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Abstract

Customer experience is a broad and multi-dimensional phenomenon, which currently divides academic scholars in terms of constructs and measurement. This study aims to examine some acceptable yet under-measured customer experience constructs already developed. The comparative exploration of the physical store and online store firm-controlled touchpoints seeks to identify differences or similarities in customers' perceived affective response, which can help firms improve their current touchpoint design. Set in a business-to-customer context in the Philippines during a Covid-19 community quarantine, a total sample of 338 respondents evaluated their recent interaction during the purchase stage. A causal-comparative exploratory research design was utilized using linear and moderated regression and showed that both physical and online store touch points significantly influence customers' positive discrete emotions. However, positive discrete emotions elicited during an online store interaction are higher than in a physical store. It also revealed that the moderating effect of individual context is insignificant.

Keywords: *customer experience; firm-controlled touchpoints; customer's discrete emotions*

Introduction

Pine and Gilmore (1998) introduced the rise of the experience economy as a fourth progressive offering from commodities, goods, and services. They emphasized that the next competitive battleground will be the staging of experiences, whether firms sell to businesses or consumers. Highly advanced firms started to integrate customer experience as part of their new business reality to drive differentiation and survive the current and fast-changing market environment (Keiningham et al., 2020).

The 2017 Gartner marketing survey examines customer experience as the new marketing battlefront (Pemberton, 2018). It was indicated in the same survey that more than two-thirds of marketers revealed that their companies are now competing mostly on the basis of customer experience (Pemberton, 2018). Its importance is also evident when firms start to hire C-level positions, with job titles explicitly labeled with customer experience such as vice president for customer experience or chief experience officer (De Keyser et al., 2015). The increasing attention to customer experience both from researchers and practitioners established it as a research priority in publications of the Marketing Science Institute from 2010 to 2020 (De Keyser et al., 2020). De Keyser et al. (2015) also recognized that customer experience is getting huge attention from top consulting companies like Mckinsey, Accenture, and Gartner, where private studies were also rigorously conducted covering the phenomenon.

The prime advantage of information and technology prompted most customers nowadays to become more demanding. This is the reason why firms are constantly on the lookout for integrating real-time and adaptive experiences. Because of this development, other firms are also coping to improve their customer's experience in order to optimize loyalty resulting in better profitability.

Literature Review

Despite the growing interest gained by customer experience, the current literature is hugely divided in terms of its multidimensional constructs and proper measurement. Establishing a unified view is necessary to avoid more confusion in its theory development and construction. Recently published studies are still focused on its systematic review as a construct because of various technical arguments raised by scholars. Very few are empirically testing some of the proposed frameworks that went through rigorous meta-analysis in order to help rule out which among the constructs remain valid. The existing definition proposed to clarify customer experience is too broad or specific. It also appears that few researchers are coming up with tests to validate these constructs, which are sprouting multiple options of what is more applicable or significant depending on one's preference, which makes investigating customer experience more complicated.

Gahler et al (2019) also noticed that the current customer experience concepts are fragmented because of its limitation in specific experience providers, touchpoints, or customer journey stages. This is the reason why some scholars would like to promote a comprehensive perspective on customer experience, which can be measured in terms of its current omnichannel environment (De Keyser et al. 2015, Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

The marketing term customer experience may appear self-explanatory, but it is considered multidimensional that covers a wider range of other constructs, which are still being argued and developed. Scholars are still debating whether customer experience is a response to an offering or an assessment of the quality of an offering. There are already a few established constructs of the phenomenon that have been well-accepted through a rigorous systematic review of literature that measures common aspects and dimensions across studies. But a common definition is still based on a researcher's preference and background. Bascur and Rusu (2020) confirmed that it is really a broad concept that must include the physical and emotional experiences of customers when interacting with products, systems, and services.

In terms of measuring customer experience, Flacandji and Krey (2020) argued that the memory of an experience and the actual experience should not be assessed using similar measurement tools because there are additional properties that must be captured timely. Imhof and Klaus (2019) also pointed out that net promoter score, customer satisfaction, and service quality, which are used as proxy measurements for customer experience, already proved that there is little or no link to customer behavior. They advocated for new and comprehensive customer experience measurements to holistically capture and understand the phenomenon as a driver in influencing customer behavior.

