Identifying and Ranking Factors of Customer Experience and its Role in Shaping Customer Satisfaction

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This article adopts the customer experience framework to find out how customer experience shapes customer satisfaction in the retail banking services. An empirical model using ISM technology is developed to identify and rank the factors of customer experience and to find the relationships and interrelationships of these factors which further shapes customer satisfaction. The results suggest that customer experience is driven by fourteen factors: convenience, customer interaction, servicescape, employees attitude, online functional elements, presence of other customers, online hedonic elements, customization, core service, value addition, speed, marketing mix, service process and online aesthetics.

In addition, the findings suggest that these factors directly or indirectly lead to customer satisfaction which further helps in building customer trust and customer loyalty. The article ends with a discussion of the managerial implications and future research directions.

KEY WORDS: Customer experience, customer satisfaction, loyalty, retail bank services.

INTRODUCTION

There is growing evidence to suggest that firms are compelled to enhance existing offerings and provide better ones to meet customers' affinity for a real experience (Creamer, 2007; Mascarenhas et al., 2006; Thompson and Arsel, 2004). Meanwhile, academic scholars are looking for a better understanding of the role of customer experience in the service encounter (Berry et al., 2002a; Harris et al., 2000; Sundbo and Darmer, 2008). For example, a recent request from Baron and Harris (2008) indicates a great need to advance service science in regard to how customer experience is created. Sundbo and Darmer (2008) contend that experience is created by

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the service providers and call for a thorough understanding of the experience development process. Researchers in recent years have begun to pay more attention to the effect of customer experience on consumer behaviors. For example, Crosby and Johnson (2007) reveal that emotional motives outweighs rational motives (i.e., functional appeals) in affecting customers' loyalty behaviors by a ratio of five to three.

In the changing scenario from product centric to customer-centric approaches, the focus of marketers has shifted towards their customers and more deliberately on their experiences. Therefore, the attitudinal affect of customer experience on their post-purchase behavior is a matter of research for both the academicians and marketers alike. But along with positive customer experience, the company also has to look for customer satisfaction with the product or service in order to build the requisite brand equity in the consumer's mind. Therefore, they emphasized that the procedures that generate positive customer experience lead to customer satisfaction.

THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Customer experience does not merely include the quality of customer care, but also covers customer interaction with the elements of marketing mix such as the popularly known four Ps and Cs in the marketing discipline. A customer experiences all aspects of the products and services offered by the company. The experiences of customers lead to customer satisfaction, which in turn acts as an antecedent of Brand loyalty, Customer retention, Market growth and the overall Profitability of the organization. According to Meyer and Schwager, the relationship between customer satisfaction and experience may be equated as:

Customer Satisfaction = (Good experiences of the customer - Bad experiences of the customer)

Scholars have conceptualized customer experience in different ways such as the creation of memorable events (Pine and Gilmore), 14 as a series of clues (Berry *et al*), 15 and as the generation of touch points and customer corridor (Meyer and Schwager). 6 Although there is multiplicity in the definitions of ' Customer Experience ' , 16 – 18 we find that none of them is really able to cover its essence holistically.

However, a common thread that runs through all of them is 'managing touchpoints' . But what is easily said may be difficult to accomplish, because there may be thousands of touchpoints that may need to be managed and that depend on several factors such as product-service mix, target segment, positioning, competition, price, channels of distribution, packaging, frontline employees, marketing, branding strategy and many more. The list is endless,

as it is very difficult to articulate all of them completely. Therefore, in this article, among all the proposed definitions, we are illustrating the most conceptual definition recently projected by Gentile *et al*, that is, The Customer Experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction.

