

Towards Customer's Emotion Management in Marketing: The Role of customers' Emotions on Their Experience

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Abstract

This research study aims at understanding the role of the customers' emotion towards a certain product/service in their experience. In another word, this research aims at finding the relationship between the customers' emotions and the way it influences their experience in a certain purchasing process. A questionnaire was distributed on a random sample of mall visitors through a period of 30 days (month) and it was based on variables including; A) shop clerk's sex, uniform and emotional behavior B) shop's environment C) clerks' friendliness.

The results show that positive emotions of the customers which are connected to a positive shopping experience is influential and hence can lead to a positive purchasing decision, in addition to that, it was found out that the shop clerk's positive emotions is very important in supporting the client with a good shopping experience in the store. The gender was also a notion that worth to be noted based on the idea that the results supported that concept of the opposites meet. Finally, the uniform and dress codes for the shopping assistants appeared to be the least influential factor of all.

Keywords: Customer emotions, customer experience, in-store customer emotions, provider/buyer encounter

Introduction

Customers are the most important factor within the market and they represent the key speaker of the products' level, success and prevalence. Generally, most of companies aim to get the customers' satisfaction through presenting them an experience that matches their expectations that might influence their experience and the way they see a product.

Many companies whether these companies present a service or a product, the idea of customer relation management (CRM) is considered to be of great importance in terms of building a good relationship with customers that may lead to the success and prevalence of the service/product that the company is marketing for. This can be attributed to the influence that an experience might leave in customer when it comes to a certain product /service and the way customers felt when dealing with it.

1.CRM

Many product/service providers or sellers believe that they must build a positive orientation towards customers, they are even required to smile based on the companies' internal systems and rules that are applied on employees as a part of their job requirements, smile for the customers and make sure to show a welcoming happy face for them. This is what most of the product/service industry is build on, the idea of pleasing customers and satisfying them. However, all the years it has been believed that the quality of the product/service is the keystone in satisfying the customers and build up good relations with them. But, nowadays, and recently with the growing interest and research on the marketing field, it had been found that it is not all about the product/service that is the key to attracting customer, it is more into the kind of experience that customers go thorough within getting the product and the nature of their perspective after getting the product/service, like are they willing to go through the whole experience again? Were they satisfied? Did it meet their expectations? (Tumbat, 2011).

1.1 Provider/Client Encounter

Many studies have examined the role of customers experience in regard to their satisfaction on the product/service that they are being exposed to, a smiley face on a shop's clerk or a friendly face of a hotel reception was found out to be the reason of miracles to take place within the industry in terms the degree of attraction and satisfaction a customer can feel. According to Tumbat (2012) this is called (encounter) where a face-to-face interaction takes place between a buyer and a seller, a shop clerk and a client, a hotel receptionist

and a clerk.

In that sense, Tumbat refers to a kind of encounters that are characterized with being long in duration, involves an intimate interaction with a customer, the existence of spatial proximity and the live interaction that is between both ends. This kind of encounters are known to be extended encounters (Tumbat, 2012; 2). In extended encounters that gathers between a product/service provider and a potential buyer there has to be some kind of emotional management that is combined with influential communication that can be significant in making the customer go through a better experience. For example, a hotel receptionist goes through the extended encounter more than a shop clerk or a mall employee, the first has to offer a service that meets the clients' expectation and satisfy them in a way that encourages them to repeat the experience once again while the later offer all kind of services/product and the clients have to choose the service that best suit their expectations (Chris and Liang, 2010).

1.2. Customers' Emotion Management

The concept of customers' emotions has been always seen to be a way of understanding the perception of customers towards a certain product/service. In general emotions form an accredited source of the human motivation and stand in terms of a certain purchasing process that takes place. Defining emotion as a word can elaborate more; Gardner (1985) sees emotions as a group of feelings that are associated with a certain behavior, while Richins (1997) came up with eight factors that define emotions stating that emotion is having one or more of the following; anger, fear, disgust, acceptance, sadness, joy, surprised and expectancy (Hanzaee and Javanbakht, 2013).

