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Published in:
Journal of Marketing

DOI:
10.1509/jm.15.0420

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2016

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):
Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey. *Journal of Marketing*, *80*(6), 69-96. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420

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Katherine N. Lemon & Peter C. Verhoef

Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey

Understanding customer experience and the customer journey over time is critical for firms. Customers now interact with firms through myriad touch points in multiple channels and media, and customer experiences are more social in nature. These changes require firms to integrate multiple business functions, and even external partners, in creating and delivering positive customer experiences. In this article, the authors aim to develop a stronger understanding of customer experience and the customer journey in this era of increasingly complex customer behavior. To achieve this goal, they examine existing definitions and conceptualizations of customer experience as a construct and provide a historical perspective of the roots of customer experience within marketing. Next, they attempt to bring together what is currently known about customer experience, customer journeys, and customer experience management. Finally, they identify critical areas for future research on this important topic.

Keywords: customer experience, customer journey, marketing strategy, customer experience management, touch points

Creating a strong customer experience is now a leading management objective. According to a recent study by Accenture (2015; in cooperation with Forrester), improving the customer experience received the most number one rankings when executives were asked about their top priorities for the next 12 months. Multiple firms, such as KPMG, Amazon, and Google, now have chief customer experience officers, customer experience vice presidents, or customer experience managers responsible for creating and managing the experience of their customers. Schmitt (1999) was one of the first scholars to emphasize the importance of customer experience, and Pine and Gilmore (1998) specifically address the importance of experiences in today's society and the opportunities for firms to benefit from creating strong and enduring customer experiences. Marketing science, and specifically customer management, has been slow to adopt these developments in the marketing literature. Attention in customer management has mainly centered on customers' value creation for firms, with a focus on metrics such as customer lifetime value (CLV) (Gupta, Lehmann, and Stuart 2004; Kumar and Shah 2009) instead of value creation for customers (Bügel 2010; Kumar and Reinartz 2016).

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The increasing focus on customer experience arises because customers now interact with firms through myriad touch points in multiple channels and media, resulting in more complex customer journeys. Firms are confronted with accelerating media and channel fragmentation, and omnichannel management has become the new norm (Brynjolfsson, Hu, and Rahman 2013; Verhoef, Kannan, and Inman 2015). Moreover, customer-to-customer interactions through social media are creating significant challenges and opportunities for firms (Leeflang et al. 2013; Libai et al. 2010). Customer experiences are more social in nature, and peer customers are influencing experiences as well. Firms also have much less control, overall, of the customer experience and the customer journey, resulting in behaviors such as showrooming (e.g., Brynjolfsson, Hu, and Rahman 2013; Rapp et al. 2015). The explosion in potential customer touch points and the reduced control of the experience require firms to integrate multiple business functions, including information technology (IT), service operations, logistics, marketing, human resources, and even external partners, in creating and delivering positive customer experiences. Thus, it has become increasingly complex for firms to create, manage, and attempt to control the experience and journey of each customer (e.g., Edelman and Singer 2015; Rawson, Duncan, and Jones 2013.

To date, researchers have mainly focused on exploratory attempts to conceptualize and measure customer experience (e.g., Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello 2009; Grewal, Levy, and Kumar 2009; Pucinelli et al. 2009; Verhoef et al. 2009). The Marketing Science Institute (2014, 2016) views customer experience as one of its most important research challenges in the coming years, likely because of the increasing number and complexity of customer touch points and the belief that creating strong, positive experiences within the customer journey will result in improvements to the bottom line by improving performance in the customer journey at multiple

© 2016, American Marketing Association
ISSN: 0022-2429 (print)
1547-7185 (electronic)

Journal of Marketing: AMA/MSI Special Issue
Vol. 80 (November 2016), 69–96
DOI: 10.1509/jm.15.0420

touch points (i.e., higher conversion rates) and through improved customer loyalty and word of mouth (Court et al. 2009; Edelman 2010; Homburg, Jozić, and Kuehnl 2015). An important question, however, is how novel the customer experience focus actually is; it seems highly related to prior and existing research streams within marketing, such as customer satisfaction, service quality, relationship marketing, customer relationship management, customer centricity, and customer engagement.

Given the relatively nascent state of the customer experience literature, there is limited empirical work directly related to customer experience and the customer journey. There is, however, a broad and deep set of research investigating specific facets of what is now being called "customer experience." Thus, our goal in this article is to bring together the research that does exist on customer experience, to understand its origins and roots, to place it in context, and to identify critical gaps in our understanding. Through this process, we aim to develop a stronger understanding of customer experience in an era of increasingly complex customer behavior. Because "customer experience" has recently become one of the major buzzwords in marketing, it is useful to attempt to bring together what we know to provide a solid theoretical perspective on this topic. To do so, we organize the paper as follows. First, we define customer experience and examine existing definitions of customer experience as a construct. Second, we link customer experience to other, more deeply studied aspects of marketing and provide a historical perspective on customer experience within marketing. Third, we identify what is known about customer experience, discussing the limited extant findings on customer experience, customer journeys, and customer experience management. Fourth, from what is known, we highlight key insights and important lessons for marketing practice. Finally, we set forth a research agenda on customer experience, customer journeys, and customer experience management.

Customer Experience Defined

Early on, Abbott (1955) and Alderson (1957) focused on the broader notion that "what people really desire are not products but satisfying experiences" (Abbot 1955, p. 40). Furthering this path, experiential theorists in the 1980s (e.g., Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989) encouraged a broader view of human behavior, especially recognizing the importance of the emotional aspects of decision making and experience. Marketing practice has also embraced the study of customer experience. Pine and Gilmore (1998, p. 3) conceptualized the idea of "experiences" as distinct from goods and services, noting that a consumer purchases an experience to "spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages … to engage him in an inherently personal way." Other researchers, however, have argued for a much broader view of the customer experience. Schmitt, Brakus, and Zarantonello (2015) suggest that every service exchange leads to a customer experience, regardless of its nature and form. This expansive perspective considers customer experience holistic in nature, incorporating the customer's cognitive, emotional, sensory, social, and spiritual responses to all interactions with a firm (e.g., Bolton et al. 2014; Gentile, Spiller, and Noci 2007; Lemke, Clark, and Wilson 2011; Verhoef et al. 2009). Recent business practice has also broadly defined the customer experience as "encompassing every aspect of a company's offering—the quality of customer care, of course, but also advertising, packaging, product and service features, ease of use, and reliability. It is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company" (Meyer and Schwager 2007, p. 2).

Multiple definitions of customer experience exist in the literature. In this article, we focus on the major accepted definitions. Schmitt (1999) takes a multidimensional view and identifies five types of experiences: sensory (sense), affective (feel), cognitive (think), physical (act), and social-identity (relate) experiences. Verhoef et al. (2009, p. 32) explicitly define customer experience in a retailing context as a multidimensional construct and specifically state that the customer experience construct is holistic in nature and involves the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses to the retailer. In their study on brand experience, Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009, p. 53) conceptualize brand experience as subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design. They conceptualize and show that brand experience consists of four separate, though related, dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral (for a further discussion, we refer to Schmitt [2011]). Grewal, Levy, and Kumar (2009) suggest that in a retailing context, customer experiences can be categorized along the lines of the retail mix (i.e., price experience, promotion experience). De Keyser et al. (2015, p. 23) describe customer experience as "comprised of the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, spiritual, and social elements that mark the customer's direct or indirect interaction with (an)other market actor(s)"—in essence, the raw data contained in all direct or indirect interactions that then come together as an overall experience. Similarly, considering technology as an experience, McCarthy and Wright (2004) identify what they call the four threads of experience, ideas that help us to think more clearly about technology as experience: the sensual, the emotional, the compositional, and the spatio-temporal.

The design, delivery, and management of the customer experience can be viewed from multiple perspectives: from the firm's point of view, with the firm essentially designing and crafting an experience for the customer to receive (Berry, Carbone, and Haeckel 2002; Stuart and Tax 2004); from the customer's point of view (Schmitt 2011); or from a cocreation perspective, in which the customer experience is deemed a culmination of a customer's interaction with other actors in a broader ecosystem, while recognizing the customer's role in the coconstruction of the experience (Chandler and Lusch 2015; De Keyser et al. 2015; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2003).

In general, scholars and practitioners have come to agree that the total customer experience is a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social components (Schmitt 1999, 2003; Verhoef et al. 2009). However, an experience may relate to specific aspects

of the offering, such as a brand (e.g., Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello 2009) or technology (e.g., McCarthy and Wright 2004), and it consists of individual contacts between the firm and the customer at distinct points in the experience, called touch points (Homburg et al. 2015; Schmitt 2003). An experience is also built up through a collection of these touch points in multiple phases of a customer's decision process or purchase journey (Pucinelli et al. 2009; Verhoef et al. 2009). Overall, we thus conclude that customer experience is a multidimensional construct focusing on a customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to a firm's offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey.

The Roots of Customer Experience in Marketing

A key question is whether customer experience, as a topic, is really new. It seeks to integrate multiple long-lasting concepts within the marketing literature but, at the same time, to disregard or depreciate strong established concepts in marketing, such as customer satisfaction, service quality, relationship marketing, and customer equity. We contend that to truly understand and appreciate the renewed focus on customer experience, we need to understand its roots—and to identify and recognize the contributions of these established research areas to customer experience.

We trace the roots of customer experience to the 1960s, when the initial seminal theories on marketing and consumer behavior were developed and communicated, specifically, the work of Philip Kotler (1967) and John Howard and Jagdish Sheth (1969). We then identify important subsequent developments in and contributions to customer experience research:

- *Customer buying behavior process models*: understanding customer experience and customer decision making as a process (1960s–1970s)
- *Customer satisfaction and loyalty*: assessing and evaluating customer perceptions and attitudes about an experience (1970s)
- *Service quality*: identifying the specific context and elements of the customer experience and mapping the customer journey (1980s)
- *Relationship marketing*: broadening the scope of customer responses considered in the customer experience (1990s)
- *Customer relationship management* (CRM): linkage models to identify how specific elements of the customer experience influence each other and business outcomes (2000s)
- *Customer centricity and customer focus*: focusing on the interdisciplinary and organizational challenges associated with successfully designing and managing customer experience (2000s–2010s)
- *Customer engagement*: recognizing the customer's role in the experience (2010s)

Customer Buying Behavior Process Models

The resurgence of customer experience and the recent focus on customer decision journeys suggest that firms are broadening their thinking about marketing and considering how to design and manage the entire process the customer goes through. Initial theories in marketing began in the 1960s, focusing on discussions of customer decision processes and experience when buying products. Integrated models showing this buying process, in which customers move from need recognition to purchase to evaluation of the purchased product, were developed. The most influential model in this regard is Howard and Sheth's (1969) model. Also in this stage were models suggesting how advertising works, including the still-used attention–interest–desire–action (AIDA) model and adaptations thereof (Lavidge and Steiner 1961). In business-to-business (B2B) marketing, Webster and Wind (1972) discussed the buying process of business customers and the important role of the buying team (see also theory of business buying behavior [Sheth 1973]).

These broad, encompassing theories are still very influential and have gained a strong foothold in multichannel research and path-to-purchase modeling, and they provide a foundation for research in customer experience management. For example, in their conceptual model of multichannel customer management, Neslin et al. (2006) build on Howard and Sheth's (1969) model by suggesting a process from problem recognition to search to purchase and to after-sales using multiple channels. Pucinelli et al. (2009) and Verhoef et al. (2009) also strongly consider the purchase journey in their treatment of customer experience. Schmitt (2003, p. 68) builds upon this process approach, noting that "the key objective of tracking the experience at customer touch points is to develop an understanding of how an experience can be enriched for the customer throughout what marketers call the 'customer decision-making process.'" Within path-to-purchase models and customer experience management, the so-called purchase or marketing funnel (which is strongly linked to the AIDA model) has become extremely popular (e.g., Court et al. 2009; De Haan, Wiesel, and Pauwels 2016; Li and Kannan 2014).