This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial physical and spiritual). Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer's expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The traditional product-oriented marketing approach has begun to shift to a service focus through value creation (Vargo, 2008; Vargoand Lusch, 2004, 2008). Rust and colleagues (Lemon et al., 2001; Rust et al., 2004) define value equity as "the customer's objective assessment of the utility of a brand, based on perceptions of what is given up for what is received" (p. 22). It is driven by quality, price, and convenience. However, service experience goes beyond the traditional view of value proposition, as customers are seeking not only functional offerings from the provider but also emotional benefits: "a mix of excitement, entertainment and adventure that ensure [a real total customer experience]" (Mascarenhas et al., 2006, p. 398). Disneyland and the Venetian casino are just some examples that successfully integrate amix of hedonic services into lavish entertainment complexes (Fowler, 2007; Pine and Gilmore, 2007). In fact, Disney, for example, places customer experience at the heart of its business philosophy (Carson, 2004; Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

In creating service experience, Crosby and Johnson (2007) suggest that customers' experience should be embedded in every touch point throughout the service delivery process. Mascarenhas et al.'s (2006) total customer experience typology suggests that experience must have the right blend of emotional attributes (e.g., excitement; color, texture, and material; and customer–employee interaction) and functional attributes including physical (e.g., the service product, the setting, and service availability) and value ingredients (e.g., the right product and location) in the creation process (cf. Berry et al., 2002a; Chang and Horng, 2010; Terblanche, 2009). These two categories of customer experience attributes should also be embedded throughout the service encounter in order to achieve sustainable customer loyalty. Patrício et al. (2011) also contend that firms should integrate their service offerings, such as the service environment and employee service delivery, as a whole

"that enables customers to create their service experiences" (Patrício et al., 2011, p. 182).

METHODS

With the growing literature on customer experience, several conceptual and empirical models for achieving the desired customer experience have been presented. However there is a lack of such a model which highlights the structural relationships among the various factors of customer experience. Therefore the existing models cannot always support managers in creating the desired customer experience (Verhoef *etal.*,2009; Gentile *et al.*,2007). In order to devise the accurate dependence powers of the factors which affect the customer experience an attempt has been made to develop a conceptual model of customer experience using ISM technology.

Objectives

To resolve these issues, an Interpretative Structural Modeling (ISM) approach has been utilized. It develops an integrated structural framework (Duperrin and Godet, 1973) which structures the mutual relationships among the factors of customer experience and also identifies the impact of these factors on customer's satisfaction. By applying this technique, an attempt has been made to fill the gaps highlighted by Walls *et al.*,(2010); Walter *et al.*,(2010); Gentile *et al.*,(2007) and Constatinides, (2004). For such purpose, the present study aims:

- To identify and rank the factors of customer experience and to study their influence on customer satisfaction.
- To find out the interaction among these identified factors and their relationship with outcome variable (Customer satisfaction) using ISM.
- To discuss the managerial implications of this investigation.

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, this study is organized in the following manner. First, critical factors of customer experience, customer experience in itself and customer satisfaction are discussed. Secondly, ISM methodology is introduced, followed by the development of the ISM model. Finally, the discussion and conclusions of this study are presented.

Factors of Customer experience :

1.1   Convenience has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(1)   Convenience

It acts as one of the main constituents in building the experiences of customers. This is because the customer wants an ease at its every single

contact point with the organization. Along with the entire service process, the customer desires convenience at 'every contact-point' i.e. from its pre-purchase to post-consumption experiences (Rowley, 1994; 1999: Constantinides. 2004; Arnould *et al.,* 2005; Knutson, 2007; Mahfouz *et al.,* 2008; Jain and Bagdare. 2009).

Convenience is an integral part of customer experience. The customer wants convenience in every aspect of its transaction either online or offline. It may be in the form of speedy check-outs, technology enabled billing, maintenance of hygiene and cleanliness, availability of parking, location and accessibility of the store, and many more (Jain and Bagdare, 2009; Rowley, 1994; 1999). But among all, the selection of location mainly affects the convenience because it is the foremost step in the creation of customer experience. The decision on location has major implications on the price, promotion, and merchandising also (Grewal *et al.,* 2009).

