Original Article

Evaluating a model for analyzing methods used for measuring customer experience

Received (in revised form): 23rd June 2010

Ruchi Garg

has an M.Tech in Electronics and Telecommunication and MBA in Marketing. She is currently pursuing PhD in business administration from IIT, Roorkee.

Zillur Rahman

has an MBA and PhD in business administration. He is currently working as an associate professor in the Department of Management Studies at the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee (India). His research covers strategy and international marketing. Dr Rahman's work has been published in international journals including *Management Decision*, *Managing Service Quarterly*, *International Journal of Information Management and Industrial Management and Data Systems*. His work has also been cited in *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, *International Journal of Service Industry Management* and *International Journal of Information Management*. Dr Rahman was the recipient of the Emerald Literati Club Highly Commended Award in 2004.

Ishwar Kumar

has a Postgraduate degree in criminology, and is currently pursuing PhD in business administration from IIT, Roorkee.

ABSTRACT Several scholars have defined 'experience' in customer-centric approaches, varying in perception and measurement techniques, yet this appellation is undermined in terms of its definition and measurement methodologies. In this article, we have analyzed the possible known methods of customer experience measurement, and then identified three major comprehensive techniques for comparison along with their advantages and disadvantages. Further, these three measurement techniques have been assessed on a model framework to suggest its applicability and suitability with the nature of industry. Finally, in the concluding section, we have suggested the most versatile method in terms of its use and applicability with industry types.

Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management (2010) 17, 78–90.

doi:10.1057/dbm.2010.7

Keywords: customer experience; service industries; service process

INTRODUCTION

In the changing scenario from product-centric to customer-centric approaches, the focus of marketers has shifted towards their customers and more deliberately on their experiences. Therefore, the attitudinal affect of customer experience on their post-purchase behavior is a matter of research for both the academicians and marketers

alike.¹ But along with positive customer experience, the company also has to look for customer satisfaction with the product or service in order to build the requisite brand equity in the consumers' mind. Therefore, they emphasized that the procedures that generate positive customer experience lead to customer satisfaction as well.² In spite of limitations in the amount

Correspondence:
Ruchi Garg
Department of Management
Studies, IIT Roorkee,
Uttarakhand, India

of empirical research in the area of customer experience, different qualitative and quantitative methods have been proposed by scholars to measure and analyze customer experience.^{3–5}

Therefore, this article first analyzes three main methods used for measuring customer experience along with their advantages and disadvantages. Second, through a model framework, the cases of all these three methods are evaluated. Finally, the most versatile method for its applicability in different industry types has been suggested.

THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Customer experience does not merely include the quality of customer care, but also covers customer interaction with the elements of marketing mix such as the popularly known four Ps and Cs in the marketing discipline. A customer experiences all aspects of the products and services offered by the company.⁶ Customer experience leads to customer satisfaction, which in turn acts as an antecedent of brand loyalty, customer retention, market growth and the overall profitability of the organization.^{7–13} According to Meyer and Schwager, the relationship between customer satisfaction and experience may be equated as:

Customer Satisfaction

$$= (\text{Good experiences of the customer} \\ - \text{Bad experiences of the customer})$$

Scholars have conceptualized customer experience in different ways such as the creation of memorable events (Pine and Gilmore),¹⁴ as a series of clues (Berry *et al*),¹⁵ and as the generation of touchpoints and customer corridor (Meyer and Schwager).⁶ Although there is multiplicity in the definitions of ‘Customer Experience’,^{16–18} we find that none of them is really able to cover its essence holistically.

However, a common thread that runs through all of them is ‘managing touchpoints’. But what is easily said may be difficult to accomplish, because there may be thousands of touchpoints that may need to be managed and that depend on several factors such as product-service mix, target segment, positioning, competition, price, channels of distributions, packaging, frontline employees, marketing, branding strategy and many more. The list is endless, as it is very difficult to articulate all of them completely. Therefore, in this article, among all the proposed definitions, we are illustrating the most conceptual definition recently projected by Gentile *et al*, that is,

The Customer Experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer’s involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial physical and spiritual). Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer’s expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points.¹⁹

