



## The Dance of the Emotional Searches with Marketing: The Experience Marketing a Conceptual Analysis

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### Extensive Summary

#### Introduction

Marketing, as being a social process affected by the changes and developments, has forced the companies to make continuous innovation in their production process. While the issues like customer relationship management and customer loyalty gained importance in the 90's in which customer and market-oriented approach began to sit in the center of marketing, a newly marketing approach called customer experience has been started to be the new competitiveness tool that creates customer value. In the focus of the reality that the economy takes its shape around the human needs, it has been seen that the community has been progressed in the three ages; agriculture, industry and information age. While the commodities used to meet the needs of the communities in the agricultural economy age, the development of technology and customers' product/service requestings in society have led the communities going through into the industry age. The information age makes the emotional and the rational-based productions being mandatory with the effects of the globalizations. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), who described the case of customers' being dissatisfied as the paradox of the 21th century even though they have a lot of choices, propose a new perspective for their customers to the businesses that they would create their own experience actively and generate unique values for themselves by this way. At this point, the experience economy has emerged as being the forth economic presentation which is different from the services and products. The experience economy which has been pioneered by Walt Disney, has taken its shape as a new economic type, involving into the production process of products and services. With the production of experiences, people have started to see themselves as an integral part of holistic imagination world that creates consisting value. By this way, business has faced with the importance of applying the hearts and spirits of the customer together with their minds. While the differentiation with the traditional elements such as price, product and

quality are no longer seen as sustainable competitive tool, the experience called as *innovation* reveals in the globalized market place (Zhang, 2008, Lorentzen, 2008, Pine and Gilmore, 1999, Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, Gentile, et al, 2007, Schmitt, 1999).

### **Conceptual Examination**

Pine and Gillmore (1999), the pioneers of the experience economy, classified the economic presentations as commodities, products, services and experiences; commodities could be measured, products are material, services are intangibles and experiences create unforgettable memory. While agricultural economy offer raw materials for the market, the industrial economy offers standard goods for users. While the service economy provides customized service, the experience economy that Toffler mentioned about it in 1970, offers personal experience for customers and this personal experience upgrades the economic value steps. The businesses, in the middle of the changes, replace their traditional marketing activities which demonstrate the benefits of the products with the marketing activities directing to the *emotions and feelings* of the customers. By this way, economic functions of the products and services stay at the back stages and the nature of the experiences contains emotional and social functions. The difference between the old and new businesses show that while the previous economic presentations satisfy the external needs of consumers, the experiences take places in the minds of the customers with spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical aspects. Thus, individuals felt unique and important by the experiences.

Since the early years of the human history, the psychologists and the philosophers have investigated human behaviors with different aspects. Thinkers from Plato up to Sartre, discovered that pleasures derived from the activities and experiences by observing the experiential behavior (Zhang, 2008). Freud (1911), who showed the sexual impulses as the source of pleasure stated that dreams were derived from experience. Koch (1956) emphasized that behaviors were motivated by internal and external factors. So, researchers have done their researches on hedonistic and functional values. The surveys have discovered that while the external factors results with functional consumption, the internal factors results with the hedonistic consumption. At this point hedonic consumption is mentioned as being the basic point of the customer experience marketing (Lofman, 1991; Holbrook and Hirschmann, 1982). In the literature, the marketing concept adopting the idea that the hedonic consumption is related with the consumers experience is called as the experience marketing. While Toffler (1970) was using the concept of the experience for the step going beyond the products and services in his work called ‘future shock’ in which the effects and the changes that would be in the future were explained, he stated that the experiences would be an economic steps that would go beyond the theater in the future

Up to Holbrook (2006), the customers who were called as the rational decision makers till the beginning of the 80s, has been started to be seen as the ones being more than economic and rational decision makers. This approach, focuses on the fantasies (dream, unconscious requests), emotions (love, hate, anger, fear, sadness, pleasure) and funs (funny activities and hedonic pleasure formed designed places) (Holbrook, 2006; Holbrook and Hirschmann, 1982). However, after the mid-90s the approach of experience marketing has gained popularity with Pine and Gilmore (1999), Schmitt

(1999), Smith and Wheeler (2002), Shaw (2005), Lasella and Britton (2003) who are guiding to the experience marketing and this approach has become a strategic competitive tool for businesses in the 21th century in which the traditional marketing has lost its effectiveness. Pine and Gilmore (1999), have accepted the experience economy as being the forth economic offering coming after goods, products and services. The emergence of the holistic experience marketing concept has been occurred with Schmitt (2003; 1999), who examined the role of experience on the process of buying decisions. In the forthcoming years the customer experience has been accepted as a concept creating value for both customers and businesses (Shaw, 2005; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Schmitt, 2003; Smith and Wheeler, 2002; Schmitt, 1999). While Schmitt (1999), emphasizes that the experience marketing focuses on the consumer experience in contrast to traditional marketing Robinette and Brand (2001), claim that the experience is a concept that is easy to show but difficult to identify. In the literature research, it has been discovered that many different definition have been done for experience marketing by different names. In accordance with these definitions, the features of experience have been analyzed. Experiences;

- are obtained by the participation in imaginary or virtual events/places,
- enriches the inner world of customers and their life experiences,
- takes place in the customers memory,
- meets the internal needs of customers,
- occurs with interactions existing between businesses and customers,
- leads the customers taking an active role,
- arises by the exchange of information, emotions and sensory stimulus,
- are designed by the theme and the story,
- appeals to the heart, mind and senses,
- leads some major changes on customers.

### **Conclusion**

In this conceptual study aimed to analyze the concept of experience and the marketing experience, the characteristics and qualities of the experience were revealed. The concept of experience that is associated with the hedonic consumption termed to the internal demands of customers has emerged as a different economic presentation other than products and services. With this newly concept, the necessity of seeing the customers as not just rational decision makers but also as emotional decision makers have emerged in accordance with the structures of experiences. Therefore, experiences appeals to the hearts, to the minds and to the senses as being a holistic approach. The experiences surrounded with emotion, pleasure and entertainment is being seen as the significant value source for customers. The purpose of this value source that occurs as a result of interactions is to enrich the customers' inner world and life experience. In this approach customers, undertake active role as being different from other current and traditional marketing approaches. While this active role is created by imaginary or virtual events and contents, stories/themes are becoming an indispensable elements of the experience. With the customers' active participation, unlike the previous economic

proposals experiences addresses to the psychological, intellectual and even spiritual areas of the individuals. If changes in these areas are positive, an emotional connection between the customers and the business happens that couldn't be copied by the rivals. For this reason, it is inevitable to say that the experiences existing with the experience economy, has become a new competition tool. The businesses using the experiential applications in their production process design the unique customer experiences for their customers. When the businesses correlate an emotional connection with the customers and find a place in their life, they could provide a sustainable competitive advantage and differentiation. This advantage occurs by the exchange of the sensorial stimulant and emotions between the customers and the business. In future research the proposed models could be used (Pine and Gilmore 2006, Schmitt 1999 vb.) in different sectors and the contents of the experiential applications could be presented. Cause up to Kamel and the others (2008), experiences are not just a concept that could be used in the entertainment world in order to create recollection but also could be used in different areas such as health care, accommodation, restaurants and travel companies.