1.2 Customer interaction has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(2) Customer Interaction

An interface which exists between an or*ganization* and a customer is recognized as customer interaction. In any organization , a customer interacts with its different parts as with its servicescape, with its products/services, with its other customers or alike(Gentile Et al., 2007). (Newton, 2006). In any organization, employees are the basic source of service delivery to the customers. In such case, they ought to be friendly, helpful, time committed. competent and capable of sustaining interpersonal distance (Sarcl and Marmorstcin, 1999; Sun, 2002; O'Cass and Grace, 2004: Singh. 2000; Wright *et al..* 2007: Butcher, 2002).

Customer experience is generated due to the customer's interaction with the company, product or other parts of the organization (Gentile *et al.* 2007; Ansart and Duymedjian. 2006). These interactions affect customer satisfaction (Slatten *et al.,* 2009) because it is linked with the customer's emotion (Arnould and Price. 1993). Employees play a vital role and act as a critical asset in the interactive service delivery (Slatten *et al.,* 2009). In the context of online environment interaction among customers can be made possible through the blogs. chat rooms, forums, and by posting the reviews of customers on company's websites. Now-a-days the customer interaction with the brand is also increasing, illustrating the strong relationship between brand and customer experience (Verhoef *et al..* 2009).

An interface which exists between an organization and a customer is recognized as customer interaction. In any organization, a customer interacts with its different parts as with its scrviccscape, with its products/services, with its other customers or alike (Gentile *et al..* 2007). According to Amould

and Price, (1993), the interaction of the customer is strongly associated with the emotions of customers and leads towards customer's satisfaction (Tsai, 2005; Nagasawa, 2008: Adelmann, and Zajonc. 1989: Sheu *et al*, 2009; Bagozzi *et al..* 1999; Richins, 1983: 1997; Allen *et al* 1992; Ladhan. 2007).

1.3   *Servicescape has a positive impact on customer satisfaction*

(3)   Servicescape

It is the physical environment being shared by the employees and customers of any organization which plays a vital role in building the experiences of a customer. The customer compares the dimensions of physical environment (space, function & signs, ambient conditions and symbols & artefacts) with the quality of service he/she will receive from the organization (Bitner, 1992; 1990; Zhang *et al..* 2009; Gilmore and Pine, 2002a,b: Grace and O'Cass. 2004: Wakefield and Blodgctt. 1994: Panzarclla, 1980).

These are the physical surroundings which internally force the customer to stay in the environment and enhance the willingness of the employees to work (Lee and Vichet, 2008; Bitner, 1992). The physical environment embraces the sensory appeals (color and aroma), spatial layout and furnishings of the organization (Zhang *et al.,* 2008). An entertaining, interactive, stimulating and educational buying environment (Knutson *et al.,* 2007) influences the online/offline behavior of the customer which affects their cognitive, emotional and physiological responses (Walter *et al.,* 2010; Heide and Gronhaug, 2006; Constantinides, 2004; Bitner. 1992).

1.4   *Attitude of employees has a positive impact on customer satisfaction*

(4)   Employees Attitude

Employees play a vital role in the generation of customer experience. In the chain of employees, the front-line employees serve the customers and create positive long-lasting memory in the customers' mind (Nowak and Newton, 2006). In any organization, despite technical support on service delivery process; carelessness, slow service delivery, and poor attitude of the employees significantly affect customer satisfaction (Gronroos. 1990). The physical appearance of the employees and their way of delivering the core service immensely affects the customer experience (O'Cass and Grace, 2004). According to Grace and O'Cass. (2004) in any organization, the core service and employee services are intertwined. Therefore, the experience generated from the core service is basically the services delivered by the employees to the customers. The role of an employee is critical, especially in service organizations. As it is the employee who directly comes in contact with the customer, hence employee behavior and capability contributes a lot in building the customer experience (Nowa)

1.5   Online functional elements have a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(5)   Online Functional Elements

The sub-factors which come under this category are skill, control, interactivity and involvement. While navigation *Skill* is the self-assessment capability of an online-user. *Control* is the capability of an online user to successfully work in an online environment and the responses expected by the user for its inputs from the website. *Interactivity* is the promptness of website perceived by the web-user. *Involvement* reveals the significance of the website in the web-user's life (Novak *et al..* 2000; Bridges and Florsheim, 2008; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Today all the organizations possess websites through which the company communicates and serves its customers. Still there are certain functional elements which affect the online experience. These elements are: skill, control, interactivity and involvement (Bridges and Florsheim, 2008). These functional elements are highly promoted by the convenience which the websites provide through the fast browsing facility and adjustable procedures (Constantinides. 2004).