Similar to the differences in definitions, scholars have categorized customer experience in various ways like Pine and Gilmore have classified customer experience into four parts: entertainment, educational, escapist and esthetic.¹⁴ Schmitt has categorized customer experience into five elements: sensory, affective, cognitive, physical and social.¹⁷ Similarly, Gentile *et al* have proposed six dimensions (components) of customer experience such as: sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle and relational.¹⁹ Hong-li has divided it into three layers: attributes, themes and effects.²⁰

Analogous to the various definitions and categorization, scholars have laid down various methods to measure customer experience. However, there is a dearth of

methodologies that requisitely measure customer experience in different conditions or industry types. Some of the existing known methods for the evaluation of service processes, which in turn can be used for measuring customer experiences, are blueprinting,²¹ service mapping,^{22,23} service incident analysis,^{24,25} walk-through audit (WTA),²⁶ service transaction analysis (STA)²⁷ and experience audit.¹⁵ Out of these popular methods, we have chosen the following three methods: Experience Audit, WTA and STA. The reason for choosing only these three methods is their wider application by well-known scholars such as Berry *et al*,¹⁵ Haeckel *et al*,²⁸ Berry and Carbone,²⁹ who used the Experience Audit Method; Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons,²⁶ Rowley,^{2,30} Koljonen and Reid,³¹ who used the Walk-Through Audit Method; and Johnston,²⁷ Rasila *et al*⁵ and Hume *et al*³², who used the STA Method.

EXPERIENCE AUDIT

According to Haeckel *et al*, Experience Audit is a tool that is used to systematically investigate the present experiences of the customers and to elucidate the emotional responses of customers' toward any particular clue.¹⁵ 'Customer Experience Audit considers what is right and wrong about the experience your customers have with you – not just in rational and functional terms but also in emotional terms' (www.cgaexperience.com).³³ Berry and Carbone have proposed the steps for Customer Experience Auditing as²⁹:

- (i) *To identify those emotions that induce the commitment of the customer:* The first step of Experience Audit is to reveal those feelings of the customers, which developed during their product or service encounter. These feelings may be hedonic or utilitarian, and various types of techniques used to elicit these feelings may be through video tapes, digital photographs, in-depth interviews and Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique.
- (ii) *To develop an experience motif:* In an experience motif, those feelings are captured, which are desired by the customers in an experience. The experience motif helps to fuse the elements that develop the experience clues. After the design and development of the clues, the translation of clues in the form of blueprinting is done. Mechanic clues are translated in the form of drawings, and humanic clues are translated in the performance narrative of the employees' roles.
- (iii) *Inventory of experience clues:* The numerous clues developed in the experience design are stocked and categorized according to their contribution in boosting up the feelings.
- (iv) *Evaluation of experience clues:* The experience clues are then evaluated at three levels, that is, according to their presence, their consistency and their execution. These clues can be divulged through forensic research tools that are attained from the fields of anthropology, psychology, heuristics and linguistics.
- (v) *To find out the experience gap:* This is the most important step in the experience audit, that is, to determine the difference between the desired feelings in an experience with the actual feeling customers attain from an experience. These desired feelings of the customers help the experience plan designer to develop the new and amended clues.
- (vi) *Filling of the experience gap and monitoring:* The gap between the actual and desired clues can be filled by the elimination of the negative clues. The requirement of those clues that create the affirmative and strong emotions by generating distinctive

and preferential clues are tested and executed in a consistent manner. The whole process of implementation is monitored constantly, and the refinement is done through the feedbacks as may be required.

Different authors have analyzed the conditions in which the experience audit may be applied in different industries to improve the experiences of their customers. Some examples of its application are explained below.

University hospital's emergency rooms

In 1957, The University Hospital, one of the most renowned hospitals in Augusta, Georgia, was facing intensive competition because of a low level of customer satisfaction. Therefore, in order to enrich the customer experience, they conducted an experience audit in its emergency department. The resultant clues revealed that the emotional requirements of the patients and their families/friends were minimally recognized. The workforce came out with 100 clues to improve the customer experience. They had to work on both the mechanic as well as the humanic clues.

