

Summary

Customer experience is a popular concept in both research and practice. It emphasizes that consumer evaluations are not only influenced by a rational weighing of value and price but also heavily driven by individual and situational factors such as their emotions or other customers around them. Although the importance of customer experience has been recognized from the early 80s (e.g., Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), we still know little about what drives customers' experiences in the different phases of their journeys and how firms can design meaningful experiences. The first aim of this dissertation is to shed light on what is already known and what still needs to be known about consumer's experiences. Based on the findings of an encompassing literature review the second aim of this dissertation is to study which factors drive today's customer experiences.

The findings of four empirical studies are presented that use various methodologies and focus on different phases of the customer journey. Essay 1 provides an integrated literature review of three decades of customer experience research. Based on this synthesis, we develop an agenda for future research that serves as a basis for the following essays. Essay 2 focuses on the information search and decision making phase of the customer journey and analyzes how simultaneously provided online ratings from other consumers and experts influence consumer decision making. Essay 3 focuses on the actual experience and usage phase and analyzes how branded (i.e., clearly visible and communicated) outsourcing of a firm-customer interaction alters consumer evaluations of the focal firm. Finally, essay 4 meta-analyzes which discrete emotions experienced during an interaction have the greatest impact on firm-relevant outcomes such as evaluation, purchase behavior, and sharing.