1.6   Presence of other customers has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(6)   Presence of Other Customers

The experiences of the customers are highly affected by the presence of other customers especially with their behaviors and gestures while having any interaction with them. The presence of others creates social surroundings for the customers, which in turn influence their behavior (Grove and Fisk. 1997). In service settings, density and perceived crowding impacts the process speed and emotional responses of the customer (Hui and Bateson, 1991).

The perception related to presence of other customers differs from industry to industry. The opinion of any individual regarding the presence of other customers significantly depends upon the services he/she is availing. As in case of theatres, picnic spots, restaurants or alike, presence of other customers is perceived as a social surrounding to any individual whereas in service settings where long queues exist (reservation counters, banks etc), presence of others seems to be a crowd for an individual (Grove and Fisk. 1997: Arnold *et al,* 2005; Nagasawa, 2008; Verhoef *et al..* 2009; Walter *et al,* 2010; Baron *et al,* 1996; Martin. 1996; Martin and Pranter, 1989).

1.7   Online hedonic elements have a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(7)   Online Hedonic Elements

The online sub-factors which lie under this category are arousal, challenge, telepresence, time distortion and trust. *Arousal* refers to as the estimation of stimulation. *Challenge* refers to as the sense of extending the capabilities

of a web-user up to his/her limits. *Telepresence* is. when a web-user perceives that the online environment is more dominant in comparison to the real environment. *Time distortion* refers to the time perception, when during navigation the web-user is so deeply engrossed in the virtual environment that he/she becomes unaware of the passage of time. *Trust* refers to as the feeling of safety and security, a web-user essentially requires of the online environment (Novak *et al.,* 2000; Constantinides. 2004: Bridges and Florsheim. 2008; Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre, 1989; Boyerand Hult. 2006).

The online hedonic elements escape the web user from the real life. These elements arc arousal, challenge, telepresence, time distortion (Bridges and Florsheim, 2008) and trust (Constantinides, 2004). The online functional and hedonic elements are not isolated but are just the parts of the online interface which simultaneously addresses the diverse needs and convenience of the web users (Constantinides, 2004).

1.8 *Customization has a positive impact on customer satisfaction*

(8) Customization

It is an extent up to which the services are customized for a particular customer. In the present scenario, organizations arc deliberately exerting themselves to deliver the customized services aiming to fulfill specific needs of the customers. Therefore, customization *is* the degree up to which the organization can tailor its products/ services according to customer's requirement.

In terms of economic attribution, customized services act as a key offering in any organization (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). In customization, employees provide customized services to the customer; they deliver a feeling of 'importance' to the customer that ultimately enhances their experiences (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). Yet many times, especially during the peak rush hours customizing one customer may become one of the reasons of negligence for many other customers.

1.9 *Core service has a positive impact on customer satisfaction*

(9) Core Service

It is the fundamental service due to which an organization positions itself in the market. The idealistic core service is that which has the capability to attract the new customers by its need-meeting characteristic, strengthen the business of the organization through its multiple parts, quality and long-lasting nature, and also act as a baseline for the selling of supplementary services over time (Berry *et al..* 2002; Grace and O'Cass. 2004; O'Cass and Grace. 2004: Walter *et al..* 2010; Jain and Bagdare. 2009; Christopher, 1996; Reynolds and Bcatty, 1999; Jones *et al..* 2000).

"In terms of core service, the relative degree and intensity of activities and interactions to waiting periods during the service delivery may impact evaluations and affect service quality evaluations significantly. Also the duration *per service* has an influence on rating outcomes" (Danaher and Mattson. 1998). In many service contexts, core service delivery depends on the employees of the organization. This significantly affects the satisfaction, aroused feelings and attitudes of the customers (Grass and O'Cass. 2004).