In order to enrich mechanic clues, they made changes in terms of putting more sign boards in all directions, at a distance from the hospital, in order to communicate the availability of quick emergency services in the area. Proper notations of parking, entrance and signage for the internal locations were laid down. The signage incorporated more sophisticated language as 'Reception-Care Point 1'. In terms of humanic clues, the change made was that the security guard who sat behind the desk before the audit now greets people and helps them to navigate the hospital campus. Similarly, several other changes were made to enhance the positive clues and decrease the negative clues. Finally, this resulted in a

13 per cent improvement in quality of care rating and a one-third reduction in the complaints of the customers.¹⁵

Rental car – Avis

Owing to the declination in the customer-service ratings, Avis applied the techniques of experience management in one of its major operations, that is, Newark International Airport. After accomplishing the experience audit, they developed an experience motif that was based on reducing the stress and anxiety of the passengers. Anxiety was generated when passengers dropped off from rental cars, owing to their worry about their flight timings. Therefore, to lessen their anxiety, Avis installed monitors at the door where the car dropped the passengers, to display the departure timings of the flights. Sometimes the arriving passengers, before leaving their rental cars, needed to communicate with their offices; therefore, Avis established the center for communication so that the passenger traveling in the rented cars can communicate with their offices through calls, faxes or may plug-in their laptops. In such a way, Avis worked on many other clues by implementing this new experience design in other key locations. The business of Avis increased by 65 per cent. By the year 1999, Avis achieved the 12th rank in the customer-loyalty survey conducted among more than 140 national brands within 26 industries, and by the year 2000–2001 Avis achieved the first rank in the same survey.¹⁵

Health and wellness center

Diolestown Hospital, established on a holistic health-care model comprising a health club, clinic, spa and other interactive services related to health care, aimed at generating unique experiences of health-care services for its customers. Therefore, the senior management of the hospital applied the techniques of experience design

in the construction phase, which became the central part of their planning and development of facilities. They conducted an experience audit, and subsequently developed an experience motif, which resulted in the retrieval of more than 200 clues. These 200 clues were classified in relation to hospital atmospherics, staff behavior, bookstore, library facilities, websites related to health-care management, and the mentoring and monitoring done by the nurses. These integrated forms of clues provided uniquely preferred experiences that could not have been possible with a single clue. As a result of these initiatives – the national survey, that is, ‘Press Ganey patient satisfaction survey’ conducted among 357 facilities – the center attained third rank. In terms of overall satisfaction, it attained the 98th percentile, and in terms of ‘sensitivity of the patient needs’ on the basis of the ‘explanations given by staff’, it attained the 99th percentile.²⁸

Along with the advantages disclosed in the abovementioned cases, there exist some disadvantages as well; for example, this method does not provide statistically applicable conclusions/ comparisons by themselves (www.customersatisfactionstrategy.com).³⁴

WALK-THROUGH AUDIT

WTA is a customer-based audit used for assessing the experiences of the customers from beginning to end. It is ‘a systematic evaluation of a customer’s view of the service provided’.²⁶ In the service delivery or creation process, it is used to assess the effectiveness of service at every stage according to the customers’ perception. The steps of WTA laid down by Koljonen and Reid are³¹:

- (i) *Preparation of the flowchart*: The first step is to prepare the flowchart of the service creation/delivery process according to customer perception, which describes the service process completely.
- (ii) *Development of the questionnaire*: For carrying out WTA, Bowen and Chase have created an instrument, that is, ‘service system effectiveness questionnaire’.³⁵ The questionnaire is designed, and administered on the customer sample, managers and customers of any standard organization.
- (iii) *Analysis of the results*: The results of the surveys are summarized and analyzed in comparison with the gaps found in the manager’s rating and the customers’ rating.
- (iv) *Implementation of the improvements*: To correct the existing deficiencies, the improvements are implemented.
- (v) *Repetition of steps*: For the continuous improvements, the above four steps are repeated sequentially.