In marketing, customers' emotion can be read through the nature of responses, interactions, and provocative's that they show within the time of getting the service of eve within the time of the feedback that a customer tries to deliver. In another meaning, customers' emotions can help in forming their experience in a certain process and hence develop a whole and full image about either a product of a service that they have gone through. According to Tang and others (2013), they see that the strategies that employees use within marketing their product/service are the key towards forming the customers' emotional stance and hence develop the experience as a whole in their minds.

1.3. Customers' Emotional Experience

Even though employees' strategies in handling emotional experiences of clients is critical to the acceptance of the service/product but still it might not be sufficient enough to make a customer buy a certain product or to go through a certain service (decision making to buy). The process should be based on some aspects that might be that should be taken into consideration like the relationship itself and the bases of the interaction that a strategy of interaction should be based on (Rafaeli, 1989). From that point, there is a clear connection between the customers' emotional experience and their attitude to purchase the product referring to that impact that the emotional experience might have on their behavioral intention specifically customers' who encounter a positive mood in the store compared to those who were not welcomed with a friendly face that is (in-store positive moods" among customers are more likely to spend more time in the store, see employees as friendly factors and go on with the purchase process (Smith and Bolton, 2002).

2. Aims and Objectives

The current research study aims at understanding the role of the customers' emotion towards a certain product/service in their experience. In another word, this research aims at finding the relationship between the customers' emotions and the way it influences their experience in a certain purchasing process.

The aim will be accomplished through delivering the following objectives:

- Identify the meaning of emotions and its relation to Customer Emotion Management (CEM)
- Go through the role of Customer Emotion Management within modern marketing field

Differentiate between regular encounter and extended encounter and which one of them is more likely to be influential on the clients

3. Hypotheses of the Research Study

Generally speaking, the research will focus on the following set of hypotheses:

H1: positive emotions lead customers to positive experience, hence support their purchasing decision

H2: There is a statistically significant influence of the **shop clerk's sex, uniform and emotional behavior** on the positive emotions of customers

H3: there is a statistically significant influence of the **shop's environment** on the positive emotions of the customers

H4: there is statistically significant influence of the **clerks' friendliness** on the positive emotions of the customers

4. Methodology

In this study, the researcher uses the descriptive, analytical approach, where theoretical framework depends on periodicals, books, and electronic articles, while field work is covered by designing a questionnaire to serve the study objectives. The study is based on the quantitative approach where a questionnaire will be built covering all the aspects of the study's model in order to be distributed on the sample of the study and hence give the researcher the ability to read the differences in the answers and then either accept or reject the hypotheses of the study.

4.1. Data Collection Methods

The data the forms the paper will consist of two sources as follows:

- 1 – **Primary source:** the study questionnaire that was designed and distributed to sample subjects.
- 2 – **Secondary sources:** books, references, previous studies on that handle study topic.

4.2. Population and Sampling

The study population includes all the shoppers within Amman malls along with its different stores and shops. The sample of the study will be customers in a shopping mall that contains varied group of shops and stores. The sample will be chosen randomly through the researchers touring in malls and shops in different time of the day. The study depends on a convenience sample that consisted of 1000 customers. 821 questionnaires were returned, which represent 82.1% of the total sample.

4.3. Reliability Test

A Cronbach Alpha test has been used to ascertain instrument reliability. The value has been = 0.906 for the questionnaire. All values are accepted since they are more than 0.60 (Malhotra, 2004).

4.4. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire consists of two main sections; the demographic variables and the variables' questions. The model below highlights the flow of the study's variables in terms of its influence on each other.

