Aligning Key Success Factors with Resources and Capabilities to Win in the Market Place

Ashok K. Sar

Professor, KIIT School of Management, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology
e-mail: aksar@ksom.ac.in ORCID: 0000-0002-7861-9060

Abstract

This paper aims to review the management developments on building resources and capabilities aligned to key success factors, with a view to lay direction for wining in the market place. This paper is prepared by an independent writer who adds impartial comments and places the articles in context. When resources and capabilities are developed duly aligned to the key success factors, managers are able to link the same to competitive advantage. In the absence of this alignment, resources and capabilities could become superfluous strengths, which are no more strategically relevant. Considering the changing pace of customer taste and preferences and competitive forces, aligning resources and capabilities to key success factors would help businesses to achieve competitive advantage. The paper provides strategic insights and practical thinking to win in the dynamic market place. The paper gives an easy to use framework for developing strategically relevant resources and capabilities.

Keywords: key success factors, resources, capabilities, processes, key strengths, key weaknesses

1. Introduction

Chuck Hofer and Dan Schendel coined the term- "Key Success Factor" (KSF) (Hofer & Schendel 1977). They define KSF as "those variables that management can influence through its decisions and that can affect significantly the overall competitive position of the firm in an industry". Subsequent published work of D. Ronald Daniel, Robert N. Anthony, John Dearden, Richard F. Vancil, John F. Rockard and Robert M. Grant have greatly enhanced the need for understanding of associated areas of activity that should receive constant and careful attention of management. Charles W.L. Hill, Gareth R. Jones and Melissa A. Schilling in their publications have articulated four generic KSF- efficiency, quality, innovation and customer responsiveness (Hill et al. 2015). They suggest that a company's ability to attain superior efficiency, quality, innovation and customer responsiveness will determine if its offering is differentiated from rivals and if it has a low-cost structure. Irrespective

of the nature of the offer, either a product, or a service or a solution, a firm can win either by having a cost advantage or a differentiation advantage, or dual advantage. Rita Gunther McGarth, in her publication in 2013 suggested that achieving sustainable competitive advantage (which has been the key thing for strategy) is nearly impossible these days, in the so called high velocity world (McGrath 2013). Companies need to embrace the notion of "transient advantage" instead, learning to launch new strategic initiatives again and again and creating a portfolio of advantages that can be built quickly and abandoned just as rapidly. Hax (2010) has been critical of the concept of competitive advantage conceptualized by Porter, and has been articulating the concept of "customer bonding" as the key to win. As per his work, customer bonding is achieved through total customer solutions- redefining customer experience, customer integration and enhancing horizontal breadth and system lock- exclusive channel, dominant exchange and proprietary standards, enabled through effective use of technology.

Capabilities are what the firm can do, often viewed through two sets of indicators, a) functions, and b) Porter's value chain (Grant 1991). Christensen and Kaufman (2015) operationalized the concept of capability by unpacking it into three group of factors that define

what an organization can or cannot accomplish: resources, processes and priorities. Resources are the productive assets owned by the firm, and often classified n three principal types: tangible, intangible and human resource. Resources can be hired and fired, bought and sold, depreciated or built, flexible and transported across organizational boundaries. Processes are the patterns of decision making, communication, coordination and interaction through which firm transform resources to products, services or solution of greater worth, and emerge in response to specific recurrent tasks (Christensen & Overdorf 2000). When organizations grow and become more complex, the need to prioritise emerge because of limited resources available at the disposal of the firm. Unlike resources and processes which are enablers of capabilities, priority puts constraints.

In this paper, I address the critical aspects of key success factors with a view to protect, promote and develop resources and capabilities that will help firms to meet the key success factors and win in the market place. I develop dimensions of KSF and go about analysing the firms' internal factors and conclude with a practical approach to developing resources and capabilities that align to KSF. The conceptual framework is given in figure 1.