Overall, the influence of these early consumer decision-making process models on customer experience research can be easily seen. Specifically, these models provide the foundation for thinking holistically about the customer experience, as a process that consumers go through, what we now call the "customer decision journey" or "customer purchase journey." Throughout this article, we will refer to customer experience as a multidimensional construct (defined above) and will refer to the customer purchase journey as the process a customer goes through, across all stages and touch points, that makes up the customer experience.

Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

One key element of understanding and managing customer experience is the ability to measure and monitor customer reactions to firm offerings, especially customer attitudes and perceptions. One such assessment is that of customer satisfaction, the conceptualization of which began in the 1970s. Satisfaction has primarily been conceptualized as resulting from a comparison of the actual delivered performance with customer expectations. This disconfirmation (positive or negative) has been empirically shown to create customer satisfaction. Researchers have discussed several ways to measure satisfaction, including rather focused measurement (i.e., "How satisfied are you about XXX?"; Bolton 1998), with more

extensive measurements using multiple items that also include customer emotions (such as happiness; e.g., Oliver 1980; Westbrook and Oliver 1991). Nonlinear effects of satisfaction and the importance of customer delight have also received attention (e.g., Anderson and Mittal 2000; Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997; Rust and Oliver 2000; Schneider and Bowen 1999). Studies have extensively assessed and confirmed the effects of satisfaction on customer behavior and firm performance, and they serve as early evidence of empirical linkage models to identify key drivers and consequences of satisfaction (e.g., Anderson, Fornell, and Mazvancheryl 2004; Bolton and Drew 1991; Gupta and Zeithaml 2006). Customer satisfaction measurement has become a rather standard practice within marketing, although other assessments and metrics have gained traction over time. For example, Reichheld (2003) strongly argues for replacing customer satisfaction with the Net Promoter Score (NPS).[1] Customer satisfaction and other approaches to assessing customer perceptions of the customer's experience serve as additional critical building blocks to our overall understanding of customer experience and provide the basis for its measurement.

Service Quality

Service marketing developed as a separate discipline in the 1980s. With the special characteristics of service offerings (e.g., intangibility, personal interactions), firms began recognizing that marketing service was significantly different than marketing goods (Rathmell 1966; Rust and Chung 2006; Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler 2006). One of the major concepts within service marketing that has garnered significant attention is service quality (Kunz and Hogreve 2011). Since the development of the SERVQUAL model and measurement scales by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), many studies have tried to validate and improve that scale (e.g., Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994), and many applications in specific contexts (e.g., e-service quality) have been advanced (e.g., Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Malhotra 2005; Wolfinbarger and Gilly 2003). The SERVQUAL model, in particular, is one of the marketing theories that have had a major influence in practice (Roberts, Kayandé, and Stremersch 2014). In the area of service marketing, we also observe the development of service blueprinting as an initial attempt to map the customer journey (Bitner, Ostrom, and Morgan 2008); early recognition of the importance of so-called moments of truth, or critical incidents in service delivery; and incorporation of atmospherics and the environment as influences on the customer experience (e.g., Bitner 1990, 1992). Taken together, the service quality literature stream brings to customer experience the focus on (1) the context in which experiences arise and (2) the journey mapping and measurement/assessment aspects of customer experience.

Relationship Marketing

The 1990s witnessed emerging attention on developing strong relationships with customers. Relationship marketing developed mainly in B2B and marketing channels research (e.g., Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987; Geyskens, Steenkamp, and Kumar 1998; Morgan and Hunt 1994). However, it also gained a strong position within consumer markets (Berry 1995; Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995), and relationship marketing theories have been tested extensively in business-to-consumer settings as well (e.g., Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan 2003; De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, and Iacobucci 2001; Verhoef 2003). Major constructs that have been considered include trust, commitment (in its multiple dimensions), switching costs, and relationship quality (as an overarching construct). Specifically, in the B2B and channel contexts, transaction cost theory–based constructs, such as relationship-specific investments and opportunism, have been treated as antecedents of relationship quality (Palmatier, Gopalakrishna, and Houston 2006). Encouraged by a stronger attention in economics and marketing and consumer research (e.g., Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999; Frey and Stutzer 2002), researchers also have recently suggested the need for more attention on emotional aspects of customer relationships (Verhoef and Lemon 2015) and have begun measuring constructs such as passion and intimacy (Bügel, Verhoef, and Buunk 2011; Yim, Tse, and Chan 2008). In summary, relationship marketing theory has significantly enriched the understanding of different theoretical facets of the customer relationship, extending the focus of customer experience to include emotions and perceptions associated with the experience.

Customer Relationship Management

The 2000s brought forth a stronger focus on value extraction from the customer relationship. Whereas in relationship marketing, the focus is mainly on building strong long-term relationships with customers, CRM and customer value management center more on the optimization of customer profitability and CLV (e.g., Kumar and Reinartz 2006; Reinartz, Krafft, and Hoyer 2004). For example, in their definition of CRM, Payne and Frow (2005) call for forming appropriate relationships with customers, implying that a long-term and strong relationship is no longer the ultimate objective. Research has also shown that long-term relationships are not necessarily more profitable and that there is strong revenue and cost heterogeneity between customers (Reinartz and Kumar 2000; Shah, Kumar, and Kim 2014; Shah et al. 2012). Following this theme, multiple studies have considered how firms can optimize customer acquisition, customer retention, and development strategies in such a way as to optimize the extracted CLV, which can result in shareholder value creation (e.g., Kumar and Shah 2009; Lewis 2006; Reinartz, Thomas, and Kumar 2005; Shah et al. 2006; Venkatesan and Kumar 2004). However, researchers might dispute whether these strategies have a sufficient focus on the value being delivered to customers. To address this limitation, the customer equity framework, introduced by Rust, Zeithaml, and Lemon (2000), with its key concepts of value equity, brand equity, and relationship equity as drivers of customer equity, links investments in quality, brands, and relationships to CLV

[1]We discuss metrics in much more detail in the "Customer Experience Measurement" section.

(see also Rust, Lemon, and Zeithaml 2004; Verhoef 2003; Zeithaml 1988). In recent studies, Ou et al. (2014) and Ou, Verhoef, and Wiesel (2016) provide additional support for this framework. The CRM literature's contribution to customer experience focuses on how specific elements of the customer experience relate to one another and to business outcomes (see also Bolton 2016).

Customer Centricity and Customer Focus

The notion of customer centricity as a valuable strategic approach has been proposed, implemented, and debated since the 2000s. Sheth, Sisodia, and Sharma (2000) focus on customer-centric marketing, an approach that centers on understanding and delivering value to individual customers rather than mass or target markets. Although it has been encouraged for several decades, this focus on individual customers has come to fruition with the ubiquitous availability of individual-level customer data. More broadly, there has also been a movement toward customer focus and customer centricity at the overall firm level, most notably put forth by Gulati and Oldroyd (2005), who identify a four-stage path to a customer-focused culture: (1) communal collaboration: collation of all customer information; (2) serial coordination: gaining insights into customers from past behavior and all information; (3) symbiotic coordination: developing an understanding of likely future customer behavior; and (4) integral coordination: real-time response to customer needs (Gulati and Oldroyd 2005, p. 97). More recently, Fader (2012, p. 9) brings these two approaches together, focusing on customer centricity as a strategy that aligns a company's products and services with the needs of its most valuable customers to maximize the long-term financial value of those customers. This shift has enabled organizations to be more ready for the interdisciplinary and cross-functional coordination required to design, understand, and manage customer experience.

Several managerial tools have been developed to facilitate the shift to customer centricity. The first tool is buyer (or customer) personas. A persona is "a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers" (Kusinitz 2014). Personas have traditionally been used in user-centered design (Pruitt and Adlin 2006) but have increasingly been incorporated into brand management and customer experience design (Herskovitz and Crystal 2010). They focus on a specific customer segment, identifying key aspects of that segment's typical customer's needs and experiences. A second tool is the "jobs-to-be-done" perspective proposed by Christensen and colleagues (Christensen, Cook, and Hall 2005; Christensen et al. 2007; Nobel 2011). Christensen's approach focuses on examining and understanding the circumstances that arise in customers' lives that may lead them to purchase a product, thereby regarding the process truly from the customer perspective. Taken together, the foregoing discussion showcases how customer-centricity has set the stage for a renewed focus on the customer experience.

Customer Engagement

In the current decade, the major movement in customer management has been on customer and brand engagement. Several definitions have been put forth for customer engagement, focusing on attitudes, behaviors, and value extraction. Overall, customer engagement attempts to distinguish customer attitudes and behaviors that go beyond purchase. Focusing on an attitudinal perspective, Brodie et al. (2011, p. 260) define customer engagement as "a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, cocreative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships." This approach suggests that engagement is a motivational state that leads customers to participate with firms. Building upon this, Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012, p. 133) provide an extensive review of the engagement literature and define customer engagement as "the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiates." This view is consistent with that of Van Doorn et al. (2010, p. 253), who focus on the nontransactional nature of customer engagement by putting forth the concept of customer engagement behavior, defined as "the customer's behavioral manifestation toward a brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers." This approach has been extended, especially as the digital and social media revolution has strengthened the importance of customer engagement behavior, as customers become active coproducers of value or destroyers of value for firms (Beckers, Risselada, and Verhoef 2014; Bolton 2016, Leeflang et al. 2014; Van Doorn et al. 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz, and Krafft 2010). Such developments have empowered customers to engage more with firms, either positively or negatively. This "beyond purchase" behavioral dimension of customer engagement includes manifestations, such as cocreation, social influence through word of mouth, and customer referrals (e.g., Hoyer et al. 2010; Libai et al. 2010).

Recent studies have also attempted to measure customer engagement (e.g., Brodie et al. 2013; Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie 2014; Calder, Isaac, and Malthouse 2016) and to examine how firms can benefit from customer engagement (Kumar and Pansari 2016). These customer engagement behaviors also have value extraction consequences. Kumar et al. (2010), for example, identify four components of customer engagement value: customer purchasing behavior, customer referral behavior, customer influencer behavior, and customer knowledge behavior. Further research has refined and begun to measure these aspects of engagement value, such as customer referral value and customer influence value (e.g., Kumar, Petersen, and Leone 2010; Kumar et al. 2013).

Customer Experience and Earlier Theories

An important issue is how customer experience relates to the major theories discussed above and specific customer-focused constructs. We have aimed to synthesize the major contributions of each of the discussed streams and how they infuse the understanding of customer experience as well as the management of customer experience (see Table 1). As we look across the decades of research, we can broadly categorize the research themes into three research areas: (1) research focused on process, behavior, and resulting value:

the early consumer buying behavior process models, CRM, and customer engagement; (2) research focused on process outcomes: satisfaction, service quality, and relationship marketing; and (3) customer-centricity research focused on the internal organizational aspects of customer experience. The first research stream, focused on process, provides a solid foundation for the idea that customer experience is created through the purchase journey. This is clearly acknowledged in both the academic customer experience literature (e.g., Pucinelli et al. 2009; Verhoef et al. 2009) and the managerial-oriented customer experience literature (e.g., Edelman and Singer 2015; Rawson, Duncan, and Jones 2013). These managerial contributions emphasize the importance of different touch points in the customer journey and the noted increasing complexity of managing the customer experience across all these touch points. Moreover, from a customer engagement perspective, customers can also be cocreators of their customer experience. The second research stream mainly focuses on process outcomes and the measurement of these outcomes, such as satisfaction and service quality. This research stream also emphasizes the link of customer experience with behavioral outcomes. Prior research has suggested that the customer's assessment of an experience influences key outcomes such as customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, word of mouth, customer profitability, and CLV (e.g., Bolton 1998; Bolton, Lemon, and Verhoef 2004; Verhoef 2003). Although we do not focus in depth on these outcomes here (see Kumar and Reinartz 2016), we do consider such outcomes when discussing the predictive quality of metrics used to measure the customer experience. The third research stream is helpful in delineating how firms can manage the customer experience both internally and externally with other stakeholders (e.g., Homburg, Jozić, and Kuehnl 2015).

