

The Impact of Customer Sensory and Intellectual Experiences on Customer Purchase Intention and Customer Store Engagement

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the effects of customer experience (sensory and intellectual experience) on customer outcomes (customer purchase intention and customer store engagement). The sample of the study consisted of 438 customers of stores specialized in food selling. Data were gathered using a questionnaire developed based on prior related works. The results pointed out that customer sensory and intellectual experiences had significant effects on customer purchase intention and customer store engagement. However, the results indicated that the effect of customer sensory experience on customer store engagement was higher than the effect of customer intellectual experience on the same dependent variable, while the effect of customer intellectual experience on customer purchase intention was greater than the effect of customer sensory experience on the same dependent variable. It was concluded that good customer experiences result in good customer outcomes. Therefore, stores seek to increase customer store engagement should pay a great attention to customer sensory experience while stores seek to enhance customer purchase intention should consider customer intellectual experience.

Keywords: customer sensory experience, customer intellectual experience, customer purchase intention, customer...store engagement.

1. Introduction

Customer experiences have received a lot of attention from researchers and companies alike. This is due to the positive effects of customer outputs, as the customer is the source of success and continuity in the market. Therefore, investigating the effect of customer experience on customer outcomes is very important for companies to understand the importance of customer experience to meet customer needs.

In one of the distinguished studies published in Harvard Business Review by Meyer and Schwager (2007), the authors highlight the importance of customer experience to achieve customer outcomes. For example, they indicated that measuring customer satisfaction does not mean how to achieve it but measuring customer experience tells companies how to fill the gap between customer expectations and his or her experiences, which in turn results in customer satisfaction. Researchers have divided customer experiences into several types, including social, emotional, pragmatic, intellectual, and sensory experiences (Cachero-Martínez and Vázquez-Casielles, 2017; Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009).

On the other hand, customer outcomes were conceptualized in terms of several constructs like customer satisfaction, customer retention (Hong-kit, Anderson & Swaminathan, 2004), customer loyalty (Liao & Chuang, 2004), customer complaint intention, customer loyalty intention, customer word-of-mouth intention (Van Vaerenbergh et al., 2014). Authors added other types of customer outcomes including customer-directed sales behaviors (Wang, Dou & Zhou, 2012), customer purchase intention (Yang and He, 2011) as well as customer store engagement (Vivek, 2009 cited in Ramly & Omar, 2016).

Effects of customer experience, particularly sensory and intellectual experiences, on customer purchase intention and customer store engagement is still unclear. Some studies (e.g., Nasermodeli, Ling and Maghnati, 2013) that addressed the relationship between customer experience and customer purchase intention used dimensions of customer experience represented in sensory, emotional, and social experiences. Other studies (e.g., Ramly and Omar, 2017) that examined the effect of customer experience on customer engagement used customer experience as a whole construct. Studies (e.g., Ahn & Back, 2018) that explore the effect of customer experience on customer engagement found that customer sensory and emotional experiences had an effect on behavioral engagement, while customer intellectual experience affected both cognitive and behavioral engagement. Accordingly, this study tries to explore the effect of customer experience (sensory and intellectual experience) on customer outcomes (purchase intention and engagement).

2. Literature review, hypotheses and conceptual model

Customer experience has been defined as customer physical, social, and emotional response due to direct or indirect interactions between the customer and a product or a firm (Yang and He, 2011; Nasermodeli, Ling & Maghnati, 2013). Reviewing the literature on the effects of customer experience on customer outcomes resulted in numerous constructs affected by customer experience. Examples of these constructs are customer purchase intention (Nasermodeli, Ling and Maghnati, 2013), customer engagement (Mohd-Ramly & Omar, 2017).