1.10   Value addition has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(10)   Value Addition

These arc the complementary services which an organization delivers in addition to the core service. These additional supplementary services create a highly positive and distinguished type of customer experience (Jain and Bagdare, 2009). The description of value addition varies from service to service. It is highly associated with the core service delivered by the organization which creates an exclusive and unforgettable feeling in the minds of the customers (Rowley, 1994; 1999; Lovelock, 1996; Schmilt. 1999: Berry *et al.,*, 2002: Lexhagen, 2005).

The value addition in services delights the customers. The definition of value addition changes from service to service, it basically depends on the core service provided (Rowley, 1994; 1999). There are different value additions but the basic one is value addition in economic terms (Knutson *et al..* 2007). The other types of value added services are alteration facility, more talk-time, food or snacks bar, free home delivery etc. This little addition in the delivery of service contributes to the higher degree of customer satisfaction (Jain and Bagdare, 2009).

1.11   Speed has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(11)   Speed

It is the promptness, which any organization shows while fulfilling the requirements of its customers (Rowley, 1994; 1999). It basically highlights the time elapsed in completion of the entire service process. The slow delivery of the services creates a dissatisfaction in the minds of the customers, which ultimately affects the word-of-mouth and re-purchases intention of the customers (Sarcl and Marmorstein. 1999: Grove and Fisk. 1997; Berry *et al..* 2002; Flanagan *et al..* 2005; Jain and Bagdare. 2009; Caballcro *et al..* 1985; Katz *et al..* 1991).

Speed emphasizes the time taken in the service process. Time reduction is done through effective channels. These channels may be telephonic/ personal visit/ computer network or others (Rowley, 1994; 1999). The slow service

delivery system affects the speed. delays the process and produces waiting lines (Shankar *et al..* 2006). While waiting, customer experience gets highly influenced by the actions of other people. The extension in waiting lines can create dissatisfying physical behaviors and inconvenience to the customer (Grove and Fisk, 1997; Shankar *et al..* 2007). These longer delays also have a great effect on the customer satisfaction and their repurchase intentions (Taylor, 1994; Clemmer and Schneider, 1989).

1.1 Marketing Mix has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(12) Marketing-mix

In any organization, marketing-mix strategies are formulated with the aim to fulfill the expectations of the customers (Yelkur. 2000). The marketing-mix strategies of all P's are planned in such a manner that they can accomplish the requirements of their customers up to a great extent. It is a salient tool, which significantly affects the buying behavior of both the online and the offline customers (Tsai, 2005; Constantinides. 2004: 2010; McCole, 2004; Ashill *et al.,* 2003).

Marketing mix has been considered as the major controllable tool which influences the buying behavior of both the online and the offline customer (Constantinides, 2004). In any organization, all the 7P's of the marketing mix depend upon the goals of the customers. These goals are the expectations of customers from any organization. They may be recreation, social interaction, entertainment, intellectual stimulation or alike (Arnould and Price. 1993). The fulfillment of these goals appears in the form of positive customer experience which delights the customer a lot (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). In an online environment, the hedonic and functional elements affect the marketing mix of the organization because when a customer buys a product through the internet, its requirements are totally different in comparison to offline environment (Constantinides, 2004).

1.1 Service Process has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(13) Service Process

It is an amalgamation of the sequence of all different type of activities held in any organization, which may either be within the contact of the customer or not in contact of the customer (Tseng *et al..* 1999). The customer gains more experience through those elements which are in direct contact as service operational units, service facilities, servicescape, front desk employees and many other things which are perceptible to the customers (Tseng *et al..* 1999; Grace and O'Cass, 2004; Bigne *et al..* 2008; Walter *et al..* 2010: Tax and Stuart. 1997: Baker *et al..* 2002).

