Unit 7 Portfolio Activity

In relation to the 'Components of User Experience' model from Van der Linden et al., (2019) (below), consider the 'Emotional reactions' of user experience.
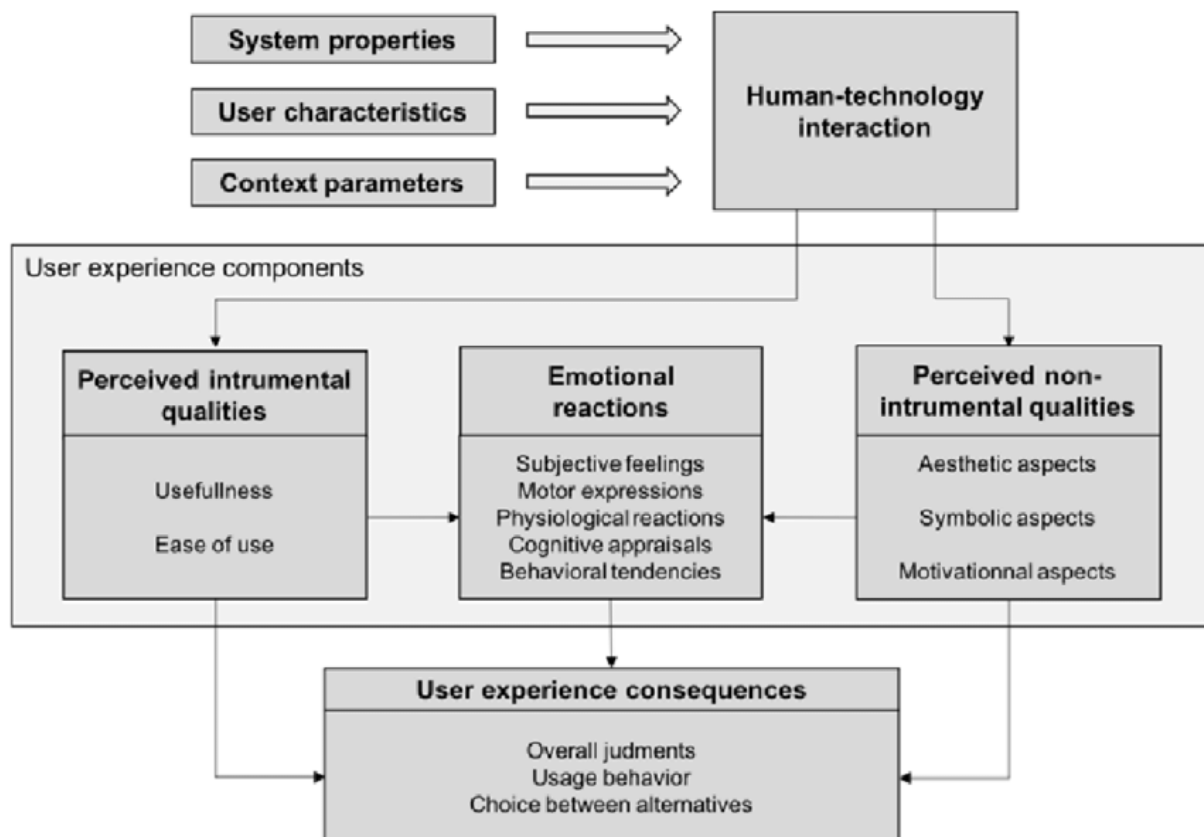

Figure 1 Components of User Experience Model (van der Linden et al., 2019)

Q: As a project manager, what might be your response to manage the emotional reactions of a customer?

Emotional intelligence (E.I.) is a crucial feature required of project managers without which it is challenging to monitor emotions, either their own or others', to best use them to guide actions, thinking, and intuition (Akkermans et al., 2020). When customers express adverse emotional reactions, it profoundly impacts all product team members. They may believe countless development hours were wasted to deliver instrumental qualities, or management teams may reflect on improvements to existing processes. However, despite any adverse responses, project managers with high E.I. recover quickly from negative emotions and can

better maintain relationships (Wong and Law, 2017), a trait necessary to keep communication between stakeholders free of emotional distraction.

Project managers need to have personal E.I. to manage internal product teams and leverage E.I. in the context of customers' emotions as part of product delivery. Connecting with customers' emotions plays to the success of an organisation's brand perception (brand equity) that forms the basis of a customer's loyalty intentions (Ou and Verhoef, 2017). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) point out that customer emotion plays a crucial role in consumer behaviour and marketing activities. For example, customer experiences vary across engagement touchpoints with a product, either pre-purchase, purchase, or post-purchase. Such touchpoints generate either positive, negative, or neutral emotions. These emotions form the basis of a customer's perception of brand reputation, trustworthiness and, by association, loyalty. Therefore, it is essential to realise that positive and negative emotions—such as negative consequences of using a competitor's product—must be leveraged to increase brand loyalty. Manthiou et al. (2020) point out that customers often experience positive and negative emotions in single interactions. For example, Manthiou et al. (2020) state, "Consider a typical consumption situation in which a couple has dinner at a fine dining restaurant; although the atmosphere and decoration are splendid, they have to wait long for their main course".

While E.I. is one core component of successful project managers concerning customer experiences, Ribeiro et al. (2021) highlight the need for additional competencies in Industry 4.0, such as soft skills, communication, emotional, management, cognitive and personal skills. For instance, a soft skill is considered leadership, being influential and motivating and able to resolve conflicts. Emotional skills include competencies such as interpersonal sensitivity, empathy and self-awareness. Marnewick and Marnewick (2021) state, "a skill that project managers also require is being digitally competent. To be digitally competent, a project manager requires digital intelligence". They consider online communication and collaboration the most important digital intelligence requirement for project managers in the fourth industrial revolution.

As a project manager, I need to use E.I. to manage the customer interaction and understand their *context*: what were their expectations and how did the product meet or fail those expectations? It is also important to know what part of their journey of product interactions the customer is involved in since every interaction has negative and positive emotions. Knowing their context and touchpoint interaction allows me to use communication, management, soft skills, and digital intelligence to formulate a resolution plan. The resolution plan can involve either a letter of acknowledgement or remediation. An action plan is vital

given the importance of emotionally engaging with customers because such behaviour engages the customer personally and makes them feel acknowledged and needed. And since the customer's emotional reactions have elicited a response from project management, they are more likely to hold positive emotions that positively influence their loyalty intentions.

References

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