2.1 Customer experience and customer purchase intention

Researchers confirmed that customer experience has a significant effect on customer purchase intention. Yang and He (2011) investigated the effect of customer experience (sensory experience, emotional experience, and social experience) on customer purchase intention and found that sensory experience had no significant effect on purchase intention, while emotional experience and social experience showed significant effects on purchase intention. Nasermodeli, Ling and Maghnati (2013) explored the effect of customer experience on customer purchase intention and pointed out that the three dimensions of (sensory experience, emotional experience, and social experience) had significant effects on customer purchase intention. In their study on the moderating effect of customer experience, Pappas et al. (2014) showed that customer experience increased the impact of customer satisfaction on customer repurchase intention. Researchers conceptualized customer experience in terms of several dimensions. Cachero-Martínez and Vázquez-Casielles (2017) reported five dimensions of customer experience: emotional experience, sensory experience, intellectual experience, pragmatic experience, and social experience. Two of these dimensions were used for the purpose of the current study. Therefore, the following hypotheses on customer experience and customer purchase intention were suggested:

H1: Customer sensory experience has a significant impact on customer purchase intention

H2: Customer intellectual experience has a significant impact on customer purchase intention

2.2 Customer experience and customer store engagement

Customer store engagement refers to customer intensity to participate and to be connected with store activities (Vivek, 2009 cited in Ramly & Omar, 2016). Brodie et al. (2011) defined customer engagement as a psychological state due to customer interactive with an object like brand or store. In terms of the effects of customer experience on customer outcomes, Ramly and Omar (2017) concluded that customer experience has a significant effect on customer engagement. Quynh et al. (2020) indicated that customer experience moderates the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer engagement. Roy, Gruner and Guo (2020) showed that customer experience significantly affects customer commitment, which in turn affects customer engagement. In order to identify the effect on customer sensory experience

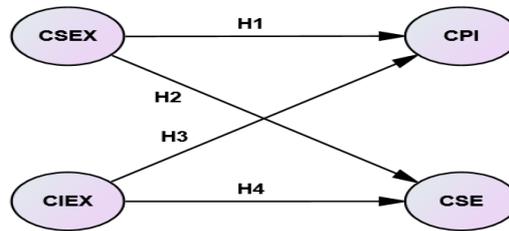
and customer intellectual experience on customer store engagement, the following hypotheses were suggested:

H3: Customer sensory experience has a significant impact on customer store engagement

H4: Customer intellectual experience has a significant impact on customer store engagement

2.3 Research conceptual model

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model of this study, in which research hypotheses were clarified. The first hypothesis (H1) relates to the effect of customer experience (sensory experience) on customer purchase intention, the second one (H2) represents the effect of customer experience (sensory experience) on customer store engagement, the third hypothesis (H3) copies the effect of customer experience (intellectual experience) on customer purchase intention. Finally, the fourth hypothesis (H4) shows the effect of customer experience (intellectual experience) on customer store engagement.



CSEX: customer sensory experience; CIEX: customer intellectual experience; CPI: customer purchase intention; CSE: customer store engagement

Figure 1. Research conceptual model

3. Methodology

3.1 Research sample and data collection

The sample of the study consisted of 500 customers of 10 different stores specialized in selling food in Saudi Arabia. Fifty customers were randomly selected from each store. A questionnaire was developed based on prior related works to collect the required data. Therefore, 500 questionnaires were distributed by-hand to the members of the sample. Due to incomplete responses, 438 questionnaires were returned complete and valid for the purpose of data analysis, with a coverage rate of 87.6%. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS and AMOS.

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire used for this study consisted of 16 items. Customer experience was measured using 8 items, 4 items for customer sensory experience (1-4) and 4 items for customer intellectual experience (5-8). Customer purchase intention was assessed by 4 items (9-12) and customer store engagement was evaluated by 4 items (13-16). The items were adopted from previous related works as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Measures of research variables

Variables	Items	Authors
Customer sensory experience (CSEX)	1. The experience of buying from this site is pleasant	Yang and He (2011); Biedenbach and Marell (2010); Yang, Liu and Li (2015); Bustamante and Rubio (2017); Cachero-Martínez
	2. I feel happy when buying from this store	
	3. The store pays much attention to hygiene	
	4. Descriptions of this store are positive	