The service process is divided into two categories: First. within the contact of the customer and Second, without the contact of the customer. The customer gains experience through elements which are within their contact i.e. service operational units, employees, service facilities or many other things which are perceptible to the customers (Tseng et al., 1999). In any organization, the service process can become speedy by maintaining the physical environment of the organization. by training of employees, by resolving problems related to the service process, and by appropriately dealing with other service priorities & fiscal concerns (Tom and Lucey. 1995).

1.1   Online Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on customer satisfaction

(14)   Online Aesthetics

The aesthetic elements of the website play a critical role in an online environment. The aim of these elements is to catch the attention of the web-user in a short span of time and to create a positive sense about the quality of products/services offered by the organization in the minds of the online users (Sun, 2002; Sheu *et al.,* 2009; Constantinides. 2004; 2010; Lee *et al..* 2006; Cyr *et al..* 2008).

In an online environment. despite the user based elements; experiences depend on the aesthetics of the website. In such a case, the attentively considered aesthetic elements are: design, presentation quality, design elements and style of the website. These aesthetic elements have to capture the attention of the web user in a very short duration of time; the design and layout of the website are devised in such a manner that it attracts the users to browse the website. The aesthetic elements of the website affect the hedonic elements of the online user up to great extent (Constantinides. 2004).

Development of Conceptual Model using ISM Technology :

ISM is a methodology which helps the individuals to resolve the complex issues into the structured format. According to sage(1977),with the help of ISM process the ambiguous and inadequately articulated mental models are used to serve different purposes. It helps to identify the influence of different variables on each other and imposes the order and direction on the complex relationship among variables of a system(sage 1977). The methodology of ISM is based on the interactive learning process. In this interpretive methodology, the judgement group decides the relationship among various variables and through this relationship, an overall structure of the complex variables is extracted. The modeling of this overall structure along with the specific interconnection among various variables is portrayed in a directed graph model in Fig. 1.

Table 1. **Application of ISM**

Contributor(s)	Area in which ISM has been applied
Saxena and Vrat,(1990)	Energy conservation in cement industry.
Mandal and Deshmukh, (1994)	Selection of vendor.
Sharma et al., (1995)	Waste management in India.
Ravi et al., (2005)	Improvement of productivity in reverse logistics.
Faisal et al., (2006)	Risk mitigation in supply chain.
Qureshi et al., (2007)	Modeling the logistics outsourcing relationships.
Raj et al., (2008)	Flexible manufacturing system in India.
Qureshi et al., (2008)	Selection process of third party logistics.
Kannan et al., (2010)	Supplier development criteria in an automobile industry.

In this study, ISM has been applied to highlight the interrelationships among the factors of customer experience and their influence on the customer satisfaction. The development of the ISM model commenced along with the literature review on customer experience. By reviewing the existing body of literature, the factors of customer experience were enlisted. Through the Expert Opinion Technique (brainstorming, normal group etc.) a contextual relationship among the variables has been established. In the panel of experts who participated in the brainstorming sessions ,there were in total 20 experts comprising seven well informed and advanced customers, three academicians possessing expertise in the field of customer experience and ten industry experts-two each from the tourism, healthcare, hospitality, banking and retail service sectors. Industry experts were considered to be those people who had a work experience of more than 10 years in their respective field and had been responsible for delivering customer experience.

