, brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. From this point of view, the suggestions that this book section will offer to businesses can be listed as follows;

When game-based experiential marketing applications are brought together with the right content and the right target audience, it will be beneficial for achieving successful results in marketing campaigns.

Innovative and creative marketing tools combined with gaming experience will be effective in reaching and interacting with consumers with different demographics.

Game-based experiential marketing applications take different forms such as advergame, gamification, in-game advertising, AR-VR games, so businesses that produce different goods or services and have different target audiences can organize different campaigns according to their target audience characteristics.

Although some of the game-based experiential marketing applications (such as product placement) are used for traditional marketing activities, these applications will be more effective as alternative marketing tools for businesses that focus on digital marketing.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Along with the technological developments experienced, marketing activities are also undergoing a digital transformation, and it is predicted that this process will continue in the coming periods. In order to respond to the changing purchasing behavior of online consumers, digital marketing activities need to be designed with a focus on more dynamic, interactive, and creative experiences. Attention should be paid to the content, target audience, and platform compatibility on digital platforms. Therefore, the question of which game-based experiential marketing application is more suitable for which platform and target audience can be started. Researchers considering working on this subject in the future can investigate the effectiveness of game-based experiential marketing practices in terms of different sectors and consumer groups. The effects of game-based experiential marketing practices can be examined in terms of different generations.

CONCLUSION

Experiential marketing is one of the marketing activities that businesses care about reaching and interacting with consumers for long-term sustainable communication. Especially the technological changes in communication technologies, the internet and social media platforms that have emerged with the internet allow consumers to experience new experiences. Consumers' demand that the products they buy include experiences that will create added value for them during the purchasing process brings about the use of new marketing tools while reaching consumers. Today, with the developing technologies and digital transformation, businesses have started to carry out their marketing activities in the virtual environment. One of the sectors on the rise with the digital transformation is the game sector. Integrating games into their marketing activities is one of the newest strategies marketing managers are starting to leverage in experiential marketing. Based on this, this part of the book has been determined as an examination of the online gaming experience and game-based applications used in experiential marketing from the perspective of experiential marketing. In this section, online games are discussed in a broad framework and the online gaming experience is analyzed in terms of marketing activities. Also, game-based applications used in marketing activities are mentioned. As mentioned in this section, game-based marketing applications (in-game-advertising, advergame, product placement, gamification, and VR/VR) are used to reach consumers who spend most of their time in virtual environments, to provide them with unforgettable experiences, to create brand awareness and brand loyalty, and to trigger purchasing. AR games) have become effective marketing tools. New and creative game content marketing practices can provide significant competitive advantages to businesses as they create awareness and create positive attitudes in consumers.

When the studies in the literature on the relationship between gaming experience and experiential marketing and the reports on game trends are examined, it is seen that games and gamification activities are more effective in reaching consumers than traditional marketing and other digital marketing activities.

Games have become one of the most popular internet activities and this trend is expected to be a rising trend globally (Lenhart et al., 2008). It is stated that the game market will reach more than 268 billion dollars by 2025 (WePC, 2022). And the most popular game category is the mobile games Mordor Intelligence (2021).

Online games are generally games that allow users to daydream and have fun. Online games eliminate borders and enable communication between people from all over the world (Lee, 2009). Online games are also in demand by people of all ages and places (Liao et al., 2020).

The fact that consumers with different demographic characteristics show such interest in games increases the brand awareness and purchase intention of consumers when reaching consumers with game content marketing practices (Oğuz et al., 2021; Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2018).

It has been concluded that the ease of use, accessibility, playability, and functional features of online games also affect brand loyalty. From this point of view, it can be said that businesses that want to take advantage of experiential marketing applications with game content can achieve successful campaign results when they determine the right content for the right target audience.

In addition to the advantages of experiential marketing applications with game content, there may also be some disadvantages.

Some of the dangers of online games, in general, should be carefully considered by businesses that want to use them as a marketing tool. Problems such as the fact that some of the online games are phishing sites, contain hidden payments, have various malicious spam content, and share personal information with third parties can trigger people to form negative attitudes towards online games. These negative attitudes can also negatively affect the marketing campaigns of businesses that want to reach consumers and create interaction through games.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Advergame: A form of entertainment-oriented advertising that combines advertising and game concepts, includes brands or logos embedded in games, and the player can access these marketing tools through businesses' web sites or applications.

AR-VR Games: The way online games are played with virtual and/or augmented reality (VR/AR) equipment.

Gamification: Using game design elements, gameplay mechanics, aesthetics, and game thinking to accomplish various purposes.

Product Placement: It is the process of integrating branded products or services into entertainment programs such as movies and games in a non-commercial way, with the aim of influencing the target audience in order to generate commercial returns.

Chapter 20

Gamers and Customer Engagement

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ABSTRACT

Video games have become one of the most prominent leisure tools in today's society. As individuals with an intense association with games, they expect a game-like experience in shopping or other areas. Hence, brands face a "gamer consumer" audience. Also, for the long-standing customer-brand relationship, the importance of customer engagement is increasing; gamification offers an excellent opportunity to involve consumers in the activities of the brand. The contribution of gamification to marketing efforts is highlighted in two forms: the first is that it provides customers gameful experience in non-gaming environments, and second, it encourages engagement by integrating game elements into non-game areas. In this chapter, it is theoretically explained how customer engagement in gamification occurs in two dimensions over a proposed model. Then, through successful marketing gamification examples (Adidas, Alipay, MINI, the Karl Lagerfeld, Subway), it is presented how customers are connected to both the gamified system and marketing purposes.

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, we have been witnessing the continuous spread of gaming systems. The proliferation of hedonic and entertainment-based systems such as games has affected other systems (such as utilitarian systems) and has brought many non-entertainment systems to be presented in a hedonic way. In parallel with the development of the gaming world, naturally, we have been facing an ever-growing audience of gamers over the years, as the internet and mobile technology have revolutionized the development of games and game-related areas. Currently, digital games have become mainstream entertainment, enjoyed by people from all demographic groups (Koivisto & Hamari, 2019: 191).

Moreover, the change in consumer habits has also affected consumer-brand relationships, therefore the marketing communication activities of brands. Changing media consumption habits (e.g., using digital

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tools instead of traditional media tools) requires consumers to be reached using new media tools. The next generation of consumers are individuals who are more familiar with games and have daily active player IDs: such consumers think like players and expect a game-like experience from their daily activities; thus, their consumption habits resemble games (Carstens & Beck, 2005). That is brands that face an audience of gamers have the impetus to approach the consumer relationship as a game.

Over the past decade, many utilitarian or entertainment-free information systems have been attempting to create game-like structures through articulated elements of games. Gamification is one of the most popular and widespread applications of this development in recent years. Information systems or technology are designed to meet some goals; for example, a shopping website should mediate the online sale of products, while a booking website should help make a reservation. Gamification turns these systems into a more entertaining structure to fulfill business goals (whether marketing, trade, education, etc.). Gamification transforms these systems into highly engaged platforms with game elements, while at the same time equipping them with a utilitarian structure that collects usage data in the background and meets certain objectives.

On the other hand, over the past two decades, there has been an emphasis among managers and researchers that the role of customers in their relationship with the brand either has changed or needs to change (Kotler et al., 2017; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). This approach, which has the effect of a relational marketing approach, focuses on establishing a long-term relationship with consumers in all areas. The active engagement of customers has a significant impact on the participation of customers within the activities of the brand, as well as in defending the brand or maintaining a continuous relationship with the brand. The main purpose of customer engagement (CE) is to create communities around the brand where customers are actively integrated through sales and non-sales activities; in this context, customer/brand engagement, in parallel with gamification, is one of the issues that managers and researchers have focused on in recent years.

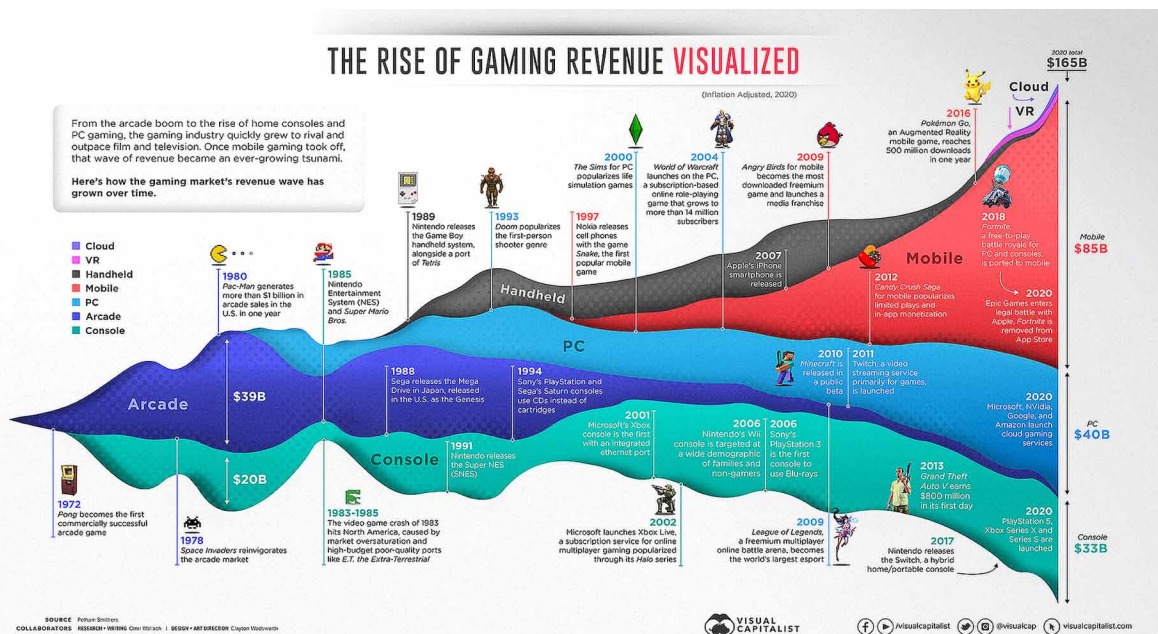
The most important feature of games is that individuals are actively engaged in a voluntary and enjoyable experience (Huizinga, 1980; Gosling & Crawford, 2011). Therefore, gamification can be an appropriate tool to increase CE. In this respect, the role of gamification in marketing communication is to transfer game mechanics and solutions from games to the daily lives of targeted customer groups, creating more brand-loyal and engaged customers who are motivated towards a high and specific purpose-oriented behavior. However, while gamification provides a playful experience, at the same time gamified design should also help achieve set goals, solve problems, and complete tasks (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011; Huotari & Hamari, 2012). Therefore, it can be reasoned that gamification features engagement in a two-dimensional manner.

The first dimension of engagement in gamification is based on game characteristics. Customers engage in something because they enjoy the process and having a game-like experience. The second dimension distinguishes gamification from games: this form of engagement includes task-oriented engagement as opposed to purely “pleasure”-oriented engagement. In short, CE in gamification refers to achieving functional (e.g., marketing, education, etc.) goals through an enjoyable experience. In light of this summary, the relationship between gamified systems and CE in the field of marketing is introduced in this chapter. The conceptual structure of gamification is first explained, then CE, and the dimensions of these two structures are discussed.

BACKGROUND

The spread of games to large market segments in various ways such as mobile phones and computers (Newzoo, 2020) has made games an important activity where individuals can enjoy their free time (Gosling & Crawford, 2011: 150). Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic has imposed some restrictions on the socialization of individuals. This period has accelerated the spread of games in recent times. However, contrary to common belief, games often serve as a means of socialization, rather than as individuals developing asocial behavior. The need for socialization is one of the main reasons behind the motivation of many players to play games: players establish friendships, get involved in communities, and socialize through online games (Lufkin, 2022).

Figure 1. The rise of gaming economy (visualcapitalist.com, 2021)



Games serve as a point of reference that most people are familiar with. It can be said that games are the first form of communication, as in fact they are one of the first experiences we have in our lives. When a person is firstborn, they communicate with their environment through the medium of games, even before their language skills have developed; in other words, they begin learning about the process of socialization through games. It is for this reason that Huizinga (1980) defines man as “homo Ludens” instead of “homo sapiens”, seeing man as primarily a player instead of a thinking being. In this sense, although technology has had a significant impact on the development of the game industry today as well as the increase in the playing times of individuals, the main reason for its development is the deep experiences that humanity has gained over time while adapting to these developments. Although digital technologies are the triggers in these developments, the main factor that increases interest in games is people’s fundamental desire to play games rather than the instrumental aspect of technology.

Hence, the spread of games is accelerated when some factors such as technology, economy, and culture provide a suitable basis. As a result of these developments, the audience of players has been growing since the 1970s. In addition, despite what is believed by many, games are now the most common leisure activity of all demographic structures, rather than being an activity solely for young people or children. This is reflected in data, as close to 80% of those who play games in the United States are over the age of 18, while the proportion of players aged 50 and over is 21%. Moreover, there is no big difference between the genders of the players, and the distribution of players between men and women seems equal (Clement, 2020). The growth of this group does not only affect the expansion of the game market, as the rise of player groups also increases the impact of a gaming approach in all other areas as well. The new generation of player individuals has very different ways of doing business and thinking compared either to the groups before them or the groups that don't play games. The main variable that causes this difference is that these individuals play more games than others (Carstens & Beck, 2005; Yee, 2006).

According to Carstens and Beck (2005: 22), and supported by previous research, individuals who play video games develop different ways of connecting to others than those who do not. That is, an identity is formed in which video games influence the thinking and behavior of generations who grew up in gaming culture in areas such as work, education, and shopping. For example, the most important goal of those who play games, as opposed to those who play less, is to win in business or activity. In this case, competition is perceived as the natural law of life. They also do not necessarily try only a single method to win, an approach which comes from the main features of games, as winning in games often includes trying different ways to progress and competing main features.

From a marketing point of view, gamers treat the consumption process as a game, go shopping like a player, and ultimately expect a game-like experience from consumption. With the hedonic consumption approach, which has gained prevalence in the marketing field since the 1980s, the expectations of gamer consumers are considered within the context of a game-like environment, in which gamers overcome obstacles while achieving goals when shopping, competing, and struggling, resulting in a sense of success. For example, they may be more willing to search for the best product or priced product by searching for the solution to a challenge. They may also struggle more with being able to purchase restricted products offered in campaigns. What is expected as a result of all of these consumption activities is the feeling of achievement, thereby creating a pleasant experience. Therefore, beyond mere hedonic consumption, we can talk about a form of consumption in which rational purposes are reached through a playful experience. Simply put, gamer consumers achieve their rational goals while turning consumption into a fun space like a game. Yee (2006) emphasizes that a similar development has occurred in the working environment: the irony, in this case, is that players perceive the game as more serious, and see the job as more playful. As with shopping, serious activities themselves turn into a game; these developments naturally lead companies to take an interest in games, and so shape many of their activities around game-based design. Therefore, although gamification is a relatively new concept, it has become a widely used term in recent years.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Gamification

Gamification is simply the integration of game elements into a non-game area. In this way, it is aimed to provide an enjoyable experience for individuals from games in non-game areas. Frequently cited in the gamification literature, Deterding et al. explain the foundation of gamification as the use of game mechanics, with which a game-like gamification system is created using game elements, designs, and, technologies within a non-game field. However, according to many authors, gamification is not only integrating game elements such as points or badges into a non-game area but also designing new systems with a gamified approach or transforming existing systems (Huotari & Hamari, 2012). For a system to be transformed into a game-like structure, it is not enough to simply add game mechanics, rather all of the content and structure must be designed like a game.

