

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGIES: ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS



<https://doi.org/10.56238/arev7n2-147>

Submitted on: 01/12/2025

Publication date: 02/12/2025

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ABSTRACT

Understanding customer experience as a differentiation strategy in an increasingly competitive market for organizations, the business discipline of Customer Experience (CX) has proven to be indispensable. In parallel, the effective integration of Knowledge Management (KM) can serve as a potent catalyst to enhance CX strategies, providing a robust framework for the collection, analysis, and implementation of valuable insights derived from interaction with customers. The objective of this work is to analyze the critical factors for the success of CX strategies, integrating KM practices to improve efficiency and innovation in these strategies, through a qualitative research of exploratory and descriptive nature, using a Systematic Review of the Literature (RSL). The research carried out resulted in the definition of 7 critical factors as responsible for CX success, demonstrating that the incorporation of KM practices can enrich the customer experience by promoting a deeper understanding of customer needs and preferences. And, finally, they can help companies and researchers in the area of management and business as a basis for future studies, creating a synergy between CX and GC that can lead to significant innovations in the field.

Keywords: Customer Experience. CX. Management and Business. Customer Loyalty.

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INTRODUCTION

Companies that have a loyal customer base making recurring purchases, in addition to their own positive impact on sales, also have other benefits such as: reduced advertising and marketing costs, increased steady profit stream, and reduced operating costs (BYUN and JANG, 2019; CHEN and CHEN, 2010; CHUA et al., 2017; KIM et al., 2014; REICHHELD and TEAL, 1996).

Considering the continuous increase in competition, presenting alternatives in products and services, it is essential to retain existing customers through investments in *customer experience* (CX), which has been gaining prominence, but still without much data to measure and prove the results obtained (GONZÁLEZ-HERNÁNDEZ and OROZCO-GOMEZ, 2012; KIM et al., 2016).

Knowledge management (KM) has emerged as an essential tool for organizations looking to optimize their strategies and secure a competitive advantage in the market. In particular, customer experience (CX) is an area that can benefit significantly from effective KM implementation. According to GONCALVES (2022), digital transformations are redefining customer experience management in organizations, and KM acts as a catalyst in this evolutionary process, helping companies to rethink the creation and delivery of value to their customers, not only based on technologies, but on knowledge management strategies.

Integrating KM into CX strategy allows organizations to better understand their customers' needs and expectations, optimize business processes, and innovate more effectively. In addition, the study by JADAANHAMMAD; AL-KUBAISY (2020) highlights that the adoption of knowledge management strategies can significantly improve the customer experience, becoming a critical success factor for organizations. Therefore, it is imperative for organizations to recognize the crucial role of KM in building and implementing successful CX strategies.

The article aims to analyze the needs and critical factors for the success of Customer Experience in companies, in order to guide entrepreneurs in the formation of Customer Experience strategies. In addition, the question that guides this research: "Do technology companies have difficulty implementing customer experience strategies?"

In Brazil, the topic is still little studied, with only one representative in the international Customer Experience Professional Association (CXPA) who is currently the one who provides guidance on the subject. However, no more specific work was found with

guides or good practices for the implementation of CX strategies in organizations, thus configuring a gap for the present research.

This work was organized as follows: after a brief introduction of this section 1, a review of the literature is presented in section 2. Also, in section 3, the research methodology applied in the work is described. In section 4, the analysis of the results is shown and finally, in the last section, the final considerations of the research are exposed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE RESEARCH IN QUESTION

Knowledge Management (KM) has been recognized as an essential strategic tool for organizations seeking innovation, efficiency, and competitive advantage. In the context of the article provided, which focuses on customer experience and marketing analytics, KM can play a crucial role in optimizing Customer Experience (CX).

The relevance of KM processes in implementing CX strategies is multifaceted. Firstly, KM enables organizations to capture, store, and analyze customer feedback in a systematic manner, making it easier to identify emerging patterns and trends (FROM BIRTH; DE OLIVEIRA, 2022). This analytical capacity can be fundamental to identify opportunities for improvement in the customer experience and to develop innovative solutions.

In addition, the prior adoption of KM practices can bring significant gains to organizations. For example, the effective integration of KM with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategies can enhance the performance of companies, allowing a deeper understanding of customer needs and preferences (ZANARIA; FURINTO, 2022).

