**Memory and brand recall role in experiences**

**Short Abstract:**

The affective customer experience (aCX) is a crucial concept that advances the discussion on the motivations of consumers’ consumption behaviour. The current paradigm of customer experience states that customers obtain value from the affective responses produced from the interaction with the firms’ brands. However, the dimension of CX memory as a dimension that forms part of aCX has been under-researched. The present study examines the influence of CX memory on aCX and the moderation effect of brand recall. The analysis was performed using PLS-SEM method. The results indicate that CX memory accounts for one-third of the aCX variance (R2 = .327), and the moderation effect of brand recall is also discussed. The findings suggest that CX memory is a dimension that enhances the understanding of how aCX is formed. Also, CX memory can be helpful for marketing managers to enhance experience analyses.

*Keywords: customer experience memory.*

**Introduction and Research Aim**

The affective customer experience (aCX) has become the focus of most major companies as it has been identified its influence on growth and differentiation (Pine & Gilmore, 2016). Therefore, the marketing efforts of firms centre into creating and managing great experiences in order to increase the positive effect on other marketing concepts such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, and the overall performance of the company (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2015).

The phenomenon of experience itself is complex. For instance, experiences can be approached from a “present” perspective (i.e. rational responses that occur in a moment of time during the interaction with a firm) or from a “past” perspective (i.e. memories). Therefore, despite the number of articles on customer experience “marketing research on experience is still relatively underdeveloped” (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2015, p. 26). Thus, there is an opportunity to develop research through the identification of antecedents, drivers, and consequences of customer experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Early definitions of aCX mentioned the ability of the brand (i.e. the mental image of a product or service in the customer mindset) to make an impression on the customer’s mind (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Carbone & Haeckel, 1994). Memories formed during the encounter of the customer with the firm can influence the future engagement of the customer with the brand (Papagiannidis et al., 2013; LaTour & Carbone, 2014). However, although some authors addressed the importance of memory as a salient feature of aCX (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2009; van Doorn & Verhoef, 2008), few conceptual models had included memory as a dimension.

The role of brand recall (BR), or the ability to retrieve a brand, is an important element in the memory-based decision-making process of customers (Nedungadi, Prakash, Chattopadhyay, Amitava, & Muthukrishnan, 2001).

“According to Keller, brand recall refers to consumers’ ability to retrieve the brand from memory, for example, when the product category or the needs fulfilled by the category are mentioned. Keller (1993, p. 3) argued that “brand recognition may be more important to the extent that product decisions are made in the store”. Hence, in the present study, brand awareness is conceptualised as consisting of both brand recognition and brand recall.” (p. 145)

In other words, the recall of the brand enhances the recall of experiences. However, it is not clear the role of brand recall as a part of the relationship between CX memory and aCX.

The aim of this study is:

*To test the influence of CX memory as a relevant dimension of aCX, as well as the moderation effect of brand recall.*

Two research questions are addressed:

**RQ1**: What is the influence of CX memories in the perception of aCX?

**RQ2**: Can brands enhance the influence of CX memories on CX?

The theme of the conference invites academics to discuss change. aCX is a relevant subject that is shaping the marketing landscape of several companies. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the concept of aCX more profusely to identify the role of different dimensions that can transform the experiences of customers. Memory is one of the dimensions that is directly related to the experience phenomenon but that has not received the adequate attention. Also, an important variable is brand recall, as it is relevant in the decision-making process. The study aims to extend the understanding of aCX and provide marketing managers with insights to provide their customers “memorable” experiences and strengthen their brand strategy.

**Background and/or Conceptual Model**

Pine and Gilmore (1998, 2016) suggested that a primary objective of customer experiences was to create memories throughout the participation of the customer and the environment of the firm. Even more, studies in tourism and marketing suggested that memories are a crucial element in the prediction of affective experiences (Oh, et al., 2007). In other words, the impression left in the customer’s mind after interacting with the brand results in an improvement of the perception of the experience (LaTour & Carbone, 2014) and the creation of positive emotions, attitudes, and beliefs with the brand (Campos, Mendes, Oom do Valle, & Scott, 2016; Yang, Liu, & Li, 2015). Brand recall is a relevant concept to understand brands as cues to retrieve memories (Nedungadi et al., 2001). Therefore, it is relevant to understand the role of brand recall. Despite the crucial role that memories have as a dimension of aCX, little has been studied. Therefore, the CXM Model (Customer Experience Memory Model) is developed to test the influence of CX memory (i.e. independent variable) on aCX (i.e. dependent variable) and the moderation effect of brand recall.



*Figure 1. CXM Model*

**Methodology**

The CXM Model was analysed using a PLS-SEM method. The sample was integrated using a random sampling method, and data were collected throughout an online self-reported survey. The CX memory scale was adapted from Smith, Chen, and Yang (2008) advertisement memorability scale (α = .89). The aCX scale was adapted from a combination of Huang and Chen (2018) online CX context scale (α = .89) and Deshwal and Bhuyan (2018) offline CX context scale (α = .92). The brand recall was measured by asking to recall the brand freely and describe the experience with the brand (Nedungadi et al. 2001; Finn, 1992).

**Results and/or Discussion and Contributions**

The results confirmed that CX memory is a significant factor to explain one-third of the aCX variance (R2 = .327). The moderation effect of brand recall is further discussed. Memory is a relevant dimension that can predict satisfactory experiences between customers and firms, and the role of brands is relevant to this relationship. The results suggest that CX memory is a relevant scale that can be used to improve aCX analysis and is suggested to be developed further.

**Implications for Theory and Practice**

Companies are increasing their interest in delivering better experiences to their customers, as the business performance is linked intrinsically with aCX. Therefore, it is necessary to study several dimensions that influence the perception of aCX. The study found a significant influence of CX memory on aCX. In this way, marketing theory is extended, including the memory produced by experiences as a relevant dimension in the creation of aCX. Finally, marketing managers are provided with insights to include CX memory as a factor in the analysis of the aCX of their brands.

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