In the remainder of this article, we discuss the extant knowledge on customer experience in each of these research domains, referred to as (1) customer experience and the customer journey, (2) customer experience measurement, and (3) customer experience management. We next discuss how customer experience can be considered distinct from other constructs in marketing.

Customer Experience as a Distinct Construct

As we have discussed, the current literature states that customer experience is a multidimensional construct focusing on a customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to a firm's offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey. For a further understanding of the customer experience construct, which is relatively broad, it is useful to attempt to differentiate it from other customer-focused constructs. First, it is helpful to understand how customer experience is related to more focused constructs, such as customer satisfaction and service quality. Customer satisfaction could be one of the components of customer experience, focusing on the customer's cognitive evaluation of the experience. One could even argue that customer experience is broadening the concept of customer satisfaction, leading to a richer view. Service quality (and its constituent elements) would be considered an antecedent of customer experience, in line with earlier research (e.g., Mittal, Kumar, and Tsiros 1999). Second, it could be argued that constructs in relationship marketing, such as trust and commitment, are also related to customer experience and may influence a customer's follow-on experiences. Commitment, as a measure of a customer's connection with a company, would typically be a consequence of customer experience. Trust, as an overall assessment of a firm's reliability and benevolence, would primarily be considered a state variable that does not directly influence a customer's experience in a customer journey (e.g., Geyskens, Steenkamp, and Kumar 1998). A good customer experience might, however, build trust. Still, one could argue that trust can influence experience because it reduces cognitive effort and attention paid to monitoring a relationship, as well as influencing the experience via a "halo effect." Third, prior research has suggested that customer experience—in particular, brand experience—is distinct from other brand-focused concepts such as brand involvement and brand attachment (Brakus et al. 2009). Fourth, customer experience is related to the emerging construct of customer engagement. Customer engagement focuses on the extent to which the customer reaches out to and initiates contact with the firm, whether attitudinally or behaviorally. As such "reaching out" (or engagement) constitutes touch points along the customer journey and results in cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses on the part of the customer, customer engagement becomes a part of the overall customer experience and, in its specific manifestations, constitutes specific touch points along the customer journey. To date, studies have neglected this connectedness (for a call for such research, see Malthouse and Calder 2011), but given that many channels and touch points are highly interactive and provide multiple opportunities for customers to engage with the firm, it is important to consider customer engagement in the development of customer experience theory. Thus, we view customer engagement emerging as a component of customer experience through specific interactional touch points, such as social communities and interactions with service employees or other customers. To date, no research has clearly shown the nomological network of customer experience and how this construct relates to other customer-focused constructs. This is a critical issue for future research; however, it is beyond the scope of this work.

Customer Experience and the Customer Journey

Stages of the Total Customer Experience: The Customer Journey

We conceptualize customer experience as a customer's "journey" with a firm over time during the purchase cycle across multiple touch points. We also conceptualize the total customer experience as a dynamic process. The customer experience process flows from prepurchase (including search)

TABLE 1
Historical Perspective: Contributions to Customer Experience

Time Frame	Topic Area	Representative Articles	Contribution to Customer Experience
1960s–1970s	Customer buying behavior: process models	Lavidge and Steiner (1961); Howard and Sheth (1969)	• Encompassed path to purchase • Broad, experiential focus • Conceptual linkage models • Considered customer experience and customer decision making as a process
1970s	Customer satisfaction and loyalty	Oliver (1980); Zeithaml 1988; Bolton and Drew (1991); Gupta and Zeithaml (2006)	• Identified key metrics to begin to assess overall customer experience • Empirical linkage models to identify key drivers • Assessed and evaluated customer perceptions and attitudes about an experience
1980s	Service quality	Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988); Bitner (1990, 1992); Rust and Chung (2006); Bitner, Ostrom, and Morgan (2008)	• Incorporated atmospherics and environment • Early journey mapping through blueprinting • Linked marketing and operations—focus on quality • Identified the specific context and elements of the customer experience
1990s	Relationship marketing	Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987); Morgan and Hunt (1994); Berry (1995)	• Expanded to B2B contexts • Identified key attitudinal drivers • Broadened the scope of customer responses considered in the customer experience
2000s	Customer relationship management	Reinartz and Kumar (2000); Verhoef (2003); Bolton, Lemon, and Verhoef (2004); Reinartz, Krafft, and Hoyer (2004); Rust, Lemon, and Zeithaml (2004); Payne and Frow (2005); Kumar and Reinartz (2006); Neslin et al. (2006); Kumar and Shah (2009)	• Enabled return-on-investment assessment • Identification of key touch points and drivers • Data driven • Incorporated multichannel aspects • Identified how specific elements of the customer experience influence each other and business outcomes
2000s–2010s	Customer centricity and customer focus	Sheth, Sisodia, and Sharma (2000); Gulati and Oldroyd (2005); Shah et al. (2006)	• Customer perspective throughout organization • Embedded the customer and customer data deeper into the organization • Focused on redesigning customer experience from customer perspective
2010s	Customer engagement	Libai et al. (2010); Van Doorn et al. (2010); Brodie et al. (2011); Kumar, Peterson, and Leone (2010); Kumar et al. (2013); Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014)	• Recognized value of nonpurchase interactions • Incorporated positive and negative attitudes, emotions, and behaviors • Conceptual platform to incorporate social media • More clearly recognized the customer's role in the experience

to purchase to postpurchase; it is iterative and dynamic. This process incorporates past experiences (including previous purchases) as well as external factors. In each stage, customers experience touch points, only some of which are under the firm's control. This process (summarized in Figure 1) may function as a guide to empirically examining customer experiences over time during the customer journey, as well as to empirically modeling the effects of different touch points on the customer's experience.

Purchase Phases in the Customer Journey

As shown in Figure 1 and consistent with prior research (Howard and Sheth 1969; Neslin et al. 2006; Pucinelli et al. 2009), customer experience can be conceptualized in three overall stages: prepurchase, purchase, and postpurchase. Much current work in the area of customer experience examines the entire, holistic customer journey. However, these three stages make the process slightly more manageable (see also Schmitt 2003).[2]

Prepurchase. The first stage—prepurchase—encompasses all aspects of the customer's interaction with the brand, category, and environment before a purchase transaction. Traditional marketing literature has characterized prepurchase as behaviors such as need recognition, search, and consideration. In theory, this stage could include the customer's entire experience before purchase. Practically, however, this stage encompasses the customer's experience from the beginning of the need/goal/impulse recognition to consideration of satisfying that need/goal/impulse with a purchase (e.g., Hoyer 1984; Pieters, Baumgartner, and Allen 1995).

Purchase. The second stage—purchase—covers all customer interactions with the brand and its environment during the purchase event itself. It is characterized by behaviors such as choice, ordering, and payment. Although this stage is typically the most temporally compressed of the three stages, it has received a significant amount of attention in the marketing literature, which has focused on how marketing activities (e.g., the marketing mix [Kotler and Keller 2015]) and the environment and atmospherics (e.g., the servicescape [Bitner 1990], the service environment "clues" [Berry, Carbone, and Haeckel 2002]) influence the purchase decision. In retailing and consumer products research, much emphasis has been placed on the shopping experience (e.g., Baker et al. 2002; Ofir and Simonson 2007). With the myriad touch points and resulting information overload, concepts such as choice overload, purchase confidence, and decision satisfaction might also be relevant to consider. These may induce customers to stop searching and either complete or defer the purchase, which has been extensively shown in assortment research (e.g., Broniarczyk, Hoyer, and McAlister 1998; Iyengar and Lepper 2000). Research investigating the purchase stage of the journey has been extended into digital environments as well (e.g., Elberse 2010; Manchanda et al. 2006).

Postpurchase. The third stage—postpurchase—encompasses customer interactions with the brand and its environment following the actual purchase. This stage includes behaviors such as usage and consumption, postpurchase engagement, and service requests. Similar to the prepurchase stage, theoretically, this stage could extend temporally from the purchase to the end of the customer's life. Practically speaking, this stage covers aspects of the customer's experience after purchase that actually relate in some way to the brand or product/service itself. The product itself becomes a critical touch point in this stage. Research on this third stage has focused on the consumption experience (e.g., Holbrook and Hirschman 1982); service recovery (e.g., Kelley and Davis 1994); and decisions to return products (e.g., Wood 2001), repurchase (e.g., Bolton 1998), or seek variety (e.g., McAlister and Pessemier 1982), as well as other nonpurchase behaviors such as word of mouth and other forms of customer engagement (e.g., Van Doorn et al. 2010). Recent managerial research has extended this process to include the "loyalty loop" as part of the overall customer decision journey (e.g., Court et al. 2009), suggesting that during the postpurchase stage, a trigger may occur that either leads to customer loyalty (through repurchase and further engagement) or begins the process anew, with the customer reentering the prepurchase phase and considering alternatives.

Given this perspective on the customer purchase journey, what does this suggest that firms should do? First, firms should seek to understand both the firm and customer perspectives of the purchase journey, identifying key aspects in each stage. Second, firms should begin to identify the specific elements or touch points that occur throughout the journey. Third, firms should attempt to identify specific trigger points that lead customers to continue or discontinue in their purchase journey.

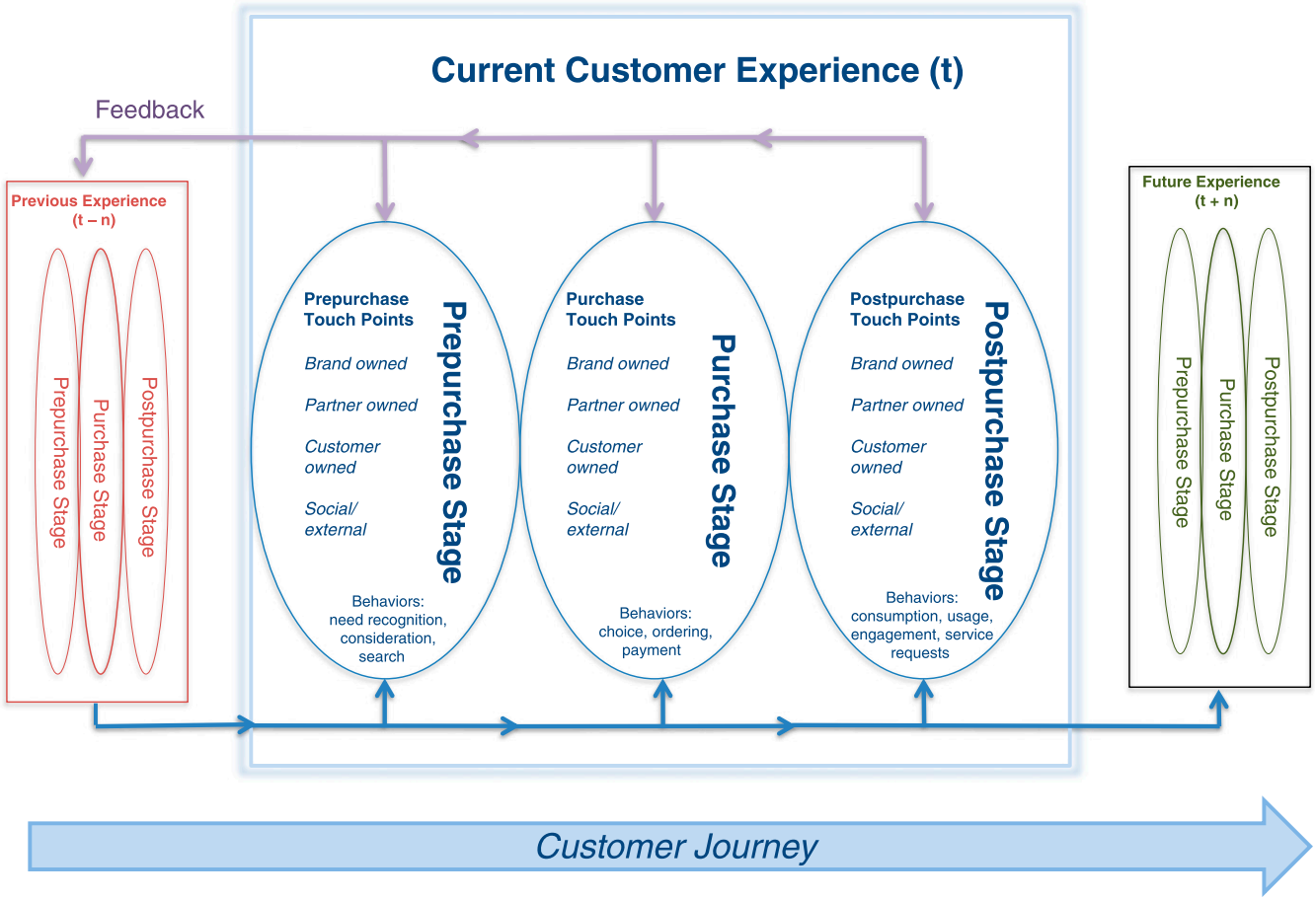
Types of Touch Points in the Customer Journey

