

Customer experience in the digital age

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Introduction

Customer shopping experiences in the digital age have been transforming considerably. The new technology is creating the basis of immersive experience and the value creation in the modern era is somehow dependent on how well the digital age is diversified related to it. From the business issue perspective, the effect of digital experience is relatively different on every customer base; thus, the positioning of the interventions related to the young individuals is important to evaluate (Ylilehto and Komulainen, 2021). The reason why millennials are crucial in terms of digital world is that they have been carrying out shopping practices in a less digital world; therefore, the transition from a less digital world to a more digital world is a crucial element to consider reflecting upon favorable returns (BOF, 2022). There is a business need to explore the position of millennials in the digital age and how the overall experience is aligned. The purpose of the proposed study is to explore the level of millennial experience in the digital world.

The findings of Hoyer, Kroschke and Schmitt (2020) affirmed that the experiential value of each and every customer tends to vary from each other. The role of augmented and virtual reality is proficient as it provides the basis of real-world experience for the customers and the overall consensus is aligned. The reason why the proposed research is of utmost interest is that the perception of the millennials is important in fashion industry. Fashion Network (2022) presented that majority of the customer base of the fashion industry in the UK comprise of Generation Z and millennials; therefore, the interest of the millennials is important. The proposal is based upon evaluation of the preliminary research in the past as well as the methodological patterns that prevail to reflect upon the data collection practices.

Preliminary review of literature

As per the research carried out by Rose and Clark (2012), the two most proficient factors that play a crucial role in aligning the digital experience of the customers are cognitive experiential state as well as the affective experiential state. This means that the mind and emotions are crucial in aligning the state of affairs in an effective manner. The focus is upon leading towards a certain degree of satisfaction for the concerned customers. Moreover, the cognitive experiential state is aligned on the basis of the interactivity speed of the internet as well as the telepresence; whereas,

in the case of affective experiential state, the role of ease of use, degree of connectedness and the aesthetics comes into play; therefore, the main framework related to argument has been created from the author's research as displayed below. The framework reflects upon the fact that the mental and affective elements can make or break the link with the concerned customer journey and the overall experience is aligned related to it. On the other hand, Aravamudhan (2015) presented that the use of statistical underpinning through a sample size of 201 students doing online shopping revealed that the cognitive experiential state is directly associated with the overall buying intention. The presence on the internet and increased level of exposure of the online value proposition helps the concerned customers to buy the products at regular intervals and show utmost attention towards them.

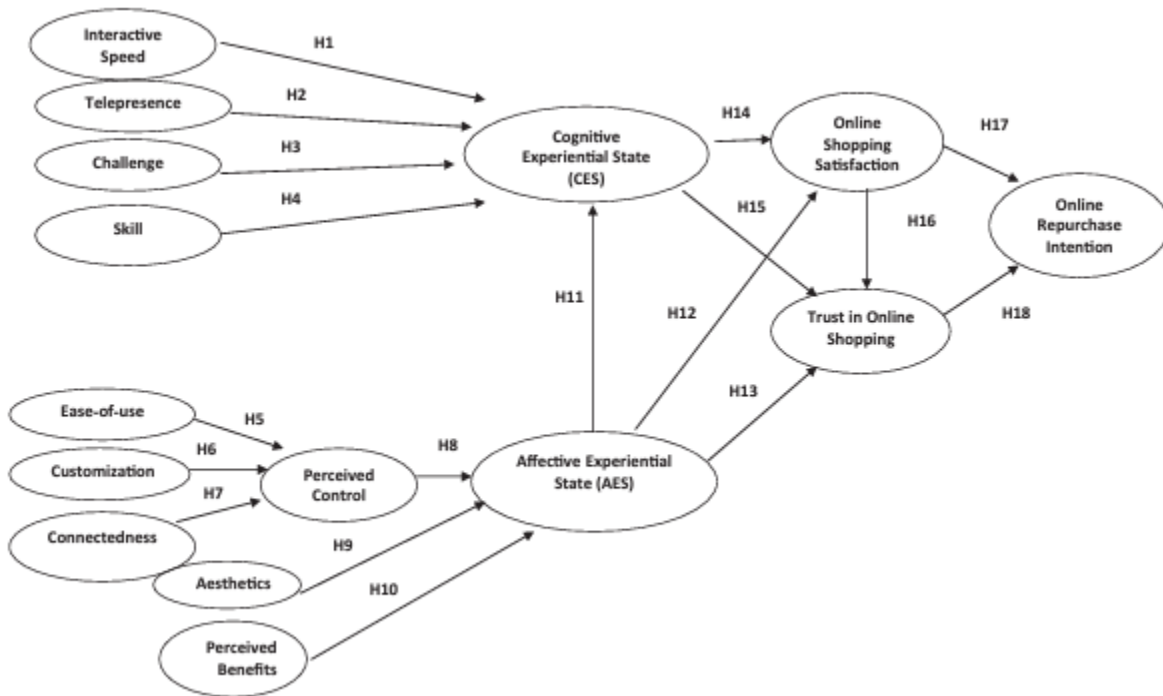


Figure 1: Online customer experience

(Source: Rose and Clark, 2012)