Several researchers have applied WTA in different industries to assess and improve the experiences of their customers. Some of the examples are:

Libraries and museums

The walk-through methodology has been applied to monitor the total customer experience of libraries and museums. In this technique, the purpose is it to essentially integrate the methodologies used for examining and evaluating the processes of museums and libraries. In both these situations, Rowley had considered several case studies to identify the factors that affect customer experience, and thus established a common framework to assess these experiences. And for the continuous improvements and addition of new services in the strategic planning process, the methodology has been conducted on a cyclical basis.^{2,30}

Texas restaurants

To improve the performance of the restaurant, the researchers had conducted an audit. A questionnaire of 42 questions was mailed to 250 restaurants owners/managers

of Texas restaurants, in which the response rate was but only 27 per cent. In the context of restaurants, there are many variables that impact customer experience, but the audit considered only those variables that could be altered in a short span of time. The questions in the audit covered customer perception starting from parking of vehicle to the payment of restaurant bill. In the audit, tipping was considered as a measure for customer satisfaction; therefore, the questions related to tipping were divided into five categories: person-to-person service, delays in service, ambience, presentation, and suggestive and promotional selling. This audit helped the managers/owners who wanted to appraise their individual services. The tangibility of the result in the form of tipping behavior of the customers can be enhanced by working on the services created or delivered to the mentioned categories by analyzing customer perception.³⁶

Hong Kong law firms

According to Hong Kong law, lawyers cannot promote their business through the conventional approaches of marketing such as advertising, and hence the only way new clients came to them was through the references of their satisfied clients. Therefore, the recently established firm Yung and Wong conducted a WTA for the systematic appraisal of their customer service experience at each step, that is, from the telephonic inquiry to the clearance of bills. Walk-through survey was conducted on both managers (two senior partners) and clients (first-time clients), so that the firm can compare the perspectives of both. As the firm was conducting the audit for the first time, and hence no targets were identified to match the results, a benchmark study was done to compare the results and performance of the firm with the local best-in-class firms. Therefore, a similar audit was conducted on four highly reputed and well-established law firms of Hong Kong.

The results revealed that the new clients of established firms were more satisfied in comparison to the new clients of the new firms. From the audit, it was clear that the new firms had to work on their service process to provide a higher level of satisfaction to their clients.³¹

WTA investigates customer satisfaction and experience, and identifies the scope of process upgradation, yet it possesses some disadvantages in terms of lack of flexibility in questionnaire modification because of which it may become difficult to analyze customer perceptions for the service process.²⁷

Johnston summarized various methods such as blueprinting, service mapping, sequential incident analysis and WTA to appraise the service processes, and finally concluded that WTA is the most effective method among all of these. But to overcome its weakness and to strengthen the audit, the results of the audit need to be evaluated with a more systematic approach like the STA method along with the transaction analysis sheet shown in Figure 1.²⁷ In WTA, the procedure is described by the company and evaluated by the client, but the advantage of STA is that both the assessment and explanation of the procedure are done by the client. This helps in describing the process as it occurs really, and how the process is actually being perceived by its clients (www.scielo.br).³⁷

SERVICE TRANSACTION ANALYSIS

According to Johnston, for the assessment of customer experience, STA encompasses four key elements: the concept of service, the assessment of transaction's quality, the service processes and messages.²⁷

- (i) *The concept of service:* It is 'the way in which an organization would like to have its services perceived by its customers, employees, shareholders and lenders'.³⁸ Therefore, the elements of

SERVICE TRANSACTION ANALYSIS SHEET				
Organization:				Service concept:
Process:				
Customer type:				
Transaction	Score			Message
	+	0	–	
Overall evaluation				

Figure 1: Service transaction analysis.
Source: Adopted from Johnston.²⁷

service design should be consistent with the service concept. In any organization, the service concept should be stated clearly because it is an essential part for the assessment of a service process.

- (ii) *The assessment of transaction quality:* The assessment of each transaction with the customer cumulates the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service provider.³⁹ This assessment of satisfaction with transaction is based on the disconfirmation theory,^{40,41} and calculated as satisfied customers (0), dissatisfied customers (-) and delighted customers (+).²⁷
- (iii) *The service process:* It is the process through which the services are delivered when the providers come directly in contact with the customers, or the customers indirectly interact with providers.
- (iv) *Messages:* In the service design, whatever messages are emanated from the service process should be consistent with the service concept, because only identifying the transaction results in the form of (-/0/+) is not sufficient for interpreting the customers' transaction.