Within the customer journey, existing studies suggest that different customer touch points can be identified (e.g., Baxendale et al. 2015; De Haan, Wiesel, and Pauwels 2016). We identify four categories of customer experience touch points: brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/external/independent. The customer might interact with each of these touch point categories in each stage of the experience. Depending on the nature of the product/service or the customer's own journey, the strength or importance of each touch point category may differ in each stage. Attribution models (discussed subsequently) can help identify the most critical touch points at each stage for each customer. Once they are identified, firms then need to determine how key touch points can be influenced.

Brand-owned touch points. These touch points are customer interactions during the experience that are designed and managed by the firm and under the firm's control. They include all brand-owned media (e.g., advertising, websites, loyalty

[2]Note that because such a significant amount of research in consumer behavior has focused on specific aspects of these three stages of the customer experience, we do not try to provide an exhaustive literature review here, since that is not the focus of this article. Rather, our aim is to contextualize this research through the lens of customer experience. We refer the reader to more exhaustive literature reviews, such as Hoyer and MacInnis (2007) or Robertson and Kassarjian (1991).

FIGURE 1
Process Model for Customer Journey and Experience



programs) and any brand-controlled elements of the marketing mix (e.g., attributes of product, packaging, service, price, convenience, sales force). Marketing modelers have extensively studied the effects of these touch points on sales and market share. Hanssens (2015) provides an extensive overview of empirical generalizations on these studies. The impact of perceptions of attributes of products and service on satisfaction has received considerable attention in the literature (e.g., Baker et al. 2002; Berry, Seiders, and Grewal 2002; Bitner 1990; Oliver 1993). In addition, much research, including recent studies by Baxendale et al. (2015) and Hanssens et al. (2014), has shown that advertising and promotion continue to influence customer attitudes and preferences. The effects of more direct brand touch points, such as loyalty programs and direct marketing, have received considerable attention in the CRM literature; this research has also considered the effects of these programs on customer attitudes (e.g., Dorotic, Bijmolt, and Verhoef 2012; Venkatesan and Kumar 2004; Verhoef 2003). Search engine advertising has also been studied extensively. Researchers have mainly been interested in sales effects and have aimed to optimize the use of search terms (e.g., De Haan, Wiesel, and Pauwels 2016; Skiera and Nabout 2013). Overall, however, our understanding of the effects of online advertising on customer experience seems rather limited.

Partner-owned touch points. These touch points are customer interactions during the experience that are jointly designed, managed, or controlled by the firm and one or more of its partners. Partners can include marketing agencies, multichannel distribution partners, multivendor loyalty program partners, and communication channel partners. For example, Ataman, Mela, and Van Heerde (2008) consider the impact of distribution channels on the sales of new products and show strong effects. The sales effects of multivendor loyalty programs have also received some attention (e.g., Dorotic et al. 2011). Experience effects of partner-owned touch points are less clear. In one study, Lemon and Van Wangenheim (2009) show that usage of a firm's loyalty partners—in a travel context—leads to customers spending more on the focal firm's services in the future. The service marketing literature has suggested the important role of the partner delivery network, as we discuss in the section on customer experience management. Sometimes the line between brand-owned and partner-owned touch points may blur. For example, a firm may create its own smartphone app, typically a brand-owned touch point, designed to work well on both the Google Android platform and the Apple iOS platform, at a specific point in time. Updates and improvements in functionality by Apple and Google may require

updates by the firm to its own functionality and design, suggesting that partners may also influence some brand-owned touch points.

Customer-owned touch points. These touch points are customer actions that are part of the overall customer experience but that the firm, its partners, or others do not influence or control. An example would be customers thinking about their own needs or desires in the prepurchase phase. During purchase, the customer's choice of payment method is primarily a customer-owned touch point, although partners may also play a role. Customer-owned touch points are most critical and prevalent postpurchase, when individual consumption and usage take center stage. One could argue that this touch point type is the classic role of the customer in the early buying process models (e.g., Howard and Sheth 1969). This role has, however, been extended because customers can be cocreators of value, independently or jointly with firms (e.g., Vargo and Lusch 2004). For example, consider situations in which customers use products in ways not intended by the firm. "IKEA hacking" (www.ikeahackers.net) is one such example; here, customers post innovative ways they have repurposed, or "hacked," IKEA products. Alternatively, consider product instructional videos on YouTube. A recent study by Google (Mogenson 2015) suggests that, in the past year, more than 100 million hours of such videos were watched in North America alone; many of these videos were uploaded by consumers, not firms.

Social/external touch points. These touch points recognize the important roles of others in the customer experience. Throughout the experience, customers are surrounded by external touch points (e.g., other customers, peer influences, independent information sources, environments) that may influence the process. Peers may exert influence, solicited or unsolicited, in all three stages of the experience. Other customers, through extrarole behavior or simply through proximity, may influence customers, especially during the purchase process or for products and services for which consumption occurs at or right after purchase (e.g., theaters, concerts, restaurants, sporting events, mobile apps) (e.g., Baxendale, Macdonald, and Wilson 2015; Risselada, Verhoef, and Bijmolt 2014). These effects can be substantial and comparable to or even larger than advertising effects (Baxendale et al. 2015). There is some evidence that the social environment also influences the experience (e.g., Lin and Liang 2011). Third-party information sources, such as review sites (e.g., TripAdvisor) and social media, also exert influence on customers. Sometimes such sources are independent; sometimes they are more closely aligned with the brand or firm (e.g., Manchanda, Packard, and Pattabhiramaiah 2015); and sometimes they may be considered partner touch points. Within the marketing literature, social media, in particular, has gained strong attention. For example, De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang (2012) consider the formation of brand "likes." Social media's effects on sales and its interactions with attitudes and firm-owned touch points have also been examined (e.g., Onishi and Manchanda 2012; Pauwels, Aksehirli, and Lackman 2016). The role of reviews in the purchase process has also extensively been documented (e.g., Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006). However, social media effects of customer experience have not been widely reported.

It is important to emphasize that our typology is much broader than the one used in the media/advertising literature, which distinguishes among paid, owned, and earned media (e.g., Kotler and Keller 2015). In our approach, we do not merely consider media but also consider channel partners, customers, and contexts as touch points. Still, there is some overlap in that paid media would, in our model, be considered brand-owned or partner-owned, whereas earned media would typically be social and external touch points. Other researchers have made the distinction between firm-initiated and customer-initiated touch points (e.g., Anderl, Schumann, and Kunz 2016; De Haan, Wiesel, and Pauwels 2016); in this case, brand-owned and partner-owned touch points would be more firm-initiated, whereas the customer-owned and social/external touch points would be more customer-initiated.

This typology of touch points provides firms with an organizing framework for understanding potential leverage points in the customer experience. For example, firms can identify the touch points in the journey that they own or can influence and be cognizant of those touch points that they have no or minimal influence over (customer-owned, social/external).

Dynamics and External Influences

It is important to consider how past experience—at each stage of the customer's experience (prepurchase, purchase, and postpurchase)—may influence his or her current experience. Specifically, Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen (2007) highlight interrelationships between channel attitudes in different purchase phases. They show that attitudes toward the search ability of channels are positively related to attitudes on the purchase ability of channels. Beyond that, past experiences can affect current experiences through expectation formation and stickiness in experience evaluations (Lervik-Olsen, Van Oest, and Verhoef 2015). These effects have consistently been shown in customer satisfaction research at both the individual and aggregate levels (e.g., Bolton and Drew 1991; Rego, Morgan, and Fornell 2013; Verhoef and Van Doorn 2008). Bolton and Lemon (1999) show that prior experience influences current satisfaction, which in turn influences future usage. Research has also suggested that dynamic effects of customer experience can occur within customers as customers themselves change over time after repeated experiences with a product or after a specific experience. Specifically, customers develop relationships with brands (Fournier 1998), which influence their identity (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Customer decisions become routinized (Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995), and extraordinary experiences have long-lasting effects (Arnould and Price 1993).

We also recognize the potential impact of broader externalities on the customer experience (Verhoef et al. 2009). For example, external environments can act as influential drivers of the customer experience (e.g., poor weather diminishing the value of an outdoor sporting event; political events influencing the value of purchase or consumption of a product or service). The specific external context in which an experience arises can

also have a significant influence (e.g., drinking a beer when it is very hot outside vs. drinking a beer because one doesn't trust the drinking water). Firms such as IBM and Microsoft are starting to capitalize on this macro aspect of the customer experience, as evidenced by IBM's acquisition of the Weather Company (www.weather.com) and its integration into IBM's customer experience management platform, as well as Microsoft's partnership with Accuweather. On a macro level, the state of the economy may also affect the customer experience (e.g., Fornell, Rust, and Dekimpe 2010; Kumar et al. 2014). Recent research has shown the impact of major internal events (e.g., service crises) on customer experience: these crises have both short- and long-term effects, and more effort is required to achieve the same customer experience than before such crises (Gijsenberg, Van Heerde, and Verhoef 2015). These events can also be sectorwide (e.g., financial crises), with similar mechanisms at work. Importantly, all these events can affect how specific touch points contribute to the overall customer experience (e.g., Hunneman, Verhoef, and Sloot 2015; Ou et al. 2014). Similarly, we also expect competitor actions to influence customer experience. Overall, current understanding of the dynamics and externalities of the customer experience suggests the following insights:

- The customer's dynamic external environment can have a significant influence on customer experience.
- Extreme crises can have a strong, negative, and enduring effect on the customer experience.
- The economic situation (i.e., recession, expansion) influences the customer experience across firms, and the drivers of customer experience may depend on the economic situation.

Understanding the Customer View: Customer Journey Analysis

A major consideration when studying customer experience is an understanding of the customer journey. In the following subsections, we focus on insights from marketing scholarship in three areas: mapping out and analyzing the customer journey, how understanding multichannel customer journey touch points can facilitate customer experience design, and how emerging mobile channels influence the customer journey.

In a customer journey analysis, firms focus on how customers interact with multiple touch points, moving from consideration, search, and purchase to postpurchase, consumption, and future engagement or repurchase. The goals of the analysis are to describe this journey and understand the customer's options and choices for touch points in multiple purchase phases (Verhoef, Kooge, and Walk 2016). Customer journey analysis has its roots in both service management and multichannel management (e.g., Bitner, Ostrom, and Morgan 2008; Neslin et al. 2006). The focus of the customer journey, though, is a bit different, in that its goal is to understand the myriad possibilities and paths a customer may take to complete his or her "job." Multichannel researchers have typically adopted the traditional purchase funnel and considered the multiple phases a customer moves through in the process from search to purchase. Service management research has usually focused on specific service encounters (e.g., visit to a hotel) and how each element in the service design (e.g., interface with registration desk, bottle of water in hotel room) contributes to the overall service experience. Given the limited empirical work on the customer journey itself, here we focus on insights from service blueprinting, multichannel management, and mobile channel management as three key elements in understanding the customer journey.