Figure 1 : A conceptual framework showing alignment of resources and capabilities with KSF
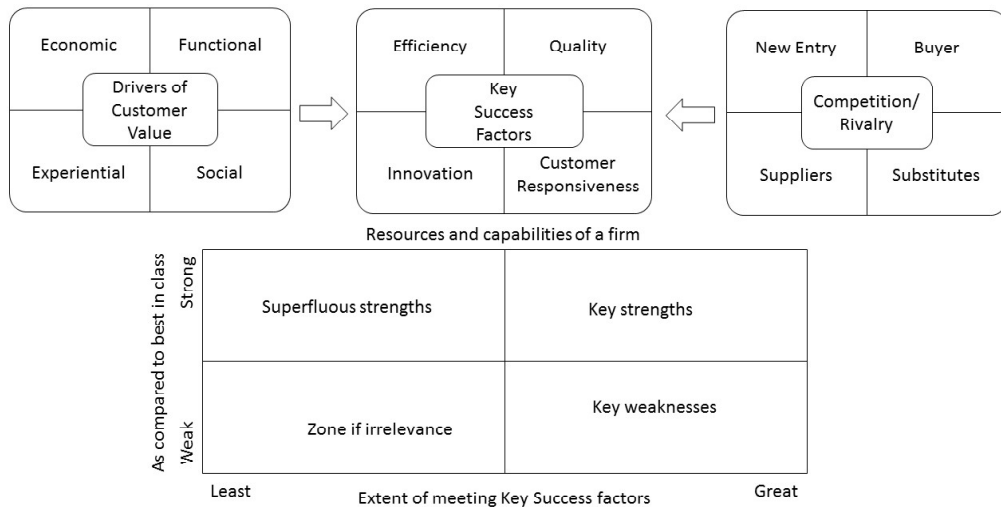
2. The anatomy of key success factors

To win in the market place a firm has to win over two constituents, a) customers and b) competitors (Lafley & Martin 2013). Therefore, the KSF need to reflect aspects associated with meeting customer expectations, and negotiating the competitive forces.

Winning over customer would mean meeting the customer expectations. Customer expectations are best met by understanding the sources of value for customers and building organizational capabilities to address the sources of customer value such as, a) economic value, functional value, c) experiential value and d) social value (Gupta 2014). The 1st source of value is economic value- when an offer provides tangible monetary savings either during the purchase or over its long-term use. For example LED bulbs or hybrid cars,

reduce the cost of owing these products. The 2nd source of customer value is functionality- customers are willing to pay a premium for fully featured products and service offerings, as opposed to a basic offer. For example Apple's iPhones are considered to be fully featured and come with premium prices. The next source of customer value is experiential value- intangible psychological or emotional value that can be derived from brand and great service. For example, in 1990, IBM's popular laser printer became a premium product with introduction of Laser Printer E, a lower cost alternative to its popular Laser Printer, with same functionality, but with a chip to reduce the printing speed. The 4th source of customer value is said to be social value- for example the value of Facebook comes from sharing information, pictures and videos with friends. Once the strategic apex understands the desired sources of

value, they can orient organizational capabilities accordingly. The foregoing discussion lead us to the question- what do customers want? This takes us to two questions- a) who are our customers?, and b) what do they want? For example, customers of steel expect low price, product consistency and reliability of supply for steel confirming to a particular specification. However, customers of fashion clothing are willing to pay premium price for exclusivity, style and brand.

Competitive forces are best understood through Porter's forces, and the power of macro- economic factors and complementors that have impact on a firm's value through impact on unit price, average cost, sales and cost of capital. For example, if powerful customers owing to high level of concentration are likely to bargain lower price, the firm needs to work on capability to maintain/ raise prices. Many a times, the only way to overcome such competitive force, may be by collaborating with customers- for example collaboration between airlines and aircraft engines through easy financing. The foregoing discussion lead us to the key question- how does a firm survive competition? That leads to four issues, a) drivers of competition, b) main dimensions of competition, c) intensity of competition, and d) ways and means to obtain a superior competitive position. For example in the steel industry, commodity products, excess capacity, high fixed cost, exit barriers, and substitute competition mean intense price competition and cyclical

profitability. Cost efficiency and financial strength are essential to survive competition. For fashion clothing, low barrier to entry and exit, low seller concentration, and buyer power of retailer chains imply intense competition. Differentiation offers and fast turnaround in categories are essential to survive competition.