The general purpose of gamification is to bring individuals to utilitarian goals supported by gaming behaviors (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011), by providing a state of deep concentration or flow (Hamari et al., 2016), thus increasing the user's engagement level (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). That is to say that gamification has a hedonic motivational dimension from games. Therefore, game thinking can be used in non-gaming areas to enable individuals to engage in business goals and improve their ability to deal with problems. (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011). Moreover, in the context of "relational marketing", game design and thinking can be used to increase the overall value creation of users. Designed with a gaming approach in mind, these systems can be described as gamified areas that are not games but still deliver gaming experiences. In this approach, any content or application is treated and designed from the perspective of a game designer. This allows content to be created that, while not being a game, can still provide a game-like experience. For example, Nike+ is a fitness tracker application that shows users how close they are to their daily goals; when they reach a goal or when they break a streak, it notifies them and celebrates. In this example, users are also experiencing gaming while playing sports. With this approach, individuals participate in the enjoyable experience of the game while at the same time remaining committed to their utilitarian (doing sports) goals and focusing on completing them.

Gamification and Game Elements

The basis for gamified systems to provide an enjoyable experience or increase user engagement is based on game features. The game can be interpreted as a structure in which many pieces come together and the player experiences it as a whole. In the game literature, the parts that make up the game structure are often defined as game elements. For example, these could be the game elements of the "Age of Empires" strategy game: to raise soldiers to conquer new places within the limits (rules) set in the game to achieve the outcome. The final objective is to pass certain thresholds (levels) to win the game. Yet some elements are used only as objects in this system (soldiers, cities, etc.), there are elements of the game (points, levels, goals, etc.) that ensure the continuity of the system.

Although unlike games themselves, gamification is not a closed system, since users get real-life or physical output beyond gaming when getting involved in gamified content. A hybrid structure is created by applying game elements to a non-game area: in this structure, users experience the game and carry out their non-game objectives, and when participating with game elements, they overcome non-game problems. For example, in a gamified education program, students strive to earn points, which can be

perceived as a game. However, answering questions or watching educational videos to earn points means an experience that is not a game, but is rather constructed to resemble a game (See Fig. Khan Academy Energy Points).

Figure 2. Khan academy energy points



Key Features of Gamification

Gamification reflects many features of games. Gamification uses the logic and mechanics of games (e.g., scores, levels, leaderboards, badges, contests, challenges, quests) to ensure user engagement and solve problems for different business objectives (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011). Based on a wide range of academic literature, we can talk about three basic aspects of gamification in the context of this study:

1. Gamification is based on a game system
2. Gamification provides a gameful experience
3. Gamification motivates consumers in a certain direction

Gaming Aspect of Gamification

When we gamify any structure, as the basic structure and design consist of game elements, the content of the application changes. For example, after the development of a shopping site with game mechanics, the related structure is neither a game nor a traditional shopping experience; rather, it represents a hybrid system between game and shopping experience.

There are two different ways to create gamified applications: to create games for non-entertainment environments and purposes and to transform existing systems into games. Whether the game is included

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in the existing system, modified and enriched based on the game or the system itself becomes a game, the new situations are described by the concept of “gamification” (Seaborn & Fels, 2015: 17–18).

The Experiential Aspect of Gamification

A gamification system should give individuals a game-like experience. In this way, they are expected to engage more in non-game content. The game-like experience manifests itself in the form of individuals creating positive psychological situations. For example, individuals having fun, experiencing a sense of achievement, or engaging in social interaction in gamification can be examples of these situations. Users can have a game-like experience as a result of interacting with game elements or motivational tools in the game. By earning a badge, the user can experience a sense of achievement or gain a different status among other users by rising on the leaderboard in a gamified setting. All outputs occur when the game element/motivation tools used because of the game-like design reveal the psychological states of the users (Deterding et al., 2011; Werbach & Hunter, 2012; Hamari & Koivisto, 2015).

The Motivational Aspect of Gamification

It is believed that there is a motivational aspect to the game. Therefore, the authors who explain gamification are often focused on how gamification drives the behavior of individuals (Werbach & Hunter, 2012; Kapp, 2014; Hamari & Koivisto, 2015). The main purpose of gamification is to influence people to effect a change in behavior in a certain direction or to seek to attract their attention (Werbach & Hunter, 2012: 45). Gamified systems direct and motivate users to engage in any activity, such as exercising, choosing destinations, or learning, towards the behavior targeted by the relevant system (Sigala, 2015; Tobon et al., 2020).

Use of Gamification in the Marketing Field

Although games have been used in education for many years, their use in the field of marketing is a relatively new approach. The fact that games provide a fun experience and encourage consumers to engage in content has encouraged organizations to use branded game applications more frequently. This trend, which started with applications such as Advergames, manifests itself in various forms, especially gamification today. Before serious games like Advergames, game mechanics were often used in marketing loyalty or reward programs. In such programs, customers can earn points through the products and services they purchase. Customers can then spend the points they earn or get special status memberships according to their spending. Such programs, in a sense, represent a simple level of gamification.

Marketing Outcomes of Gamification

The contribution of gamification to consumer relations can be summarized in two ways. First, gamification has had an impact on consumer brand experience as a result of consumer contributions to brand interaction. Additionally, the engagement of customers who have a pleasant experience is expected to be high (Zichermann & Linder, 2010; Werbach & Hunter, 2012). Secondly, it can be classified as the results of a gamified application in the brand-customer relationship. These results include desirable marketing purposes such as loyalty, WOM, or re-purchase (Hofacker et al., 2016). Since 2010, there has been a lot

of research on gamification, and in general, gamification has proven to be an effective way to improve customer loyalty, CE, and brand relationships (Koivisto & Hamari, 2019).

Gamification is largely intended to transform customer consumption or brand interaction into a pleasant and playful experience (Deterding et al., 2011; Huotari & Hamari, 2012). Explaining this experience through the concept of engagement can be useful. Gamification can increase the engagement of customers in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects (Tobon et al., 2020). A gaming experience can enable customers to focus more on the activities of brands, gain more energy and be emotionally satisfied. On the other hand, a brand experience similar to games can also offer a behavioral contribution that provides continuity, such as games. Customers who receive a positive brand experience can also have positive attitudes towards the brand. In this sense, the enjoyment of games, the sense of accomplishment, competition, or the flow situation can positively affect the attitude of consumers towards the brand. Individuals with positive attitudes are expected to be loyal to the brand.

Variables Influencing Marketing Efforts in Gamification

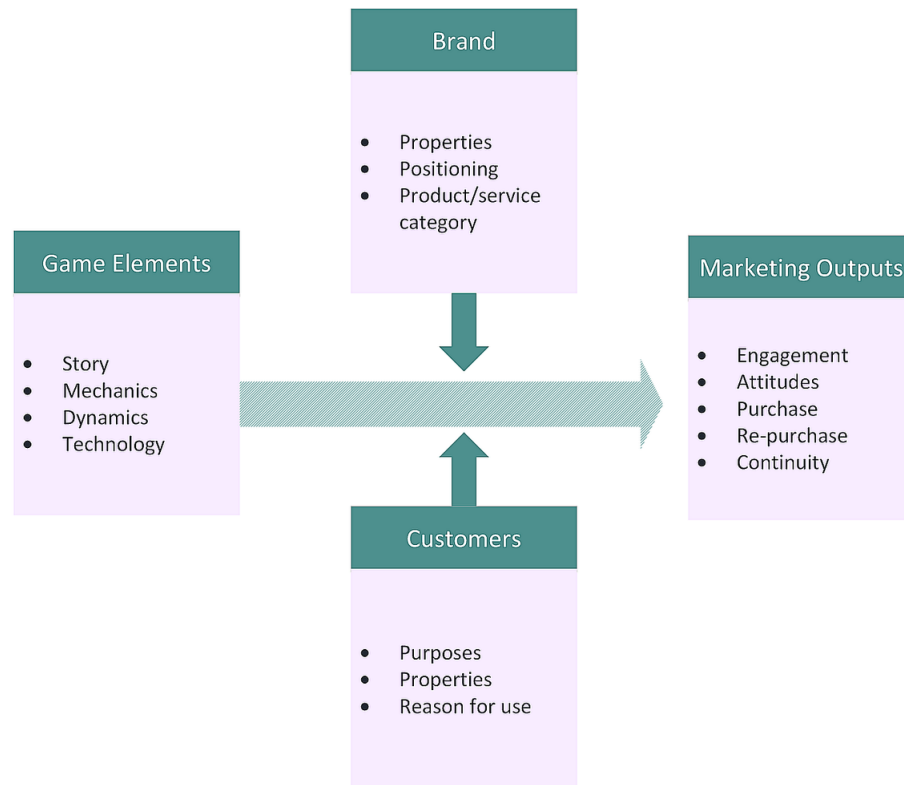
There are three key variables (See Fig. 2) that affect the contribution of gamification to marketing efforts (Loyalty, WOM, purchasing, etc.). The first and most important is the game design of gamification. For any gamification application to be successful, it must provide a gameful engagement in the first stage. For this, game mechanics and design must attract the attention of consumers and encourage them to foster an active engagement. Elements such as levels, badges, or avatars can encourage users to be constantly involved in the gamification system and have a pleasant experience. As will be explained later, to have a gaming experience and the resulting engagement, gamification must above all be enjoyable.

Secondly, the fact that the brand or organization integrates the gamification system into programs such as sales and customer service affect the success of gamification. The data obtained from the gamification platform should also be used for marketing purposes. Consumers should be able to interact with physical and other non-gaming elements while using the gamification system; for example, they should purchase products, share the brand's messages, comment on products and services, or directly contribute to the development of the brand.

Thirdly, the purpose for which customers use gamification can increase its effectiveness. Moreover, the story of gamification or the design used should be able to attract the customer's attention. Like in a game, consumers' gaming preferences can affect their engagement, therefore their marketing outcomes. In addition, a consumer community that can be created through gamification is vital in spreading marketing goals through users.

Gamers and Customer Engagement

Figure 3. Gamification and marketing outputs relationship (adapted from Hofacker et al. 2016)



Customer Engagement

According to Price et al. (1995), a way to improve and maintain customer-brand relationships is to provide “extras” that will delight and satisfy customers beyond their purchasing relationships. The key to the success of this approach is to provide non-standard service experiences with a sense of mutual engagement with customers. So, organizations are moving from a product-focused management approach to a customer and service-oriented approach. Their efforts have focused on establishing and strengthening customer relationships rather than sales (Bijmolt et al., 2017: 119). Accordingly, customer engagement can be considered to be an advanced dimension of the relational marketing approach.

CE can be defined as a behavioral manifestation of customers towards a brand or company beyond simple purchasing activities, resulting from motivational drivers (van Doorn et al., 2010). According to Tuten (2008: 26), engagement is “the development of an expectation through the idea of branding with the surrounding content”. In this sense, engagement tactics should be aimed at providing movement-oriented experiences that will enable the interaction of brands and customers. These tactics should also coincide with and be supported by brand promises. CE aims to create and improve brand-to-customer relationships. When customers perceive a meaningful, unforgettable, positive, and continuous relationship with the brand in question, a successful engagement has occurred.

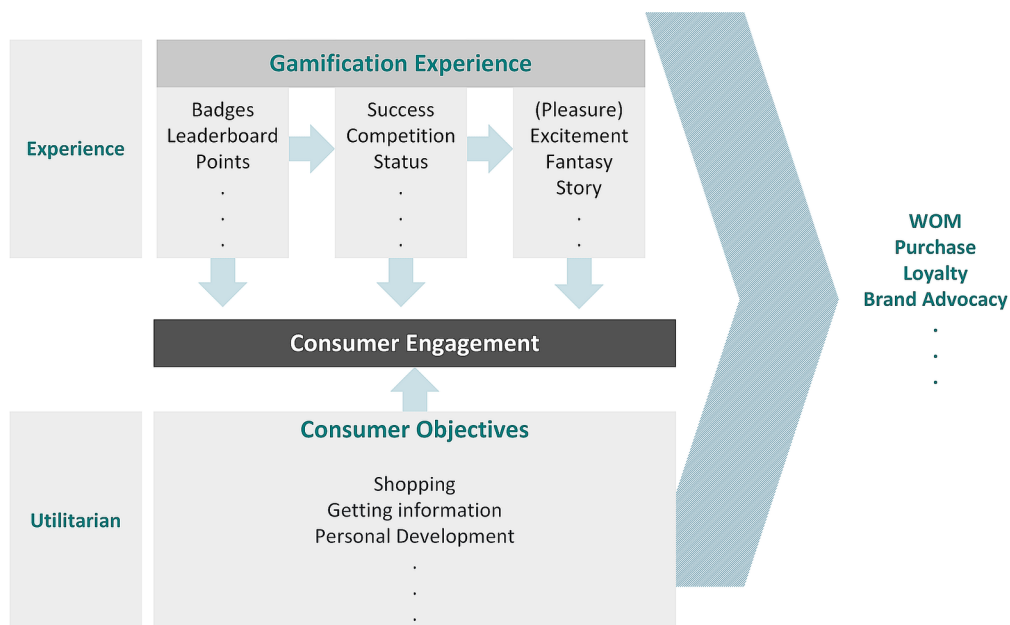
Customer Engagement and Gamification

Gamification allows customers to create a brand experience beyond their purchasing activities. It can be used as an incentive platform for participation. Gamification offers an entertainment-based solution to an individual’s emotional or physical needs, while brands allow customers to share their experience with these applications. In a sense, brands offer solutions with an experiential approach to other needs of customers in addition to their basic services. For example, Adidas Running & Training, a gamification application, allows its customers to track their daily activities (running, training, etc.) around the Adidas brand through the use of gamification. This example is based on creating a brand experience with the help of technology, but most importantly with an understanding that centers on human values. Physical activities in this app are part of the experience. However, these activities have been gamified by integrating with the digital world. The activity is both physical activity as well as a game.

The key features that enable individuals to engage in gamified content are often related to game elements. For example, the use of “levels” in gamification encourages users to specialize and move to the next level, while rewards or points encourage users to participate more in acquiring these tools (Seaborn & Fels, 2015; Alsawaier, 2018; Koivisto & Hamari, 2019). Game elements improve user performance, increase the use of branded content, and allow users to experience a pleasant experience (Harwood & Garry, 2015).

The basis of CE is that customers interact with the brand (Brodie et al., 2011). Gamification includes game elements that make the interaction continuous, enable individuals to be actively involved, and promise an enjoyable experience. Gamification elements transform existing content into a more entertaining and interesting form. As with the games, the users are presented with challenges to be achieved and some rewards are given at the end of tackling these challenges. Such incentives increase the active engagement of individuals and cause them to find the gamification experience enjoyable (Leclercq et al., 2018).