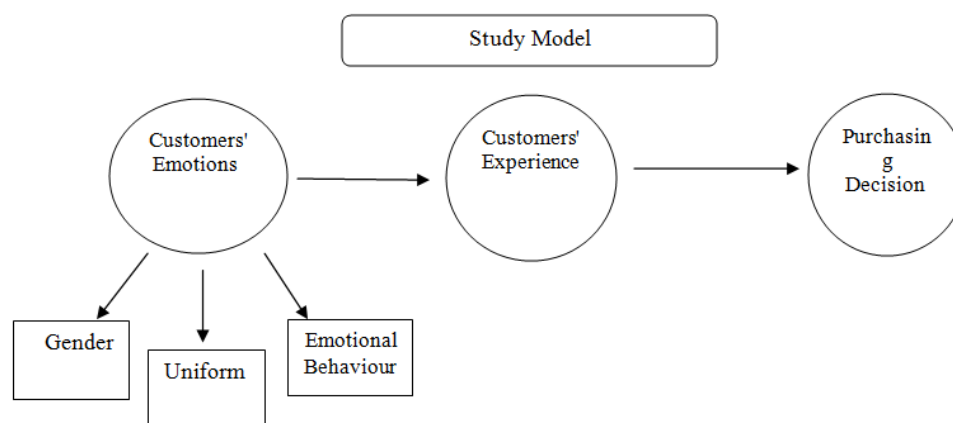


Figure 1. Model.

The model of the study as it shows above the flow of the variables between each other, it starts with the customers' emotions which is influence by three main aspects of (gender, uniform, emotional behavior), the customers' emotions influences the customers' experience the process of the purchasing in general and hence influence deeply the possibility of the purchasing decision as a whole.

5. Analysis

In this part, a review if the analysis and findings will be presented through the questionnaire which was distributed on the sample of the study. This part is divided into two parts; the first highlights the demographic

variables analysis while the second part shows the results of the respondents answer to the paragraphs of the questionnaire.

5.1. Demographic variables

It is illustrated through the analysis of the demographic variables that there are more males (52% of the sample) than females responded to the questionnaire, this results is somewhat surprising considering that females are normally more attracted to shopping and touring in the malls compared to males, but through this study, the respondents of the sample were more males than females, this can be attributed to the males' patience and well to answer such questionnaires and surveys in malls compared to females. As for the age wise, it has been reached through the analysis that 40% of the sample were shoppers with an age range that is higher than 30 years old. While 75.9% of the sample responded that they go shopping 2 times or less per month, this can indicate that, the nature of the sample were members who had families to take care of, in another meaning it consisted of adults rather than teenagers.

To test the hypotheses, a structural equation model (SEM) was used (Bollen, 1989; Hair et al., 1998). (see table 1). The method used to estimate and test the SEM was the covariance-based approach. The software IBM SPSS Amos 18.0 (Byrne, 2001) was used. The prerequisites to apply SEM, such as normality and non-collinearity, were ensured. The normality of the data was estimated, and univariate normality and multivariate normality (with a Mardia coefficient of 1.43) were confirmed. Non-collinearity was also confirmed.

The goodness-of-fit indexes of the model were acceptable (see Table 2).

Table 1. Correlations

	Table 1. Correlations	Uniform	Gender	Customers emotions	Customer experience	Purchasing decision
Emotional behavior	1.00					
Uniform	.36	1.00				
Gender	.15	.51	1.00			
Customers emotions	.40	.20	.15	1.00		
Customer experience	.37	.18	.14	.41	1.00	
Decision	.23	.52	.52	.22	.34	1.00

Table 2. Test of model fit

Index	Value	Recommended value
χ^2	P = 0.00	P ≤ 0.05
RMSEA	0.07	≤ 0.08
GFI	0.99	≥ 0.90
AGFI	0.96	≥ 0.90
NFI	0.99	≥ 0.90
IFI	0.99	≥ 0.90
CFI	0.99	≥ 0.90
Normed χ^2	1.91	1-2

All of the measurements of the equations were statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05, and the measures of reliability and variance extracted from the constructs were all significant (Table 3). Finally, to analyze the structural model fit, the significance of the estimated coefficients in the SEM was estimated. All of the estimated coefficients were significant. In Figure 2, the estimated standardized regression coefficients are shown (all t values exceed the reference values of 1.96 for a significance level of 0.05).

In summary, hypotheses H1, H3, H4, and H5 were supported, and hypothesis H2 was rejected.