Service blueprinting. The service management literature uses knowledge about the customer journey to develop an optimal service design. For this purpose, Bitner et al. (2008) develop the so-called service blueprinting methodology, which they refer to as a customer-focused approach for service innovation and service improvement. The methodology has many similarities to business process improvement and total quality management modeling approaches. Service blueprinting maps out the entire service delivery process from back-office internal processes to front-facing customer interactions. The methodology is often somewhat internally oriented in that it typically builds employee insights (e.g., through ideation or brainstorming) into the service delivery process and service design (see also process–chain–network analysis; Sampson 2012). Although firms frequently use service blueprinting and customer journey analysis based on such internal techniques, one main concern is that these techniques are not sufficiently customer focused. Bitner et al. (2008) raise concerns about the potential lack of customer focus using service blueprinting, which may explain why many internal process–oriented customer journey approaches are not effective. Moreover, given the dynamic developments in (digital) technologies, customer behavior, and the competitive landscape, such internally developed customer journeys may easily become obsolete. The service blueprinting literature suggests two key insights:

- Service blueprinting can provide a solid starting point for customer journey mapping.
- Customer journey analysis should understand and map the journey from the customer perspective and, therefore, requires customer input.

Multichannel perspective. Perhaps the most developed aspect of customer journey analysis is in the multichannel literature. Although it mainly considers channel choice behavior, it offers key insights into analyzing, managing, and influencing the customer journey. Initially, studies focused on the choice of one specific channel, such as catalogs and direct mailings (e.g., Eastlick and Feinberg 1999; Leeflang et al. 2013), online channels (e.g., Ansari, Mela, and Neslin 2008; Venkatesan, Kumar, and Ravishanker 2007), and mobile channels (Ko, Kim, and Lee 2009; Wang, Malthouse, and Krishnamurthi 2015). Since the arrival of e-commerce, an enormous amount of studies have assessed the drivers of online channel use. These include socio- and psychographics, perceived benefits and costs, social influence, marketing-mix instruments, and past purchase behavior (e.g., Ansari, Mela, and Neslin 2008; Bilgicer et al. 2015; Melis et al. 2015). Given the large number of studies in this area, there is an urgent need for a meta-analysis on the drivers of channel

choice (Verhoef, Kannan, and Inman 2015). Taking a more multichannel focus, studies have considered the choices of multiple channels across multiple phases of the customer experience, and these studies identify specific multichannel usage patterns and multichannel segments (e.g., De Keyser, Schepers, and Konuş 2015; Konuş, Verhoef and Neslin 2008). These studies have typically used surveys to measure channel choices in different phases. Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen (2007) provide strong evidence for the presence of the research shopper, a customer who searches in one channel and purchases in another. More recently, scholars have analyzed research shopping in a more fine-grained manner by considering "showrooming" (search in store, buy online) and "webrooming" (search online, buy in store) (e.g., Brynjolfsson et al. 2013; Rapp et al. 2015). In turn, these studies have been extended to examine postpurchase channels as well (De Keyser, Schepers, and Konuş 2015; Gensler, Verhoef, and Böhm 2012).[3]

Importantly, studies have also aimed to investigate the mechanisms underlying these subsequent channel choices. Verhoef et al. (2007) provide evidence for three mechanisms for research shopping: search and purchase attribute advantages of specific channels, lack of lock-in in the channel during the purchase funnel, and the presence of cross-channel synergies. Gensler, Verhoef, and Böhm (2012) reveal similar mechanisms and also consider channel inertia over time as an explanation for customer loyalty to channels in different phases (for a discussion of channel inertia, see Konuş, Neslin, and Verhoef 2014; Melis et al. 2015). These studies focus on the notion that channels have specific benefits and costs and that some channels are more useful in specific stages of the purchase funnel. Given the evolving technological developments of channels and the diffusion of channels, however, the distinction in benefits and costs between channels (especially online and offline) is shrinking (i.e., risk to pay online reduces; more visual effects online). In summary, here is what we know about the role of channels in the customer journey:

- Channels differ in benefits and costs, often making one channel more useful for a specific stage in the purchase funnel than other channels. These differences are, however, shrinking due to technological developments and diffusion of new channels.
- Customers differ in their preference and usage of channels across different purchase phases, and specific multichannel segments can be identified that differ in terms of consumer characteristics.
- Channel choices in the purchase funnel are affected by one another because of lock-in effects, channel inertia, and cross-channel synergies.

Mobile. The introduction of new channels and touch points may induce even more switching across channels and add even more complexity to the customer journey. Perhaps most important is the increasing importance of the mobile channel (e.g., Brinker, Lobaugh, and Paul 2012; Husson et al. 2014). Knowledge on mobile channels is still limited. A major question is whether mobile and, perhaps, tablets are new channels or just other devices used to shop, partially replacing desktop devices. Mobile channels have specific characteristics that make them more suitable for search and less suitable for purchase (e.g., Chaffey 2016; De Haan et al. 2015). Importantly, mobile channels also directly interfere and interact with other channels. For example, the increasingly prevalent act of showrooming likely occurs because customers can search in the store on their mobile device for the best offer online (Rapp et al. 2015). In this sense, mobile may enhance cross-channel synergies because customers using mobile devices may be able to attain lower prices while also experiencing smart-shopper feelings (e.g., believing that they received a bargain, succeeding in negotiations with store employees) (Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen 2007). Mobile also offers new marketing tactics for firms. For example, it enables retailers to provide tailored, time-sensitive, and location-sensitive advertising and promotions in store as well as personalized marketing offers (Bart, Stephen, and Sarvary 2014; Chung, Rust, and Wedel 2009; Hui et al. 2013). At that stage, mobile becomes a firm-initiated touch point.

So far, research on the use of mobile in the purchase funnel has been limited and has mainly been done in practice. Conversely, academic research has mainly considered the effects of mobile promotions and the adoption of mobile shopping on purchase behavior (e.g., Hui et al. 2013; Wang, Malthouse, and Krishnamurthi 2015). Initial evidence has suggested positive effects of mobile promotion on in-store spending and mobile shopping order frequency. One promising avenue of research investigates how touch-screen devices (vs. mouse-click devices) influence customer decision making. Brasel and Gips (2014) find that touching an item (on a tablet or smartphone) leads to a greater sense of ownership and attachment than clicking on the item (on a desktop or laptop). Follow-up research (Brasel and Gips 2015) shows that a direct-touch interface increases the number of alternatives searched and changes the importance weights of specific attributes. Related research (Klesse, Levav and Goukens 2015) suggests that how people express their preferences (verbally vs. pressing a button) influences their self-control. Additional research is clearly required on the use of the mobile channel as a touch point and how it affects the customer journey. In summary, regarding mobile, research has suggested the following:

- Mobile device channels interact and may interfere with existing channels.
- Mobile device channels offer new location-based, time-sensitive opportunities to create firm-initiated touch points.
- Mobile channels appear to be better suited for search than for purchase.
- Mobile devices' direct-touch interface appears to significantly influence the customer journey.

Customer Experience Measurement

Customer Experience Measurement

Customer experience measurement plays a critical role in making insights actionable for the firm. At a high level,

[3]Recent figures show that these behaviors are common, with 73% of surveyed U.S. customers having showroomed and 88% having webroomed (Edwards 2014).

firms attempt to measure and assess customers' overall experience with the firm through a myriad of metrics. Ideally, we would have proven measurement approaches for the overall customer experience, at each stage in the customer journey (prepurchase, purchase, and postpurchase) and for all touch points. Current research and practice, however, is much more fragmented. Recently, scholars and practitioners have started to measure the overall customer experience. This field is in its early stages of development, with many such scales still being evaluated and reviewed for their internal and external validity. While no strong customer experience scales have been developed, Brakus et al. (2009) develop a brand experience scale that measures four aspects of the customer brand experience—sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral—identifying relationships between brand experience and brand personality, satisfaction, and loyalty. Recent initial advances by marketing scholars include scale developments by Maklan and Klaus (2011), Klaus and Maklan (2012), and Verleye (2015). Klaus and Maklan (2012, 2013) propose an alternative approach to measuring customer experience quality; they identify four facets of customer experience: peace of mind, moments of truth, outcome focus, and product experience (see also Klaus 2015). Marketing practitioners have also proposed measures typically focusing on assessing the voice of the customer across the entire experience (Schmidt-Subramanian 2014; Temkin and Bliss 2011).

These overall customer experience measures have yet to gain traction in marketing practice. This may be due to their recency or, perhaps more likely, the difficulty in developing a single set of measures that adequately captures customer experience across industries and channels. At this point, it may be more fruitful to consider existing approaches that have been validated across many industries, such as the five key dimensions of service quality: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996), as a starting point to guide efforts toward an overall customer experience measurement approach.

The most developed aspect of customer experience measurement concerns customer perceptions of parts of the journey or of the overall customer experience. In marketing practice, we observe a strong use of such customer feedback metrics as an easy measurement of the customer experience. These metrics typically do not capture the full customer experience as we define it in this article. Rather, firms tend to use simple, usually single-item measures that are easily understood by top management and can be included in marketing dashboards. Firms tend to measure specific aspects of customer experience, such as customer perceptions at a point in time, for a single transaction, or as an overarching perception. Customer satisfaction has been the dominant customer feedback metric for years, and marketing and consumer researchers have conducted thousands of studies on the antecedents of satisfaction, the measurement of customer satisfaction (in specific contexts), and the behavioral and financial consequences of customer satisfaction (e.g., Bolton and Drew 1991).

Despite strong evidence of customer satisfaction as an important metric within marketing science, consultants have proposed new metrics. Specifically, Reichheld (2003) successfully proposed the NPS as a new metric, and leading firms have adopted it, partially because of its intuitive nature. Its success may also be due to firms' dissatisfaction with the customer satisfaction metric because changes in this score are often considered limited and firms might not have known how to influence it. As a consequence, large (yearly) reports were often written, but the results were not used. Today, some firms report NPS in their internal (daily, weekly, and monthly) dashboards, as well as in their annual reports to shareholders. Researchers have also suggested that NPS is more of a forward-looking metric, whereas satisfaction is more of a backward-looking metric (Zeithaml et al. 2006). In a more recent article, Dixon, Freeman, and Toman (2010) propose the Customer Effort Score (CES) as a new feedback metric. Marketing scientists have been rather skeptical about these claims. Although these new metrics have some intuitive power, they lack strong theoretical development, focus on a rather specific domain (CES), and use rather ad hoc transformations (NPS). De Haan, Verhoef, and Wiesel (2015) provide a classification of different metrics. They consider two dimensions: focus/scope of the metric and transformation of the metric. They also consider the top-two-box score of customer satisfaction as well as the absolute value of NPS without a transformation.