Figure 4. Two-dimensional customer engagement and its process



Two-Dimensional Customer Engagement

The main factor behind the use of game elements in many areas, including marketing, is the creation of interesting systems by using the “attractive” features of games. Games are inherently fun and engaging constructs, and so players generally prefer games as they provide an enjoyable experience and support engagement (O’Brien & Toms, 2008). However, unlike games themselves, gamified systems are not aimed at giving pleasure, but at dual engagement. The primary purpose of gamification is to provide an enjoyable experience in the area where consumers interact, while the other purpose of gamification is related to business/marketing purposes, and is designed for customers to participate in relevant content and to act in a direction appropriate for marketing purposes; it, therefore, indicates a utilitarian intention. While customers engage in these goals, they do this as if they were a player in a game. Therefore, the gamified system primarily leads the user to a rational purpose during its use; this is the second dimension of engagement in gamification. For example, in the case of Nike+ (one of the leading applications in gamification), while users experience competition, social interaction, and success, a community is formed in which the brand is at the center. This may have indirect positive effects, such as brand loyalty and WOM because, from a customer point of view, it interacts with the brand beyond transactions. This means creating - as previously mentioned - “extras” for customer engagement, thereby creating an association with customers beyond a transactional relationship.

The purpose of using gamification applications is to increase engagement, however gamified designs should also help to achieve set goals, solve problems, and complete tasks (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011; Huotari & Hamari, 2012). In games, players engage in the game system (magic circle), but what is achieved in the end for the player is psychological relief. Gamification, on the other hand, creates a different form of engagement aimed at increasing participation in the system and existing goals while maintaining a real-life activity. This form of engagement differentiates players from participating entirely for “pleasure”, transforming it into a purpose-oriented dual engagement. In other words, when users are involved in the game, they indirectly perform rational purposes according to the content of the gamification. While this content is educational, marketing may also include purchasing, liking the brand, or participating in its activities.

The Basis for Two-Dimensional Engagement

Traditionally, computing technologies have been designed to serve two different purposes: either productivity or an enjoyable experience (Hassenzahl, 2003; van der Heijden, 2004). Systems that prioritize productivity mediate the efficient, fast, and easy realization of the needs of individuals in a particular subject. Therefore, they are built on usefulness and an easy-to-use design. For example, a graphic design program is designed to help users design the images they desire in the fastest, easiest, and best way. However, in systems that focus on enjoyment, the design structure is primarily built on giving users a playful experience. For example, a video game primarily focuses on users enjoying playing the game. Therefore, while outputs are important in productivity-based systems, the process itself is more important in systems that strive to provide an enjoyable experience.

Systems designed to facilitate a playful experience are equipped with hedonic features. Users are directed to these systems for a pleasant experience like entertainment and fantasy, which is why fun-focused computing technologies often include hedonic elements such as engaging content, animated images, pleasing sounds, and aesthetically beautiful visual designs. Individuals who are in this type

of system tend to focus more on the process itself rather than on the output in the process result; they, therefore, seek out an experience of pleasure (Novak et al., 2003). Games are one of the best examples of such systems: although players often have various objectives related to the game, the principal goal of the players is the enjoyable experience they expect to receive during the playing process. Players seek psychological experiences such as competition, success, social interaction, etc., which can result in a pleasant experience rather than a rational benefit from games (Hunicke et al., 2004).

On the other hand, computing technologies have for many years been designed with a functional, productive, and mission-oriented approach. Since the 1990s, there has been a growing consensus that computing technologies should also satisfy the hedonic needs of users as well. Therefore, studies have begun to be conducted regarding how a system could be productivity-oriented while still creating an enjoyable experience (Moon & Kim, 2001; van der Heijden, 2004). It can be reasoned that gamification has become widespread as a result of the interest in addressing hedonic and utilitarian approaches together in technology. There are two main pillars of this type of two-dimensional engagement in gamification: the experiential dimension based on game features, and the utilitarian dimension that aims to achieve rational purposes according to the context of the content.

Gamification allows a productivity-oriented system to work together with a hedonic experience. Gamification can be described as hedonic since it uses game elements and features a game design; on the other hand, it is essentially a game-like system created to solve problems (e.g., increasing employee productivity) by integrating game elements into a non-game system. Therefore, it also serves as a productivity-based tool. It can be considered that gamification is aimed at motivating the user to utilitarian goals through hedonic or internally-motivated behavior. That is to say, gamification can be seen as a hedonic tool for productivity (Hamari & Koivisto, 2015: 421).

To summarize, a gamification application can be explained as a structure that aims to increase user engagement, based on the design of games to provide a playful experience, but is an effort to achieve business or marketing goals. Gamification is neither a purely hedonic system nor serves a purely utilitarian purpose. It refers to a hybrid engagement process in which two structures come together. During this engagement process, users have a playful experience due to the game elements on the one hand, while also completing certain business purposes through interacting with the game elements.

Features of the Gamification Experience

One of the most common definitions for gamification is the use of game features (elements) and game design techniques in non-game content, as previously described. It is the effects and consequences of game elements on players that make gamification an enjoyable experience. Although there is no consensus on what is classified as game elements, it seems that the classification developed by Hunicke et al. (2004), referred to as MDA (Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics), is widespread in the literature. The first stage of this model consists of the rules of the games and the mechanics that determine gameplay. Some emotional consequences are expected to occur in players who interact with mechanics; in these dynamically expressed results, players are expected to experience results such as competition, status, and success.

Although individuals receive the game and gamification experience in an integrated form, the mechanics involved also affect the emotional results obtained at the end of the game. Features that encourage users to actively engage in the gamification process include the relationship of these structures with each other and the gamified content. Each mechanic is a way to achieve a certain emotional result (dynamic);

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for example, obtaining the most powerful sword by collecting more points and thereby becoming the strongest player, or advancing to a more privileged status by passing several levels. mechanics act as tools that players utilize to obtain and experience these dynamics.

The game mechanics used in the gamification system are also used to motivate and encourage users in a certain direction. For example, when users share on social media networks to allow the brand to promote their services, they are given a certain score or badge. Or, for example, there are challenges or levels that users must overcome in order to win a certain reward. The design of the game elements and their relationship to the content set a definite path for the user to achieve a certain goal; this is unlike rational purposes, for which individuals perform according to an internal desire. While engaging in these processes, they often experience a flow situation (Hamari et al., 2016).

Gamification systems use game elements to direct users to specific purposes. For example, users of Starbucks' My Reward app earn points (stars) according to their loyalty to Starbucks. There are three "levels" depending on the degree of user loyalty, and every time they purchase a Starbucks product, they accumulate stars. Rewards include: an extra cup of coffee, a birthday gift, or even offers designed specifically for the individual customer. More frequent visits to a Starbucks store are awarded an upgraded level. In the case of McDonald's, on the other hand, the gamification is completely offline and built around the popular board game Monopoly. When you buy certain products from McDonald's, you receive a ticket, and each ticket represents an area on the Monopoly game board. The goal here is to collect all of the pieces of the same color to win a prize.

Many game elements encourage users to continue playing. The following are some examples of gamification elements that enable users to continuously engage:

- Points are one of the basic elements for obtaining gamification data.
- Levels serve as a goal for users to overcome some tasks.
- A leaderboard serves as a stimulus for users to improve while continuing to play.
- Badges are the main symbols of success.
- Progress bars are stimuli that show users their current status.
- Avatar provides users with a personalized experience.
- Comment and Chat services enable users to be actively involved and socialize within the gamification process.

Goal-Oriented Engagement

Mechanics provide various actions, behaviors, and control mechanisms for the player with the game content, as they trigger the game dynamics using the contents of the game (Hunicke et al., 2004). During the play period, it determines the desired behaviors and ensures specialization in this direction; therefore, it is important for the realization of rational purposes. For example, SuperBetter, developed by Jane McGonigal, helps users to live healthier life and fight psychological disorders. SuperBetter players determine their goals and go on quests to accomplish objectives, and during this, players collaborate with allies (other users), identify "bad guys" or counterproductive actions, and create power-ups throughout the journey in real life.

Each product includes two aspects: hedonic features and beneficial features. Individuals achieve emotional results, satisfaction, or pleasure as a result of the use of this product. On the other hand, individuals also search for a product aimed at rational purposes. In gamification, this property refers to the utilitarian

dimension of the structure (Hassenzahl, 2003). A utilitarian product is primarily instrumental. It is used to fulfill either externally-given or internally-created behavioral goals. The goal determines the behavior of users, therefore, the purpose of individuals who want to achieve a goal in the use of gamification is not only an enjoyable experience but also to achieve some rational results.

Goals are key for CE to take place, however for customer engagement to occur, consumer objectives and those of the firm must be compatible (van Doorn et al., 2010), since individuals engage only when they can achieve their objectives. Therefore, whether it is a hedonic and/or a utilitarian objective, engagement must first be presented with a value to achieve these objectives. Here consumer goals may also not be directly related to the brand, the brand may also be in a position to mediate a consumer's other needs.

As previously emphasized, gamification is designed for non-game goals despite being a game-based approach. In gamification, users not only engage with playful elements, but they can also engage to accomplish a truly rational purpose. This aspect of gamification serves a utilitarian purpose. For example, individuals may use a gamified training program to learn calculus, such as in the case of Khan Academy. Therefore, the basis of the second engagement dimension of gamification is the commitment of consumers to their goals.

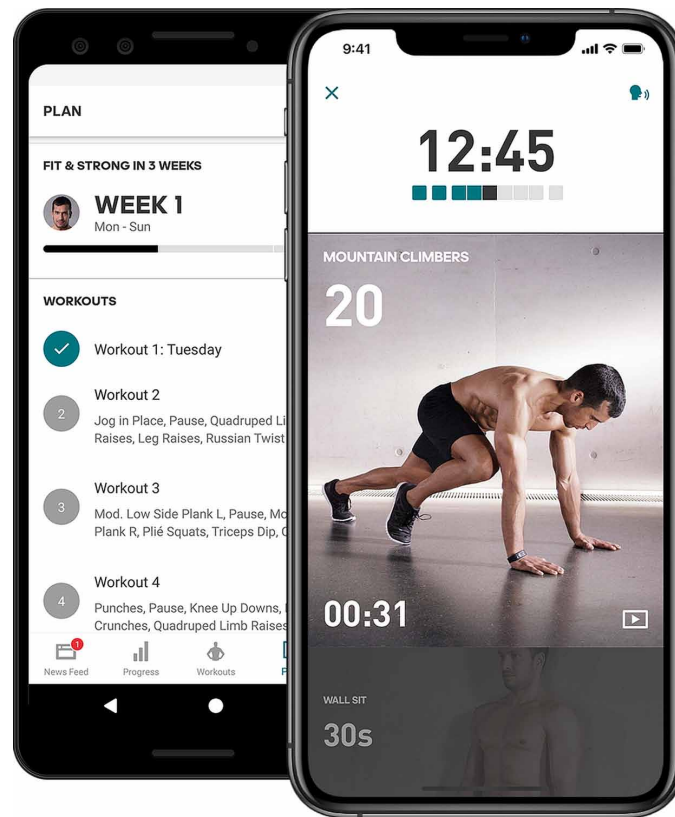
The following examples illustrate how some gamification applications enable dual engagement. First of all, it should be noted that these are not based on an empirical study, but the observations of the author.

Adidas Running and Training

In this app where sports and games are combined, the main purpose of the users is to play sports. Game elements make it a more encouraging and enjoyable experience. Gamification elements, which play a supporting role in enabling users to achieve their goals, strengthen their greater commitment to sports activities and objectives. For example, runners can be followed by their friends on the app. They can cheer this person up online during the run, with visual-audio elements. Instead of running alone, the user exercises with people from different parts of the world.

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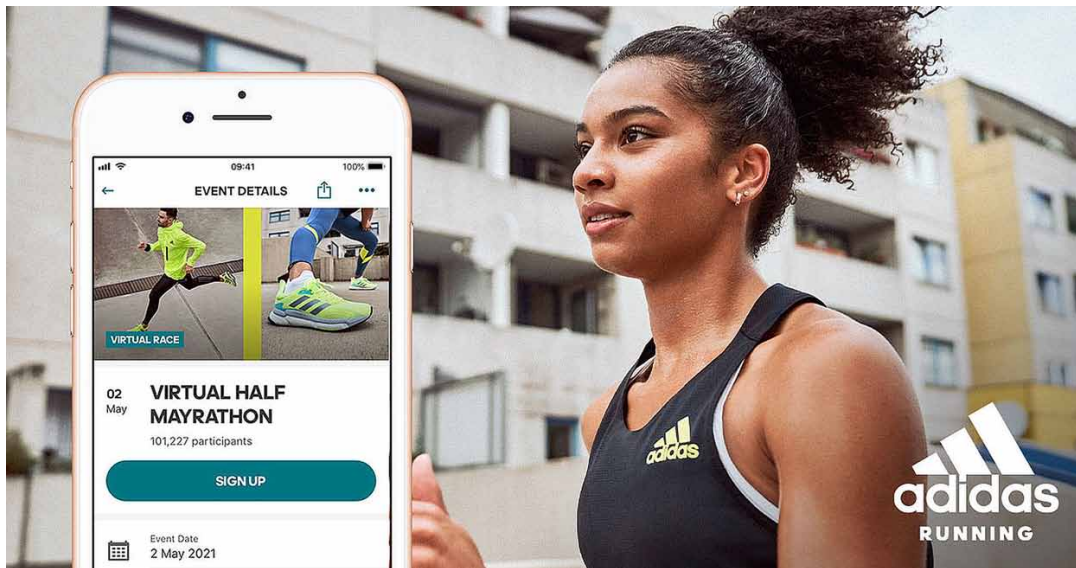
Figure 5. Some examples of Adidas running and training (Runtastic, 2022)



The application also enhances social interaction between users and eventually competition with challenges, competitions and virtual races. It increases competition and more effort with achievement badges and leaderboards, turning users' physical activities into fun and encouraging experiences for users to achieve their sporting goals. These races, which trigger competition among users, can increase users' engagement and commitment to their goals as they also combine with their rational purpose (marathon running). So, these activities of the users are inherently a form of sports activity but also a game.

Adidas serves as a social unifying tool in the sports activities of consumers. It adds value to consumers' lives beyond transaction relationships. Consumers create a community around the brand in other areas, not a transaction. The form of engagement highlighted by Price et al. (1995) has been realized through the gamification application. Users share their activities with other people through social media. In this way, the brand's voluntary positive WOM is carried out. It also encourages users to feel committed to their goals and a sense of accomplishment. Because they declare how much they have achieved their goals.