Customer intellectual experience (CIEX)	5. Employees in this store advise me	and Vázquez-Casielles (2017)
	6. The store has a beautiful exterior design	
	7. The store adjusts its services to my needs	
	8. The products are beautifully presented	
Customer purchase intention (CPI)	9. I will visit the store again in the future	Yang and He (2011); Nasermodeli, Ling & Maghnati (2013); Alotaibi, Alkathlan & Alzeer (2019).
	10. I will recommend this store to my relatives and friends	
	11. I will buy my products from this store	
	12. I mention the positives of the store to others	
Customer store engagement	13. I share my experience with others	Abuljadail and Ha (2019); Islam et al. (2019); Ramly and Omar (2016); Vivek (2009).
	14. I am buying from this store	
	15. I like the attributes of this store	
	16. The store provides a family atmosphere	

3.3 Factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted in order to explore the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test, total variance explained (TVE) and rotated component matrix. As shown in Table 2, KMO value (0.762) is higher than 0.70 (Anjum, 2020) and the value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant (Sig. = 0.000) since it is less than 0.05 (Othman, Othman & Juhdi, 2019). According to these results, it was acknowledged that the current data are suitable for factor analysis. The cumulative percent of all components equals 75%.

Table 2. Results of factor analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test		Component	Total Variance Explained		
			Initial Eigenvalues		
			Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
KMO	0.762	1	3.969	24.809	24.809
Approx. Chi-Square	1082.037	2	3.125	19.531	44.340
df	120	3	2.647	16.544	60.884
Sig.	0.000	4	2.267	14.171	75.055

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

It was found based on the results of the scree plot shown in Figure 2 displays four variables were extracted with eigenvalues greater than 1.

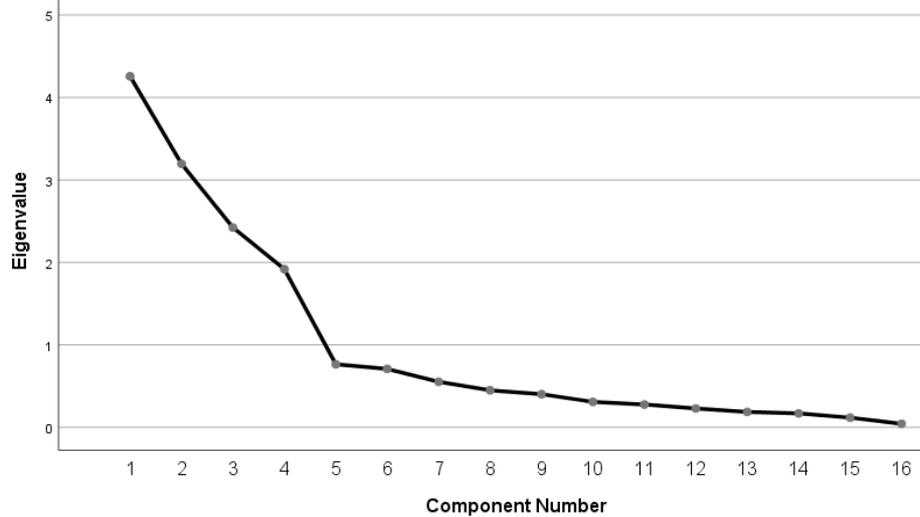


Figure 2. Scree plot test

The rotated component matrix as shown in Table 3 indicates that the first component, which is customer sensory experience, had loaded on four indicators (CSEX1-CSEX4) with factor loadings ranged from 0.786 to 0.912. The second component, which is customer intellectual experience, had also loaded on four indicators (CIEX1-CIEX4) with loadings from 0.762 to 0.880. Customer purchase intention had four indicators (CPI1-CPI4) with loadings between 0.869 and 0.957. Finally, customer store engagement had four indicators (CSE1-CSE4) with loadings from 0.752 to 0.848. Such loadings are acceptable since their values are greater than 0.40 (Anjum, 2020).

