

Title:

Understanding Customer Experience Creation in Online Retailing:

A Meta-analytic Approach

Abstract

Retailers always make attempt to create superior customer experience irrespective of online or off-line formats as it is one of the major antecedents of customer loyalty. Over the years, researcher have studied plethora of factors acting as antecedents of customer experience creation such as social environment, service interface and information processing, which is vital in the context of online retailing. Despite a substantial body of research on the subject, literature is still fragmented and especially in the context of online retailing, the antecedents of customer experience creation have been discussed in a piecemeal manner. Using meta-analytic approach, this study makes an attempt to aggregate the findings in the literature and propose a comprehensive framework indicating the antecedents and pertinent contextual factors behind customer experience creation in online retailing.

Key words: Customer experience, online retailing, meta-analysis

Brief Literature Review & Research Gap

Creation of customer experience has been an important endeavour of retailers irrespective of online or off-line format since it is one of the major precursors of customer loyalty (Badgett, Boyce, & Kleinberger, 2007). One of the initial works on customer experience by Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) underlined the importance of experiential aspect of consumption that was later broadened and substantiated in several studies (e.g., Schmitt, 1999; Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002). In a recent study, Meyer and Schwager (2007, p. 118) defined customer experience as “the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company”. Based on such elaborations in literature, many researchers have studied and proposed determinants of customer experience creation in the context of consumption and retailing (e.g., Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002; Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Sousa & Voss, 2006; Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros, & Schlesinger, 2009).

With the proliferation of Internet, online retailing has taken a stable shape resulting in a promising avenue for value creation both for consumers as well as for marketers. The ever-increasing landscape of online retailing has also drawn the attention of scholars who have proposed various antecedents and contextual factors for creation of customer experience in the domain (e.g., Constantinides, 2004; Ranaweera, McDougall, & Bansal, 2005; Chocarro, Cortiñas, & Villanueva, 2013; Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000; Rose, Clark, Samouel, & Hair, 2012; Nambisan, & Watt, 2011; McLean, & Wilson, 2016). Despite a substantial volume of work, literature is still fragmented and researchers have identified the antecedents of customer experience creation in online retailing in a piecemeal manner. The current study makes an attempt to aggregate the findings in the literature and propose a comprehensive framework mentioning the antecedents and pertinent contextual factors behind customer experience creation in online retailing.

Research Question

What are the antecedents and relevant contextual factors that help in customer experience creation in online retailing?

Research Methodology

This study draws on the work by Verhoef et al. (2009) and relevant literature on online retailing to propose a framework for customer experience creation in online retailing. Next, it tests each link in this framework using meta-analytic approach by examining the effect sizes collected from relevant studies. The idea behind using meta-analysis is to empirically ascertain what works and what does not work as antecedent and moderator of customer experience creation (Varsha, Sharma, & Sheth, 2015) as meta-analysis permits an estimation of the true population effect sizes based on inconsistencies in extant findings (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). It also allows to investigate the role of contextual factors using moderation analysis (Hong, Liao, Hu, & Jiang, 2013), which is important as the framework in this study has several situational and consumer specific moderators.

Preliminary Findings

Based on the literature review and drawing on some important works (e.g., Ranaweera, McDougall, & Bansal, 2005; Chocarro, Cortiñas, & Villanueva, 2013; Rose, Clark, Samouel, & Hair, 2012; Nambisan, & Watt, 2011; McLean, & Wilson, 2016), we propose a framework for customer experience creation in online retailing as shown in Figure 1. This framework mentions some important antecedents of customer experience creation in online retailing and also identifies relevant situational and consumer specific moderators.

Research & Managerial Implications

This study adds and extends the stock of knowledge on customer experience creation in online retailing by providing a comprehensive framework that includes antecedents and some important moderators as mentioned in Figure 1. It also provides several insights for the practitioners engaged in creating superior customer experience in online retailing.