While the academic community is still debating on the conceptualization of customer experience and its proper measurement, consulting firms, and private organizations started to

launch their own research about the phenomenon. These companies are no longer wasting precious time in clarifying a few technicalities about customer experience but comprehensively opting to maximize how it can already be applied in their respective firms. It may appear self-serving, but the practical approach of customer experience is showing more benefits to these industries than the academe. There are even more customer experience studies conducted by private firms than those that were delivered by academic scholars (Jain et al, 2017).

A narrow definition of the term was offered by Becker and Jaakkola (2020). They suggested defining customer experience as "*non-deliberate, spontaneous responses and reactions to offering-related stimuli embedded within a specific context.*" This was their solution to the confusion on whether customer experience is a response to an offering or an assessment of the quality of the offering.

The latest work of De Keyser et al. (2020) also proposed a nomenclature that can be used to better define, understand, and manage customer experience. After conducting a fine-grained analysis of 143 published customer experience papers, they established 12 customer experience components that fall under 3 major building blocks. These building blocks were identified as touchpoints, context, and qualities, which were referenced as the acronym TCQ. De Keyser et al. (2020) cited that the TCQ nomenclature precisely captured the essence of customer experience, and reduced its conceptual ambiguity and theoretical differences. They were able to reconcile conflicting and common constructs present across studies. As a result of their rigorous meta-analysis, the authors proposed the definition that "*customer experience is formed through touchpoints (T), which are embedded in a broader context (C), and marked by a set of qualities (Q) that, together, result in a value judgment by the customer.*"

Touchpoint is the term used to refer to each individual interaction between a customer and the firm, and these happen every time a customer directly or indirectly "touches" the firm through different channels (De Keyser et al. 2015). Touchpoints also reflect the moments when the customer interacts with the firm's offering, and these contact points can be direct or indirect and comprise various cues, which is anything that can be perceived or sensed by the customer (Verhoef et al, 2009; Becker and Jaakkola, 2020). Touchpoints also differ in terms of control, nature, and stage of the customer's journey (De Keyser et al, 2020).

McColl-Kennedy et al (2019) also defined touchpoint as an episode of direct or indirect contact with a firm, which is premised on their investigation of brand-owned postpurchase consumption (Lemon and Verhoef 2016). De Keyser et al (2020) specified that in these touchpoints, a customer is a focal individual, who engages in a commercial interaction. Thus, the customer is considered a market actor covering the entire spectrum of commercial and non-commercial service/product providers. McColl-Kennedy et al (2019) encouraged that touchpoints should be improved by mapping them out from the customer's perspective, and not only based on the firm's perspective (Lemon and Verhoef 2016).

Becker and Jaakkola (2020) clarified that customer experience is subjective and contextual variables related to the customer and their broader environment can influence their responses to stimuli and their evaluative outcomes. However, they noticed that current research clearly shows a

fragmented view with some studies often disregarding the effect of contextual variables. To address this shortcoming, they classified three contextual variables including customer contingencies, which specifically focus on the customer's character, resources, and knowledge. Their past experiences and expectations, including their participation in the interaction, can influence the experience. Becker and Jaakkola (2020) also indicated that these contextual factors can affect customer experience by making some stimuli more or less recognizable or it can also affect the evaluative outcomes of a particular response. This is why they encouraged us to include relevant contextual variables and their effect on the strength and direction of the relationships between a touchpoint and its evaluative outcomes.

De Keyser et al. (2020) presented in their TCQ nomenclature under the context that the individual context reveals a short-lived personal state of the customer that can be very subjective based on his or her own way of thinking and even emotional state. This can impact their interaction given that there is a tendency for some customers to be more open in trying out new products when they are in a good mood, while they stick to familiar and trusted products when they are in a bad mood. They also pointed out that previous experiences may affect a customer's way of engaging with the firm's offering. De Keyser et al. (2020) also highlighted opportunities in considering the effect of contextual factors on customer experience. Since contextual data is broad by covering all individual, social, market, and environmental factors, they are urging researchers to select only the most appropriate contextual data since it is not likely that all contextual factors would be equally important in different stages. Thus, it is important to discover ways in selecting only the most critical contextual data in any given situation.