Johnston²⁷ has proposed five stages of STA as shown in the analysis sheet (Figure 1):

- (i) The service concept is required to be clearly specified and in conformity with the offerings provided by the employees in the form of service.⁴²
- (ii) For the assessment of customer perception in each transaction, WTA is conducted by the mystery shoppers, surrogate/consultant customers or independent advisers in a real process setting. The transactions are described in a concise manner in the analysis sheet, and their concerned scores are filled in the middle column of the sheet.
- (iii) The messages gathered after the services offered are entered into the right-hand column of the analysis sheet.
- (iv) The outcomes of the transactions, in the form of scores (-/0/+), are entered in the middle columns, and the combined resultant is mentioned in the foot row of the analysis sheet, that is, overall evaluation.
- (v) With the help of this analysis sheet, the service designers, managers and staff are able to understand customer perception regarding the services

offered, and the required improvements can be worked upon.

Johnston described two case studies in order to highlight the implementation of the STA tool effectively.²⁷ Hume *et al* applied the STA method in the non-profit performing arts sector.³²

Non-profit performing arts

Research in the non-profit performing arts sector found that the revenue received through the sale of tickets is not sufficient for the long-term survival of the arts organization. Therefore, in order to attract and increase the repurchase intention of the customers, the arts organization had to work on the customer satisfaction, service experience and the service delivery process. For this purpose, the STA method was applied with some modifications to assess the service offerings. This assessment was done by integrating the information gathered from customer experience and the voice of the managers, which in totality provided the shared views and vital mismatches. The results helped in analyzing the gaps in the existing service design of the arts organization. For the strategic development of the arts organization, the functional factors such as the quality of venue, quality of service and personal interactions with the visitors, which were ignored traditionally, were found to be of great importance in the prediction of repurchase intent of the customers. By improving the gaps in the service design, this method effectively helped the managers in attracting the customers in a better way.³²

According to Johnston, STA may be used to identify the cause of a service transaction's outcome. The advantages of STA are:²⁷

- STA requires the managers and staff to think about the service concept and to describe it in their own words to clarify their intentions.
- It is a 'customer-oriented' tool, which forces the employees and managers to perceive the service process according to customer viewpoint.
- It clearly and explicitly states the significance of each transaction in the customer context.
- It evaluates the service scripts, the tangible and physical aspects of service, and also identifies the messages delivered by providers to their customers.
- STA does not depend on the customer complaints; rather, it is a step-by-step evaluation of the complete service process in the viewpoint of the customer.

The analysis sheet, proposed by Johnston, acts as an effective tool for assessment and improvement of customer experience.²⁷ But there is a disadvantage with the presented analysis sheet, that is, in the middle column of the sheet, the author has divided transaction satisfaction of the customer into three broad edges (−/0/+), but in general conditions customer experience is neither pure negative nor pure positive. Therefore, these negative and positive experiences of the customers may be subdivided into more categories. The middle columns, which the researcher has laid down in conformity with the disconfirmation theory, have been replaced by LaSalle and Britton, who have attached the dimensions of experience in the sheet.⁴³ The converged analysis sheet of Johnston and LaSalle and Britton is shown in Figure 2.⁵ The dimensions included in the new analysis sheet are neutral (things that make no difference in the value perceptions of the customers), positive (ordinary, extraordinary and priceless events) and negative (acceptable, unacceptable and intolerable events).⁴³ Rasila *et al* applied this modified analysis sheet for service process investigation in the case of business park.⁵

Finnish business parks

In this study, the researcher investigated the user interaction with service environment at a pre-experience stage, that is, before

TRANSACTION ANALYSIS SHEET								
Organization							Service Concept	
Process								
Customer type								
Transaction	Score						Message	
	In tolerable	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Neutral	Ordinary	Extraordinary	Priceless	

Figure 2: Experience analysis sheet.
Source: Adopted from Rasila et al.⁵

parking their vehicle till they entered in the main lobby of the office. The atmospherics play an effective role in the creation of positive or negative user experiences. The positive user experience reveals the innovativeness of the employees, their creativity and inspiration to contribute to the productivity of the service. For such design, the researcher considered a case that comprised three business parks in Finland.