Table 3. Item statistics and rotated component matrix

Items	Item statistics		Component			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4
CSEX1	3.20	0.849		0.786		
CSEX2	3.23	0.810		0.898		
CSEX3	3.29	0.897		0.865		
CSEX4	3.36	0.944		0.912		
CIEX1	3.41	0.758			0.762	
CIEX2	3.40	0.770			0.880	
CIEX3	3.30	0.864			0.874	
CIEX4	3.49	0.777			0.772	
CPI1	3.01	0.879	0.869			

CPI2	2.97	0.957	0.940			
CPI3	3.02	.974	0.957			
CPI4	2.98	0.873	0.951			
CSE1	3.26	0.708				0.773
CSE2	3.30	0.661				0.841
CSE3	3.38	0.753				0.848
CSE4	3.40	0.770				0.752

3.4 Reliability and validity

Reliability was tested using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α) with a cut-off value of 0.70 (Pappas et al., 2014) and composite reliability with a threshold of 0.70 (Alotaibi, Alkathlan & Alzeer, 2019). Validity was tested by the average variance extracted (AVE) to test convergent validity. AVE values should be greater than 0.50 (Alsheikh, 2019). Discriminant validity was measured by comparing the square root of AVE with correlations between research constructs. The square roots of the AVEs should be higher than the correlation coefficient between each pair of the research constructs (Alsheikh, 2019). The results of reliability and validity, displayed in Table 4, typify acceptable values; alpha coefficients and CR values are greater than 0.70, AVE values are higher than 0.50 and all square roots of the AVEs are greater than the correlation coefficients between constructs.

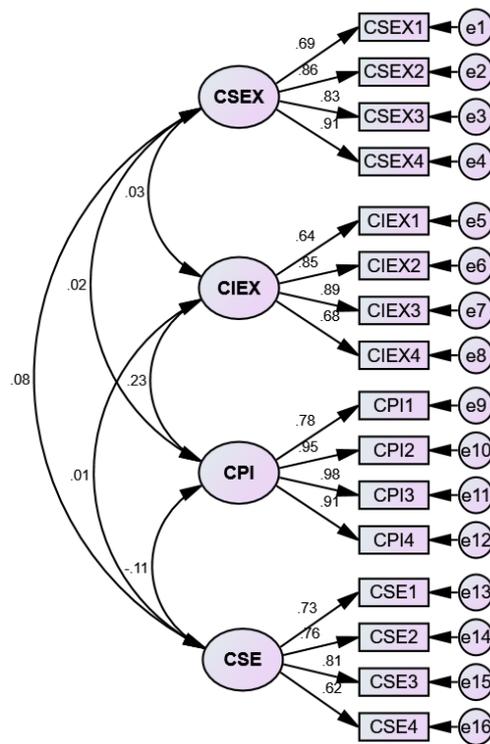
Table 4. Results of reliability and validity

Variables	Items	Measures of reliability and validity				Correlation matrix			
		α	CR	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	CSEX	CIEX	CPI	CSE
Customer sensory experience (CSEX)	CSEX1	0.89	0.923	0.751	0.867	-			
	CSEX2								
	CSEX3								
	CSEX4								
Customer intellectual experience (CIEX)	CIEX1	0.847	0.824	0.679	0.894	0.45**	-		
	CIEX2								
	CIEX3								
	CIEX4								
Customer	CPI1	0.952	0.962	0.865	0.930	0.39**	0.55**	-	

purchase intention (CPI)	CPI2								
	CPI3								
	CPI4								
Customer store engagement (CSE)	CSE1	0.817	0.880	0.647	0.805	0.51**	0.62**	0.49**	-
	CSE2								
	CSE3								
	CSE4								