In the framework of McColl-Kennedy et al (2019), they classified context as part of value creation elements that can affect a customer's experience positively or negatively. They indicated that value formation depends on the situational context in which a service is formed. Instead of calling it an individual context, they also highlighted the customer role as a set of learned behaviors that can function as a part played by the customer in a given context. This can vary from very active to relatively passive (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012). For example, a customer who gets involved in redefining the terms and conditions of a sale through a series of negotiations would be considered active, whereas a customer who simply accepts all the terms and conditions of sale provided by a firm is considered passive.

Flacandji and Kray (2020) pointed out that one of the seven customer experience dimensions shared across studies is the affective dimension, which is a customer's response through emotions and moods associated with the pleasure or displeasure of an interaction. Mahr et al (2019) mentioned in their systematic literature review that the emotional dimension is mostly associated with the interaction, whereas the physical dimension is related to quality.

Bascur and Rusu (2020) also argued that it is critical to specify a specific dimension in studying customer experience because it captures a broad scope. These various dimensions exist together and must be explained using a certain context. They mentioned six components, including the emotional component that involves the affective system, which generates moods, feelings, and emotions in customers.

The importance of how customers feel during an interaction with the firm is an affective response (McColl-Kennedy et al 2019) or discrete emotions (De Keyser et al. 2015). McColl-Kennedy et al (2019) shared that there is a small number of basic emotions that are biologically recognized and these are similar among individuals, regardless of differences in culture. In their framework, they included six main discrete emotions with reference to Shaver et al's (1987) foundational work.

Becker and Jaakkola (2020) argued that when operationalizing customer experience, the use of satisfaction and service quality as proxies must be avoided, instead it should be focused on the customer's spontaneous responses and reactions to the stimuli. They recommended measures on the most common experience dimensions used like affective response to facilitate better accumulation of knowledge. The researchers also noticed that most studies use research instruments, where the participants heavily rely on remembering their past experiences. This can somehow affect the validity of findings because of the accuracy of participants' memory in recalling their past experiences. Thus, Becker and Jaakkola (2020) recommended research designs to capture customer responses right after the interaction.

De Keyser et al. (2020) presented in their TCQ nomenclature under qualities that the valence of an experience refers to the negative, neutral, or positive nature of customer responses to interactions with the brand or firm. They argued that all three may be true to a customer, although very few are focused on neutral experiences. They also pointed out that the valence of experiences and some evaluative outcomes, like satisfaction, should be studied further. Because of the possibility that all three valences of experience can be activated at the same time, focus on its implication as an evaluative outcome must also be studied. Mahr et al. (2019) also pointed out that emotion and cognition appeared under the theme of experience, wherein emotions are closely related to processes and purchases, which are considered to be outcome measures. In a similar analysis, they found out that the affective concept is also closely related to the themes of brand and product.

Measuring customer experience as a construct is another widely debated topic. Some industry practitioners and consultants are using proven marketing metrics such as net promoter score, customer satisfaction, customer effort score, and service quality to measure customer experience. These metrics are clearly indicated on their respective websites. However, scholars are arguing that even if these well-established metrics are simple and scientific, it does not fully capture the essence of customer experience. It may help as an indicator, but not as an absolute measurement of customer experience. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) already argued that customer experience is entirely different from customer satisfaction and service quality, but these marketing terms can be related. They mentioned that service quality could be an antecedent of customer experience, and customer satisfaction is one of the components of customer experience that focuses on cognitive evaluation.

Mahr et al (2019) shared that some scholars were also criticized for adopting customer satisfaction and service quality as key customer experience measurements because of its shortcoming in predicting purchasing behavior, and bias toward cognitive outcomes compared to affective outcomes. In their systematic review of the literature, they found out that the concept of

emotions is more closely related to interaction, as an outcome measure concept. Khan et al (2015) also cautioned that key customer experience metrics should capture the emotional side of the customer's conscious and subconscious mind.