Table 3. Structural parameters

			Estimate coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized estimated coefficient
Customers emotions	<---	Gender	.08	.03	2.52	***	0.09
Customers emotions	<---	Uniform	.01	.04	.28	.78	0.01
Customers emotions	<---	Emotional behavior	.37	.03	11.23	***	0.38
Customer experience	<---	Customers emotions	.37	.04	10.07	***	0.34
Decision	<---	Customer experience	.22	.03	8.59	***	0.24

S.E., standard error; C.R., critical ratio; p, p-value.

***p-Value is ,0.001.

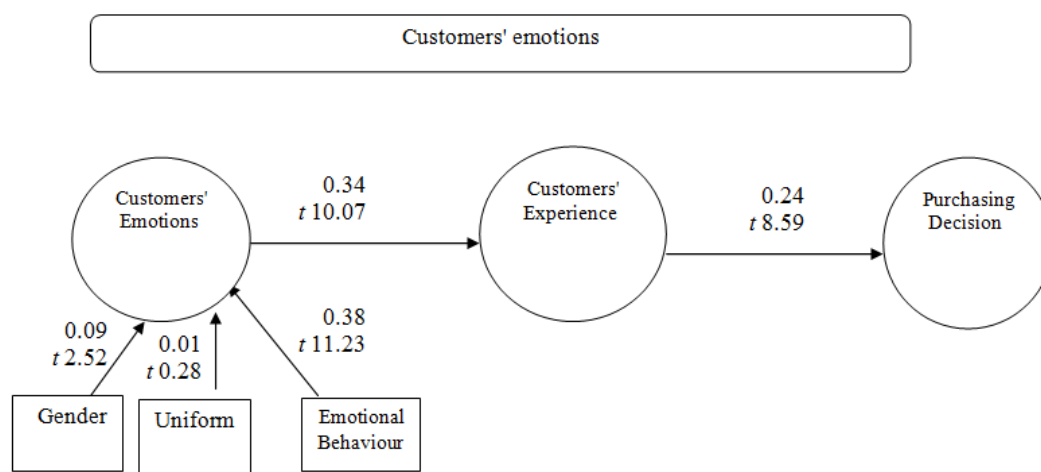


Figure 2. Results of the Model.

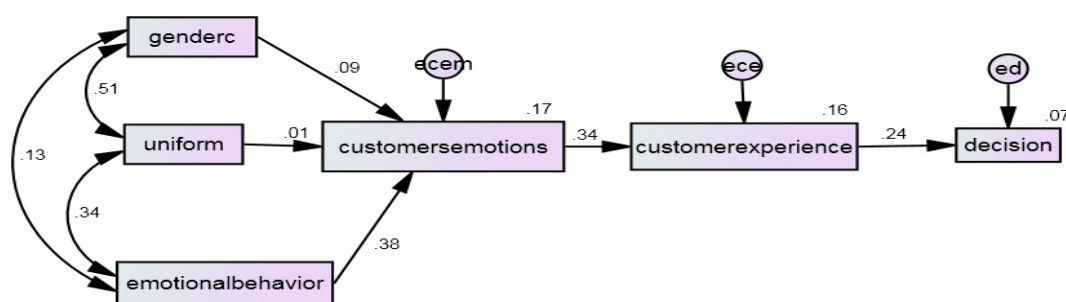


Figure 3. AMOS Model.

6. Discussion

From the analysis above, it appears that males presented more response to the questionnaire of the study that can be attributed to the fact that males might be more patient in dealing with social questionnaires and surveys in a better way compared to females. From another perspective; respondents with ages more than 30 years old which also reveal the spending and shopping habits of individuals during that age. This matches with Miley and Mack (2009) that the shopping and spending patterns of individuals with the age range between 30-45 are seen to be higher but spent with a wiser patterns compared to other individuals with the other age ranges.