Since the introduction of NPS, researchers have investigated the predictive quality of different metrics. One problem of early studies of NPS is that they did not use a similar metric for NPS (e.g., Keiningham et al. 2007; Morgan and Rego 2006). The general conclusion of the early studies was that NPS is not a metric that should be preferred to customer satisfaction. More recent studies have provided a more nuanced view. Van Doorn, Leeflang, and Tijs (2013) report no strong differences between NPS and customer satisfaction, although the link with some financial metrics and customer feedback metrics is generally low. De Haan, Verhoef, and Wiesel (2015) examine the predictive power of these metrics for customer retention and conclude that differences between NPS and satisfaction are small, although their results seem to prefer transformed metrics (i.e., top-two-box satisfaction) capturing nonlinear effects arising from, for example, customer delight (e.g., Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997). However, they show that NPS and customer satisfaction strongly outperform CES and also suggest that combining metrics improves predictive performance. Finally, they report differences between industries without finding systematic patterns. Recent research has also focused on the value of relative metrics (e.g., satisfaction relative to competitors) as potential good predictors of customer behavior (Keiningham et al. 2015). The studies thus far suggest the following:

- There is not yet agreement on robust measurement approaches to evaluate all aspects of customer experience across the customer journey; long-tested approaches, such as SERVQUAL, may offer a good starting point.
- Customer satisfaction and NPS perform equally well in predicting firm performance and customer behavior, although the predictive performance differs between specific contexts.
- Transformations of metrics to account for potential nonlinear effects due to notions such as customer delight are useful.

- Customer feedback metrics focusing on a specific domain of the customer experience (e.g., Customer Effort Score) are not strong in predicting future performance.
- Multiple customer feedback metrics predict customer behavior better than a single metric.

Measuring Effects of Customer Touch Points

A customer journey perspective should consider the effects of multiple touch points encountered in a specific journey on the ultimate purchase (or other behavioral) outcome. These models are referred to as attribution models or sometimes path-to-purchase models. Such models have mainly gained interest in online environments, in which customers interact with multiple touch points and online retailers try to determine the contribution of each touch point to the final purchase to improve their allocation of online marketing budgets across these touch points. One general problem with modeling this behavior is that multiple (and often distinct) touch points occur in different phases of the funnel. As a consequence, touch point effects can be endogenous, leading to erroneous conclusions and resource allocation. For example, when a customer explores options using Google, he or she might be less likely to buy, given his or her exploration stage, than when a customer enters the website directly (direct load) at the end of the purchase funnel.

As with traditional market response models, we observe two modeling approaches. First, studies have estimated aggregated sales models using aggregate sales data and aggregate budget allocations toward touch points (including mass advertising) and other data, such as social media metrics (e.g., De Haan, Wiesel and Pauwels 2016; Srinivasan, Pauwels, and Rutz 2016). These models can account for traditional media, but they do not model the individual customer journey. A second modeling approach uses individual-level clickstream data to estimate conversion rates and order size in online stores. Li and Kannan (2014) develop a model in which they predict touch point consideration and use and the impact of touch points on purchase. The model allows them to examine carryover and spillover effects of different touch points. Xu, Duan, and Whinston (2014) also model interactions between different touch points over time and their effects on purchase. Anderl, Schumann, and Kunz (2016) use a hazard model to consider the effects of touch points and their interactions on purchase. These models provide more in-depth insights into how customers use specific touch points, the effects of these touch points, and how usage of one touch point influences the usage and effectiveness of other touch points. However, they frequently fail to provide insights into the effects of traditional media, with their strong focus on online being firm- or customer- initiated online touch points (Li and Kannan 2014).

Purchase consequences of the use of and migration to touch points in the customer journey have mainly been studied in the multichannel, online, and service marketing literature streams. Research in the multichannel literature has mainly devoted attention to how channel migrations (i.e., moving from catalog to online and offline to online) affect individual purchase behaviors (e.g., Ansari, Mela, and Neslin 2008; Gensler, Leeflang, and Skiera 2012; Hitt and Frei 2002; Wang, Malthouse, and Krishnamurthi 2015). One general problem here is the selection effect because migrated customers are inherently different than nonmigrated customers. Accounting for this econometrically (i.e., using propensity scoring) is essential. Neslin and Shankar (2009), Verhoef (2012), and Verhoef, Kannan, and Inman (2015) provide overviews of these issues.

In summary, studies that focus on influencing the customer journey have suggested that customers go through a journey using multiple touch points and that these touch points affect one another. Notably, these studies have mainly focused on sales/conversion effects and not on the customer experience in different stages. The following key insights arise from these studies:

- When moving through the customer journey to purchase, customers use and are exposed to multiple touch points that each have direct and more indirect effects on purchase and other customer behaviors.
- Although it is a complex and difficult endeavor, it is important to identify critical touch points ("moments of truth") throughout the customer journey that have the most significant influence on key customer outcomes.

Customer Experience Management

The literature on customer experience management is rather scarce. Managerial-oriented books have been written about how to manage the customer experience (e.g., Schmitt 2003). Schmitt (2003, p. 17) defines customer experience management as the process of strategically managing a customers' entire experience with a product or company. In Schmitt's framework, customer experience management consists of five steps: (1) analyzing the experiential world of the customers, (2) building the experiential platform, (3) designing the brand experience, (4) structuring the customer experience, and (5) engaging in continuous innovation. In this discussion, customer touch points do not have a prominent position. However, multiple practice-oriented authors have stressed the importance of customer experience management across customer touch points (e.g., Edelman and Singer 2015; Rawson, Duncan, and Jones 2013). This view is also reflected in one of the few academic studies on the topic (Homburg et al. 2015), which defines customer experience management as "the cultural mindsets toward customer experiences, strategic directions for designing customer experiences, and firm capabilities for continually renewing customer experiences, with the goals of achieving and sustaining long-term customer loyalty" (p. 8). In this study's discussion of these elements, management of the customer experience across different touch points in a customer journey is prominent. Homburg and colleagues note that firms should be able to design the journey across multiple touch points, building on a firm's own capabilities as well as working in alliances; the authors also argue for an experience-oriented mindset within firms, which seems clearly linked to a customer-centric orientation (e.g., Shah et al. 2006). Importantly, they also emphasize the importance of big-data analytical capabilities for understanding and potentially personalizing the customer journey (see also Verhoef, Kooge, and Walk 2016; Wedel

and Kannan 2016). Interestingly, some firms (e.g., Oracle)[4] consider customer experience management a part of advanced CRM. However, as discussed by Homburg et al. (2015), customer experience management differs from CRM on many aspects, and as we have discussed, CRM has a stronger value extraction focus, whereas customer experience management emphasizes value creation more strongly. We next focus on three specific aspects of customer experience management: customer journey and touch point design, the role of alliances and network partners, and the internal organization.

Customer Journey and Touch Point Design

In addition to the customer journey analysis, both the service management literature and the multichannel literature have begun to consider customer experience design. The objective of the original service blueprinting approach was not only to provide an efficient journey but also to try to provide an optimal experience to customers. Patrício, Fisk, and Falcão e Cunha (2008) extend the service blueprinting approach to design interactions with touch points in such a way that the customer experience is optimized. Empirically, in the early phases of the service literature, researchers began investigating critical service encounters and how these encounters (not yet called "touch points") affect customer satisfaction (e.g., Berry, Seiders, and Grewal 2002; Bitner 1990), paying specific attention to service failures and recovery (e.g., Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999). Research has also begun investigating the effects of self-service technologies on customer perceptions and behavior (Meuter et al. 2000; Zhu et al. 2013). In general, this research area has focused on how interactions in the service delivery process affect customer experience—typically measured as customer satisfaction.

In the multichannel literature, researchers have mainly considered the question of how interactions between channels affect experience measures. Building on the notion that customers should have a seamless experience across channels, the multichannel literature has attempted to identify synergies between channels (Neslin et al. 2006), although studies have also suggested some potential dissynergies, for example, satisfied offline users are less likely to use the new online channel (e.g., Falk et al. 2007). New evidence has provided more support for the positive effects of synergies. Retailers with better integration between their channels tend to have stronger sales growth (Cao and Li 2015). Herhausen et al. (2015) report that online–offline channel integration reduces perceived risk of the online store and increases perceived quality of the online channel, resulting in positive choice effects for the online channel and reduced cannibalization in the offline channel. Focusing on assortment integration, Emrich, Paul, and Rudolph (2015) argue that full integration in terms of the assortment is warranted; however, this does not equally hold for all firms. Similarly, Emrich and Verhoef (2015) find that integration in design between online and offline channels is beneficial only for store-oriented customers. In summary, evidence has shown the beneficial effects of integration, but some firm and customer contingencies exist.

Specific touch points should contribute to customer experience in different stages. In the marketing and consumer research literature, researchers have typically considered how attributes of and/or beliefs about touch points (e.g., advertisements, channels) affect evaluations and liking (e.g., Baker et al. 2002; Bart, Stephen, and Sarvary 2014; Gomez, McLaughlin, and Wittink 2004; MacKenzie and Lutz 1989). The contributions (and interactions) of multiple touch points to the customer experience is, however, a neglected area. In a recent study, Baxendale, Macdonald, and Wilson (2015) evaluate the impact of multiple interactions and the valence of these interactions with multiple touch points on brand preference changes. Using the mobile real-time experience tracking survey technology (Macdonald, Wilson, and Konuş 2012), they show that frequency and positivity of interactions contribute to brand preference changes, with in-store communications, brand advertising, and peer observation having the strongest effects. The strong positive effects of in-store communication could be induced by the general strong power of promotions at the point of sale (e.g., Van Nierop et al. 2011), combined with their focus on brand preference. We contend that there is an urgent need to extend Baxendale, Macdonald, and Wilson's (2015) work by considering a richer model to understand the effects of multiple touch point interactions across multiple stages in the experience. The following initial insights regarding customer journey design still need further exploration:

- A seamless experience across channels through channel integration will create a stronger customer experience.
- The effect of an individual touch point may depend on when it occurs in the overall customer journey.

Partner and Network Management

Recently, customer journey mapping has begun to include the role of partners and external influences (Chandler and Lusch 2015). This research has expanded the customer journey view to a network perspective that recognizes the roles of communities, experience networks, service delivery networks, collaborators, and the broader ecosystem in which the experience occurs (e.g., Tax, McCutcheon, and Wilkinson 2013). One article defines a customer experience ecosystem as "the complex set of relationships among a company's employees, partners and customers that determines the quality of all customer interactions" (Bodine 2013, p. 7).

Tax, McCutcheon, and Wilkinson (2013) examine the entire service delivery network, which they describe as encompassing all other services that might influence the customer experience. They identify three specific forms that such an extended service delivery network might take. The first, and the most typical, is the customer-coordinated network. Here, the customer takes control of and responsibility for all external activities related to the focal experience (e.g., when dining at a restaurant, the customer coordinates the reservation, transportation, payment, and any ancillary services such as child care). This network results in low control and higher uncertainty for the firm. The second form is the

[4]See https://www.oracle.com/nl/applications/customer-experience/crm/index.html.

service-coordinator-based network, in which the customer may outsource the planning to an event coordinator, such as a travel agency. Here, the focal firm still has low control and potentially high uncertainty because coordination is limited across all entities in the network. The third form is the firm-coordinated network, in which the firm takes the lead role in connecting and coordinating all aspects of the customer's experience. In this network, the firm obtains greater control, lower uncertainty, and additional insights into the entire customer experience (see also Patrício, Fisk, and Constantine 2011; Patrício, Fisk, and Falcão e Cunha 2008; Sampson 2012; Teixeira et al. 2012). Provan and Kenis (2007) identify three forms of governance for such partner networks: participant-governed networks (the participants govern themselves, formally or informally), lead-organization-governed networks (one partner or organization takes the lead and directs the network), and network administrative organizations (a separate organization is set up to administer the network). Overall, the literature suggests the following:

- When mapping and analyzing the customer journey, it is critical to take the broader service delivery system into account.
- The benefit to the firm of taking a stronger role in the service delivery network is to reduce uncertainty in customer experience delivery; this needs to be balanced against the increase in costs and complexities associated with such an expanded role.
- As partner networks become more ubiquitous, choosing the appropriate governance models will be critical.

Internal Firm Perspective

Managing the customer experience also affects the firm. Homburg et al. (2015) specifically mention the need for firms to develop a customer experience response orientation. Within the marketing literature, there has been extensive attention on customer-centric orientations within firms (e.g., Shah et al. 2006). In a CRM context, Ramani and Kumar (2008) develop a scale for the measurement of a firm's interactive customer orientation and show that this is positively related to business performance. The extensive literature on customer-centricity could be useful to further developing our understanding of a customer experience response orientation.