Imhof and Klaus (2019) mentioned that net promoter score, customer satisfaction, and service quality, when used as proxy measurements for customer experience, clearly proved that there is little or no link to customer behavior. They advocated for new and comprehensive customer experience measurement to understand it as a driver in influencing customer behavior. Some scholars also proposed other customer experience indicative measures such as customer experience quality (EXQ) and wallet allocation rule (WAR).

Objectives of the Study

The researcher decided to explore and test some acceptable and proven customer experience constructs that were empirically studied by scholars. This study focused on the effect of physical stores and online stores as firm-controlled touchpoints on customers' discrete emotions in a business-to-customer context.

The comparative exploration of these two firm-controlled touchpoints identified differences and similarities in customers' perceived affective responses. It clarified whether physical store interaction elicits more positive discrete emotions versus an online store because there are more contributing aspects connected to the former like ambiance and human connection. This does not discount the fact that an online store also has an advantage in terms of convenience and ease of transaction.

By comparing positive, neutral, and discrete emotions as an affective response, this study identified if one or more types of emotion are common during the customer's purchase stage. It also focused on exploring the role of cognitive and affective individual context as a combined moderating factor, which can positively or negatively affect customer interaction during the purchase stage. Since some published studies ignored the contextual factors that can affect a customer's experience prior to their interaction with a firm, this study clarified the extent to which individual context affected the relationship.

Scope & Limitations of the Study

This study covered two firm-controlled store-type touchpoints, which were easily recognized by respondents. It focused on an event-specific customer experience, which means that it only aimed to capture the customer's recent interaction in either a physical store or online store during the purchase stage. It explored customer experience based on three constructs, namely firm-controlled touchpoints, individual context, and discrete emotions.

The survey was conducted from May 4-15, 2021 using an online form, and generated a good sample of 338. It captured the perspective of customers through discrete emotions as an affective response to their firm-controlled store-type touchpoints. The firm's perspective on their touchpoints is not part of this study since the researcher is taking the customer-centric approach, and no specific firm was identified. The cognitive aspect (ie. how customers think), physical aspect (ie. how

customers interact), social aspect (ie. how customers share), and sensory aspect (ie. how customers experience through their senses) were excluded from this study. There may be other undefined factors aside from individual context, which can affect the participants in responding to the survey questions. But this study is limited to individual context as a moderating variable. Social, market, and environmental contexts were omitted because these factors are most likely to influence the customer before and after the purchase stage, and not during the purchase stage.

Frameworks of the Study

FRAMEWORK 1.

Conceptual Framework
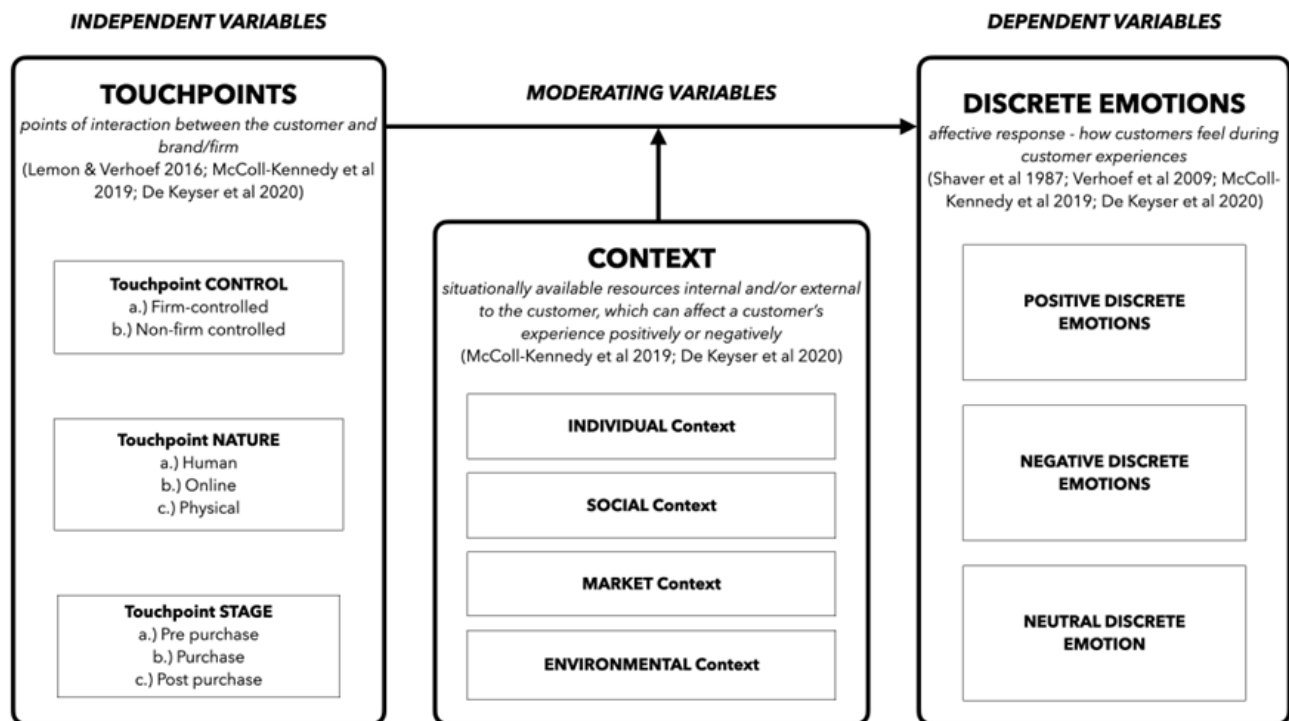
The conceptual framework that was used is built upon McColl-Kennedy et al (2019) theoretical framework and De Keyser et al (2020) TCQ nomenclature foundation. The framework was based on the premise that a customer's interaction with a firm through an identified touchpoint results in discrete emotions, which can be positive, negative, or neutral. However, this can be positively or negatively moderated by external or internal resources available to the customers.