Figure 6. An example of Adidas Running virtual races (Runtastic, 2022)



Ant Forest

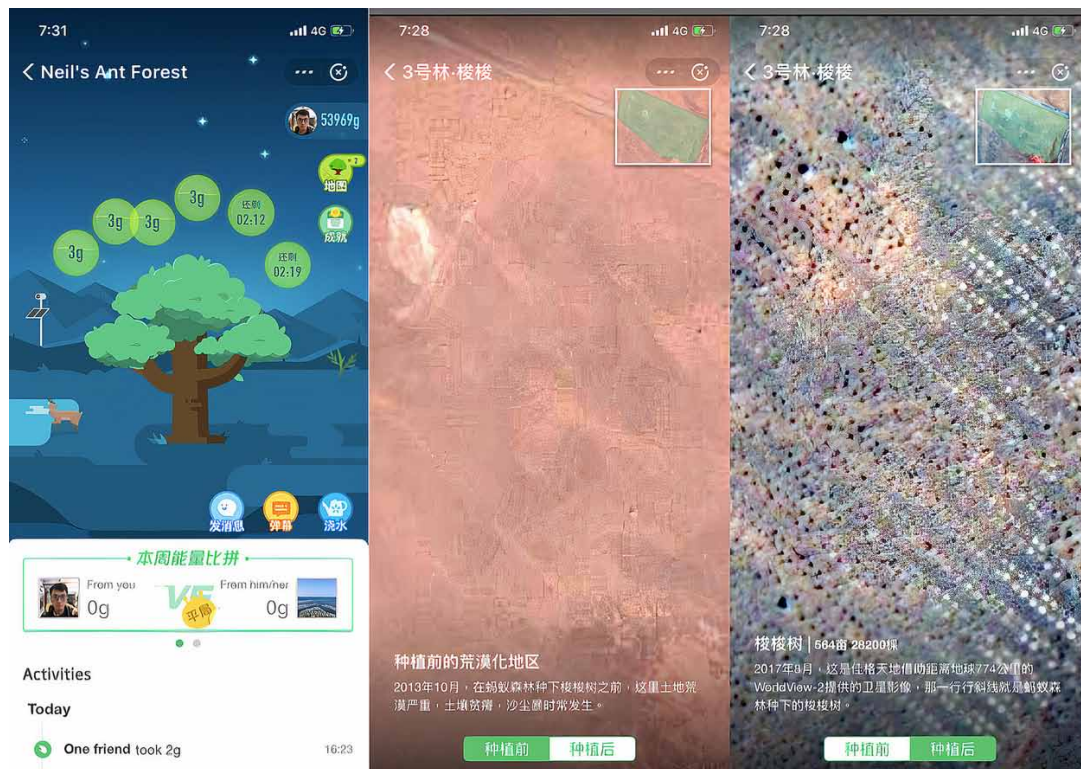
Alipay Ant Forest is a mini-platform within the Alipay app where users can collect carbon credits by participating in low-carbon activities. When users make eco-friendly lifestyle choices, such as paying e-bills instead of paper invoices or using public transport, those choices are counted and converted into virtual “green energy points”. When accumulated, it will become a virtual “tree” in the Alipay Ant Forest widget. With these carbon points, users can choose to plant certain trees or shrubs that need to be reforested in remote areas of China. After collecting enough points, users can transform virtual trees into real trees, and these trees are sewn up by Alipay and philanthropist partners in areas that need to be replanted (Alibaba Group, 2022).

This application is a good example of gamification’s relationship to the real world. The basis of application is based on environmental sensitivity, but it turns it into a fun experience with game elements. In the game, what users actually see is a growing tree supplemented with animation elements, points, and other game elements. Users are striving to earn more points as if they are actually growing a tree. They also trigger competition as they share their success with other users. Users contribute to nature as if they were in a game. It is like the Farmville game that used to go mainstream through Facebook and became popular around the world. The most important difference is that this game has real-life implications.

The app, which makes users’ environmentalist feelings a reality, supports users’ efforts to plant more trees with game elements. Moreover, it encourages them to leave less carbon footprint. In terms of Alipay, while the social behavior change it aims for (less carbon footprint) occurs, users’ engagement in this purpose is boosted by game elements. Users, on the other hand, implement their environmental sensitivities (changing habits) and actualize their rational purpose (positive contribution to the environment) because the brand truly planted trees at the end of the game.

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Figure 7. Alipay ant forest and how users see their true trees' growing in some areas of China (Chou, 2019)



MINI Getaway Stockholm

MINI Stockholm designed a location-based mobile game in 2010 to promote MINI Countryman. A virtual MINI appears on players' iPhones. They capture this MINI and then escape as far as possible they can out of their orbit to prevent other potential players from passing it by. Anyone who gets within 50 meters of the player holding the MINI can kidnap the Countryman and thus move from being prey to becoming a hunter. The first player to hold the car for a week wins a true Countryman.

Although there is a real prize at the end of the game, it is not only the prize itself that makes the game enjoyable and participatory. Users engaged in this game because it was fun! It was the game that increased the actual participation in this promotion and turned it into a playful experience. Each game ends with a reward. In football, it can be a trophy, or a medal in a marathon, but no athlete can run just for a medal. As Csikszentmihalyi (1990), emphasizes in the Flow Theory, the main thing that keeps the flow is the challenge. The game itself is exciting and boosts engagement.

Throughout the interviews and YouTube comments, we can get information that people talked more about the excitement of chasing after the car than the car. Thus, as in a game, it is not the result of the game, but the enjoyable experience of the actual game by increasing engagement. At the end of the game, 12000 people from Stockholm alone took part the game, while thousands visited the website and watched their videos. The virtual MINI has traveled 1500 physical kilometers. People played the game for an average of 5 hours. Also, people from 90 countries followed the game (MINIGetawayStockholm, 2022).

Figure 8. The MINI getaway Stockholm 2010 game (Transmission, 2010)



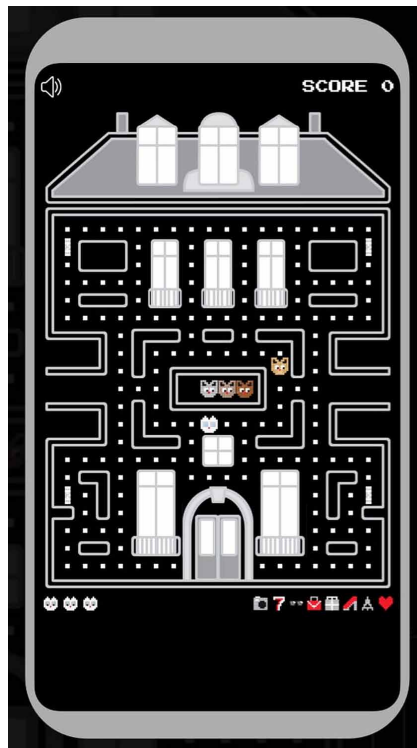
The Karl Lagerfeld's Pac-Man Game

The fashion industry has been trying to capture consumer interest over games for a few years. After Gucci's Arcade games platform (Gucci, 2022), Karl Lagerfeld introduced its game to customers, inspired by a retro game pac-man. Users play as Karl Lagerfeld's cat Choupette (who has 232,000 followers on Instagram and is synonymous with Karl Lagerfeld) and try to escape a team of dogs (replacing Pac-Man ghosts) to collect Karl Coins. The game is played online and in-store, but the results are not just online. The points that users earn as a result of their performance (Karl Coins) are transformed into rewards that they can use in real life. In the weekly prize draw, the top-rated players have been given the opportunity to shop at Karl Lagerfeld in the UK and Europe.

The game was designed with inspiration from the Pac-Man game, which was very popular in the '80s and redesigned with different content today. So, it becomes easier for users to get involved in this familiar game and experience immersion status. Games like this are simple and uncomplicated systems that everyone can easily play. This is why more than 21,000 users visited the gaming site in the first week, allowing users to engage in the game. Engagement in the brand, which is the other dimension of gamification, is ensured by both design elements used in the game (Cholute cat, snow scores, store design, etc.) and by associating the results with real life. The other dimension of the game, engagement in the brand is realized both by the design elements (Choupette cat, Karl Coins, store-like game design, etc.) used in the game and by linking the results with real-life (SMACK Agency, 2022).

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Figure 9. Karl Lagerfeld's game for mobile



Subway: Sink a Sub

In 2020, Subway launched a brand awareness campaign in Australia and New Zealand. This campaign was run through a gamified app called Sink a Sub. Customers who buy a sub and a drink at participating Subway restaurants would receive a code for a gaming experience. Mimicking the classic battleship game, users try to sink their metro sandwiches with balls thrown from a pirate ship onto a virtual maritime battlefield. Sink a Sub players could win a “treasure chest” of prizes including car bikes and Subway food. Although players who missed the target would win some prizes, including Subway cookies, drinks, meal upgrades, or a second shooting opportunity in the game.

As the designer pointed out, the campaign aims to increase users’ brand engagement and interactions with Subway (Campaign Brief, 2020). Through the gamified app, customers experience a fun game, while their activities are supported by real-life rewards. The game itself is fun enough to encourage increased participation, as well as encourage users to go to Subway to win more prizes. Buying more Subway products to get more code, then playing a game associated with Subway and returning to Subway to get the prizes creates a cycle and a constant interaction. The difference that gamification makes is that these processes are transformed into a game and thus increase engagement. This program looks like traditional promotional marketing but does so like a game and through a fun experience around the Subway brand. At the same time as users are gaming, their ties to Subway are strengthening. This manifests itself in two forms: the first through the entertainment experience of the game, and the second through the experience through rewards and promotional cards given to users.

Figure 10. The Subway's Sink a Subgame and game and promised rewards (Campaign Brief, 2020).



SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In an environment where technology is decisive in the lives of consumers, gamified applications provide a significant advantage to their engagement in new marketing programs. As shown in this study, over the last decades many firms have been addressing their customers through games and gamified applications.

In this study, the game-like applications explain why consumer engagement is increased through game systems. Companies that appeal to consumers with gamified systems can indirectly reach their goals by providing users with an enjoyable experience. In these applications, customers engage in both the system itself and its marketing goals. On the other hand, for a high-engagement gamification program, practitioners should pay attention to the following considerations in the gamification design:

- Gamification design should produce solutions to consumers' problems.
- Gamification design should help consumers achieve their rational goals.
- Gamification design, if applied in digital technologies, should include the simplicity and convenience required by basic information technologies.
- Gamification design should serve not only rational purposes but also enjoyment and socialization. Consumers should be able to do it by socializing and enjoying an activity.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This chapter discussed the importance of gamification for consumer engagement and what aspect it impacts consumer engagement. Up until now, research and applications have generally been interested in the way gamification is mobile or websites. Driven by approaches such as Metaverse, it seems likely that we will be welcoming more frequently gamified content in the coming period, along with augmented

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reality or virtual reality app. On the other hand, although digital technologies play a decisive role in the societal world, we face few gamification applications in the offline world. Practice and research in this regard seem very shallow. In particular, there are applications for product packaging and the use of gaming elements in physical venues. But research in these areas appears to be little.

Moreover, in some countries, such as China, elements of the game are used to direct or regulate the behaviors of citizens (Osborne, 2015). Similar to the Black Mirror series in future times, we could be confused with more practices where citizens are subject to privileges or restrictions based on gamified systems. This comes across as an issue that needs to be addressed on a wider scale, which includes marketing.

Finally, one issue that needs to be explored in the context of social change is the brand commitment of consumers. Postmodern societies have a more resilient and weak commitment. It is therefore difficult to establish lasting relationships. This applies to brands as well. Arguably at the top of the challenges marks will face most often in the future is the inability to have loyal consumers despite many holding on. It may therefore be helpful to focus more on customer-brand relationships on the basis of partnership where mutual benefit occurs.

CONCLUSION

While many apps have been developed as a result of interest in gamification in recent years, many of these efforts often focus on enhancing the gaming experience. Games are systems that allow for a naturally enjoyable experience; however, the main purpose of gamification is not to give individuals a playful experience. Simply put, gamification is to turn a non-gaming system into a fun and game-like experience. It is relatively easy for individuals to engage in gamification, but the main objective is integrating marketing purposes into the gaming experience of consumers. Directing consumers to marketing purposes within a fun and enjoyable experience refers to the success of gamification.

Engagement in gamification in this context is not only about whether consumers are involved in-game elements (challenge, reward, status, etc.), but also whether the engagement includes active involvement in marketing efforts. In order to achieve this dual engagement, non-gaming systems must be addressed and designed with a playful approach, not only by creating a game. In other words, the main objective of gamification is to offer consumers a variety of different services as a gaming experience, rather than creating a game itself. Consumers now need to be treated like players and, accordingly, brands need to design their activities like a game. This will enable the creation of a common communication language with player consumers.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Customer Engagement: A customer's behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers (van Doorn et al., 2010, p. 254).

Game-Based Engagement: Users engage in the game experience by integrating gaming elements into content

Gamer Consumers: Individuals who use digital games very intensively in their lives and act as players in the consumption process.

Games Elements: The infrastructure or parts that make up the game are generally called game elements. These cover mechanics such as points, badges, or levels, as well as rules of games and status, and results such as success.

Gamification: A nongame content is designed like a game, giving a playful experience in the target audience.

Gaming Experience: It is when individuals interacting with game elements in non-playing areas have a game-like experience in the current situation.

Goal-Oriented Engagement: Engaging in a vehicle (mobile apps, websites games etc.) that people feel will help them achieve their goals.

Two-Dimensional Engagement: It is the involvement of consumers in both the experiential and utilitarian aspects of a system and their orientation intellectually, emotionally, and motivationally. It is the realization of the rational goals of the consumers through an experiential structure.

Chapter 21

Emphasis on Design Principles in the Context of Communication Technologies in Mobile Advertising

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ABSTRACT

Design, technology, and communication are facts that can't be separated from each other. Because in the process of communication and processes from the technology bar, each one is a design process. Just as with design, ideas are generated from a problem in the process of communication and technology. Actions are being taken to bring the ideas produced to live. Communication processes and technology are the intertwined design of products. Visual communication design has an effective expression. From the design in the packaging of a product to the logo of a company and the colors used in the advertisement created for service to the symbol of a brand, the role of the design is high in communication between the customer who is the target audience. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on slogans and visuals in advertisements. This chapter will consist of the title introduction, background, main focus of the chapter, solutions, recommendations, future research directions, and conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Communication has contributed to the development of humanity, along with the change that technology innovation brings. Among the types of communications used from past to present, the “Visual Communication Design”, consisting of typographic and visual elements, has a key location. While advertising banner is an element of visual communication design, it is also a leading communication tool in the advertising industry that communicates the desired message to the audience. It is a structure that contains typographic and visual elements that are prepared for advertising, messaging, or product promotion.

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Mobile advertising is one of the most important marketing shapes available today. The increase in mobile advertising is advancing with technological innovations. Mobile advertising applications are intended to enable more effective communication, understand consumer needs, identify consumer interests, and provide experience activity that is compatible with the consumer's lifestyle.

Each ad needs different design fiction. For example, in an advertisement in a magazine, print quality can be considered, and the element to highlight in the ad can be printed in vivid colors. In an advertisement to be broadcast on the radio, the audio-based power can be emphasized by a different tone of voice. In mobile advertising, the focus of the ad can be transferred by combining both auditory and visual power. A feature is emphasized, highlighting the product, message, and promise to the user for use in each ad factoring.

This book section addresses the concept of emphasis in design. The concept of emphasis is presented through advertising literature. The emphasis concept, which is a key design element, is the place and impact of mobile advertising design.

BACKGROUND

Advertising is a whole range of verbal, written and video activities to promote a product or service to the designated audience. The ad has a wide range of definitions. A few of these definitions are:

Advertisement is born from the word "clamare", which means calling in Latin. The advertisement that goes through the French word "reclame" is a tobacco activity that supports sales policy and tries to force people to buy that product without forcing it (Okay, 2009: 6-7). A French-origin word, the advertisement from the root of reclame, is one of the most effective and strategic forms of mass communication used to influence or change human behavior in a desired direction. As an economic tool, the ad aims to ensure the formation of brands, to keep the product or service in the market, to sell it or to increase the demand. Increasing the sale of a product or service is a key goal, while it serves as economic communication (Bati, 2013: 11). Under the control of a particular person or institution, it is a non-personal announcement to convince and inform the target market of goods, services or thoughts (Tenekecioğlu, 1983: 85).