User experience in the journey from parking to main lobby is divided into four stages : parking of the vehicle, entering the building, having a shower and finally entering the main lobby of the office. The results of the experience analysis indicated that with very less monetary investment, the negative experiences of the user can be easily converted into positive experience, which in turn enhances the overall productivity of the organization.¹⁵

MODEL: DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION

For analyzing these three methodologies in different service conditions and industry

type , we opted for Lovelock and Wirtz's 'Understanding the nature of the Service Act' model,⁴³ shown in Figure 3 to determine which is the best among the three.

Lovelock and Wirtz have classified the different service processes in two broad categories as 'the nature of the service act' and 'the direct recipient of the service', which are further subdivided into four groups: people processing, mental stimulus processing, possession processing and information processing.⁴⁴

Mental stimulus processing: Services that touch the minds of the customers and influence their behavior and attitudes in services such as entertainment, education, religious practices, professional advice and others.

From Table 1, it is clear that among these three methodologies, only two methods are found to have mental stimulus processes.

Information processing: The essential component of service process is information.

Figure 3: Understanding the Nature of the Service Act.
Source: Adopted from Lovelock and Wirtz.⁴⁴

Table 1: Cases applied in the mental stimulus processing category

S. no.	Methodologies	Available specific conditions	Service categories by Lovelock and Wirtz
1.	Experience Audit	—	—
2.	Walk-Through Audit	Libraries and Museums	Education
3.	Service Transaction Analysis	Non-profit performing arts	Arts and entertainment

The services that are dependent on the compilation and processing of the desired information falls into this category, such as advisory services, banking services and management consulting.

From Table 2, it is evident that the cases of all three methods are found to be applicable in the information process group.

People processing: Human interface acts as an essential component in such types of process.

To avail such services the physical presence of the customer is necessary, because in such types of service processes the output is the customer him- or herself. For example, whether the customer has attained better health after treatment or reached the required destination safely after availing the transport services or attained a well-shaped body after using the fitness services. All this depends on the kind of interface between the customer and the service provider.

Table 2: Cases applied in the information processing category

S. no.	Methodologies	Available specific conditions	Service categories by Lovelock and Wirtz
1.	Experience Audit	Health and Welfare Centre Avis Rental Car University Hospital's Emergency Room	Healthcare Passenger Transportation Healthcare
2.	Walk-Through Audit	Texas Restaurants	Restaurants/bars
3.	Service Transaction Analysis	Finnish Business Parks	Passenger Transportation

Table 3: Cases applied in the people processing category

S. no.	Methodologies	Available specific conditions	Service categories by Lovelock and Wirtz
1.	Experience Audit	Banks ⁴⁵	Banking
2.	Walk-Through Audit	Hong-Kong law firm Mass services-Retail bank ⁴⁶ Walk-up & user interfaces ⁴⁷	Legal services Banking Data processing
3.	Service Transaction Analysis	Lawyers firm	Legal services

Table 4: Cases applied in the possession processing category

S. no.	Methodologies	Available specific conditions	Service categories by Lovelock and Wirtz
1.	Experience Audit	—	—
2.	Walk-Through Audit	—	—
3.	Service Transaction Analysis	Major Engineering Company ²⁷	Repair and maintenance

The results of Table 2 are similar to those of Table 3. This implies that all the methods are applicable for analysis cases where human interaction is central.

Possession processing: In this type of service process, there is less involvement of customers in the analysis as compared to the people processing. For example, in the case of repair services the contribution of the customer is very limited, such as dropping off the item and picking it up from the workplace, explaining the problem with their requirements and paying the bills.

The results of Table 4 are apparently different from the results of all other three cells, because only the case of the STA method lies in this category whereas the cases related to other two methodologies are not present in this group.

Hence, after reviewing and applying the cases related to these methods in the given

model, it has been concluded that the cases of the STA method lie in all the four groups of the model, whereas the cases of the other two measurement methods lie either in two or three groups of the model.

CONCLUSION

This study has presented three different methods for measuring customer experience, that is, experience audit, WTA and STA. Along with that, it also highlights how different researchers have applied these methodologies in different situations. The brief overview of some of the case studies is presented in this article, along with the advantages and disadvantages of each customer experience measurement method. Investigating these three methods in the Lovelock and Wirtz model, it was found that for the assessment and enhancement of customer experience, the STA methodology can produce better results as compared to

other two methods. The reasons are, first, it overcomes the disadvantages of other two methods; and second, among all the three methods, it is the only method whose cases are applicable in all types of service process.