3. Alignment of KSF with resources and capabilities

In a high velocity world associated with rapid changes in consumer tastes and preferences and dynamic competitive forces, possession of appropriate resources and capabilities become critical to a firms success. A resource or capability is appropriate or strategically important, if it is able to meet the KSF. For example, in steel industry, cost efficiency requires small-scale plants (based on arc-furnace) that can achieve low cost through flexibility and high productivity. Differentiation can be achieved through technical specification and service quality, which is evident for automobile grade steel, and high-speed-steel (used in manufacture of cutting tools). In fashion clothing, cost efficiency requires manufacturing in low wage nations and differentiation is based on style, reputation, quality and speed of response to changing fashions. Based on the understanding of KSF and resources and capabilities that become necessary to meet the KSF, a firm can focus on development of the appropriate resources and capabilities. Thus, the strategic apex in a firm understand the view of key strengths- resources and

capabilities that are high on strategic importance and high on relative strengths. It would also help in understanding key weaknesses- resources and capabilities that are high on strategic importance but low on relative strengths. When a set of resources/ capabilities fall out of the strategic importance zone, it would signal the strategic apex for not wasting time and money on these resources/ capabilities.

4. A practical approach to develop resources and capabilities aligned to KSF

The assessment of KSF would appear to be very qualitative and subject to bounded rationality bias. I have found the four generic factor based KSF- efficiency, quality, innovation and customer responsiveness, to be very useful in bringing objectivity to the assessment of KSF. A brainstorming at function/ sub-function level would generate meaningful ideas on each of these four parameters for further refinement. For example a group of frontline sales persons came up with ideas to raise efficiency by cross-selling and time management. Similarly a R&D team came up with innovation resulting in substantial reduction in number of part to assemble washing machine, thereby improving cost efficiency. A manufacturer of standing-wheelchair, automated interaction between the design team, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and existing/ potential user over an internet platform to speed up the product development process, which resulted in fast product acceptance.

With assessment of KSF in the four dimensions, identification of tangible, intangible and human resources for development become very objective. For example, the standing wheelchair manufacturer identified the significance of reputation in western markets to build the overall brand without using mass media and through exhibitions, workshops and by managing the point of sale communication mix. Similarly, capability of efficient management of logistics emerged from the assessment of efficiency for the standing wheelchair manufacturer.

The final aspect concerning alignment of KSF with resources and capability is to gain insights in to the process of building resources and capabilities that would help a firm to achieve competitive advantage and sustain the same. The first step is to validate the relevance of the resources and capabilities. The relevance comes from meeting the KSF. Second, the resources and capabilities need to be relatively strong as compared with key rivals in the industry. Relevant and strong resources and capabilities help a firm to achieve competitive advantage Third, to sustain advantage by deploying relevant and strong resources and capabilities. To sustain advantage, the resource and capabilities must be durable and imperfectly imitable. Capabilities in particular become imperfectly imitable, when they emerge from complex processes. I give below a few established approached to developing key strengths:

• Acquire and develop the underlying resources, Especially human

resources: Externally (hiring), Internally through developing individual skills

- Acquire/access capabilities externally through acquisition or alliance

- Greenfield development of capabilities in separate organizational unit (IBM & the PC, Xerox & PARC, GM & Saturn)

- Align structure & systems with required capabilities

- Change management to transform values and behaviors (GE, BP)

- Product sequencing (Intel , Sony, Hyundai)

- Leveraging on Core Competencies/ distinctive competencies

- Knowledge Management (systematic approaches to acquiring, storing, replicating, and accessing knowledge)

- Build team-based capabilities through training and team development (i.e. develop *organizational routines*)

5. Conclusion

An objective assessment of the customer value drivers and drivers of competition would enable strategic decision makers to develop a profile of key success factors. These key success factors can be the guiding force to create a portfolio of advantages capturing strategically relevant and strong resources and capabilities that can be built quickly and abandoned just as rapidly, considering the volatility in the industry, to win in the market place. The approach would assist managers to integrate analysis of the external analysis and internal analysis through key success factors to build relevant and strong resources and capabilities to win in the turbulent market place.