The advertisement should inform the customer about the terms of purchase of the products and influence the customer. Advertising refers to the most convincing, deceiving message using some tools to publicly, communicate, promote, promote, and promote the features, benefits and interests of a service, a place, something or something. The advertisement, which acts only as an act of selling goods or marketing services, or increasing demand against them, would want to quickly reach a conclusion with high budgets, that has an impact on the company output (product or service) and customers in order to achieve a direct profit (Çamdereli, 2005: 34-35).

The advertisement creates a purchase bee on the target audience and aims to increase demand against the advertised product. Results of advertising services can be obtained in the short term. There is a need for large budgets for advertising services to occur. The presence of a strong financing structure is not only a direct expression of the success of the advertising campaign, but it is important enough for the campaign to succeed.

The advertisements that used to be spoken through the vocal communication channels of the screamers have changed in harmony with both the audiovisual and literary environments expressed today in television, newspapers, radio and the internet. It is known that the date of the first ad study dates back up to 3000 years.

Today, one of the most important forms of derivation, advertising has a very old history. Verbal advertising has emerged at the beginning of the change between people. Although the beginning of the written ad is not certain, it is believed that a kind of announcement, which was found at the British Museum in England, was written to a papyrus 3000 years ago, was the first written ad (Mucuk, 2007: 211).

Any action to direct a message from a product or service to the market's units is called advertising, verbally, in writing or visually. The advertisement should be informational to the consumer about the product that is intended to be purchased. How to use the product features must be transferred correctly to potential users. The advertisement needs to convince the consumer that it needs to buy it. The information is included with the incusing.

Advertising should be remarkable. It should also be ensured that the consumer who is interested in it wants it. The consumer should be directed to decide whether to buy the advertised product. In a good advertisement, the consumer is drawn to attention, their interest is transformed into desire, and they are targeted to decide and purchase that product. The consumer making a purchase decision must also turn this decision into action.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Mobile Advertising

Mobile commerce, mobile marketing, and mobile advertising have started to emerge today with the rapid spread of mobile tools such as mobile phones (Usta, 2009: 294). Also, mobile phones become a multimedia communication tool with written, voice and video communications, become a portable entertainment tool, can be used for marketing activities for retailers and manufacturers, allowing multi-channel shopping, navigation and mobile internet connectivity; Mobile phones have become an important marketing tool (Barutçu & Göl, 2009: 25) that has not only been a means of communication.

Mobile advertising has been included in the marketing literature (Arslan & Arslan, 2012: 65), as mobile phones are being used as advertising tools, depending on technological developments. Traditional media tools are insufficient to reach target customer groups because of increased human mobility today and people have time and space accuracy. Mobile advertising is an approach that allows businesses to reach their existing and potential customers using wireless interactive media via mobile communications tools and provide them with personalized information, goods, services and ideas (Özgüven, 2013: 123).

The mobile marketing association (2003) has expressed mobile advertising as any advertising, marketing and promotional activity that is available to the consumer through mobile channels. In short, mobile advertising is an ad that uses mobile tools (Kıraç, 2012: 24).

Emphasis on engagement and interactivity is one of the key characteristics of mobile advertising. In mobile advertising applications, consumers take a more active role and are encouraged to participate in the campaign through mobile channels. One of the most important benefits of mobile communications platforms is that consumers allow feedback easily and quickly, contributing to the increase in return (Dağtaş, 2013: 136).

Mobile ads are important because they can reach the audience directly and mobile ads can be personalized to the consumer's time, location, and priorities (Barutçu, 2009: 259-285). Mobile ads can send messages to an auditory and visually vast audience, and the advertiser has full control over the message,

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making mobile advertising the channel the most common and most spent channel among marketing communications elements by businesses.

Design

The word design comes from the Latin word “disignare.” After the Renaissance, the word “design” was written in French, and entered English from the Italian disegno. The word contains things that come into the meaning of drawing, sketching, and planning and design today. It means the idea and the tools used to put it out there (Barnard, 2002: 92).

The term design has so many meanings that even this is a single source of chaos (Heskett, 2013:12). Design is to produce a design, “Heskett said (2013: 13), connecting the deepening of complexity to the spread of design practice and terminology. For design, it’s a consequence of the ability to think about something that isn’t. Kolko expresses the design as a way to regulate complexity or find clarity inside chaos (Kolko, 2010: 16).

There are different expressions about the concept of design. Some of them resemble each other, while others define the subject differently. Design is a conceive of thinking as an ide, but this ide contains the dynamics of forming a conceive form, and is excluded as a form-forming ide within the process of formation (Tunalı, 2004: 12). Thinking creates the ideal by the intersection of mind and emotion (Yamaçlı, 2008: 46-47). In this context, each design phenomenon has an ide and an object designed.

Design is the most basic communication mode that man has ever established with objects (Tunalı, 2004: 13). Design is meant not only to shape the appearance of objects all around, but also to shape life (Yurdakul, 1988: 110-112).

Emphasis in Design

This section will review the use of the highlight of design principles in advertising. The emphasis feature that is visually central to the ad is used to attract the audience’s attention and increase their interest in the advertised product. The emphasis found in different ad parliaments in a wide variety of ways highlights the areas of the ad that are important.

The emphasis within design principles is the placement of the element that is intended to be in the foreground in any design at the focal point of the design. The emphasis feature can be explained from very different perspectives. Emphasis according to Özsoy and Ayaydın (2016: 196-198);

- The most remarkable part of the work.
- The first point in design.
- Refers to the emphasis of the main topic.
- Contains the most interesting part.
- An element is more dominant than others.
- The center of interest that the designer wants to attract the audience.

Emphasis is the first highlight in design, which is the most dominant point. It is the element that attracts the attention of the audience to a specific part of the image being used. Emphasis on design is the creation of visual importance through careful use. In a composition, the designer tries to highlight the relative importance by moving the eye through interspaced spaces or repetitions (Öztuna, 2018: 37).

If the emphasis does not make the eye stand in the important area, the elements used can create visual distortions. It needs an effective emphasis on any visual design. Emphasis provides charm. It can create an emphasis effect in size, visual hierarchy, color, texture, and can use white spaces within the page to create emphasis (Uçar, 2004: 5). In this context, the emphasis feature can create a spot value with other design elements used in the design, creating balance, color, or black and white field balances.

There are some considerations when creating emphasis that carefully underlines the message that is intended to be transmitted through a design (Özsoy & Ayaydın, 2016: 200-203):

- The location of the emphasis is usually the optical center.
- Found design elements can create highlight elements.
- Design elements must direct individuals to the highlight feature.
- Support can be obtained from opposites to make the emphasis stronger.
- The highlighted item should be more dominant than the whole.
- Highlight features should be featured in the foreground.
- Emphasis can be created with light-dark color, opposites and the use of unusual items.

To summarize, attention should always be at the optic center. As any feature in the design can create emphasis, emphasis is supported by opposites, light-dark color effects, or the use of unusual elements. The element that dominates other elements in the composition created dominates the design, while other elements lead to the highlighted element, creating an integrity.

Use of Emphasis on Advertising Platforms

Designs show that one element is in the foreground compared to the other. In this context, the foreground item is the highlighted item. Each advertising application that reaches its target audience is undergoing both a demanding and detailed design process.

When reading literature in the context of advertising design, scientists who contribute literature seem to agree on the importance of emphasis used in design. Emphasis is to express part of an art or advertising design by color, lighting, focusing, depending on the type of design. For example, in an ad used in the print press, a section of the title or body text can be typed with a flashy typeface, and this is how it is parsed to create a highlight feature (Gülsoy, 1999:2). Emphasis is that the design element is in a more dominant position than other elements. For an ad design to succeed, a specific item must be highlighted (Elden & Özdem, 2015: 116). If an element that needs to be highlighted within the design is lost in design, it is not likely to mention success in design. If the audience's attention is focused on a specific point, the message the ad wants to deliver will not be able to achieve the desired effect.

The advertising should not only attract the target audience's attention to a product or service, but also turn the target audience into a consumer and point them toward buying behavior and provide a repeat purchase. In this context, advertising should ensure both the occurrence and continuity of the purchase behavior. Ad can express the message it wants to deliver with different elements in different ad environments. Advertising attractions are the factors that support emphasis in advertising. Advertising appeal is the basic basis or approach that advertisements use to attract and engage the audience, influencing their emotions (Elden & Bakır, 2010: 76). The emphasis used in design on advertising platforms is used as a stand-out, engaging factor. Ad attractiveness should be the benefit of the product that is engaging or makes a purchase, believe that the target audience meets the promise of the product or service, and to

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determine which aspects of the brands are differentiated with competitors (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008: 431). When deciding on the ad appeal to be used in the ad campaign, it is important to remember what design will be impressive on the target audience and what differentiates and reminds the brand from its competitors. If there are different classifications, it can be said that ad attractions are activity between the brain and the heart, the feeling and the thoughts. Basic advertising attractions can be discussed in knowledge and emotion. Knowledge-driven attractiveness is rational and acts with causal arguments. Anti-information has emotional appeal and these come as humor, animation, music and fantasy (Uztuğ, 2005: 207).

Advertisements need to be remembered to convince the audience to buy from a product. If an ad is in the mind of the audience and the audience is having positive evaluations of that product in their mind, that ad is considered successful. The target audience reinforces repeated items in ads through repeated reps. Repeat ensures that the item highlighted in the ad is clearly detected in both the target audience and the brand is separated from its competitors. Repeated elements highlight the desired message to be given to the target audience and ensure that the brand is better placed in the minds.

Emphasis on Advertising

In the design prepared for advertising, emphasis is shaped by the creative idea. The emphasis within the advertising design should be on the item that the message the ad wants to deliver wants to focus on. When performing ad design, the item that is wanted to be noticed must be decided and edited accordingly. This creative can be visual or text (West, 2013: 47). The main thing is that it determines the focus on the advertising image. The decision on which to highlight visual, text, title, slogan or logo will determine which element the emphasis will be on.

In the context of creative advertising strategies, long text is not widely preferred in advertising. In many ad campaigns today, impressive visuals are now preferred to convey the brand's message. Stunning visual elements are more prominent in the messages that are big in our lives every day. For a target audience who doesn't have enough time to spend time on very long text, the ads are more noticeable where visuals and logos are highlighted and highlighted.

According to the nature of the emphasis on design, the information that seems important must be edited with visual features that highlight it. In this context, the message intended to be given to the audience in advertising banners is delivered in its simplest form. Designs for advertising platforms are prepared based on a specific layout. In the advertising environment, items in the advertised product and advertisement should be presented in a specific layout on the page. This regulation in design ensures easy detection of the target audience and image clarity (Küçükerdoğan, 2005: 80). Emphasis indicates which of the title, subtitle, text, or visual elements will be highlighted during the decision-making phase. The foundation of a successful and good design is about the accent. However, there is not always a requirement for emphasizing a single item (Peltekoğlu, 2010: 275). It is not healthy to highlight every element in design, even when not always emphasizing a single item. Highlighting an item will focus attention toward that point. It will be more useful to review with an example of the title, image, slogan, body text, and logo highlighting that make up the ad elements.

Headline Advertisement

One of the elements found in the designs for advertising platforms is the title. The title is one of the most important parts of the ad, because it directs the text to read it rather than to scan it. It makes it easier to exchange information in the ad and highlights what the advertiser wants to highlight. There are three functions of the title within an ad text (Gürgen, 1990: 101):

- Attract attention
- Engage the audience to know about the service advertised in the text
- Ensure that consumers who are likely to buy advertised service read the text

A well-written title attracts the audience's attention and leads them to reading the ad text. The title has a curiosity-awakening effect, as well as the attention to the image in the ad is intensified.

Figure 1. Fiat advertisement

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/outdoor/fiat_lose_the_labels



Fiat introduces the iconic 500 model in the “Lose the Labels” ad campaign, which celebrates incompatibility and expresses individuality. He created the campaign to support the 500 Rockstar model.

Next to 500 Rockstar, the title “Birthseldom has no podium” shows a woman equally confident. The idea behind the campaign with the slogan “lose Tags” is to challenge compliance against individuality. Fiat 500 is a homogeneous look of cars in segment a, and its authenticity is expressed, while applications in this campaign focus on fashion labels. It expresses people's individual styles with the myth that you need to follow this style to be stylish.

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Advertising with Images

The image is the most common role in advertising platforms and the leading role of the layout. The use of striking colors to attract attention is a way to simulate what is intended to appear and be noticed. In this respect, the image used in a visual composition is rich in the name of color diversity. The color of the fund on which the image is positioned has an important effect on the image.

A visual image on an advertising platform is usually available as a photo or illustration. Effective visual elements specifically visualize the basic idea of the ad, support the title, and highlight the topic of the advertising.

Figure 2. Coca-Cola advertisement

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/cocacola_cocacola_messes_with_your_head_with_visual_campaign



Can an image make a sound without making a sound? Coca-Cola has created a campaign that invites the audience to hear the voices of the images in the ad. The photo series refers to macro images of classic Coca-Cola moments, opening the lid of a bottle, opening a box, and spurting bubbles. The title says “try not to hear it” and encourages viewers to do so while pushing them to avoid hearing the sounds in the images. The Coca-Cola campaign links their minds to an image with a specific voice. It uses its product and iconic visuals to fill the silence in the visuals with the expected sound.

In the Coca-Cola ad, the product is visually expressed from its packaging to the pre-consumption stretch. While advertising designs use product visuals, there is no visual that literally reflects the product’s form. The ad provides tips on the product, even if the product does not appear in its full form, thanks to the visuals used. In other words, it is about emphasizing the elements that are not visible, allowing the audience to complete the missing parts of the product in their mind, and delivering the process to the target audience in the mental process of the ad. In this context, an interaction is created. The target audience will enjoy it by feeling that it has been included in the process.

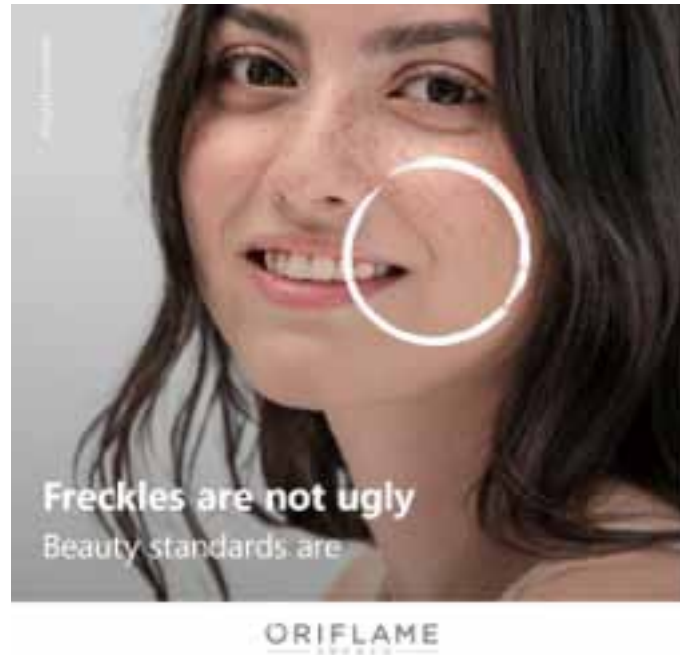
Advertisement with Slogan

The slogan is a kind of signature of the ad. It expresses the most important feature of the advertised product or service in a short, bold and simple way.