FRAMEWORK 2.

Operational Framework
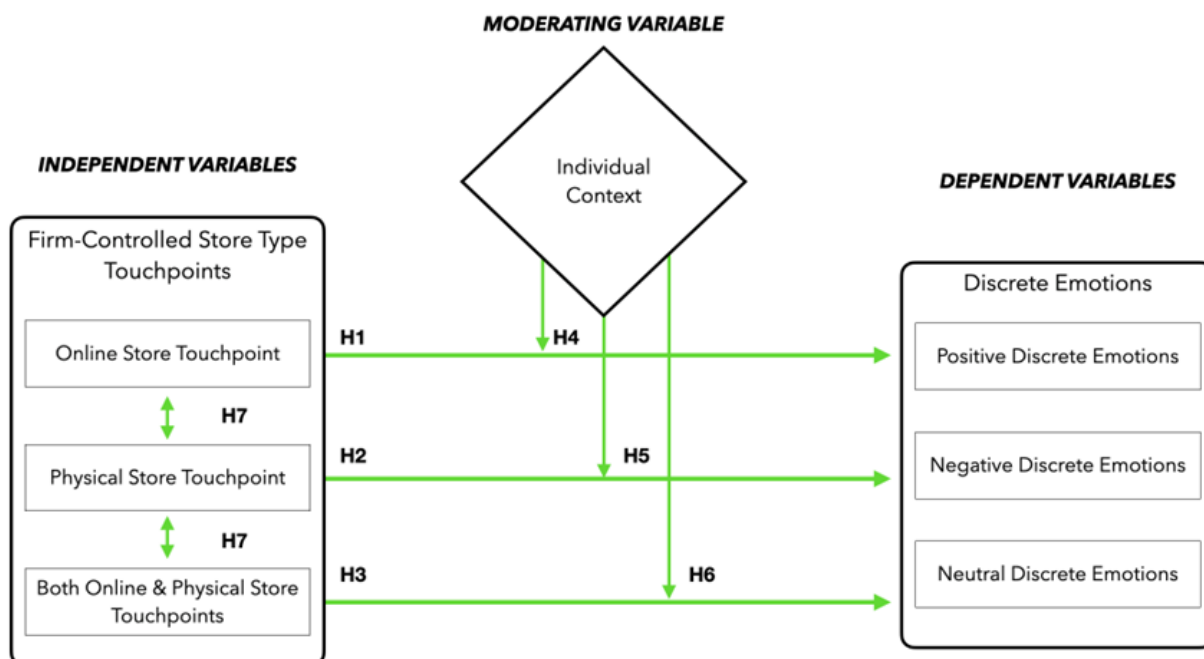
The operational framework focused on the comparison between the physical store and online store, and non-firm controlled touch points were excluded since the unit of analysis was based on the customer's understanding during the purchase stage. Firm-controlled store-type touchpoints are the independent variables, which cause the dependent variable and take the form of the intervention or treatment in this study. Discrete emotions are the dependent variables, and individual context is the moderating variable, which occurs in the causal pathway between the independent and dependent variables.