The main aim of assessing customer experience is that with the changing scenario from consumption experience to experience economy and to experiential marketing, the concept of experience is increasingly being used as a strategic tool for positioning and growth of business. According to Kotler, owing to easy duplication of the physical attributes of the products, it has become tedious for the product companies to attain their competitive advantage through product differentiation, and thus they have to switch over to service differentiation.¹⁶ Therefore, it has become imperative for all marketers irrespective of what they are marketing, that is, to pay attention to managing the experience.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitations appeared from the study are, first, more number of cases can be considered to generalize the results. And second, the study is conceptual in nature; therefore, through the empirical analysis, more consistent and reliable results can be achieved.

As STA has been used in a variety of situations that make it more versatile and applicable, it can be used as a first step in the direction of analyzing customer experience. However, more specific models/processes may be developed for more specific conditions.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 Pullman, M.E. and Gross, M.A. (2004) Ability of experience design element to elicit emotions & loyalty behaviors. *Decision Sciences* 35(3): 560.
- 2 Rowley, J. (1994) Customer experience of libraries. *Library Review* 43(6): 7–17.
- 3 Barsky, J. and Nash, L. (2002) Evoking emotion: Affective keys to hotel loyalty. *Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 43: 39–46.
- 4 Jones, M.A. (1999) Entertaining shopping experiences – An exploratory investigation. *Journal of Retailing* 6(1): 129–139.
- 5 Rasila, H.M., Rothe, P. and Nenonen, S. (2009) Workplace experience – A journey through a business park. *Facilities* 27(13/14): 486–496.
- 6 Meyer, C. and Schwager, A. (2007) Understanding customer experience. *Harvard Business Review* 85(2): 116–126.
- 7 Anderson, E. and Mittal, V. (2000) Strengthening the satisfaction-profit chain. *Journal of Service Research* 3(2): 107–120.
- 8 Athanassopoulos, A., Gounaris, S. and Stathakopoulos, V. (2001) Behavioural responses to customer satisfaction: An empirical study. *European Journal of Marketing* 35(5/6): 687–707.
- 9 Beerli, A., Martin, J.D. and Quintana, A. (2004) A model of customer loyalty in the retail banking market. *European Journal of Marketing* 38(1/2): 253–275.
- 10 Heskett, J., Sasser, W. and Schlesinger, L. (1997) *The Service Profit Chain*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- 11 Levesque, T. and McDougall, G. (1996) Determinants of customer satisfaction in retail banking. *International Journal of Bank Marketing* 14(7): 12–20.
- 12 Muffato, M. and Panizzolo, R. (1995) A process-based view for customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management* 12(9): 154–169.
- 13 Wood, J. (2008) The effect of buyers' perceptions of environmental uncertainty of satisfaction and loyalty. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice* 16(4): 309–320.
- 14 Pine II, B.J. and Gilmore, J.H. (1998) Welcome to the experience economy. *Harvard Business Review* 76(4): 97–105.
- 15 Berry, L.L., Carbone, L.P. and Haeckel, S.H. (2002) Managing the total customer experience. *MIT Sloan Management Review* 43(3): 85–89.
- 16 Kotler, P., Keller, K.L., Koshy, A. and Jha, M. (2009) *Marketing Management: A South Asian Perspective*, 13th edn. Singapore: Pearson Education.
- 17 Schmitt, B.H. (1999) *Experiential Marketing: How to Get Customers to SENSE, FEEL, THINK, ACT, RELATE to Your Company and Brands*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- 18 Shaw, C. and Ivens, J. (2005) *Building Great Customer Experiences*. New York: Macmillan.
- 19 Gentile, C., Spiller, N. and Noci, G. (2007) How to sustain the customer experience: An overview of experience components that co-create value with the customer. *European Management Journal* 25(5): 395–410.
- 20 Hong-li, G. (2008) *Customer Experience Hierarchy Model: Based on the Theory of Customer Value Hierarchy*. New York: IEEE, 978-1-4244-2108-4/08.
- 21 Shostack, G.L. (1984) Designing services that deliver. *Harvard Business Review* 62(1): 133–139.