Three brain storming sessions were conducted for this study. In the first brainstorming session, initially the research outline and its significance of the objective was introduced, later on, the pertaining literature was given to all the participants in order to identify the factors of customer experience. In the second session, which was conducted after 12 days, a total   no. of 14 factors of customer experience were identified. These 14 factors were likely to evaluate the customer experience; therefore a variable customer experience in itself was added along with these factors. To identify the impact of these factors on the customer, an outcome variable i.e. customer satisfaction, was also considered in the study. In the final brainstorming session, the ranking of all the factors and their interrelationships with each other along with their influence on customer satisfaction was carried out. To achieve the concrete results, further the relationships were reconfirmed by the panel of external experts. These experts were from different service sectors such as tourism, banking, retail, healthcare and hospitality. The outcome of the final brain storming sessions has been verified through the external group of experts.
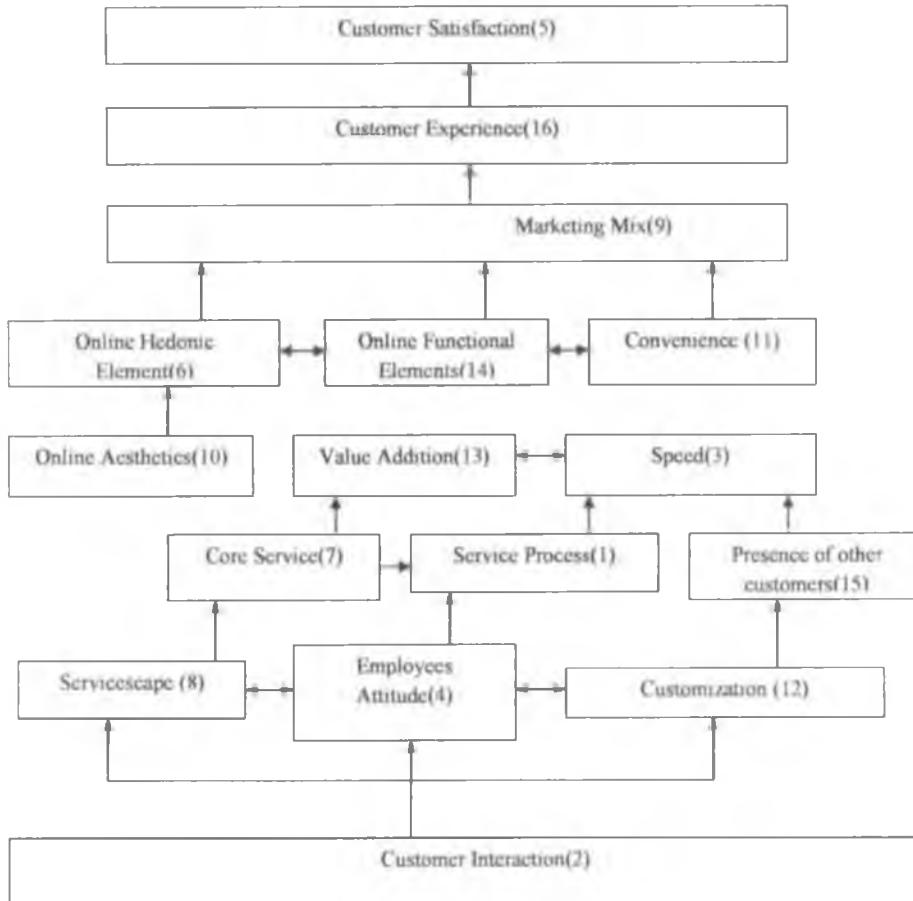
Fig 1. **Conceptual Model of customer experience using ISM technology**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To apply the concept of customer experience alone in practice, an apparent knowledge of the key ingredients which constructs 'customer experience' is essentially required, on the basis of which a comprehensive framework can be developed. This framework will help the banking organizations to compare the expected and delivered experiences of the customers. By over passing the difference which may occur through this comparison, the organizations will be able to satisfy their customers, which ultimately leads to customer loyalty, customer retention, positive word of mouth, market share, growth and profitability.

It is evident from figure 1 that customer interaction (2) was a highly significant factor for the creation of customer experience and therefore, it

acts as a base for the hierarchy model of ISM. Customer satisfaction (5) was the resultant outcome variable, which could be attained through the enhanced and improved customer experience. Therefore this variable has been positioned at top in the ISM hierarchy model. In any organization , a customer interacts with every touch point of the organization, as its employees attitude(4), servicescape (8), product/service delivered and with the other customers present in the organization(15) (Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Berry and carbone,2007).

Among all the touch points of the customers, the employees have a great impact on the other aspects of the organization such as core service (7), service process (1) and online environment(10) of the organization. They also mutually influence the servicescape (8) and customization (12), where serviscape leads to online aesthetics and customization affects the service process (1). The customer plays a vital role in prioritizing its requirement regarding the customized (12) product or service. Nevertheless, since the employees are the ones who deliver the customized service, their way of delivery affects the process of the organization a lot (Addis and Holbrook, 2001).