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Touchpoints are the independent variables, which cause the dependent variable and take the form of the intervention or treatment in this study and are manipulated to demonstrate change in the dependent variable (Mathers et al., 2009). Discrete emotions are the dependent variables, which is an outcome variable. The value of a dependent variable is dependent on other independent variables and its value will change as the independent variable or intervention changes (Mathers et al., 2009). Individual context is the moderating variable, which occurs in the causal pathway between the

independent variable and the dependent variable. It is statistically associated with both the independent and the dependent variables (Mathers et al., 2009).

Operational Definition of Terms
1. *Firm-controlled physical store touchpoint* is the interaction between the firm and customer inside a physical store that is controlled by the firm.
2. *Firm-controlled online store touchpoint* is the interaction between the firm and the customer through an official website or social media page that is controlled by the firm.
3. *Individual context* refers to the customer's current individual emotional state and way of thinking prior to their interaction with the firm-controlled touchpoints.
4. *Positive discrete emotions* are affective responses of the customers captured by joy, love, and surprise during their interaction with the firm-controlled touchpoints.
5. *Negative discrete emotions* are affective responses of the customers captured by anger, fear, and sadness during their interaction with the firm-controlled touchpoints.
6. *Neutral discrete emotions* are affective responses of the customers captured by indifference during their interaction with the firm-controlled touchpoints.

Hypotheses
Hypothesis 1 - Firm-controlled online store touchpoint does not significantly influence positive discrete emotions during the customer's purchase stage.
Hypothesis 2 - Firm-controlled physical store touchpoint does not significantly influence positive discrete emotions during the customer's purchase stage.
Hypothesis 3 - Both firm-controlled store-type touchpoints do not significantly influence positive discrete emotions during the customer's purchase stage.
Hypothesis 4 - Individual context does not moderate the relationship between firm-controlled online store touchpoints and positive discrete emotions during the customer's purchase stage.
Hypothesis 5 - Individual context does not moderate the relationship between firm-controlled physical store touchpoints and positive discrete emotions during the customer's purchase stage.
Hypothesis 6 - Individual context does not moderate the relationship between both firm-controlled store-type touchpoints and positive discrete emotions during the customer's purchase stage.
Hypothesis 7 - There is no significant difference in discrete emotions across all types of firm-controlled store-type touchpoints during the customer's purchase stage.

Methodology

The study is a causal-comparative exploratory type of research because it attempted to establish the relationships between firm-controlled store-type touchpoints and discrete emotions during the customer's purchase stage. It adopted a non-probability sample, specifically a quota sample based on Slovin's formula.

The researcher investigated and studied the availability of research instruments, specifically measuring valid constructs of customer experience. However, there is currently no available questionnaire that was originally created to measure the phenomenon, except the latest

multi-dimensional instrument introduced by Gahler et al. (2019), which was recently studied and tested. The researcher developed a survey instrument with the absence of an available customer experience instrument, and generally patterned the design after Gahler et al. (2019), but substantially added and removed items and descriptions fitting this study. To test its reliability and consistency, the 12 scale items of the survey instrument were tested and earned a Cronbach's alpha of 0.910, which is considered excellent.

Linear regression, moderated analysis, and analysis of variance were used to test the 7 hypotheses. Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Durbin-Watson test for auto-correlation, and VIF collinearity test were also conducted prior to running the regressions to avoid redundancy and critical multicollinearity, where the p-value can be unreliable.