As per Samala (2019), the social exchange theory clarified that the brand engagement being carried out by the digital brands in the recent era has been quite extensive and it has led towards successive returns. The concerned customer participation improves considerably when the brand engagement

tactics are reliant on the digital framework. The current age of customers i.e., millennials are dependent on extensive use of internet and spending time online; thus, the overall exposure towards brand related knowledge has been extensive and it has led towards favorable returns in a timely manner. The role of social exchange theory is evident because the social media platforms are utilized and the information sharing among the key individuals has been crucial. In contrast to this, Ozuem (2021) elaborated that the social cohesiveness is extensive and the brands are reliant upon it. Moreover, the online brand communities have been beneficial. Since their creation, the concerned customers have been enjoying a favorable position and a consensus is attained. The online brand communities enable the customers to remain loyal to the brand. The reason is that a 360-degree experience comes into play in this regard. The consideration is given to Facebook to explore the overall customer experience as presented by Islam (2021) and the findings reveal that the product reviews, product recommendations as well as the product aesthetics being presented with the help of social media channels has been proficient. The concerned customers tend to rely upon this data and they can diversify the overall position. Apart from this, the findings reveal that the brands on Facebook indulge towards live shows which are quite enticing and it leads towards an emotional attachment being created related to the brand under consideration. However, the role of successive advertisement and targeted practices to approach the respondents such as millennials holds the key and better positioning is being carried out related to it.

In the view of Cattapan (2022), the role of omnichannel retailing intervention is proficient as it brings about successive changes and the basis of seamless experience for the customers is created. The overall customer journey is required to be influenced so that better outcomes for the future are created. The large companies tend to rely upon online and offline customer base and their level of experience tends to be similar; however, the fashion entities that are specifically reliant upon integration promotion and pricing tactics. The overall customer experience is aligned on the basis of unique display of advertisement. The sources of attraction have relatively changed in the recent era and they are reliant on innovative dynamics. The research of Gazzola and Pavione (2020) revealed that the emerging trends in the concerned fashion industry matter a lot and younger generation are reliant on proactive measures being deployed by the concerned brands. The brands that tend to depict their environmental proficiency and better state of affairs related to it through

digital channels are crucial in this regard and better mindset is shaped up of the concerned customers.

The theoretical framework under consideration in the proposed study is as follows.

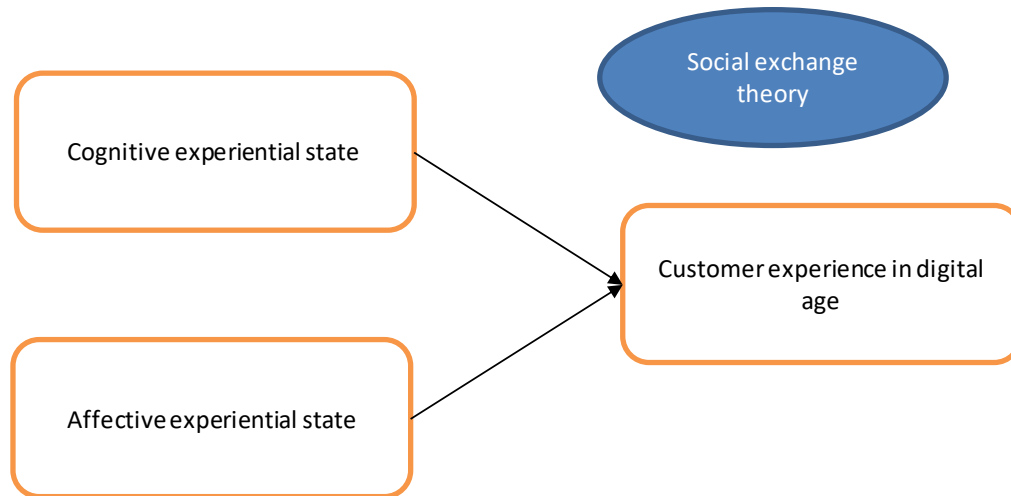


Figure 2: Theoretical framework

The research somehow fits in the category of empirical evidence in which the respondent profile is generated and their respective perception is shaped up.

The research questions that will be followed are highlighted as.