The customers of any organization are always delighted with the value addition they receive along the necessary services. The value addition strongly depends on the core service (7) of the organization; therefore it varies from service to service. The speedy service process is a type of value addition to the customers but addition of extra services may many times induce delay. This reveals that the value addition and speed mutually impact each other. Along with value addition, the speed also gets influenced by the service delivery process (1) and density of customer's presence (15). The slow service process and a large number of customers induce delay, which in turn affects the overall convenience (11) of the system.

Convenience has a strong mutual interrelationship with the online environment as comfortable and adjustable website procedures and good navigation capabilities (14) of the user heavily impact each other. This enhances the emotional attachment of the customer with the organization. The customer wants the convenience at its every touch point which leads the marketing mix (9) of the organization should be designed in such a manner that it can be able to fulfill the goals of the customers and enhances their experience (16). The positive or enhanced customer experience always leads to customer satisfaction (5).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Variables such as customer satisfaction, customer experience, marketing mix, online hedonic elements , online functional elements, convenience, value addition and speed are dependent variables. These variables pose

weak driving powers but they strongly depend on other variables. In the figure they are positioned at the top of the ISM hierarchy. They represent the desired goals of any organization and strongly depend on the other variables of the system. These variables appear as the resultant actions in case of proper evaluation of customer experience. Based on these external and internal variables, the managers of the organizations can be able to predict the incremental advantages of their investment on the enhancement strategies of customer experience in the present and in near future also. Therefore the managers should handle all these variables with special care as they represent the desired outcome in favor of the organization.

- In the linkage cluster, the variables are unstable in nature, so any change in them will certainly affect the other variables and also affect them through feedback. Therefore the careful study of these variables is an essential requirement. The managers of the organizations should properly monitor these variables at each level of the evaluation process.

- The variables customer interaction, customization, presence of customers, core service, employees, serviscape, online aesthetics and service process are the independent variables with strong driving power and weak dependence power. Hence these variables act as 'key variable' for the survival and growth of any organization and work as a main driver for the effective evaluation of the customer experience in the organizations. The managers need to concentrate on these key variables more cautiously because these variables affect the basic touch points of the customers which contribute a lot in the development of customer experiences. Thus it is essential for the managers to develop the strategies in such a manner that the proper deployment of these variables can provide an enhanced level of satisfaction to the customer.

CONCLUSION

In the highly competitive era of corporate reforms, the organizations are trying to enhance their market share by attaining and retaining their customers. In the recent years organizations have been focusing more on managing the experiences of customers, so that they are successful in bringing delight and satisfaction in customers effectively.

For such a purpose, organizations are in need of such factors which affect customer experience a lot, with the intention that the managers can work on those factors from the strategic level to operational level.

In this study, an attempt has been made to identify the factors of customer experience and find their interrelationships and moreover to identify their impact on the outcome variable of customer experience i.e. customer satisfaction.

For this purpose, an ISM based model has been developed which depicts the hierarchy of customer experience factors and also highlights their impact on the satisfaction level of the customer. The key findings of this study shows that the driving and dependence powers of all the factors gives an insight to the management of the organizations to understand how to boost up the satisfaction of their customers.

With the help of model variables, a roadmap has been developed that guides the researcher to develop various models in order to analyze and measure customer experience. The study acts as a platform for the present research through which the researcher gets the proper steps to bridge the gaps that exists in the literature and moreover to resolve the present research problem. For such purpose, the research problem of the present study was formulated in the form of three research objectives. Though a good amount of theoretical and empirical literature on customer experience exists, the interrelationships among their factors and their impact on customer satisfaction have not been modeled to help the practicing managers. The managers should deal with independent variables at the strategic level only as they are the main influencers of customer satisfaction. To achieve the clear results of each variable, the managers should consider the variables collectively rather than considering them individually.

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