

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IN RETAIL STORES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Lilian Carvalho – FGV/EAESP
Luciana Bonsenso – FGV/EAESP

INTRODUCTION

Studies regarding customer experience have been mentioned in different aspects for a long period of time. For example, during the 1950s, when Levy noted that "People buy products not only for what they can do but also for what they mean" (Gardner & Levy 1955, Levy 1959, p. 118). With that in mind, the fact that a product could have a symbolic meaning was raised and analyzed, together with several other aspects that would influence a purchase decision and, therefore, the customer experience as a whole, such as emotive, nostalgia, and multisensory aspects, among others. With this in mind, it is known that customer experience has been changing until nowadays, due to the digital transformation that we are facing. This innovation has started as a new possibility for companies to have better results in periods of crisis and withstand in the market, either by offering new products and improving its services or by providing differentiated experiences for its customers during the purchase decision-making process.

METHOD

This study aims to explore what are the most important drivers of customer experience in physical and digital stores of apparel retail in Brazil. We surveyed 247 female customers from all social classes (Brazilian Criteria, 2019) regarding the importance of 12 attributes, in terms of importance, on a 5-point scale. This preliminary study aimed to sort the most important aspects of customer experience, which you can see in descending order, in Table 1.

Results

Order	Attribute	Average	Channel
1	Price	4,49	Both
1	Product Quality	4,49	Both
2	Dressing Room Presence	4,17	Physical
3	Fast Delivery	4,14	Online
4	No frills purchase (no cashier)	3,85	Physical
5	Augmented Reality	3,79	Both
6	E-commerce support staff (presence)	3,76	Online
7	Flagship Store Environment	3,75	Physical
8	Store Pick-up	3,60	Online
9	Online Suggestions	3,47	Online
10	Social Media Presence	3,20	Online
11	E-commerce presence	3,02	Online
12	Brand	2,68	Both

Table 1 - Attribute Preference

CONCLUSIONS

We can see that Price and Product Quality are tied in the first place as the most important attributes of the consumer experience. We also ran an ANOVA in SPSS to see if there was a difference in the means of different social classes (A, B1, B2, C1, C2, DE). There were no differences in any of the 12 attributes. We do not see a prevalence in attributes for physical or online stores, which shows that customers may be channel-agnostic, preferring to purchase in the channel that best suits their needs depending on the occasion. With this in mind, we aim to conduct a conjoint analysis with these attributes to find which is the best bundle to offer consumers.

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