A good slogan should be short, easy to understand, suitable for the product or service, easy to recognize, simple, and memorable to remind you of good feelings. The slogan has two purposes. One is to ensure continuity in the campaign in the ad, another is to ensure that the message in the ad is short, repeatable and memorable.

Figure 3. Oriflame advertisement

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/integrated/oriflame_beauty_standards_are_ugly



Beauty standards, asymmetrical properties, big noses, beard, cracks, it indicates that body curves, irregular skin, and essentially anything out of the standard are ugly. But in reality, ugly is beauty standards, ugly because they create ugliness as artificial.

Everything we think is ugly in our appearance is ugly because beauty standards say so. According to the concept used in the ad, the slogan turns beauty and ugliness upside down, saying that beauty standards, the rules that should define beauty, are actually ugly. To deliver this message in a bold and understandable way, the main slogan “beauty standards are ugly” is combined with direct messages that deny that “defects” are ugly. The messages that appear are as follows: Wrinkles are not ugly. There are beauty standards. Irregular skin is not ugly. There are beauty standards. In line with the campaign’s philosophy, the visual concept includes real women with a wide range of ages and looks, natural makeup and touch-free. This is an ad campaign where asymmetric features, cracks, body curves, wrinkles are not only shown, but also emphasized as a good thing. This campaign, which is held by Oriflame, also stands out as the first large-scale brand campaign in Armenia to tackle the problem of beauty standards.

Advertisement with Body Text

The body text of ads is intended to express the information that is intended to be transferred to the target audience in the shortest and most lean way. The title and visual elements used in advertising platforms are aimed at triggering the desire to have a product or service advertised by increasing the interest of the audience (Gürgen, 1990:114).

Body text is where information is transferred in the most detailed way to the advertised product or service. The text in the ad should be in a position to capture the audience’s attention, as well as to make

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them read themselves to the fullest. In ad texts, sentence patterns are used that are easy to understand, increase readability, and in such text, striking, easy and open sentences are active (West, 2006: 161). The adjectives used in the ad text or title are used to highlight the brand, to help it stand out from its competitors and to promote the product.

Figure 4. GreenPeace advertisement

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/greenpeace_save_my_soul



The campaign to save my soul shows how big a single finger can be in the fight against extinction of endangered species. You can shoot your stamp with one text message. The message that endangered animals will love those who help them is being transmitted.

Advertisement with Logo

The logo is the signature of companies and is specifically designed for each company. The logo gives the product individualism and it is important that it is available in all ads to be noticed about the purchase.

In a design that does not have a logo, it may not be clear who will be the institution that communicates the ad message. The logo will let the target audience know about the company that reached them. Because the human mind perceives visual elements better and faster than words, the corporate logo is quickly recognized by the audience. The logo of the brand used in the ad is quickly recognized by the target audience and selected from the competition.

Figure 5. Hyundai advertisement

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/hyundai_details_can_be_important



For Hyundai, the advertisement created in Spain aims to draw attention to the importance of early diagnosis in breast cancer. Inspired by the logo of the Hyundai brand, an advertisement was published in October, a month of breast cancer awareness. Emphasis is on the logo in this design. Please note the details are important, the check yourself for your health slogan also supports the message the ad wants to deliver.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The mobile world that has increased its place in our lives has its impact in many areas. It has also eliminated borders around the world by allowing us to communicate with our shopping habits, communicate with our environment, get information on anything, and discover what's new in the entertainment world in our leisure time.

In recent years, the speed in technology development has also reflected in the world of advertising and marketing and has led to new structures. Advances in the world of technology and information allow us to easily achieve innovations in every aspect of our lives. Increasing human needs requires innovation in technology. Mobile phones have been loaded with advanced technology and many missions. Both individual expectations and company expectations combined with technology, key steps have been taken in advertising and marketing.

Technology provides ease of trade today, where access from one end of the world is low cost thanks to mobile technologies. In this context, companies communicate seamlessly with each other and their customers.

Depending on these developments, the innovation process reflected in the mobile world has become mandatory for companies to use different tools to reach customers. Taking advantage of the benefits of

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the mobile world will also benefit institutions. Mobile communication technologies are also an important tool for building customer awareness in today's media market.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Mobile advertising and marketing are constantly evolving and being updated today, which also assumes that mobile marketing applications will become even more important in the future, and requires research on the subject.

Given that the number of smartphone users is increasing day by day, it can be foreseeable that the future of mobile advertising is bright and will be the "mobile year" of next year. Mobile advertising is seen to evolve in a similar way to the development of traditional internet advertising. Mobile advertising needs better mobile phones, a technologically advanced network system and richer content to improve and increase (Özgüven, 2013: 165).

Mobile advertisements are more interesting and varied with the help of operating systems used on smartphones, so mobile advertisements are more interesting and can communicate with visitors than advertisements shown on desktops.

Mobile advertising enables marketers to create designs that meet customer specifications. A good marketing management is based on long-term relationships. Mobile advertising is a good tool to achieve this goal. Because it provides mutual communication between companies and customers. In mobile marketing applications, advertising is also increasing in the impact of information content. The consumer, who feels the ad is useful, valuable and relevant to them, will also be more likely to turn toward advertising and brand.

Consumer is undoubtedly the most important element in advertising and marketing. Because all marketing work is shaped by consumer behavior and experience, and is prepared according to their expectations. That's why advertisers and marketers or businesses need to know who to serve, what kind of audience. A target audience that is not well recognized will not be available with the right product or the right strategy.

CONCLUSION

A successful design is one of the key elements of the ad. The creation of the creative idea is as important as the idea itself. No matter how good the idea is, the failure of the app is putting out the creative impact. A good design should deliver the most information as soon as possible, making the message easier to understand, and meeting the audience. In this context, visual design contributes to the creation of a common language between the advertiser and the target audience.

All elements that create a visual and auditory composition in an advertising application have a separate function. However, the attention of the potential audience must be drawn to a point. The emphasis creates the center of advertising design, making one element in the entire design dominate the others. The advertisement is highlighted and the audience wants to be shown as the real one. The emphasis on content is supported by ad attractions. With rational and emotional advertising attractions such as humor, fear, sexuality, there is an interest in advertising messaging. Focusing the audience's attention on the ad message is also achieved through emphasis.

Emphasis is achieved through various applications for different advertising environments. For example, emphasis in mobile ad spots is usually the name, logo, slogan of the advertiser or brand, etc. it is done in a highlighter way. This environment is also emphasized, while using the power of picture, sound and motion is utilized. The feature to highlight in a radio spot is assisted by sound and effect. At this point, the voice tone and the dictation of the voice of the voice is also important. Ad environments without auditory power communicate visual importance with different ad design components. Outdoor ads have big images in the visual center. In print advertising environments, emphasis is placed in the layout of the page. For example, the subject of the highlight is image in image framed page layout and body text in text-weighted page layout. Each component of the printed advertising composition can be emphasized by highlighting and moving it to the visual center. Title, body text, slogan, image and logo are key elements that have an impact on the advertising environment. From a visual design point of view, color, smudges, white space, contrast, size, basic design principles, such as balance, shape the presence of the highlight in the advertising image.

In summary, nothing is highlighted when everything is highlighted. The emphasis must be made on a single subject. The goal of the emphasis in the ad is to ensure that the audience is focused on important content. The ad needs to have a significant impact in order for the brand to stand out and be able to stand out from the competition. The impact will be by focusing on one element for designers and advertisers who have mastered expressions and putting it in the visual center.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Advertising: One of the masterpieces of business and marketing. It is a tool that communicates between products and services and the consumer, provides information flow, and influences consumer buying behavior.

Banner: A picture-based wall announcement that's designed to introduce something, to make it public, to hang where the crowds can see it.

Design: Creating drawings of a plan or object.

Graphic Design: A creative process that involves organizing text and images in a plane, in two-dimensional or three-dimensional way to convey a message, enhance an image, or visualize an idea.

Mobile Advertising: The type of ad shown on web pages and apps that appear on mobile devices such as mobile phones or tablets.

Chapter 22


A Commercial Stage Strengthening Brand Image in the Framework of Postmodern Consumption: Pop-Up Space

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ABSTRACT

In the postmodern era, competition in the retail sector has increased, and it has gained importance to be in the minds of the target audience as a result of the changing consumer profile, technological developments, and product diversity. This change has also affected retail formats, and pop-up spaces have become one of the marketing methods of businesses. Brands that want to stand out from the competition try to create memorable customer experiences with a new reality and a different perception environment, as well as an immersive atmosphere in the commercial space. Given the role of presentation and special effects, the interior becomes an exciting scene that strengthens the brand image. The study aims to examine the brand image-space relationship in the postmodern era within the framework of the different experiences offered to the customer through the metaphor of theater and to reveal the spatial elements that affect the customer's perception of space in pop-up spaces. As a result of the study, it is aimed that the elements will be a guide for pop-up retail design.

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INTRODUCTION

Pop-up spaces, which are designed for a limited time in the context of the principle of ephemerality, have become more common than ever in recent years by being applied within the scope of various commercial activities such as stores, restaurants, cinemas, galleries, and brand-oriented promotion. The main purpose of pop-up spaces, where the spatial arrangement is restructured, is to create spaces suitable for interaction with the brand beyond the wishes and needs of the consumers. In this context, design in pop-up spaces is an important element that provides the brand experience. In the postmodern world where visual saturation has been reached, the space turns into a performance space with aesthetic illusions and sensory experiences used to ensure rememberability. The atmosphere, which combines the physicality of the theater stage with the perception and meaning associated with the brand, offers consumers an enjoyable and memorable buying experience. In this context, pop-up spaces that adapt to the experience economy have become a strategic tool that strengthens the brand in the consumers' memory and supports the brand image against the risk of being left behind. It is assumed that in the postmodern era, in the face of increasing competition between brands and changing consumer trends, qualified space examples will be created day by day to improve brand and consumer relations.

The study deals with "pop-up spaces" as a marketing strategy developed for a competitive environment between businesses, that aims to be imprinted on consumers' minds, in the postmodern consumption era, and the metaphor of theater as an approach that responds to the changing needs in aesthetic and symbolic dimensions in pop-up space design.

The qualitative data obtained through the written and visual sources examined during the literature review were analyzed with the content analysis method. Similar and frequently repeated data were gathered under six subtitles and interpreted in a way that readers could understand.

In the first part of the study, the concept of brand and the relationship of space are examined and postmodern consumer trends, which are the reference point for the brand's space design, are discussed. In the second part, the concept of pop-up is defined, and the principles of pop-up space design are evaluated. In this context, the theatrical design approach is explained as a strategy that increases the consumer experience in the retail sector. Within this scope, the study shows that theater and retail pop-up space design can speak the same language and serve different purposes by making use of a common theoretical basis. In the last section, the design components used to create the targeted perception of the customer in pop-up spaces are examined. As a result, by drawing attention to the role of pop-up spaces in brand, space, and consumer interaction, the strong effect of the use of temporality and theater metaphor in retailing on brand identity is emphasized.

The literature review conducted during the research process shows that the studies dealing with pop-up spaces are predominantly marketing-oriented and literature on the design of these spaces is lacking. It is expected to contribute to the literature when the consumption, experience, and perception-oriented structure of the mentioned subject is considered in the context of spatial design. This study will inform designers, researchers, managers, and other members of the marketing, media, and retail sectors on the best practice of "pop-up spaces" as the intersection of marketing and design.

BACKGROUND

In the globalizing world, mass production has emerged as a result of developments in production technologies, and it has become easier to reach the consumption object depending on the increasing amount of goods and services. Consumption has ceased to be a phenomenon solely aimed at meeting needs, in line with the mass scale of consumption, the increase in the level of communication, and the changes in social structures; consumer understanding, consumer views, and expectations have changed. In this context, the concept of postmodern consumption, whose effects are felt all over the world as well as in developed capitalist countries, has emerged, and the material use-value of the consumption object has been replaced by the brand and image value (Baudrillard, 1998). While the production-centered understanding is abandoned, the magical images that are used to ensure the continuity of consumption have made consumption the most important goal for the individual. In this approach, which puts aesthetic pleasures at the forefront, the postmodern consumer prefers the consumption object according to its symbol and indicator value (Cova, 1996a). In the symbolic evocation and image culture, consumption object is accepted as a status indicator and a proof of a sustained lifestyle (O’Cass & McEwen, 2006), this attitude gives importance to the image value and therefore the meanings of the brands (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). The consumer believes that the consumption is a means of self-expression and uses the consumption as a source of pleasure and excitement to emotionally be satisfied in pursuit of new experiences, rather than meeting needs (Jantzen et al., 2012). According to this, for the individual constructing his/her identity through consumption actions, consumption has turned into an emotional tool with symbolic elements instead of providing functional benefits. In this case, the postmodern consumer is characterized as irrational people who are guided by their emotions and influenced by symbolic meanings and aesthetic criteria (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

In the consumption society, where permanence is replaced by transience, the postmodern consumer, who constantly strives to buy a new or different consumption object, seeks temporary pleasures. In this context, the consumer, who tends to break with the traditional, lacks commitment to big projects and seeks innovation, change, and excitement (Cova, 1996a). The adrenaline-addicted consumers, who seek a different experience in the context of each product and a surprise that will amaze them, want to satisfy their hedonic needs and these elements are used to activate their buying behavior (Hayta, 2014).

As the symbolic meanings of consumption objects and services become more important for consumers, the experience in the consumption process has gained importance (Parsons & Maclaran, 2009). While consumer behaviors and habits have evolved depending on the new system, the communication style of commercial businesses with the consumer has also changed within this framework. This change has caused enterprises to apply different marketing methods and strategies in an increasingly competitive environment. In the consumer society, where the saturation point has been reached in terms of branding and visual quality, temporary communication environments that can turn into spaces of experience are needed due to the rapid shortening of attention spans for retail spaces. Experiential marketing, which is one of the postmodern consumer-oriented approaches, is a marketing strategy that perceives the wishes and expectations of the consumer and establishes emotional bonds between the brand and the consumer through experience. In the postmodern era, when it is not enough to offer products or services to the consumer alone, experiential marketing has adopted the principle of making the consumer experience different emotions during the purchase. As a strategy that strengthens the brand image, the experiential approach focuses on the interaction between the brand and the consumer with corporate storytelling, thus creating a deep consumer bond (Smilansky, 2009). In postmodernism, the consumer has started to

take an active role in the production of meaning by getting rid of the passive target position for the image marketing of the businesses. In this period, which is called the age of experience, the understanding of experiencing and sharing emotions has been adopted instead of telling and selling (Cova, 1996b). Instead of buying a product or service that consumers did not have before, consumers are looking for an experience they have not had before (Yuan & Wu, 2008). The lived experience makes the consumer feel privileged and triggers the desire to experience the same feelings again (Deligöz, 2016). In this process, the extraordinary atmosphere and magical images presented to the consumer make the experience unforgettable. Beyond improving product and service quality for the target audience, the unique experiences created play an important role in strengthening the brand image in its current and future activities (Meyer & Schawager, 2007). Also, businesses using the experiential marketing strategy differ from their competitors, the value of the brand increases, and the formation of customer loyalty is supported (Schmitt, 1999).