- 22 Kingman-Brundage, J. (1991) Technology, design and service quality. *International Journal of Service Industry Management* 2(3): 47–59.
- 23 Kingman-Brundage, J. (1995) 'Service logic': Achieving service system integration. *International Journal of Service Industry Management* 6(4): 20–39.
- 24 Stauss, B. (1993) Service problem deployment: Transformation of problem information into problem prevention activities. *International Journal of Service Industry Management* 4(2): 41–62.
- 25 Stauss, B. and Weinlich, B. (1995) *Process-oriented Measurement of Service Quality by Applying the Sequential Incident Method*, Proceedings of the Workshop on Quality Management in Services V, 11–12 May, The Netherlands: Tilburg University, pp. 447–473.
- 26 Fitzsimmons, J.A. and Fitzsimmons, M.J. (1994) *Service Management for Competitive Advantage*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- 27 Johnston, R. (1999) Service transaction analysis: Assessing and improving the customer's experience. *Managing Service Quality* 9(2): 102–109.
- 28 Haeckel, S.H., Carbone, L.P. and Berry, L.L. (2003) How to lead the customer experience. *Marketing Management* 12(1): 18–23.
- 29 Berry, L.L. and Carbone, L.P. (2007) Build loyalty through experience management. *Quality Progress, ABI/INFORM Global* 40(9): 26.
- 30 Rowley, J. (1999) Measuring total customer experience in museums. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 11(6): 303–308.
- 31 Koljonen, E.L.-P.L. and Reid, R.A. (2000) Walk-through audit provides focus for service improvements for Hong Kong law firm. *Managing Service Quality* 10(1): 32–45.
- 32 Hume, M., Mort, G.S., Liesch, P.W. and Winzar, H. (2006) Understanding service experience in non-profit performing arts: Implications for operations and service management. *Journal of Operations Management* 24: 304–324.
- 33 http://www.cgaexperience.com/pdfs/customer_experience_audit.pdf, accessed 24 September 2009.
- 34 http://www.customersatisfactionstrategy.com/other_ways.html, accessed 14 October 2009.
- 35 Bowen, D.E. and Chase, R.B. (1991) Service quality and the service delivery system: A diagnostic framework. In: S.W. Brown (ed.) *Service Quality: Multidisciplinary and Multinational Perspectives*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, pp. 157–178.
- 36 Fitzsimmons, J.A. and Maurer, G.B. (1991) A walk-through audit to improve restaurant performance. *The Cornell HRA Quarterly* 31(4): 94–99.
- 37 http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0103-65132002000100004&script=sci_arttext, accessed 14 October 2009.
- 38 Heskett, J.L. (1986) *Managing in the Service Economy*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- 39 Johnston, R. (1995) The zone of tolerance: Exploring the relationship between service transactions and satisfaction with the overall service. *International Journal of Service Industry Management* 6(2): 46–61.
- 40 Cadotte, E.R., Woodruff, R.B. and Jenkins, R.L. (1987) Expectations and norms in models of consumer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research* 24(3): 305–314.
- 41 Churchill, G.A. and Surprenant, C. (1982) An investigation into the determinants of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research* 19(4): 491–504.
- 42 Clark, G., Johnston, R. and Shulver, M. (1998) Exploiting the Service Concept for Service Design and Development. Working Paper, University of Warwick.
- 43 LaSalle, D. and Britton, T.A. (2003) *Priceless: Turning Ordinary Products into Extraordinary Experiences*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- 44 Lovelock, C. and Wirtz, J. (2004) *Services Marketing: People, Technology, Strategy*. Singapore: Pearson Education.
- 45 Berry, L.L., Wall, E.A. and Carbone, L.P. (2006) Service clues and customer assessment of the service experience: Lessons from marketing. *Academy of Management Perspectives* 20(2): 43–57.
- 46 Olorunniwo, F. and Hsu, M.K. (2006) A typology analysis of service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in mass services. *Managing Service Quality* 16(2): 106–123.
- 47 Lewis, C., Polson, P., Wharton, C. and Rieman, J. (1990) Testing a walk through methodology for theory-based design of walk-up-and-use interfaces. Proceedings of ACM CHI'90 Conference; 1–5 April, Seattle, WA, pp. 235–242.