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ONLINE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Ankita Agarwal

Research Scholar, School of Management, KIIT University
Bhubaneswar, India – 751024;
ankita.agarwal7000@gmail.com

Abstract

With key developments in global e-commerce, online shopping behavior has become a keen area of interest amongst researchers. Understanding why online shoppers behave the way they do is now gaining importance not only among marketers, but also among various other stakeholders such as academicians, researchers, companies, retailers, and the like. As there are many factors that affect consumers' online shopping behavior making the scope of research in this area quite vast, this paper takes a detailed approach of only one factor i.e. online customer experience and examines how it plays a role in shaping consumers' online shopping behavior as well as its implications for online retailers. In the words of Jeff Bezoz (1999), "creating compelling online experiences for cyber customers is the key to competitive advantage on the internet". Many other researchers across the globe have also highlighted the important role that online customer experience plays in effecting online purchases and shaping consumer behavior. Keeping this in mind, this present paper presents an in-depth analysis of relevant existing literature pertaining to online customer experience.

Key Words: *Online shopping, online shopping behavior, online customer experience, online shopping experience, online buying behavior, online customer satisfaction*

Introduction

With global e-commerce continuing to grow by leaps and bounds, online retailers are making every effort to keep up with the pace. A recent report by eMarketer projects global e-commerce sales to grow by more than 141% between 2016 and 2021. As online shopper behavior changes fuelled by factors such as urbanization, changing demographics and advances in technology, focus on continuous innovation has become the topmost priority of online retailers.

One of the key areas of research with respect to online shopping behavior has been to understand the factors that play a role in shaping consumer decisions to purchase online. Previous research work in this area has highlighted a variety of factors such as vendor characteristics, behavioural attributes, product attributes, website attributes, online shopping experience and so on. For this

paper however, only one factor i.e. online customer experience has been explored in detail.

This paper attempts: (1) to understand the role that online customer experience plays in the decision-making process and of online shoppers and online retailers as well as its role in customer satisfaction, based on existing literature, and (2) identify possibilities for further research areas related to this topic.

In order to conduct a thorough search and identify the most relevant studies related to this area, a number of online databases were accessed online. Databases accessed for this study include EBSCO, Emerald and ProQuest. The keywords used while searching these databases were online shopping, online consumer behavior, online buying behavior, online customer experience, online website attributes, and online customer satisfaction. Then the most relevant 100 articles from the results were identified for the literature review. The time period for the literature review is from 2000 to December 2016.

Online Shopping Experience

Online shopping experience as a topic of research has been explored from multiple viewpoints by a number of researchers as seen in the literature review below:

Hoffman & Novak (2000) came up with a conceptual model of customer experience in online environments. Apart from representing general customer experience in online environments, their model also provides more rigorous operational definitions of key model constructs than existed previously. It also provides a mechanism for determining whether and how model constructs relate to external marketing variables such as product information search and online shopping behaviours that are relevant to the commercial online environment. The methodology used in the paper makes use of a test of Hoffman & Novak's (1996) conceptual model and further refines the previous theoretical model using a quantitative modeling framework. The results of the study indicated that website design must be challenging enough for the consumer to be aroused, but should not be such that it leads to a frustrated consumer who decides to log off.

Janda & Ybarra (2005) explored the relationship between two constructs – online shopping experience and customer satisfaction. A survey was carried out using quota sampling method and a total of 177 usable responses were gathered. Then the authors used confirmatory factor analysis and multi-group analyses using the LISREL 8 software for data analysis. Their findings suggest that online shoppers satisfaction is strongly affected by a superior online experience if they have no prior experience with the purchased brand, are purchasing a high priced product, and their general attitudes towards online shopping are not very favourable. Also the relationship between online experience and satisfaction was found to be stronger for females as compared to males.

Soopramanien (2011) studied attitude formation in customers towards online shopping when both the benefits and risks of using the internet to do shopping are considered. The author has also examined the role of experience in the context of consumer's intention to shop online. The findings of the study indicate that the intention to use the internet for online shopping is impacted negatively in some consumers due to a conflict between the risks and benefits of using online shopping. The author has also highlighted that online shopping experience lessens consumers' scepticism about using the internet to buy products. Experienced online shoppers are able to judge the benefits and risks of shopping online in a better way as compared to late adopters of online shopping. Hence, the study posits that more experienced consumers are less likely to be sceptical about using online shopping and are also more likely to embrace shopping through the internet. The author has suggested that future research could focus on exploring if specific shopping activities online differ between different groups of consumers.