Pop-up spaces, where this approach is formed, are temporary spaces that can meet the target audience at different points and serve the purpose of advertising and sales with surprising and amazing methods. Design in the pop-up space is the key element that presents the brand experience to the consumer. For this reason, it is essential to create a remarkable, surprising, original, and different space setup based on illusion and performance for the postmodern consumer, who is constantly in a state of excitement and enthusiasm (Cordan & Karagöz, 2013). These spaces, which create an environment for brand-consumer interaction, affect the perception of the brand in the industry by increasing brand awareness with their content that arouses curiosity and triggers a sense of discovery in the consumer (Puccinelli et al., 2009). Unusual space design attracts the attention of consumers and becomes a tool between the consumer and the brand to keep the brand value alive. While enabling the consumer to perceive the brand as three-dimensional in the space, it is aimed to differentiate in the sector with the design components. Therefore, an immersive atmosphere shaped around aesthetic illusions and sensory experiences is created to provide an abstract image of the brand in the consumer's mind. Thanks to a new reality and a different perception environment offered to the consumer, the brand takes a place in the memory of the consumer. Given the role of presentation and special effects, the interior becomes an exciting stage focused on consumer pleasure and entertainment (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

In the context of the theater metaphor, the design components that holistically construct a certain scene in the interior add depth to the experience by dramatizing the concept used in the space. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), businesses stage an experience when they communicate by attracting the attention of consumers. The *mise-en-scene*, created using universal theater principles and language, manipulates the imagination and emotions of the consumer while reinforcing the performance-based features of the space. The consumer is invited to interact with the performance rather than being a passive observer and can establish a stronger connection with the product and thus the brand as part of the show presented in the retail setting. In this context, the commercial space, which has theatrical features, exhibits an approach that focuses on the user experience beyond visuality.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

In the context of the theater metaphor, the subject has been accepted as related to how the presentation technique in the space affects the perception; it has been argued that the consumer-space relationship is a determinant in the design of consumption spaces and in directing consumer behaviors within the space,

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just like the audience-stage relationship. As a strategic marketing technique, the manipulation created in the mind of the consumer by the emotion desired to be created at the brand-consumer interface in pop-up spaces is emphasized.

Although the concept of pop-up space is handled in a multifaceted way in the field of marketing, the scarcity of academic research in the field of interior design draws attention. It is aimed that the proposed theoretical infrastructure will contribute to future studies on pop-up spaces on the brand-consumer axis.

BRAND AND SPACE FOR POSTMODERN CONSUMPTION

Creating brands, products, and services that meet the demands and needs of consumers are among the primary goals of marketing. To develop effective strategies in line with this goal, it is important to understand the factors that the consumers are under the influence of while making their brand and product choices. The way to compete in today's constantly and rapidly changing market conditions is to understand the thought, behavior, and lifestyle changes of consumers.

Postmodern Consumption and Consumer Trends

Consumption is a phenomenon that people have been continuing since the day they existed to maintain their vital activities and is in constant change according to the conditions of the current period. In the historical process, consumer needs and expectations have changed in parallel with globalization, technology, and social developments, and consumption activity has gained different meanings in different periods. Consumption, which is a part of daily life, has turned into a type of action where consumption objects are used in different ways, beyond meeting compulsory and priority needs.

In the modern period that developed after the Industrial Revolution, in socio-economic structures, lifestyles, and social relations, dynamic elements that affect people's daily lives have emerged. In this period when capitalism was on the rise, developments in production technologies and changes in production methods caused an increase in production. The stagnation and crisis environment that started after the global wars brought the world economy to the point of collapse; a production system for mass consumption has been developed, which reveals new needs to increase consumption against the decrease in supply (Gramsci, 1971). The rapid and mass consumption of products and services led to the idea of creating false needs instead of obligatory needs and making them feel like a need (Jansiz, 2014).

This change which has taken place worldwide due to globalization, the spread of mass media, and the consequent disappearance of borders, has been expressed with the concept of postmodernism in modern societies (Strinati, 1995). The modern period, which has existed for two centuries in the economic, social, and political fields, lost its influence in the 1950s, the postwar period, and left its place to the postmodern period, in which radical changes were experienced in the ways of production and consumption (Jameson, 1991). In the transition period from the more traditional modern period, in which production was at the forefront, to postmodernism, a reverse transformation was experienced in production and consumption, while the importance of production decreased, consumption gained acceleration. This difference observed between the modern and postmodern periods reveals different consumption patterns and consumer profiles (Berner & Van Tonder, 2003).

The decrease in production costs with the developing technology has enabled the production of cheap disposable objects, and durable objects that have been passed down for generations in most of the past

civilizations have been replaced by perishable products designed for instant use. In this context, the economic system, in which transience replaced permanence, made consumption permanent, and individuals dragged into chain shopping entered the race to consume more to adapt to rapidly changing conditions (Baudrillard, 1998). In the minds of individuals surrounded by objects, the phenomenon of need has been transformed, consumption has become a lifestyle that evokes a sense of pleasure and happiness in people beyond meeting their needs.

The emphasis of postmodernism on transience and the understanding of instant consumption cause the consumer identity to be formed through a variable context based on temporary values. Accordingly, the consumer buys a new identity while purchasing a product (Gabriel & Lang, 2006). During consumption, identities are changed similarly to changing costumes (Bauman, 1996). In this context, postmodern consumption is the process of constructing individual identity, in which identities are reproduced by removing belongings, apart from its economic meaning (Firat & Dholakia, 2003).

In the postmodern period, the preferred brands, products, and services are accepted as the supporter of the image, the indicator of the lifestyle, and social status (Hayta, 2014). Therefore, in this period when the symbolic elements of consumption habits come to the fore, the consumption object is a part of the effort to create a perception of people's self and identities (Kellner, 1992). In this case, the consumption object, which enables the individual to interact with the environment with its meanings, is used as a symbolic communication tool (Grubb & Grathwell, 1967).

Consumers, who match their identity with the symbolic features of the consumption object, tend to choose symbolically rich objects that express their personality and support the construction of their identity, as they try to reflect themselves through the brand they choose and the product they buy (Goulding, 2003). For this reason, consumption is usually realized for symbolic benefits rather than functional benefits. In this context, while the use-value has been replaced by the indicator value, symbols and images have become an integral part of consumption (Baudrillard, 1998).

In the postmodern era dominated by symbols, images, and visuals, the consumer has access to many different product options. For the postmodern consumer, who expects to be emotionally satisfied, the experience of the consumption object during consumption has gained importance beyond meeting the physical needs and providing benefits. According to Debord (1967/2002), the postmodern society is the society of the spectacle and the consumer in the middle of the hyper-reality surrounded by images strives to be a part of the spectacle. In this context, the object of consumption is the embodied illusion of the spectacle (Debord, 1967/2002).

The postmodern consumer desires to experience thematic environments rather than being exposed to finished products. Therefore, in the new period, it has become a necessity to develop marketing strategies that accept consumers as experience producers in the consumption process rather than a target (Firat et al., 1995). Solomon's (2003) statement on the subject, "*The traditional view of the consumer as a passive recipient is no longer accurate or very useful*" supports this understanding (p. 10).

Although postmodernism positions the consumer at the center of the production process, the constant flow of information and new products can lead to instability and create a variable consumer profile that avoids commitment (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993). Current market conditions with global competition present various challenges that require businesses to re-evaluate many marketing methods (Dawes & Berman Brown, 2000). Instead of assuming a stable consumer profile, it has become a necessity to follow an audience whose decision mechanism is variable, whose brand loyalty is weak, and who engages in impulse buying behavior (Babacan & Onat, 2002).

Relationship Between Brand, Space, and Image

The concept of a brand as a means of distinguishing a business's products and services from others has existed for centuries. Manufacturers have used brands or signs to distinguish their products from others since ancient times. By this means, manufacturers have defined their products, allowing consumers who want to repurchase or recommend their products to others, to recognize and specify these products (Murphy, 1987). Earlier, the first humans marked their animals by using warm symbols and aimed to prevent the mixing of animal herds with symbols to distinguish their animals. For this reason, the word "brandr", which means to burn in the Old Norse language, formed the origin of the word "brand", which means brand in English (Blackett, 2003).

A brand is a variety of mental associations that reinforce the perceived value of a product or service by the consumer (Keller, 2003). The brand covers many definitions from the phenomenon that makes sense of the high price to the characteristics of the business in the minds of the consumers. However, while definitions emphasize a common origin, they always refer to the object from which an impression is formed and the process of forming that impression (Blackett, 2003).

The emergence of the meaning of the brand concept used today dates back to the 19th century. After the Industrial Revolution, with the increase in mass production, it became important to present the products to the market with a decisive name, and the brand was used to increase the quality perception of the product with strong mental associations. The concept of the brand, which is at the center of the competition that emerged between businesses, has become relevant to the entire organizational structure of the company in the modern economic system. According to Bruce and Harvey (2008), beyond symbols and signs, today the brand is like an asset that provides loyalty, adds value, is the main factor of growth, and directs the business for any sector, although it was a concept that emerged in the early days for consumer goods.

The brand, which is the most valuable asset for a business, defines the products and services of the businesses and thus enables consumers to have information about them. For this reason, it is used as a tool to perceive the uniqueness of products in the consumer's mind (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). Today, obtaining a solid place in the mind of the consumer is of vital importance for the brand (Senbir, 2011).

Faced with many similar product options in an intensely competitive environment, consumers have difficulty in the decision-making process and make their choice according to brands and prices. Also, as a result of easier access of consumers to each brand and product in the consumption society, brand loyalty is negatively affected, and brands need to develop differentiation strategies. One of the ways businesses can stand out in this existing competition is to keep the consumer-brand interaction active by creating brands.

In this context, branding has strategic importance for businesses in differentiation-based competition. In addition to rapidly transforming buying behaviors, the development of new retailing formats with technological developments, and the easy access to different brands from various platforms show the importance of differentiation through fictional and sensory components that create unforgettable experiences to hold on to different brands in the sector.

Brands reflect the product they represent in line with the perceptual phenomena that occur in the minds of consumers. For this reason, Ries and Ries (2002) state that a strong image should be created in the minds of consumers to create a strong brand. The set of associations formed in the minds of consumers about the brand constitutes the brand image (Keller, 1993). The consumer deduces these associations from the communication and presentation techniques of the brand as well as the physical features of the

product (Can, 2014). A catchy and strong brand image that directs the consumer's impressions, ideas, and feelings about the brand positively affects the competitive advantage of the business (Newman & Atkinson, 2001). In addition to creating a brand image, it is of great importance to ensure the continuity of the created brand image.

A new process in the dominance of visual culture has become evident with the image becoming dominant in the postmodern period. Perceiving by seeing makes abstract concepts concrete, and perception becomes stronger with less mental effort. For this reason, visual images that are easily remembered in visual culture have become more effective in the formation of a brand image that can provide the desired effect in consumers (Çalık, 2021).

In the postmodern era, where diversity increases, visual differentiation is realized with design, and consumer perception is directed. As the physical representation of the brand, the space acts as the spokesperson of the brand with its three-dimensional brand experience. The consumer gives meaning to the space in the experience process. Philip Kotler (1973), with the term "atmospheric", which he coined in 1973, states that the consciously constructed physical environment can be used to create certain reactions in the consumer. For this reason, properly organized atmospheric elements are effective in creating the image of the brand by creating cognitive and behavioral reactions in the consumer (Boustani, 2020).

Visual aesthetics is an integral part of consumption (Crader & Zaichkowsky, 2008). By creating a fascinating space atmosphere, brands aim to attract the attention of the consumer, encourage purchasing, and create positive impressions of the brand in the consumer (Boustani, 2020). According to Baker and Parasuraman (1994), there is a high level of relationship between the physical attractiveness of commercial space and consumers' brand preference, and the atmosphere of the space drives these relationships. For this reason, the space plays the role of a bridge between the brand and the consumer.

Rather than the image that the brand is trying to create, the experience presented to the consumer and the reality perceived by the consumer constructs the brand image (Palmer, 2010). While purchasing a product offered by a brand, besides the functional benefit of this product, other opportunities provided by the product also become a part of the buying experience (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In these processes, the consumer develops feelings and subjective symbolic meanings about the brand. A positive and memorable brand experience becomes vital for brands in terms of strengthening the brand image, as it creates an abstract picture of the brand in the mind of the consumer (Schmitt, 1999).

POP-UP SPACE AS A COMMERCIAL STAGE

Within the framework of cultural and social dynamics that are constantly changing, the postmodern consumer, who chooses to behave more freely compared to other consumers, seeks differences and becomes increasingly indifferent to standards, tends to oppose product and service presentations made in similar ways. Such changes and differentiations also show themselves in the buying behavior of the consumers, they do not find the products offered in the usual way enough for them, and they demand to buy these products from where they want and when they want.

Marketing-related activities, which are among the basic functions of businesses, are important in terms of keeping the relationship of existing customers with the brand longer and attracting potential customers. In this context, businesses need unique and consumer-oriented approaches instead of conventional strategies.

Pop-Up Space

The emergence of similar-looking spaces in the retail sector has begun to standardize and dull these spaces, and methods of differentiation with spaces to be structured in the context of the brand image have begun to be sought. Given the volatility of the sector, the evolution of digital retail formats, and the growing desire of consumers for new experiences, commercial spaces must continually evolve to remain a part of the retail sector (Alexander et al., 2018). Consumers' search for a more memorable and enjoyable buying experience has been a trigger for new retail formats (Cassel et al., 2021).

Pop-up spaces are spatial arrangements that can be located in places with different characters, serve different purposes, and are designed for temporary periods (Cordan & Karagöz, 2013). Today, pop-up spaces have emerged as a result of the awareness of brands that the exchange of value with the consumer can only be achieved by incorporating novelty and uniqueness into commercial spaces, creating a positive consumer experience and in a certain time period (Boustani, 2020). Businesses have started to implement pop-up spaces as a new marketing tool to create the experiential environment that consumers desire, to support brand image, attract attention, and gain new customers (Niehm et al., 2007).

In the context of transience, pop-up spaces are seen as a symbol of the consumer's constant search for innovation. The incentive for the consumer is the anxiety of not being able to visit a unique, temporary, and non-repeating event (Pomodoro, 2013). In this context, temporary stores represent the essence of postmodern marketing, which has been restructured for the short attention spans consumers have (Boustani, 2021a). Pop-up spaces characterize the uncertain nature of the consumer, causing fluctuations among consumers and disappearing before they get bored.

In the retail sector, temporary spaces are planned to improve brand image and brand awareness in the eyes of consumers (Pomodoro, 2013). The atmosphere of a temporary commercial space, which encourages experience to share knowledge, values, and emotions with consumers, attracts consumers and offers the opportunity to interact with the brand (Boustani, 2020). The emergence of pop-up spaces at the right place and at the right time enables consumers to instantly encounter brands while on the go (Lowe et al., 2018). For businesses who aim to highlight their brand, strategically positioning pop-up spaces increase the possibility of reaching potential consumers, the tendency to appear in several different places at different times creates a mental link between pop-up spaces and all other activities of the brand. In this context, pop-up spaces benefit from experiential marketing principles as a three-dimensional communication tool (Boustani, 2021a).

