

A dynamic perspective on customer experiences

Michaela Lipkin¹ and Kristina Heinonen²

Abstract

This paper aims to conceptualize and empirically highlight customer experience dynamics. So far, much service literature has approached the customer experience as a static and firm-controlled phenomenon, confined to interactions during the service encounter. We take on a more dynamic approach to the construct, arguing that customers experience service over time and beyond the firm's actions. Consequently, the customers' sense-making of the experience is also apt to change due to factors outside the firm's control. The paper presents a study conducted among 18 customers of a mobile sports tracking service, which locates 8 different change-triggering factors in the customer's context. We characterize these factors into three change categories causing experience dynamics: 1) long-term change 2) short-term change and 3) swayers. The findings help service firms understand how customers within their own context may cause and influence change in experiences. The paper ends with suggestions for how managers may manage such change.

Keywords customer experience dynamics, change-triggering factors, long-term change, short-term change, swayers, customer's context

1 Michaela Lipkin is a doctoral student at the Department of Marketing, Hanken School of Economics, and a member of CERS, Centre for Relationship Marketing and Service Management. Her research focuses on customer experiences, specifically the customer perspective on different types of experiences with self-service technologies.

2 Kristina Heinonen holds the tenure track position as Assistant Professor in service marketing at the Department of Marketing at Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland. She is the director of the knowledge and research centre Centre for Relationship Marketing and Service Management (CERS) at Hanken. Heinonen is also an Adjunct Professor in customer-centred service marketing at the School of Management, University of Tampere, Finland. Heinonen is currently involved in research projects concerning service value, e-service and mobile service, dynamics of customer relationships, and integrated marketing communication.