

Summary

We live in a time when many buyers base their purchasing decisions not only on price, but increasingly on non-price experiences. Companies that provide their customers with a better level of service that improves their experience are more likely to have a higher market share and also report higher revenues than their competitors.

The main objective of this dissertation is to identify interactions between a customer from generation Y and an online apparel company and to characterize the effects of these interactions on the overall customer experience. The scope of the analysis includes the purchase decision process from the moment the online store page is opened to the moment the customer proceeds to the check-out and payment.

Achieving the purpose of the thesis requires identifying the various touchpoints, which are conceptualized as the individual actions that customers undertake to purchase, with specific expectations associated with these activities. It then enables a conceptualization of a customer journey map, i.e. a diagram that illustrates the successive steps that customers have to take before deciding on a transaction. An important role in this process is determined by perception, reactions and emotions, which significantly shape the customer experience. The final stage of experience creation is satisfaction, or lack thereof, with the overall process, which determines the willingness to make a repeat purchase, to use the online store's offering again, as well as the recommendations made, often on social media, and ultimately the customer's loyalty or lack thereof, which has specific consequences for the company.

The first chapter presents the theoretical dimension of the customer experience, highlighting the contribution in this field in the management sciences, the conceptualization of the concept - components, process approach and determinants. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the importance of customer experience management in the administration of the retail and sales company.

The third chapter focuses on the conceptualization of the customer journey and the customer experience while buying online. It covers both the components and the stages of the customer journey and underlines the significance of mapping process. Great attention was also

paid to the specifics of creating the customer experience in online stores and the factors affecting the customer's experience of virtual shopping.

The fourth chapter provides a characterization of apparel as a category of products offered on the market. It distinguishes fashion market segments, describes the seasonality of the apparel market and the cyclical nature of style perception in the long and medium term. The following section focuses on shopping behavior, the degree of fulfillment of needs in this product category. The most popular online sites selling clothing in Poland were also characterized and classified.

Chapter five presents the results of an exploratory study. It covers the conceptualization of the journey map of a customer from generation Y when purchasing products from the category of clothing, footwear and accessories in an online store. It consists of the main stages, the detailed actions, and the individual activities performed during customer journey, along with highlighting which activities respondents paid the most attention to. This allows to identify the factors contributing to the customer experience during the various detailed stages of the journey.

The sixth chapter includes an analysis of the results of remote, unmoderated usability tests, in which participants rated individual factors of the shopping experience. Another important aspect is to understand the impact of evaluating the experience of each stage of the journey and the overall subjective satisfaction with the whole shopping journey. This was made possible by using the epsilon statistical method, which allows to analyze the the impact of correlated predictors on the dependent variable. The final aspect is to examine the relationship between the overall rating of the shopping experience and transactional issues, such as the propensity to recommend, intention to re-purchase and loyalty to a particular online store.

The conclusion presents the findings of the study and addresses the answers to the research questions posed and the realization of the stated research objectives.