In addition, the literature suggests that firms should develop and master several mindsets and capabilities to successfully manage the customer experience (Homburg et al. 2015), including the customer journey design and partner-network capabilities discussed previously, as well as analytical capabilities. Research on these capabilities is very scarce, and further development is definitely required. In the Appendix, we provide the example of the management of a customer journey with Disney, which introduced the Magic Band as a way to measure and manage the customer journey as well as to create a stronger experience. What does this example suggest for designing and managing customer experience going forward? First, firms have the opportunity to take a fresh look at the customer's overall experience and to determine whether and how new approaches and technologies may be able to remove friction or pain points. Second, Disney recognized the importance of seamlessness to its customers and created solutions that made it easier for customers to "get the job done." Third, Disney recognized how redesigning the prepurchase stage of the experience (i.e., preplanning) could be helpful to customers in the purchase and consumption stages (reducing uncertainty and waiting time) and also helpful to Disney (managing capacity and flow). Fourth, managing the customer experience involves many functions, including service operations, IT, analytics, and marketing.

Specific systems, such as IT, can serve to enhance the more emotional components of the customer experience. For example, consulting agency Pricewise developed a loyalty program called Go Pass for skiers for Slovakian Ski Resort. The loyalty program provides three general benefits: (1) rational, (2) comfort, and (3) emotional. The rational benefits, such as a lower price or rewards, are typical for a standard loyalty program. Like Disney's Magic Band, the program provides significant convenience throughout the customer journey—when booking a visit to the ski area, when paying in restaurants, and throughout the customer's ski experience. The emotional element is achieved by using motivational schemes: customers receive rewards through participation and strong performance in a skiing challenge, such as becoming a "King of the Mountain" (Bijmolt and Verhoef 2016). Other cases emphasize the importance of data science or big-data capabilities in developing a customer journey. For example, Royal Bank of Scotland learned about the mobile usage behavior of customers and developed a more streamlined mobile experience to increase mobile conversion rates.[5]

Research is required that aims to further conceptualize, measure, and assess performance consequences of customer experience management in organizations, as well as to consider potential moderating factors (i.e., cooperation between functions). Key initial insights regarding customer experience management are as follows:

- A customer-centric focus is an important facilitator within firms to create stronger customer experiences.
- Customer experience management requires a multidisciplinary approach in which multiple functions (i.e., IT, marketing, operations, customer service, human resources) cooperate to deliver a customer experience.
- Firms require specific capabilities (e.g., partner network management, customer analytics) to develop successful customer experience strategies.

Taken together, it is evident that insights regarding customer experience and the customer journey come from many sources across many decades. We provide a summary of what is currently known on the topic in Table 2.

A Research Agenda for Customer Experience

The first goal in this article was to provide an overview of knowledge on customer experience in the marketing

[5]See http://blogs.adobe.com/digitalmarketing/analytics/how-rbs-used-data-science-as-a-service-to-improve-customer-service/.

discipline Here, we provide a research agenda for customer experience (see Table 3), which we hope will stimulate research and knowledge development in this area.

Drivers and Consequences of Customer Experience

Conceptualizing customer experience. We see much room for additional research to strengthen the overall conceptualization of customer experience and, especially, the customer journey. There is a strong need to examine how existing marketing constructs, such as service quality, commitment, and customer engagement, relate to customer experience and interact with one another, resulting in the overall customer experience. There is a critical need for researchers to develop and test such an integrated conceptual model of customer experience and the customer journey. In this article, we have sought to identify the key component parts. Identifying the critical linkages and moderators is a critical task for future research.

Understanding key drivers. Perhaps due to the lack of sound measurement development for customer experience, there is also a dearth of research on how customer experience can be influenced and on the consequences of customer experience. Studies have mainly considered drivers of customer satisfaction or value (e.g., Baker et al. 2002; Hunneman, Verhoef, and Sloot 2015) but have not considered the drivers of customer experience as a broad construct. We strongly recommend that researchers go beyond the normal paths with regard to the antecedents of customer experience and assess the combined effects of the elements that make up the "raw data" of the customer experience (e.g., service quality attributes, price image, brand, loyalty programs, external environments). The contributions of multiple and different types of touch points to customer experiences in different phases of the customer journey require more attention. How do specific elements of the customer experience (e.g., sensory, affective, cognitive) combine to influence the customer at different points in the journey? Researchers should also take advantage of the increasing presence of "big data" and integrate survey data with transaction, channel, and operational data at both the aggregate and individual levels (e.g., Bolton, Lemon, and Bramlett 2006; Bolton, Lemon, and Verhoef 2008; Gijsenberg, Van Heerde, and Verhoef 2015).

Better linkages to outcomes. In terms of consequences, we call for an integration of loyalty and purchase funnels. The customer journey models to date have focused strongly on conversion as the sole outcome of the customer journey, while failing to acknowledge long-term loyalty effects of the customer journey; these long-term effects are acknowledged in practice, however (Court et al. 2009). Consequently, models that include both immediate purchase consequences (e.g., conversion rates) and long-term loyalty (e.g., repurchase, retention, CLV) would be valuable. On an aggregate level, studies are required that extend the existing literature that links metrics, such as customer satisfaction, to firm performance (e.g., Anderson, Fornell, and Mazvancheryl 2004) to the realm of customer experience—by showing that excelling at customer experience delivery results in stronger firm performance in terms of market metrics (e.g., sales, market share) and in terms of financial metrics (e.g., return on assets, shareholder returns). The question is whether the additional investment in delivering a successful experience enables organizations to achieve positive returns.

Interplay and spillover of experiences and expectations. Researchers frequently focus on specific firms, industries, and contexts and usually adopt a micro approach. Customers, however, experience thousands of experiences in multiple sectors, firms, and countries. A key area that research should consider is the extent to which customer *expectations* in one domain spill over into other domains, contexts, situations, and industries. For example, do superior perceived customer experiences at Apple transfer to customer expectations of mobile telecom operators, clothing retailers, or restaurants? Similarly, do worse experiences in specific industries transfer to other industries as well? At a macro level, it is relevant to determine how macro developments (e.g., economic crises, rising or decreasing oil prices; Ma et al. 2011) affect customer experiences and the extent to which strong customer experiences in different sectors may contribute to consumer well-being and general trust in societies.

Customer Journey and Mapping

Deepening touch point understanding. We have identified four types of touch points that influence each stage of the customer journey: brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/external. Much research is needed to understand the relationships among these touch points and how they influence each stage of the customer journey. For example, how can a firm exert more control over non-brand-owned touch points? Is it possible to turn a partner-owned touch point (or customer-owned, or social/external) into a brand-owned touch point? At which stage(s) might this be most effective? In addition, deeper understanding is needed on the "moments that matter." Given what we know about consumer behavior and behavioral economics, might there be small nudges at relatively innocuous touch points that could have significant downstream influences on customer behavior?

Advances in customer journey mapping. Yet another element of customer journey analytics is customer journey mapping. There is an urgent need to go beyond the service blueprint type of methodology. This mapping can be more data based, taking advantage of new technologies such as Wi-Fi–based location services. Moreover, researchers could involve the customer by using customer self-journey mapping or asking customers to develop ideal customer journeys. Touch points and journeys can become more adaptive—moving toward personalized journeys and/or engaging customers in developing their own journey on the road. Finally, we see a need to dive deeper into customer decision journeys, to identify opportunities for intervention or influence. Consider, for example, new technologies that can identify potential anomalies in customer behavior (www.numenta.com). By identifying specific ways in which

TABLE 2
What We Know About Customer Experience

Topic	What We Know
Customer experience dynamics	• The customer's dynamic external environment can have a significant influence on customer experience. • Extreme crises can have a strong, negative, and enduring effect on the customer experience. • The economic situation (i.e., recession, expansion) influences the customer experience across firms, and the drivers of customer experience may depend on the economic situation.
Mapping the customer journey	• Service blueprinting can provide a solid starting point for customer journey mapping. • Customer journey analysis should understand and map the journey from the customer perspective and, therefore, requires customer input into the process.
The multichannel journey	• Channels differ in benefits and costs, often making one channel more useful for a specific stage in the purchase funnel than other channels. These differences are, however, shrinking due to technological developments and diffusion of new channels. • Customers differ in their preferences and usages of channels across different purchase phases, and specific multichannel segments can be identified that differ in terms of consumer characteristics. • Channel choices in the purchase funnel affect one another because of lock-in effects, channel inertia, and cross-channel synergies.
The multidevice and mobile journey	• Mobile device channels interact and may interfere with existing channels. • Mobile device channels offer new location-based, time-sensitive opportunities to create firm-initiated touch points. • Mobile channels appear to be better suited for search than for purchase. • Mobile devices' direct-touch interface appears to significantly influence the customer journey.
Customer experience measurement	• There is not yet agreement on robust measurement approaches to evaluate all aspects of customer experience across the customer journey; long-tested approaches (e.g., SERVQUAL) may offer a good starting point. • Customer satisfaction and NPS perform equally well in predicting firm performance and customer behavior. • Transformations of metrics to account for potential nonlinear effects due to theoretical notions, such as customer delight, are useful. • Customer feedback metrics focusing on a specific domain of the customer experience (i.e., Customer Effort Score) are not strong in predicting future performance. • Multiple customer feedback metrics predict customer behavior better than a single metric.
Effects of touch points	• When moving through the customer journey to purchase, customers use and are exposed to multiple touch points that each have direct and more indirect effects on purchase and other customer behaviors. • Although it is a complex and difficult endeavor, it is important to identify critical touch points ("moments of truth") throughout the customer journey that have the most significant influence on key customer outcomes.
Customer journey and experience design	• A seamless experience across channels through channel integration will create a stronger customer experience. • The effect of an individual touch point may depend on when it occurs in the overall customer journey.
Partner and network management	• When mapping and analyzing the customer journey, it is critical to take the broader service delivery system into account. • The benefit to the firm of taking a stronger role in the service delivery network is to reduce uncertainty in customer experience delivery; this needs to be balanced against the increase in costs and complexities associated with such an expanded role. • As partner networks become more ubiquitous, choosing appropriate governance models will be critical.
Internal firm perspective	• A customer-centric focus is an important facilitator within firms to create stronger customer experiences. • Customer experience management requires a multidisciplinary approach in which multiple functions (i.e., IT, marketing, customer service, human resources) cooperate to deliver a customer experience. • Firms require specific capabilities (e.g., partner network management, customer analytics) to develop successful customer experience strategies.