The pop-up space creates a marketing environment that focuses on the promotion of a brand or product collection, exists for a short time, and allows for unique experiences, often encouraging more physical dialogue between the consumer and the brand in more constrained spaces (Niehm et al., 2007). Pop-up spaces, an experiential retail format, focus on creating memorable consumer experiences by combining interacting elements (Cassel et al., 2021). Having experiences in the retail environment makes the brand accessible in the mind of the consumer, strengthens the brand image, and affects the recall of the brand (Niehm et al., 2007). In this context, pop-up spaces, despite their short life, are key to supporting long-term consumer relationships and guiding a brand's future strategies (Pomodoro, 2013).

In pop-up space design, it is essential to create an original and different spatial arrangement suitable for different marketing objectives. It is important to construct the space with an interactive approach, which is shaped by experiential marketing techniques, is surprising, remarkable, based on illusion and performance, and aims to communicate directly with the audience (Cordan & Karagöz, 2013). As a syn-

thesis of communication and sales, pop-up spaces provide consumers with an atmosphere that develops on the axis of innovation, privilege, surprise, and discovery (Lowe et al., 2018).

In the retail environment, consumers demand an experience that excites them rather than just selling something. From the moment consumers experience the atmosphere, they interact with the brand on the axis of their emotions (Boustani, 2021b). A pop-up space is also defined as an experiential store as it puts the experience in the foreground (Boustani, 2020). At the same time, the use of different types of experiences, such as entertaining, aesthetic, educational, and immersive experiences, is frequently encountered in pop-up spaces (Cordan & Karagöz, 2013). This type of experience adds pleasure and happiness to utilitarian shopping and helps distinguish one brand from another in the consumer's mind (Cassel et al., 2021).

The excitement and innovation initiated by pop-up spaces provide consumers with an escape from reality and consumers are invited to the show (De Lassus & Anido Freire, 2014). Environmental components, which are designed to enable consumers to experience the atmosphere more intensely, dramatize and stage a particular theme (Boustani, 2020). Puccinelli et al. (2009) think that an atmosphere that can evoke various reactions in consumers contains clues about the brand, and this will radically affect the consumer-brand interaction. For this reason, the atmosphere is an important determinant in the continuation of the brand-consumer communication during and after the experience production and buying process.

Pop-up spaces benefit from investing in atmospheres that emotionally captivate consumers and allow them to have unique experiences. In this context, businesses create a theatrical retail atmosphere that invites them to participate in the experience while focusing on the excitement, entertainment, and pleasure of the consumer (Boustani, 2020). In this context, pop-up spaces, in addition to being an area to be exhibited and admired, also contain theatrical elements that help consumers generate positive reactions to the brand through stories and images. Surprising and exaggerated design components provide theatrical environments that stimulate the consumer's imagination and senses, encouraging participation in the experience (Jain & Bagdare, 2009).

Theatrical Design

The theater metaphor is one of the common metaphors in the marketing literature (Harris et al., 2003). Pine and Gilmore (1999) mentioned the importance of creating loyalty by influencing consumers through experiences and emphasized the concept of theatricality in their study called "Experience Economy". To create value in the current market conditions, products and services are not enough, it is necessary to stage experience. This metaphor has been adopted as a way to attract the attention of consumers in commercial spaces and to make a difference in a market where competition is increasing (Baron et al., 2001). In this context, the theatrical structures of pop-up spaces, which have turned into a stage, are effective in creating brand awareness by supporting businesses to make a sound when entering new markets.

Theater design is the art of creating visual and auditory elements that shape a performance space in support of the script. These elements combine to create an atmosphere in which the play will be staged, and the audience can experience the performance. The scenario, which is supported by the dramatic structure created, is narrated through the performance, and the interaction of the performers with the audience. In this context, the audience participates in the performance by reacting to the events depicted on the stage. Transforming words into images that support communication forms the basis of theatrical design (Malloy, 2014).

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The first contact with the play begins with seeing and perceiving the stage. In the theater, the audience tries to make sense of the messages they see. Stage design supports the work according to the use of components and helps the audience to produce new meanings. The attitude developed by the audience towards what they perceive from the stage is subject to change with new data and processes. In this context, the stage constitutes the basis of meaning (Yücel, 2020).

In the context of the theater metaphor, pop-up spaces stage what the brand wants to convey to the consumer to trigger brand-consumer interaction. In this context, the theatrical design translates words into images (Malloy, 2014). While every element of the play, that is in harmony and complements each other, increase commercial success; dramatization creates an atmosphere that consumers discover and enjoy. In the staged space, the consumer is no longer a consumer and plays a leading role in the construction of a memorable experience that takes place in privileged environments (Boustani, 2020). Service, as staging a play, while the product is defined as stage decoration, the stage is designed to create a special moment for each consumer during the participation process (Cordan & Karagöz, 2013).

The design attracts the consumers who experience the dramatic action into the world of the play, involving them in the staged performance at a sensory level. Consumers get rid of the monotony of traditional retail environments through these hyper-real environments, where they are disconnected from daily realities. Similarly, pop-up spaces add to the retail environment the sense of innovation, surprise, and exclusivity that theaters and “Cirque du Soleil” have enjoyed for years. As a result, the strong dramatic experience that a brand offers in the commercial space nurtures consumer satisfaction, and “planned spontaneity” gives acceleration to the brand. (Boustani, 2020).

Theatrical Design Components in Pop-Up Spaces

Visual components on the theater stage are placed holistically to achieve the effect that the play wants to reflect and to direct the perception in this direction. The atmospheric components depicted in the stage design are deliberately brought together to shape the audience’s impression (Benedetto, 2013). In the theater, the audience tries to make sense of the fiction by evaluating all the components presented on the stage one by one. In this process, the audience is included in the fiction by evaluating the visual components of the scene and the visual messages conveyed together with the emotional expressions conveyed by the performer. (Malloy, 2014).

In the commercial space, on the other hand, it is aimed to arouse a sense of curiosity in the consumer with similar visual components used by taking advantage of the magic of the theater stage, and the consumer is invited to experience. By combining the material and mental elements of the brand, the qualities of the space are exaggerated perceptually, and the performative aspect of the commercial space, which turns into a stage, is enhanced.

The surreal spatial arrangement, exciting colors, disproportionate symbols and objects, illusionary graphic elements, rhythmic installations, and dramatic lighting design will be examined as examples of visual components encountered in pop-up commercial spaces.

Surreal Spatial Arrangement

It does not matter how realistic the scene is on the theater stage where reality is not represented exactly (Benedetto, 2012). To support the play, the unreal elements used in spatial arrangement make the theater a part of the imagination and interiority. In this context, the surreal arrangement of the theater stage,

which has the ability to shape perceptions, is used in pop-up spaces to reach the depths of the consumer's mind. Similar to the theater stage, it transforms into an atmosphere where emotions, perceptions, and experiences are lived.

Surreal spaces are spaces that cannot exist in the real world. Pop-up spaces, which embody subjective imaginations with real objectivity, create surreal arrangements that contrast with the physical world by bringing together many elements that have no spatial and semantic relationship. These spatial arrangements, which are shaped by the imagination of the consumer who experiences the space, can offer an unlimited variety. These spaces, which the consumer thinks that they are not likely to encounter, gain meaning with the consumer's distorted view of reality and inferences and leave a stronger effect on the subconscious. This arrangement, which is out of bounds and does not worry about credibility and makes the consumer feel freer, is aimed to offer exploration opportunities in different dimensions and an immersive space experience.

Exciting Colors

The element of color is at the heart of the narrative created by the theater stage. While the thought structures and messages are conveyed to the audience on the stage, the visual composition created through color increases the effect of the story to be told. Color helps the audience to focus on the subject while making it easier for the scene to take place in the audience's mind.

In the commercial space, on the other hand, color is used to create an atmosphere that creates the desired perception and emotion in the consumer, to be remembered, to attract attention, and to be noticed (Bellizzi et al., 1983). The use of color provides meaning transfer by directing the perception and in this context, it represents a silent language (Fraser & Banks, 2004).

The color impression acquired during the space experience also directs memory and thought processes apart from instant visual stimulation. Emphasis can be made by using a single color in the space, by making combinations of contrasting, white and black, saturated basic and medium color tones, the visual experience is shaped, and the place held in the mind is reinforced (Valerievna et al., 2021). In this context, the unusual color used in the space supports organization and coding in perception and positively affects brand awareness.

Disproportionate Symbols and Objects

Proportion expresses the perceived size relations between parts of a whole. The proportion difference experienced based on human measurements supports the thematic ideas of the scene when used unexpectedly or exaggeratedly (Malloy, 2014). Unusually scaled elements are used to create a focal point and to emphasize and draw attention (Ching, 2007).

In pop-up spaces, it is seen that the human-space proportionality is deteriorated by businesses that want to surprise the consumer and change their perception of space. An important element of the brand, which is given a unique shape, is visually emphasized by equipping it with a contrasting color or texture and dimensioning it meaningfully. These elements, which turn into remarkable and catchy symbols in the space by activating the imagination, make an effective difference in the quality of the visual experience (Özçam, 2019).

Illusionary Graphic Elements

In the theater stage, deceptive backgrounds that increase reality are used to remind a certain time and place and to create spatial depth and perspective (Whitehead, 2018). Three-dimensional perception and illusions created by the systematic combination of form, space, depth, movement, and color elements contribute to the effect dimension of the communication process in the visual communication process (Timur & Keş, 2016).

Graphic works experienced through interaction in pop-up spaces push the consumer to question perceptually. While the symbols of the brand are blended with the use of lines, geometric shapes, light, and dark colors together, the deceptive elements created provide the visual illusion and strengthen the relationship between the space and the consumer. Optical patterns that can be applied to areas such as the wall or floor surface completely change the character of the commercial space, making the space interesting (Özçam, 2019).

Rhythmic Installations

Rhythm is defined as the harmonic repetition of certain forms in a composition (Ching, 2007). While it is used to emphasize the whole of an object or to emphasize the parts that make up the whole, it supports thematic and conceptual elements. The way the objects come together allows different associations on the appearance, mood, and rhythm of the story. The variety in rhythm makes the scene livelier and more exciting. Objects that are repeated at regular intervals create movements that guide the audience on the stage and enable them to be guided throughout the composition (Malloy, 2014).

Rhythmic installations are also seen in commercial spaces in remarkable forms and are applied to pop-up spaces as an element that supports the customer experience by bringing together objects related to each other and the space in terms of meaning and perception. Installations, which can be constructed with various methods, are used in ways that support the space aesthetically, symbolically, or functionally in relation to the brand (Özçam, 2019). The installations, which contain the messages that the business wants to convey with their artistic and conceptual dimensions, are experienced as a part of the communication between the consumer and the brand.

Dramatic Lighting Design

In addition to providing visibility, light in the theater supports the dramatic atmosphere by giving depth and perspective to the stage with its density, distribution, and movement, and directly affects the audience by creating an emotional reaction. With the visual effects provided by an effective lighting design, the thematic ideas are reflected while emphasizing the dramatic aspect of the scenario. Lighting design, which has a comprehensive effect on the appearance of visual design components, affects the whole design, and when the light differs, the perception of objects and other visual components can change. Therefore, the lighting guides the perception that the scene creates in the audience (Malloy, 2014).

In pop-up spaces, on the other hand, while architectural elements are emphasized with dramatic lighting techniques suitable for the concept, the inviting aspect of the space is brought to the fore. A dynamic and catchy visual experience can be created by directing the composition of the color, intensity, distribution, and movement of the light and the perceptual aspect of the lighting in the direction of the

atmosphere desired to be created (Pilbrow, 1997). In this case, lighting turns into a tool that affects human behavior besides its aesthetic quality (Jaglarz, 2011).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Within the scope of the study, the design components used in the context of the theater metaphor in pop-up commercial spaces were examined through the visuals after the literature review, and classification was made based on the information obtained. The surreal spatial arrangement, exciting colors, disproportionate symbols and objects, illusionary graphic elements, rhythmic installations, and dramatic lighting design are the components included in the article. Although the design components that can be used in the space in the context of the theater metaphor are not limited to the ones mentioned in this study, it should be noted that as the number of examined examples is increased, more different elements may be encountered. In the study, an analysis was made on current space examples, it is predicted that new topics can be reached by examining different examples.

CONCLUSION

In the post-modern period that developed after the Industrial Revolution, there is a rapid change from a production-based economy to a consumption-based economy. In this period, consumption has evolved into a phenomenon where symbolic needs are met as well as physical needs, and brands, products, and services have turned into a social status tool that reflects the identity of the consumer. In this context, the symbolic values of the consumed objects come to the fore instead of the content, and individuals take on different personalities according to the products they buy and the brands they prefer. Also, with the increasing production within the framework of the abundance of products experienced with the developing production technologies, the brands have also increased, and the consumers have been surrounded by similar objects. This situation has increased the competition between brands and businesses, making consumers loyal customers, maintaining their market shares, increasing their sales, and staying in a preferred position has gained importance. In this context, it has made it necessary for brands and businesses to constantly renew themselves and develop marketing strategies suitable for the postmodern consumer.

In this new process, visual images have become more effective, and the use of visual images has gained weight to provide the difference in the formation of the brand image that can create the desired effect. In an increasingly competitive environment, brands use the design element and try to establish a bond with their consumers to maintain their existence and ensure consumer loyalty. Considering that the unforgettable experiences of the consumer strengthen the brand image, it is understood that brands should design commercial spaces as a visual communication element to create a positive experience for holistic brand perception.

While trying to increase the value of brands in the eyes of consumers with visual communication elements, it has become common to create fantastic experience spaces to attract the target audience. In this context, pop-up spaces, which are used as a marketing strategy, appear before the consumer at unexpected times and offer a surprising, striking, and entertaining experience to the consumers through their unique spatial elements. With the fascinating experience, a privileged feeling is created for the consumer, and the brand image is strengthened with new contexts created in the consumer's mind.

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Contrary to the passive position of the consumer in traditional commercial spaces, the active role played by pop-up commercial spaces carries the relations established with the space to a new dimension. While pop-up spaces, with their aesthetic illusions and immersive atmosphere, turn into a stage in the context of the theater metaphor, the consumer is brought to an active position in the space and experiences memorable experiences in a new reality created by theatrical design components.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Brand Image: The set of perceptions that consumers create in their minds about the brand.

Experiential Marketing: One of the postmodern consumer-oriented approaches is a marketing strategy that directly involves the target audience in the brand experience and allows the brand to interact directly with the consumer.

Pop-Up Spaces: Temporary spaces that can meet the target audience at different points to communicate with the consumer in surprising ways and to create a memorable experience that supports the brand image.

Postmodern Consumption: The culture of consumption in which the distinction between real needs and fake needs disappears and symbols and indicators come to the fore instead of goods or services.

Theatrical Design: A design strategy in which the concept in the space is dramatized to add depth to the experience in pop-up spaces.

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