Assumptions of the Study

In order to avoid overgeneralization and unfair statements on the topic, the following assumptions are presented to assert concepts that led to the framing of this study:

1. The researcher assumed that physical store touchpoint will gain more positive discrete emotions compared to online store touchpoint because of ambiance and human interaction even during quarantine restriction that limits this type of interaction. Furthermore, the researcher assumed that online store touchpoints would only elicit neutral discrete emotions.
2. It was also assumed that individual context will significantly moderate the relationship between firm-controlled touchpoints and discrete emotions during the purchase because a current emotional state and way of thinking may affect a succeeding store interaction. If a customer is already in a bad mood and exhibiting a negative way of thinking through his actions prior to entering a store, this can also affect the way he would perceive his store interaction.
3. The exclusion of social, market, and environmental context will no longer be relevant during the purchase stage because these factors were only significant during the pre-purchase or post-purchase stages.
4. The inclusion criteria of the sample respondents were appropriate and aligned with the objectives of this study. It is assumed that all participants recently made their actual purchase with the firm-controlled touch points either in a physical store or online store. However, the online survey was conducted hours after their exit in both store types. It is assumed that they can still vividly remember their recent store interaction, and there was an ease of recall.
5. It is also assumed that participants answered in an honest or candid manner, and were consciously aware of their emotional state and way of thinking prior to and during the purchase stage, regardless if the prior emotional state was influenced by events that were not covered in this study in order to capture the moderating effect of individual context. Therefore, they can truly respond whether their overall store interaction was positive, negative, or neutral.

Result and Discussion

Out of 338 total respondents, 62% are male and 38% are female. Half of the total respondents are between 30-39 years old, and 30.8% belong to the 20-29 years old age bracket. Only 13% are first-time customers, and 87% of the respondents are repeat customers of their respective stores.

TABLE 1.

Regression Analysis - Effect of Firm-Controlled Store Type Touch Points on Positive Discrete Emotions

model	Online Store Touchpoint	Physical Store Touchpoint	Both Online & Physical Store Touchpoints
p-value	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
Adjusted R squared	0.366	0.440	0.312
Intercept	0.039	0.203	0.583
Decision	Reject null hypothesis 1	Reject null hypothesis 2	Reject null hypothesis 3

The above table summarized the regression analysis of predictors determining positive discrete emotions across all store-type touchpoints. The p-values in all store-type touchpoints are less than 0.001 and are considered significant. Therefore, the null hypotheses (Ho_1, Ho_2, Ho_3) were rejected. The adjusted R squared provided the explanatory power of all the predictors for store-type interaction leading to positive discrete emotions. Physical store touchpoint appeared to have the highest adjusted R squared, which means that all predictors were able to explain positive discrete emotions by 44%. While the values of the adjusted R squared for the online store touchpoint and both firm-controlled store-type touch points were 36.6% and 31.2% respectively.

Comparing the predictors for online store touchpoints, only payment options and joy appeared to be significant. This is indicative that for every unit increase in payment options, positive discrete emotions in the online store touchpoint increase by 0.1332. Furthermore, for every unit increase in joy, positive discrete emotions in the online store touchpoint also increase by 0.11363.

For physical store touchpoints, store personnel, and joy were the only predictors that appeared to be significant. This also indicates that for every unit increase in store personnel, positive discrete emotions in the physical store touchpoint increase by 0.10173. For every unit increase in joy, positive discrete emotions in the physical store touchpoint also increase by 0.23581.

TABLE 2.

Moderated Analysis - Effect of Individual Context on the Relationship Between Firm-Controlled Store Type Touch Points and Positive Discrete Emotions

model	Online Store Touchpoint	Physical Store Touchpoint	Both Online & Physical Store Touchpoints
Moderating effect - Individual Context p-value	0.915	0.949	0.797
Affective Individual context p-value	0.513	0.071	0.838
Cognitive Individual context p-value	0.187	0.029	0.586
Decision	Accept null hypothesis 4	Accept null hypothesis 5	Accept null hypothesis 6

The above table presented the moderating effect of individual context on its relationship between the store-type touchpoints and positive discrete emotions. It revealed that its influence is not significant because it resulted in a p-value higher than 0.05 across all store-type touchpoints. However, if individual context will be separated into cognitive and affective individual contexts, only the cognitive individual context in a physical store touchpoint appeared to be significant with a p-value of 0.029. Overall the moderated analysis revealed that individual context does not indicate significant relation with positive discrete emotions. Therefore, the null hypotheses (Ho_4, Ho_5, Ho_6) were accepted.