TABLE 3
Research Agenda for Customer Experience (CX)

Topic	Research Questions
Conceptualization, drivers and consequences of customer experience	• How does a further conceptualized CX construct relate to other major constructs in customer management and marketing? • What are the drivers of CX and how does this differ between industries and cultures? • What are the consequences of CX? • What are the components and linkages in an integrated model of CX and the customer journey? How could such a model be tested? • Can CX explain customer behavior and firm performance beyond existing constructs (such as customer satisfaction or customer engagement)? • What are the combined effects of CX at multiple touch points during different phases of the customer journey on overall CX and customer behaviors (e.g., conversion, loyalty, WOM)? • How can different sources of data (e.g., surveys, operational data, social media) be linked to further elucidate the formation of CX? • How do experiences in one domain or industry influence customer experiences in other domains? What are the conditions for such expectation spillover to occur? • Which macro developments influence CX across firms? • What is the effect of improving CX across industries on consumer well-being?
Customer journey analysis, design, and management	• Can the "purchase funnel" and the "loyalty funnel" be integrated in such a way that we can understand short-term behavioral consequences as well as long-term loyalty effects of the design of the customer journey? • What is the optimal design for the customer journey for firms? Or do optimal designs not exist? • How can touch points be seamlessly integrated across the journey (similar to channel integration)? What models will enable firms to accomplish such integration? • How can brands exert more control over non-"owned" touch points? Can such touch points be turned into brand-owned touch points? At which stages of the journey? • What is the role of the brand in the CX and customer journey? • How do customer choices for touch points in the customer journey relate to each other? Do these choices and influences change over time? • How does the use of multiple devices across the journey influence CX and customer behaviors? • Can we identify anomalies in customer journeys—whereby customers deviate from habit or predictions—and identify potential moments of influence? • Can we identify new types of customer segments by their use of specific touch points in the customer journey?
Customer experience measurement	• How can CX be measured while taking into account its rich, multidimensional nature? • How can we measure the CX construct across multiple touch points and journey stages? Are different measures needed for different stages of the journey? Are there optimal moments to measure? What fast, simple metrics could provide insight? • How should firms link distinct metrics across the customer purchase journey? • How does CX differ across industries, contexts, and cultures, and what does this imply for the measurement of CX? • What are the effects of different touch points on customer experience, conversion, and loyalty? And how can integrated touch points make a difference?
New techniques for data collection and analysis	• How can we capture CX data in situ? How can we capture and analyze the raw components of CX without influencing the customer journey or experience? • How can we incorporate new data and analytics into CX analysis (e.g., social listening, text, photo and video analytics, location-based data) to further understand CX and the customer journey? • How can new neuroscientific approaches be used to measure CX? • Can machine learning models be used to analyze the customer purchase journey and identify opportunities for intervention and influence?
Customer experience management	• How should organizations be structured in order to successfully manage the customer experience? • How can CX management be measured, and what is the effect of CX management on business performance? • What are the effects of specific capabilities and mindsets on CX management? • How do the distinctions between disciplines (functions) within firms impede or enhance the success of CX initiatives? • How do organizations need to adapt to the complexity of the customer journey? • How can firms effectively use technology in CX management?

customers deviate from their habitual or expected customer journeys, new opportunities for firms to influence the customer journey may emerge.

Developing an omnichannel understanding across the journey. Researchers could evaluate not only the journeys themselves but also what drives these journeys, going beyond the widely available multichannel choice models. Within the customer journey, specific phenomena require more attention. Specifically, the phenomena of showrooming and webrooming need to be explored further. Forward-looking models are required to understand customer motivations and expectations of the value of each channel throughout the journey. For example, do customers believe that their shopping utility is enhanced when they search offline and finally buy online? What is really driving such behavior? Do technological advances in advertising, such as shoppable videos (Peterson 2015), enhance the customer experience? The use of mobile and touch devices and their impact on customer decisions require more attention and should be considered a fruitful area for research.

Segmentation and life stages versus cohorts. Another topic is the question of whether specific customer segments prefer specific forms of touch points (e.g., Konuş, Verhoef, and Neslin 2008). For example, millennials may prefer electronic connections, whereas for other generations, in-person contact (salespeople, customer service, and call centers) may remain crucial elements of the journey. Such preferences, and the influence of specific touch points, may change over time. Firms are confronted with operational challenges on how to deliver a good experience to these heterogeneous, dynamic segments (e.g., Leeflang et al. 2013).

Customer Experience Measurement

Scale development. There is an urgent need for the development of scales for measuring customer experience across the entire customer journey. The current scales are not as well developed as the high-impact measures in other domains, such as service quality (SERVQUAL) and market orientation (MARKOR; Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar 1993). The challenge facing researchers is to determine how the richness of the customer experience construct can be measured succinctly and accurately across multiple touch points—and in different stages of the journey. However, to foster the use of this scale—or scales—in practice, a comprehensive, short scale should be developed. This is an especially vexing problem because simple and quick measures per touch point may be needed. In addition, studies that aim to understand why differences exist between industries are required. Understanding how best to measure customer experience across cultures is also relevant. Finally, it is important to show how the customer experience measure is distinct from other potentially related constructs (e.g., customer engagement).

Data. We urge researchers to consider new techniques for data collection. On a higher level, we expect the availability of new sources of "big data" to lead to new approaches for capturing customer experience data in situ. For example, we see the advent of new big data customer feedback metrics through social listening techniques (e.g., mobile phones; Macdonald, Wilson, and Konuş 2012) and emerging techniques (e.g., text analytics, photo and video analytics, location-based data) that use Wi-Fi networks and retail in-store beacons. One potentially fruitful area—namely, picture-driven analytics—might shed more light on how consumers experience specific events.

We contend that the marketing research discipline has missed an opportunity in developing these techniques, which are now being developed predominantly in IT (e.g., Chen, Chiang, and Storey 2012). To date, marketing scholars have mainly used the output of this research (e.g., text analytics) but have not sufficiently contributed to the development of these techniques. Digital sentiment indices have already been developed, but text analytics and other emerging techniques can also be used to measure experiences in specific touch points, such as call centers and e-mails (e.g., Verhoef, Antonides, and De Hoog 2004; Verhoef, Kooge, and Walk 2016). These approaches could be used to predict traditional survey feedback metrics or even replace them if they perform well as predictors.

Researchers are also beginning to consider neuroscientific approaches that enable more precise, in-the-moment measures of customer experience. These techniques include eye tracking, electroencephalograms, functional magnetic resonance imaging, biometrics, and facial coding. They are just beginning to be applied to customer experience (Lewinski 2015; Plassmann et al. 2015; Venkatraman et al. 2012), with several global research firms investing in these technologies (e.g., Nielsen, Ipsos, Millward Brown). We expect that these approaches will soon complement attitudinal survey measurements and provide new insights into the factors that influence the customer experience and how they are linked to customer behaviors. Practice is moving forward (Ha 2015), and marketing scientists need to catch up.

Attribution models across the customer journey. Customer journey analytics have mainly developed quantitatively in the online environment by considering the attribution of different touch points to purchase and sales (e.g., Li and Kannan 2014). This work should be extended to the offline world. For example, researchers could examine not only sales effects but also how distinct touch points (brand, customer, partner, and social/external) simultaneously contribute to the customer experience in different phases of the customer journey. The researcher could also build on the notion of channel integration and extend it to the broader idea of "touch point integration." In doing so, the role of brands and brand identity would become more prevalent, given the broad set of touch points and the dynamic nature of customer experience (Homburg, Jozić, and Kuehnl 2015; Verhoef, Kannan, and Inman 2015).

Customer Experience Management: New Organizational Models

So far, the customer journey and channel literature has made little progress in explaining how firms can manage the entire customer journey and experience. Management control is probably an illusion in an era in which customers are empowered and "design" their own journeys. Regardless, we still find a significant gap in research on how firms can best

manage the customers' journeys. The complexity of journeys and the speed with which both technology and consumer behavior are changing may require new and flexible organization models. Only recently has research explored the specific underlying capabilities of customer experience management and derived differences in market-driven and customer relationship management (Homburg, Jozić, and Kuehnl 2015). With the ubiquity of IT in many processes, IT firms' working methodologies (such as agile and scrum approaches) have begun entering marketing. Companies are adopting new ways of organizing marketing functions to remove existing silos around brands, customer segments, channels, research/insights, and so on. For example, a large Dutch bank, inspired by startups and IT companies such as Spotify and Google, is transforming its marketing organization using marketing "tribes" (self-organizing marketing teams). This transformation is in the very early stages, but it indicates that firms are willing to make radical movements toward more flexible, more customer-centric organizations that enable them to manage the customer experience effectively in increasingly fragmented markets. Marketing scholars should investigate how firms organize to successfully manage the customer experience.

Concluding Thoughts

Although human experience has been studied for hundreds (if not thousands) of years, the field of customer experience management is a relatively new "greenfield" area for future research. However, it is important to recognize what we already know about customer experience throughout the customer journey—as we have been studying facets of it for the past 50 years. In this article, we have sought to bring together what is known about customer experience and the overall customer journey from many aspects of marketing, including customer satisfaction, customer management, service quality, and relationship marketing, in addition to specific research on customer experience. We have presented an integrated view of customer experience across the customer journey that we hope will be helpful in (1) organizing what is known in this area and (2) stimulating future research. There are many challenges to conducting research in this area. The topic is dynamic and multidisciplinary, and it requires multiple methods. Although some bright spots exist, such as multichannel/omnichannel research, many aspects of customer experience are void of strong marketing scholarship. In several areas, marketing practice has a strong head start. It is time to strengthen theory, understanding, and knowledge in this critical area of marketing.

Appendix: Tools and Best Practice for Customer Experience Management

Designing, managing, and monitoring the total customer experience and enabling customers to optimize and customize the experience is a daunting task. When one considers what is involved in actually tracking, organizing, and managing every possible interaction between the firm and the customer through the customer journey, the complexity and difficulty of the project is clear. We have tried to provide an overview of key conceptual and analytic approaches to assist in this endeavor. Because one of our goals in this article is to identify best practice, in this Appendix we provide an extended example of one firm that has taken this challenge head-on: Disney. This enables us to delineate key aspects of the process and to highlight the integral role of IT and operations in the successful implementation of a customer experience initiative.

Customer Experience Design

Disney's Magic Band technology and its online tool, MyMagicPlus, work together to enable customers to create their ultimate Disney experience. Disney has invested upward of $1 billion in this venture to "root out all the friction within the Disney World experience" (Kuang 2015, p. 7). By removing all the pain points and sticking points in the current Disney experience, executives believed they could transform the Disney experience to free up customers to experience the park more broadly. This new approach enables customers to preplan their Disney experience and to identify specific times to experience various rides and events in the park, including personalized meetings with Disney characters, lunch reservations, and rides on top attractions.

Role of Information Technology

Disney's new approach embeds technology throughout all stages of the customer experience. Magic Bands (bracelet-sized wristbands individualized for each family member on the trip) arrive before the planned vacation and can be used throughout the park. The band sensors enable guests to swipe the band for entrance onto rides and into their hotel room, to make purchases, or, most important, for Disney to find the guest (for a meet-and-greet with a Disney character, to take the perfect photo while the guest is on a ride, to deliver preordered entrees to a guest's table, or to e-mail a coupon if a guest happens to wait too long in line). Each Magic Band contains an RFID chip, a radio, and a battery. It connects the guest with up to 100 data systems in the park, streaming real-time data about each guest and ensuring that all systems work together to ensure a consistent, customized experience.

Reducing Friction and Optimizing Logistics

Disney believes that the combination of preplanning and technological capabilities reduces critical friction areas such as waiting time, frustration, and indecision, and that it consequently improves overall customer experiences. According to Tom Staggs, Disney's COO, "You get to be the hero, promising a ride or a meet-and-greet up front. Then you can be freer to experience the park more broadly. You're freed to take advantage of more rides" (Kuang 2015, p. 12). Staggs also notes, "If we can enhance the experience, more people will spend more of their leisure time with us" (Barnes 2013). This combination also enables Disney to optimize logistics and the service ecosystem. By gaining data and insight into how people flow throughout the park, food,

employees, and services can be located appropriately, reducing even more friction. The result? Customers spend more and are happier, and Disney has a more efficient and effective operation.

Strengthening Touch Points Throughout the Experience

Disney's relatively closed service ecosystem has enabled the firm to embrace new technology in innovative ways to reengineer the customer experience. By encouraging and enabling customers to preplan their experience, Disney is strengthening the touch points in the prepurchase stage of the experience and reducing uncertainty and frustration during the purchase stage—the customer's visit to the park. The Magic Band technology and its surrounding and supporting information systems enable Disney to deliver a seamless, customized, and surprisingly frictionless experience to its guests. It almost enables Disney to anticipate its customers' needs. Postpurchase and postconsumption, Disney's approach may have interesting and potentially unintended consequences. As one of Disney's Magic Band YouTube videos suggests, customers may expect all service providers to be as seamless as Disney and may wonder why their Magic Band does not work everywhere (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2buVLVO-6F8).

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