

# **DEVELOPING A MEASUREMENT SCALE FOR THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ALONG THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY**

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In today's omnichannel environment, customers experience a vast range of touchpoints during their customer journey. To be able to manage their marketing activities at all touchpoints, service and manufacturing companies need to be able to measure customer experiences along the entire customer journey. While a well-developed and theoretically solid understanding of customer experience (CE) as a multi-dimensional construct exists in research (e.g., De Keyser, Lemon, Klaus, and Keiningham 2015; Homburg, Jozić, and Kuehnl 2015; Lemon and Verhoef 2016; Schmitt 2011), little is known about how to measure CE in a structured and holistic way. Extant studies are limited to a specific domain of the CE concept, such as brands (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello 2009; Schouten, McAlexander, and Koenig 2007) or service co-creation and quality (Maklan and Klaus 2011; Verleye 2015) and are thus not applicable to any customer journey and its different elements (i.e., experience providers, touchpoints, and purchase/consumption stages). Additionally, these measurement approaches assume equal weights for the construct's dimensions, although research indicates that different CE dimensions might be more or less salient in a given situation (Ariely 1998), and they ignore that single experiences may have individual weights for customers' evaluation of their overall experience. To overcome these limitations in the literature, the Marketing Science Institute (MSI) called for more empirical research on CE measurement in their latest research initiative. We address this call by asking: How to measure CE along the customer journey as a multi-dimensional construct, while accounting for distinct customer journey elements and differential weights for individual CEs?

Our research provides a measurement scale that captures the diverse aspects of CE along individual customer journeys. Our scale captures various CE dimensions (affective, cognitive, sensorial, physio-behavioral, relational, functional, and symbolic) and accounts for customers' interaction with different experience providers (brand, personnel, other customers), across multiple touchpoints (e.g., advertisement, online shop, store), and in different stages of the customer journey (pre-purchase/-consumption, purchase/consumption, post-purchase/-consumption). Additionally, we suggest an approach for the aggregation of single CEs and CE dimensions to an overall CE measure based on customer-specific weights to form a more accurate measure of individual CEs. This scale makes each CE quantifiable to researchers and practitioners and enables firms to include CE as a key performance indicator in their marketing dashboard.

To develop our CE scale, we adhere to established scale development procedures (e.g., Churchill 1979), including a broad literature review, in-depth interviews with customers, and online surveys using convenience and representative samples. First empirical results will be presented at the conference. The MSI financially supports this research project.

References are available upon request.