Amialchuk and Taylor (2011) in their study, identified various categories of online shopping experiences as well as website features and functions that enabled the experiences. They also investigated how these experiences affected browser satisfaction, conversion and online store performance. They came up with a conceptual model showing the role of customer online shopping experiences and how they are linked with online retail performance (measured in terms of online sales, monthly visits, and monthly unique visitors). Based on existing literature, the authors classified customer experiences into five dimensions: sensory, cognitive, emotional, pragmatic and relational. Data collection was done in two phases. First, through an online survey of 214 students in two US universities and then through secondary data related to 115 retailers, collected from two sources- The Internet Retailer Top 500 Annual Directories for 2006, 2007 and 2008, and the ForeSee Results browser satisfaction annual index for the same years. Analysis was done using exploratory factor analysis and data-based regressions (ordinary least squares regression and Instrumental Variable regression using STATA 2007 statistical software package). The results of the study confirmed the existence of the five dimensions of customer experiences and also suggested a new type of online shopping experience termed as interactive/engagement. It refers to the involvement of customers with the online store as well as other friends/shoppers via the online store interface. The study further verifies the mediating role of browser satisfaction in increasing sales and traffic to online stores. The authors suggest that future research can be carried out with a focus on other online customer experiences apart from website features and functions, such as order fulfilment, customer service, shipping and returns, etc. Post-purchase experiences, drivers and consequences of browser dissatisfaction with online retailers can also be studied.

Hsu, Chang & Chen (2012) examined the moderating role of consumer characteristics (trust propensity, willingness to buy and self-confidence) on the relationship between flow experience and internet shopping experience. Their results show that flow experience is significantly and positively related to internet shopping behaviour and the relationship between them is moderated by consumer characteristics. When the extent of a customer's trust propensity, willingness to buy, or self-confidence is relatively high, the influence of flow experience on internet shopping behaviours is maximized.

Rose, Clark, Samouel and Hair (2012) explored the concept of online customer experience by empirically testing a model of the relationship between antecedents and outcomes of online customer experience (OCE). Interactive speed, telepresence, challenge and skill were identified as the four antecedents of the cognitive experiential state (CES) and ease of use, customization, connectedness, aesthetics and perceived benefits were identified as the antecedents of the affective experiential state (AES). The authors proposed that perceived control has a mediating effect on three variables: ease of use, customization and connectedness. Further, the authors hypothesize that a relationship exists between the CES and AES components of OCE. The study identified satisfaction, trust and repurchase intention as the behavioural outcomes of OCE. Data collection for the study was done using a web-based questionnaire distributed to a sampling frame consisting of online shoppers located in the USA and Europe. Out of the total responses received, 220 questionnaires were found to be of use. The results of the study support the proposed model and its hypothesized relationships. The findings confirm that the three variables; ease of use, customization and connectedness directly impact the levels of perceived control. The findings also indicate that CES and AES do not directly influence repurchase intention but rather customer satisfaction is an important mediator between them. On the whole, the study confirms a measurement scale for the antecedents, components and consequences of OCE. The authors suggest testing the OCE model further in different contexts and across various e-retailing situations in order to yield more valuable insights.

Jiang, Yang and Jun (2013) examined the construct of online shopping convenience in the B2C e-commerce context and came up with five key dimensions of online shopping convenience: access, search, evaluation, transaction and possession/post-purchase convenience. The study was carried out using a two-stage approach wherein data was collected through in-depth focus group interviews as well as a web based questionnaire survey. The focus group interviews were carried out in collaboration with the largest supermarket retailer in Hong Kong city. The online questionnaire survey was also put up on the same supermarket's official website. 623 responses were received from consumers out of which 550 were considered usable. Data analysis revealed that each of the five key