TABLE 3.

Analysis of Variance - Discrete Emotions across All Firm-Controlled Touch Points

	Online Store Touchpoint	Physical Store Touchpoint	Both Online & Physical Store Touchpoints
N	113	63	161
mean	0.876	0.730	0.742
Decision		Reject null hypothesis 7	
Welch's p value	0.007	**Fisher's p value**	0.009

Table 3 revealed that the analysis of variance conducted is significant because both Welch's and Fisher's p-value is below 0.05. Therefore, there is a difference in discrete emotions across all store-type touchpoints. Positive discrete emotions are higher in online store touch points compared

to physical store touchpoints, and both firm-controlled store-type touchpoints. The physical store touchpoint is closest to the mean score. Thus, null hypotheses (Ho_7) were rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Understanding customers today can be very challenging given a relatively complex marketing environment that is constantly evolving. Since the research area of customer experience is still considered a "blue ocean" with conflicting approaches, it is critical to recognize which among the constructs have been empirically evaluated and separate those from evolving constructs that are still subject to varied interpretations. This study is a response to the call of established customer experience researchers like McColl-Kennedy et al (2019), to explore the investigation of a rigorously evaluated framework in advancing literature.

The study revealed that interaction in both physical and online store touchpoints can significantly influence customers' positive discrete emotions during the purchase stage. Joy was determined as the specific discrete emotion contributing to an overall positive interaction experience, while payment options and store personnel were the specific interaction predictors significantly influencing positive discrete emotions in an online store and physical store respectively. It also showed that positive discrete emotions elicited during an interaction with an online store are significantly higher compared to a physical store. This could be attributed to convenience, which was experienced by respondents, who were restricted from making an actual purchase in a physical store because of quarantine restrictions. The availability of online payment options was a strong single predictor, which enhanced the positive experience.

Similar to all empirical studies conducted, this research is acknowledging its limitations, which can be addressed by future customer experience researchers. It is highly encouraged that researchers collect timely customer experience data right after the interaction with a specific store type to capture the exact experience and facilitate ease of recall. Recalling a store interaction hours after their exit from the store may affect collected data because a customer's emotional state may change thereafter. Since this study focused on discrete emotions, researchers should also investigate cognitive responses, which were also empirically reviewed by McColl-Kennedy et al. (2019) framework as valid customer experience constructs in evaluating touchpoints. Other contextual factors in value creation during the purchase stage such as customer role, firm resources, and firm activities can be included in determining both the affective and cognitive responses of the customers.

The latest work of De Keyser et al. (2020) already proposed a nomenclature that can be used to better define, understand, and manage customer experience. After conducting a fine-grained analysis of 143 published customer experience papers, they established 12 customer experience components that fall under 3 major building blocks. These building blocks were identified as touchpoints, context, and qualities, which were referenced as the acronym TCQ. The authors defended that the TCQ nomenclature precisely captured the essence of customer experience, and reduced its conceptual ambiguity and theoretical differences since conflicting constructs across studies were reconciled. This research was partly guided by this nomenclature, and can also set a good foundation for future customer experience researchers, who wish to expound on other dimensions of a customer's interaction.

The study's original design is to investigate customers of a specific firm. However, this research did not involve a specific firm with physical and online stores because of data collection limitations from quarantine restrictions. Firm owners can also start investigating their particular store touchpoints using a similar framework to validate how their customers perceive their interaction. This study was set in a business-to-customer context, but it is also highly encouraged to investigate how it varies in a business-to-business setting.

A customer's journey does not start and end with an interaction in the store. Thus, the multi-dimensional aspect of customer experience can be very challenging to capture in a single study. This phenomenon's increasing challenge was attributed to customer interaction through several touchpoints in multiple channels and media (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Therefore, a wide-scale customer journey including all interaction, regardless if it is firm-controlled or not, is still a long way. But covering part of that customer journey can already be considered progress similar to the insights presented in this paper.

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