Customer experience as a marketing concept was first introduced on in the mid1980s. Before this, the main literature at the time focused on the customer as a

rational decision maker, which made the idea of experiential approach new and

original; consumers were already thinkers and doers, but now they were also

feelers. The idea of customer experience became even more relevant in the

following decade when Pine and Gilmore (1998) presented the progression of

economic value. The core idea is that during the purchase process, experiences

can be viewed as an economic offering and serve as the next point after

commodities, goods, and services. At the beginning of the 2000s customer

experience received great awareness and several contributions were focusing

their attention on the subject and experience as a new form of creating value for

both customers and companies. (Gentile et al. 2007.)

Despite acknowledging the importance of customer experiences, the

literature in the early 2000s focused mainly on managerial publications and

practitioner-oriented journals. The focal point was therefore on the managerial

actions and outcomes, rather than on the actual methods determining the sources

and consequences of the customer experience. (Verhoef et. al. 2009.) When

evaluating the service experience from a research perspective, the relationship

between a customer and company forms from a series of encounters. Recent

research of the customer experience often conceptualizes these encounters as

touchpoints which together form a unified service process called customer

experience journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Since the journey consists of more

than just the just the core service, it is important to focus on the experience as a

whole. Authors such as Voorhees et al. (2017) recognize this in their recent

analysis of service experience literature. They note that while the prior work

concerning the topic is indisputably foundational, it often lacks in providing a

vision of service research outside the core service encounters. Thus, they suggest

looking beyond the obvious and examining the all-compassing service

experience including the pre-core, core, and post-core service encounters.

Mapping the customer journey through experiences

In today’s modern and customer-driver environment it is critical for companies

to understand the experiences of consumers and the journey their customer have

to go through. More than ever before, customers are interacting with the firms

via several diverse touchpoints which include communication in various

channels and media. All in all, compared to the early consumer behavior models,

customer experiences are becoming more social which requires companies to

purposefully take action in integrating numerous business functions in

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pursuance of delivering and creating consistent and positive customer

experiences.

Tseng et al. (1999) present an idea of improving service operations by the

customers’ service experience, which is presented in the figure below. The

improvement can be executed by discovering the customer experiences and

following the customer experience mapping. Information gathered by methods

such as examining customer behavior, their interaction and contacts, and what

their current experience journey regarding the service operations is, can be used

as an insight to improve the service quality. This insight may be utilized in

uncovering where exactly the service experience should be improved so that the

customers’ perception of value can be enhanced.

FIGURE 2 Improving the service experience of customers (Tseng et al., 1999)

2.1.1 Definition and creation

Some of the first authors to mention the concept of customer experience were

Pine and Gilmore (1998). They discovered that while the services were becoming

more commoditized, the forefront companies started to utilize experiences in the

competition for customers. The idea of customer experience journey and journey

mapping can be seen as drawing the base from theoretical methods such as SIT

(sequential incident technique) and service mapping. SIT was first introduced by

Stauss and Weinlich in 1997 and later published in their 1997 article. In the article,

the sequential incident method was used to measure the capacity of service by

sorting the phases of the customer relationship into the order of priority in the

eyes of the consumer.

Norton and Pine II (2013) define customer journey as a sequence of events

that can either be designed or not. During this journey, the customers go through

learning about, purchasing, and interacting with the company or the brand. The

journey may include a specific commodity, good, service, or experience, that is

in the center of the purchase process. The customer journey reflects a specially

designed sequence of events, which are produced by the company in order to

create value for the customers as well as profitability for the company and

standing out from the competitors.

Customer journey maps are used to illustrate individuals’ experiences as a

customer of a certain company. The maps normally include making choices

related to the buying process, such as deciding to buy a product or a service, or

the decision to continue being a loyal customer. Customer journey maps typically

Recognize and

map customer's

service experience

Discovery of potential

problems and

opportunities by

examining the

customer's experience

Take action: improve

service operations so

that some change

occurs in customer's

service experience

Goal:

improve

customerexperience