dimensions of online shopping convenience had a significant and positive effect on the overall levels of customers' perceived online shopping convenience. With respect to search convenience, the results of the study revealed that search inconvenience was regarded as a major obstacle to convenient and efficient online shopping by consumers. The authors grouped the issues associated with search convenience into four major categories: download speed, website design, search function and product classification. With respect to evaluation convenience, the authors have stressed on the sensitivity of online shoppers and the effectiveness of a customer review system towards the same. As far as transaction convenience is concerned, the authors emphasize the need for simple and convenient online payment methods. The authors further highlight the importance of product returns convenience as identified from the dimension of possession/post-purchase convenience. The overall results of the study indicate that online shopping convenience is positively correlated with behavioural intentions. The authors suggest that further research could focus on studying more diversified company types and service industries as this particular study has taken only one major brick-and-click retailer into consideration. The authors also suggest using a longitudinal research method to investigate the evolutionary processes of changing customer perceptions of online shopping convenience.

Pateli, Giannakos and Chrissikopoulos (2014) examined the relationships between satisfaction and repurchase intention along with the moderating effects of shopping experience on these relationships. The authors developed an empirical **model** and tested the same using Structural Equation Modelling and multi-group analysis methods. The research model portrayed the moderating effect of experience on the relationships of effort expectancy, performance expectancy, self-efficacy, trust with satisfaction and satisfaction with intention to repurchase. According to Venkatesh et al., 2003, effect expectancy refers to customers' perspective that online shopping is free of effort and performance expectancy refers to the degree to which customers believe that online shopping improves their transaction experience and affects their future intentions. Self-efficacy as defined by Taylor and Todd (1995) refers to the capability to perform a task. They were of the view that online shopping and its marketing depends highly on customer's experience. The study explores online shopping behaviour keeping in mind both high and low-experienced customers. Data collection was done through distribution of a questionnaire, through various places such as universities and public areas as well as direct mails. The survey was mainly directed at those who had made at least one online purchase in the past six months. Out of 433 responses, 393 were found to be fit for analysis. Multi-group analysis was then carried out

using standard SEM software AMOS Version 18.0 software. The findings of the study indicated that there was no significant difference between low and high-experienced users for the impact of self-efficacy, trust and effort expectancy on satisfaction. The results also suggested that online users who were more experienced were more satisfied with their online purchases. The authors suggest that further research can include non-experienced online customers in order to identify mechanisms for attracting new online customers.

Bilgihan, Kandampully and Zhang (2015) developed a theoretical **model** depicting a unified customer experience in online environments by gaining an understanding of the key antecedents and outcomes of the same. The study was based on existing literature. The authors identified easiness to locate, ease of use, hedonic features, utilitarian features, usability, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment and social interactions as the key antecedents of the unified online customer experience. Repeat purchase, WOM, e-WOM and brand engagement were identified as the outcomes of online customer experience. The authors suggest that digital ecosystem interactions could be a topic of future research. The authors also indicate that future studies may focus on understanding how devices such as iPads and smartphones influence online customer experience. The present study has focused only on identifying the antecedents and outcomes of unified customer experience. So future research may also focus on empirically testing the same. Besides these, the authors have also pointed out further areas of research such as the social aspect of e-commerce, mobile security concerns, game console commerce, social interaction designs, generational and cultural differences in e-commerce.

Mallapragada, Chandukala & Liu (2016) investigated how key outcomes of an online purchase experience – purchase decision and amount of money spent (basket value) might depend on the browsing characteristics (no. of pages viewed and time spent browsing) and the characteristics of both the product category being shopped (i.e. the what) and the online retailer's website (i.e. the where). The results support the assertions that contextual factors are associated with online browsing. For eg., regarding the main effects of product characteristics on basket value, online retailers should pay greater attention to the degree of hedonic/utilitarian characteristics of the products they carry.

Discussion

The studies made by Soopramanien (2011) and Pateli et al. (2014) are somewhat similar as both have focused on the experience of online shoppers. While Soopramanien (2011) highlights that experienced shoppers are less likely to be skeptical about using online shopping and are more likely to embrace shopping on the internet, Pateli et al. (2014) came to the conclusion that more experienced online users were more

satisfied with their online purchases. Both the studies have put focus on the moderating role of online shopping experience in shaping satisfaction and purchase/re-purchase intention. Another study by Janda and Ybarra (2005) can also be considered parallel to the previously mentioned studies as it also highlights the relationship between online shopping experience and customer satisfaction. Janda and Ybarra (2005) emphasized through their findings that the relationship between online shopping experience and customer satisfaction was found to be stronger for females as compared to males. So, this study mainly explored the demographic aspect.