3.5 Research measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to explore the adequacy of the hypothesized model in terms of describing the sample data (Shek & Yu, 2014; Sharaf, El-Gharbawy & Ragheb, 2018). Figure 3 confirms that the measurement model fits the sample data well. The first Parsimonious fit index, which is Chi-square to degree of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF), should be less than 5, the second absolute index, which is Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), should be greater than 0.90, the third incremental index, which is Comparative Fit Index (CFI), should be higher than 0.90. Finally, Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) should be smaller than 0.08 (Mahadi et al., 2018). For the current measurement model, CMIN/DF = 1.544, which is less than 5, GFI = 0.847, which is near to 0.90 (Borofsky, 1992), CFI = 0.949, which is greater than 0.90, and RMSEA = 0.075, which is less than 0.08.



CMIN/DF = 1.544 ; GFI = .847 ; CFI = .949 ; RMSEA = .075

Figure 3. Research measurement model

4. Results and discussion

Figure 4 shows the structural model of the study. It displays the relationships between two constructs of customer experience (CSEX and CIEX), customer purchase intention (CPI) and customer store engagement (CSE). In terms of structural model goodness of fit, the figure illustrates that the model fit the sample data well since CMIN/DF is less than 5 (CMIN/DF = 1.852), GFI is close to 0.9 (GFI = 0.887), CFI is greater than 0.90 (CFI = 0.915), and RMSEA is less than 0.08 (RMSEA = 0.064).

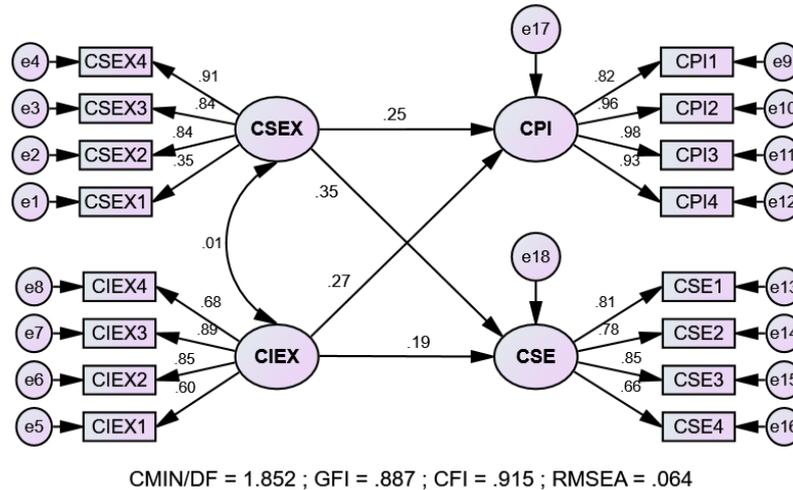


Figure 4. Research structural model

The results as shown in Table 5 demonstrate that customer sensory experience (CSEX) has significant effects on both customer purchase intention ($\beta = 0.25$, $t = 4.958$, $P = 0.000$) and customer store engagement ($\beta = 0.35$, $t = 6.723$, $P = 0.000$). Similarly, customer intellectual experience has significant effects on customer purchase intention ($\beta = 0.27$, $t = 5.062$, $P = 0.000$) and customer store engagement ($\beta = 0.19$, $t = 4.911$, $P = 0.000$).

Table 5. Results of hypotheses testing

Constructs& paths			β	t-value	P-value
CSEX	→	CPI	0.25	4.958	0.000
CSEX	→	CSE	0.35	6.723	0.000
CIEX	→	CPI	0.27	5.062	0.001
CIEX	→	CSE	0.19	4.911	0.000

CSEX: customer sensory experience; CIEX: customer intellectual experience; CPI: customer purchase intention; CSE: customer store engagement.

It is noted from these results that the effect of customer sensory experience on customer store engagement is greater than the effect of customer intellectual experience on the same construct. As for the effect of customer intellectual experience on customer purchase intention, it is greater than the effect of customer sensory experience on the same construct.