- What is the concept behind customer experience in the contemporary era for fashion customers?
- What kind of customer experience is associated with the millennials?
- What is the millennial experience towards digital contemporary era in the case of UK fashion industry?
- What are the recommendations that can be followed by the fashion retail companies in the UK to maximize the customer experience?

Methodology

Methodological choices and patterns

The focus of the proposed research will be on two paradigms namely positivism and interpretivism. The reason why the two paradigms will be utilized is that the researcher is keen upon single and multiple nature of realities to be generated (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). The focus is upon developing a consensus and the role of logical reasoning and factual representation holds the key. The intention to focus upon in-depth evaluation of the topic of interest also holds the key in this regard to diversify the position of the respondents. The deployment of objective as well as subjective data is under consideration and the information related to the customer experience is aligned related to it. The perception and thinking patterns of the millennials has been crucial in this regard (Brannen, 2017).

The research approach that will be followed is deductive approach. The focus will be upon generating statistical assumptions that are required to be proved through testing procedures. For this purpose, the focus will be upon testing already established theory rather than testing a new theory. The reason is that wide range of data is available related to the customer experience in a digital era; however, the existing data is required to be transformed related to it (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The research design under consideration will be explanatory. The presence of variables is certainly there as per the preliminary research; however, the existence of literature related to the variables emphasized the researcher to focus upon a statistical connection among the variables in a successive manner. The choice of explanatory study is carried out because the cause and effect analysis are to be carried out (Davies and Hughes, 2014). The role of independent variables towards the dependent variable is required to be addressed in a favorable manner in order to reflect upon favorable returns. It has been ascertained that the explanatory research design intensifies the overall approach towards learning appropriately and the researcher is able to identify a statistical connection.

The research strategy that will be followed is ethnography and surveys. The researcher will focus upon multiple strategies because a 360-degree approach is required to be carried out related to topic of interest and better positioning is aligned related to it. Moreover, the use of survey as well

as ethnography strategy is tandem is favorable because up to date data can be carried out and the information related to the respondents i.e., the millennials will be explored about their level of experience and the ongoing thinking patterns. The use of primary data will be deployed and it will be backed up with two instruments namely questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire will be based upon Likert scale of 5 points; however, the interview will be based upon semi-structured perspective as semi-structured information will be tapped through this.

As far as the sampling is concerned, the researcher will involve 100 millennials who are residing in the UK through LinkedIn. The focus will be upon approaching them through social media platforms to eliminate the issues of accessibility. The role of convenience sampling is evident as the first 100 respondents will be approached related to the topic. The sample size for interview assessment is 5 marketing managers working in the retail sector of UK. The respondents will be approached through convenience sampling and the utilization of LinkedIn is there.

The data analysis will be based upon SPSS-based practices in which the core statistical tests will be carried out such as reliability, regression, correlation, descriptive, validity and frequency analysis. On the other hand, the interview analysis will be assessed through the thematic analysis in which similar patterns of the responses will be utilized considerably.

Scope of the research

The research is limited to the UK fashion industry only; however, it is an online research; therefore, all the concerned respondents available in the UK vicinity and who indulge in fashion related shopping will be approached accordingly.

Limitations and constraints

A key limitation being highlighted related to research design is that the sample size of 100 is limited; however, the time elapsed in data collection of two different methodological patterns is relatively on a higher side. Due to this aspect, the time limitation is there. When it comes to the cost and other resources constraint, the constraints are not there because the data collection process is also desk-based; however, the utilization of a viable internet connection and a mobile phone is there to ensure that the desired outcomes are being carried out in a relatively favorable manner.

Consideration of ethical issues

In order to determine the ethical issues that tend to prevail in the proposed study, the role of confidentiality is a predominant factor; however, it has been backed up with the anonymity element. The researcher has kept the respondents anonymous and any kind of biasness involved in the present case is avoided. The overall state of affairs is aligned related to it and the focus is also upon withdrawal. The respondents are provided with the liberty to withdraw from the research at any given time.

Timetable

| | <u>Dec</u> -22 | <u>Jan-</u> 23 | <u>Feb-</u> 23 | <u>Mar</u> -23 | <u>Apr</u> -23 | <u>May</u> -23 | <u>Jun-</u> 23 | <u>Jul-</u> 23 | <u>Aug</u> -23 |
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| Milestone 1: Introduction | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>background information</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>objectives and questionnaire</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Milestone 2: Literature review | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>evaluation of past literature</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>research gap construction</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Milestone 3: Methodology | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Shaping up research onion</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>creation of data collection instruments</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Actual data collection</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Milestone 4: Data analysis and discussion | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Data analysis and statistical evaluation</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>coding and thematic analysis of interviews</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>combining with past literature</i> | | | | | | | | | |

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|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Milestone 5: Conclusion and recommendations | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Summarized findings</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>finalization of dissertation</i> | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 1: Milestone

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