Online shopping experience was also explored through other aspects such as online retail performance and online shopping convenience. The study by Amialchuk and Taylor (2011) puts forth five dimensions of online customer experience – sensory, cognitive, emotional, pragmatic and relational. Whereas the study by Jiang, Yang and Jun (2013) highlights the five key dimensions of online shopping convenience – access, search, evaluation, transaction and possession/post-purchase convenience. Amialchuk and Taylor (2011) further the effect of online shopping experience on online retail performance (defined by key dimensions such as online sales, monthly visits and monthly unique visitors). They also discovered a new type of online shopping experience namely interactive/engagement. On the other hand, Jiang et al. (2013) posited that

search inconvenience was regarded as a major obstacle to convenient and efficient online shopping by consumers.

The studies by Rose et al. (2012) and Bilgihan et al. (2015) further explored other aspects of online shopping experience. Rose et al. (2012) while studying the relationships between antecedents and outcomes of online customer experience (OCE) highlighted that interactive speed, telepresence, challenge and skill were the antecedents of cognitive experiential state (CES) and; ease of use, customization, connectedness, aesthetics and perceived benefits were identified as the antecedents of affective experiential state (AES). Bilgihan et al. (2015) posited that the antecedents of unified customer experience in online environments were easiness to locate, ease of use, hedonic features, utilitarian features, usability, perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, perceived enjoyment and social interactions. Both the mentioned studies can also be considered similar as both have thrown light on the outcomes of online customer experience. While Rose et al. (2012) mention satisfaction, trust and repurchase intentions as the behavioural outcomes of online customer experience; Bilgihan et al. (2015) mention repeat purchase, WOM, e-WOM and brand engagement as the outcomes of online customer experience.

Online shopping experience has been studied in a different dimension by Hsu et al. (2012). They threw light on the aspect of "flow experience" and studied the moderating role of consumer

characteristics (trust, propensity, willingness to buy and self-confidence) on the relationship between flow experience and online shopping experience.

Thus, online shopping experience has been explored through different dimensions by various researchers. Aspects such as purchase intention, satisfaction, online retail performance, consumer characteristics, flow experience, antecedents and outcomes of online shopping experience, online convenience and unified online customer experience have been studied in detail.

Major gaps

From the literature review, certain gaps have been identified. Firstly, multi-channel effects of online shopping experiences have not been studied. Secondly, though "flow" has been studied in detail (Hoffman & Novak,1996; Hsu,Chang & Chen, 2012), other antecedents of online shopping behavior have not been explored in detail. Thirdly, most of the studies have been carried out in countries across the globe. There are hardly any studies focusing on online shopping experience and consumer characteristics of consumers in India. Also, non-experienced online shoppers have not been explored in detail. It has also been found that multi-device and multi-channel usage of online shopping has not been considered in existing studies in detail. Most of the existing studies have put focus on only a few specific product characteristics and consumer characteristics. There is a need for more in-depth coverage and research pertaining to product characteristics as well as consumer characteristics.

Conclusion

From the above research, it has been found that extensive research on online shopping experience has been carried out with focus on a variety of factors such as customer satisfaction, attitude formation, purchase intention, role of website features and functions, flow experience, online shopping convenience, and unified customer experience to name a few. Yet, there is scope for further research in this area. Future studies can focus on exploring behavioural influences on online customer experience. Also, the role of situational involvement is an unexplored area. Further, various demographic variables and more focus on understanding online shopping experience in growing age groups/ cohorts such as Generation Z. There is also scope to study how specific shopping activities online differ between different customer groups. Future researchers can further explore online customer experience across a variety of geographies and retail situations. Carrying out longitudinal research in this area could also be a further research opportunity. Thus, online shopping experience as a topic of research definitely still has a lot of unexplored avenues and will continue to be an interesting area for future researchers.

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