Contrary to the findings of the current study, some studies (e.g., Yang and He, 2011) showed that customer sensory experience does not affect customer purchase intention, while other studies (e.g., Nasermoadeli, Ling and Maghnati, 2013) confirmed that customer sensory experience plays a vital role in increasing customer purchase intention. Roy, Gruner and Guo (2020) pointed out that customer experience has an

indirect effect on customer engagement through customer commitment. On the other hand, some previous studies (e.g., Ahn & Back, 2018) found a significant effect of customer intellectual experience on customer brand engagement.

In any case, these results can be interpreted by looking at the nature of the customer experience variable, which includes a feeling of happiness when buying from a particular store, and the customer notice of the extent of the store's interest in cleanliness, while noting the positive opinions that the customer hears about the store. Moreover, the interest of the store employees in arranging the products and the desire to provide assistance and advice to the customer are all matters that enrich customer experiences (sensory and intellectual experiences) and increase his or her engagement and desire to buy. Consequently, a good customer experience can lead to increased engagement and intent to purchase.

5. Conclusion, implications and recommendation

The study aims at exploring the effect of customer experience as measured by customer sensory experience and customer intellectual experience on customer outcomes like customer purchase intention and customer store engagement. The results showed that all hypotheses were accepted. This means that customer experiences have a significant effect on the customer purchase intention and the customer store engagement. The results revealed that the effect of customer sensory experience is greater on customer store engagement than its effect on customer purchase intention, while the effect of customer intellectual experience is greater on customer purchase intention than its effect on customer store engagement.

One can conclude from these results two types of implications: theoretical and marketing implications. First, the theoretical implications consist in showing the relationship between two types of customer experiences (customer sensory experience and customer intellectual experience) and two types of customer outcomes (customer purchase intention and customer store engagement). Although researchers are interested in studying the effects of customer experiences on his outputs, the current study is one of the first studies that dealt with the relationships between current variables. Therefore, the current study constitutes a theoretical basis for future studies that seek to uncover the effects of customer experiences on other variables.

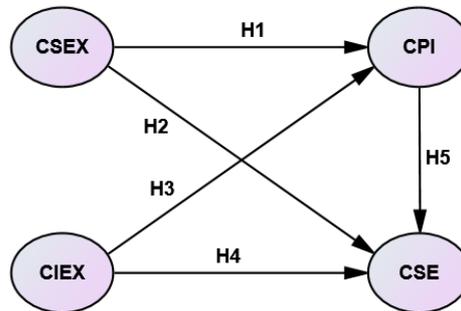
Secondly, the marketing implications extracted from the current study warn that companies seeking to improve the level of customer store engagement should pay attention to indicators that improve his or her sensory experiences. As for companies trying to increase the customer purchase intention, they should focus on factors that improve his or her intellectual experiences.

The current study recommends that stores should pay great attention to factors that improve customer experiences, whether sensory experiences or intellectual experiences. Examples of these factors include concern for cleanliness, interior and exterior design of the store, elegant display of products, focus on customer needs, and recruiting staff who desire to serve and advise customers. Stores should also create measures by which they can identify the customers' emotional, sensory, price, social, and intellectual experiences, in order to be able to enhance these experiences and ensure their positive impact on customers' output.

6. Limitations and future works

The sample of the current study consisted of customers of stores specialized in selling food products. Therefore, future studies are required to select samples from stores in other sectors. Moreover, the study concerned with exploring the effects of two types of customer experience (sensory and intellectual experiences) on two types of customer outcomes (customer purchase intention and customer store engagement). Therefore, future studies are requested to investigate the impact of not only these two types of customer experience but also other types such as price and social experiences. Furthermore, researchers

are required to explore strategies of customer experience management. Future studies could investigate additional path in the current research model to highlight the effect of customer store engagement on customer purchase intention as can be seen in Figure 5.



CSEX: customer sensory experience; CIEX: customer intellectual experience; CPI: customer purchase intention; CSE: customer store engagement

Figure 5. Future research suggested mode

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