The analysis of the model variable showed that the emotional behavior appeared to be the most influential factor among all the other factors with a CR of (11.23) which was the highest of the entire factor. This represents that the emotional behavior of the shopping assistant has a very deep influence on the customers' emotions and hence

it affects their purchasing decision. This what Baker (2013) has called as the emotional connection between the assistant and the customer, he argues that the emotions and the emotional behavior of the shopping assistant has a very deep influence on the customer in terms of the feeling that the assistant has within the shopping process. The feelings that the customer has might be easily transferred to the customer who will be deeply influence by these emotions and hence affect the decision that the customer is building on whether to buy or not.

On the second and third level came the variables of the customers' emotions and the customer experience with a CR of 10.7 for customers' emotions and 8.59 for the customer experience. In that sense, it appeared that the customers' emotions has a deep influence on the purchasing process in terms that it determines the way they feel towards either the item or store in general, it accompanies the concept of the deciding whether to buy the item or not or even to spend more time in the store or not. Rick and Loewenstein (2008) in general as it stated what worth to be mentioned is the fact that emotional behavior and customers' emotion have an influence on the economic behavior.

From another perspective, it was found out through the analysis that gender is the fourth influential factor on the customers' emotions, which can lead to the purchasing decision. It was found out that women are more emotional compared to men and more open in expressing their emotions and needs, when it comes to shopping, women are also an emotional shoppers, the shop as per their emotions and feelings, so the shopping experience is bound to the way they feel. From that point, gender has deep influences in terms of the fact that each gender prefers their opposites in the shopping process. In another meaning, women prefer to shop in an environment where they are approached and offered help from male shopping assistants and vice versa, men prefer to be approached and offered help from female shopping assistants. This matches what Latu, Mast and Kaiser have stated (2011) genders in their natural existence are more influenced through dealing with their opposite other, specifically when it comes to women who are more emotional and more out when it comes to their feelings and emotions. On the same idea, Xu, Wang and Li (2010) also supports the fact that positive emotions appear within customers when they are dealing with their opposite gender as it gives them the concept of caring and understanding to their emotions and needs. The author adds that the differences in the customer/seller personality make it easy for the two parties to interact, cooperate and reach the purchasing decision easily. In addition, Merwe & Jacobs (2008) state that usually shopping assistants have a very influential effect on customers specifically female customers. The study reveals that most of the purchasing process takes place within the stores due to the female customers' emotional attachment to the environment where the sales assistant is making an effort to make a sale or convince the customer with a certain item. On the opposite, Hu and Jasper (2004) argue that it is not the idea that women are more emotional and men are not emotional, and it is not that women like shopping more than men do. The concept is that the shopping malls recently are providing the customer with an environment that encourages them to shop regardless of their gender or emotional scheme. So the idea of gender nowadays is not that much influential. Putting into perspective that more than 85% of the shopping assistants are males and still people shop and buy their needs. not to mention the type of store which present the self service idea which doesn't need an assistant at all and the customer has to find the item by him/her self.

Finally, the uniform appeared within the analysis to be the least influential factor among all the previously mentioned factors with a CR of 0.28. Many studies addressed uniforms and dress codes as a form of marketing. It might not have a lot to do with the customers' satisfaction as it has to do with the idea of marketing and promoting the logo, slogan or marketing campaign of the concerned party (Poojary, 2011), while Yu (2011) sees that the staff uniform is a vital part of what is called the store physical evidence; this concept refers to the elements the presents the "store front" like the uniforms, billboards, signboards and promotional items. In general, it is important for the store and the employees to be within the scope of the accepted physical appearance considering the fact that they are in constant connection with the client (customers).

7. Conclusion

In an overall estimation, it is seen that customers' emotions are very important to make a sale. A successful merchandiser presents the best tools available in order to market their product and increase their income. Recent stores are taking some new procedures to create a welcoming environment within the store itself, it even reaches the point of building this environment based on scientific and psychological aspects like what might be attractive to the client, what might make the customers feel welcomes, enjoy the shopping time, increase the time they spend in the store. In addition to that, some stores put these psychological aspects in perspective in terms of the decorations, colors they use in the store and the way items are being presented. The recent trends in sales and marketing are getting more focused on customer satisfaction through satisfying their emotions and needs all of the successful stores and brands are trying their best to leave their customer has the best shopping experience in

their facility and the tools are varied.

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