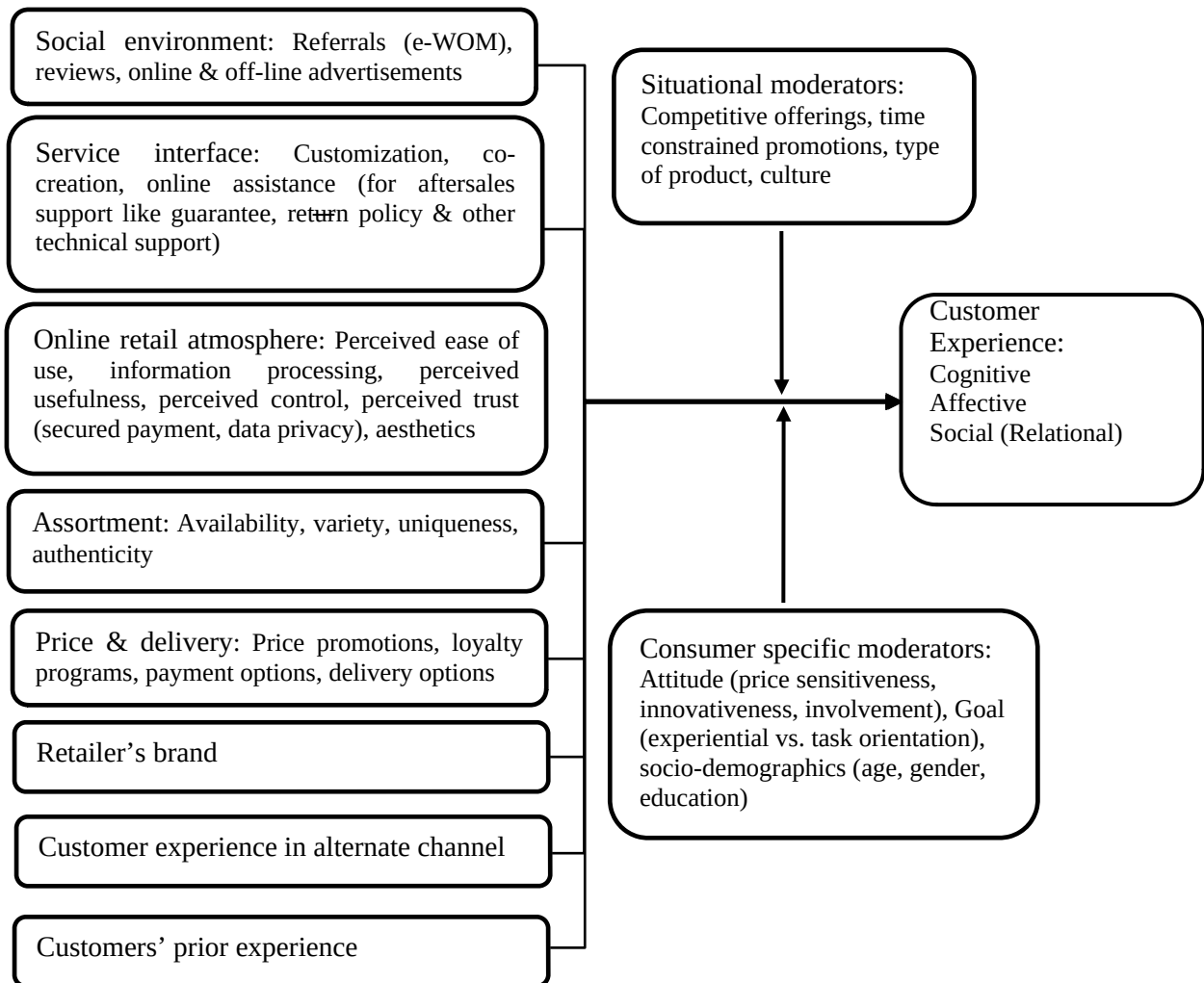


Figure 1: Customer experience creation in online retailing

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