However, the adoption of KM is not without barriers. Organizational resistance, lack of knowledge-sharing culture, and technological limitations can be obstacles to effective KM implementation (COLETI et al, 2022).

KM can be seen as a possible critical success factor in building CX strategies. The ability to effectively manage knowledge can not only enhance the customer experience but also promote innovation and sustainability in organizations.

CX: ITS ROLE IN COMPANIES AND APPLICATION STRATEGIES

According to HOLMLUND (2020), customer experience (CX), defined as the customer's response to interactions with an organization before, during, or after purchase or consumption, through various channels and over time, has stood out as a sustainable source of competitive differentiation. Organizations often seek to portray and manage the customer experience through the customer journey, which involves a variety of touchpoints representing direct or indirect interactions that the customer has with the organization. When it comes to CX, we consider all the interactions that the consumer has with the company and its products, covering different aspects, such as rational, sensory, physical, and even spiritual (GENTILE et al., 2007).

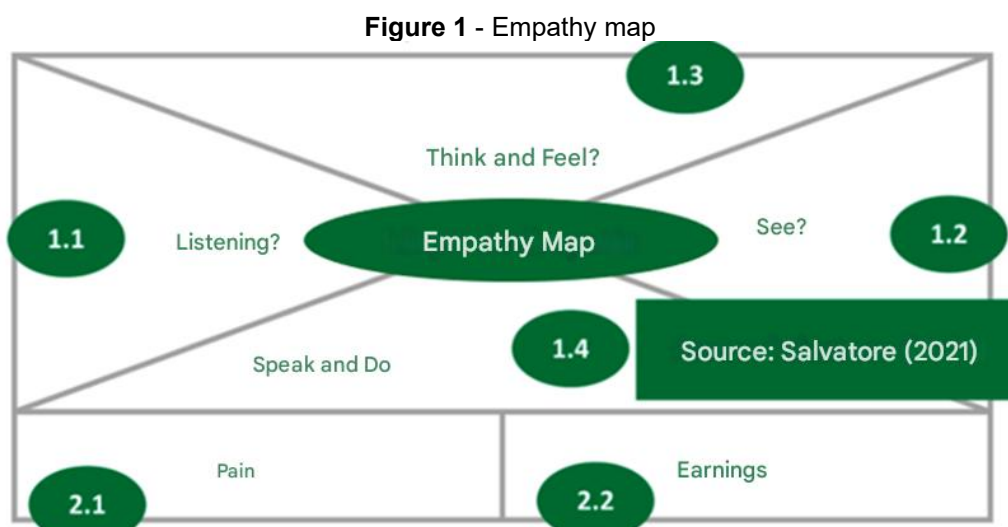
Several authors present different definitions on the subject of customer experience, however, in essence, it can be categorized as direct, when it occurs through a purchase or use of a product or service, being mainly initiated by the customer himself. On the other hand, it can be considered indirect when it occurs through unplanned meetings with company representatives or other forms of exposure to products, brands or services, eventually resulting in customer recommendations or indications, complaints, advertising or reports (MEYER et al., 2007). Shaw (2005) argues that customer experience arises from the combination of the company's actual physical performance and the feelings that are aroused during each interaction.

As mentioned by González (2012), customer loyalty is extremely important for all companies. In this sense, the focus on improving the customer experience is becoming increasingly relevant, aiming to create brand loyalty and establish a sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, it is essential to monitor all the points of contact that customers have with the company, taking into account the different stages of the customer life cycle (MENACHEM, 2015).

According to Gupta (2021), adopting a customer-focused approach brings a number of advantages and implies understanding customers in a personalized way and on an individual level. In this way, companies are able to assess their future profitability, as well as financial indicators related to costs, expenses, and revenues. Additionally, this approach provides the opportunity to personalize marketing strategies and enhance the accuracy of communications.

The study conducted by Salvatore (2021) discusses the relevance of analyzing the quadrants present in the empathy map, a tool that allows applicators to develop the ability

to understand their target audience more deeply, resulting in the creation of a persona. Salvatore uses the Empathy Map to identify different profiles within the context of the business, as illustrated in Figure 1.



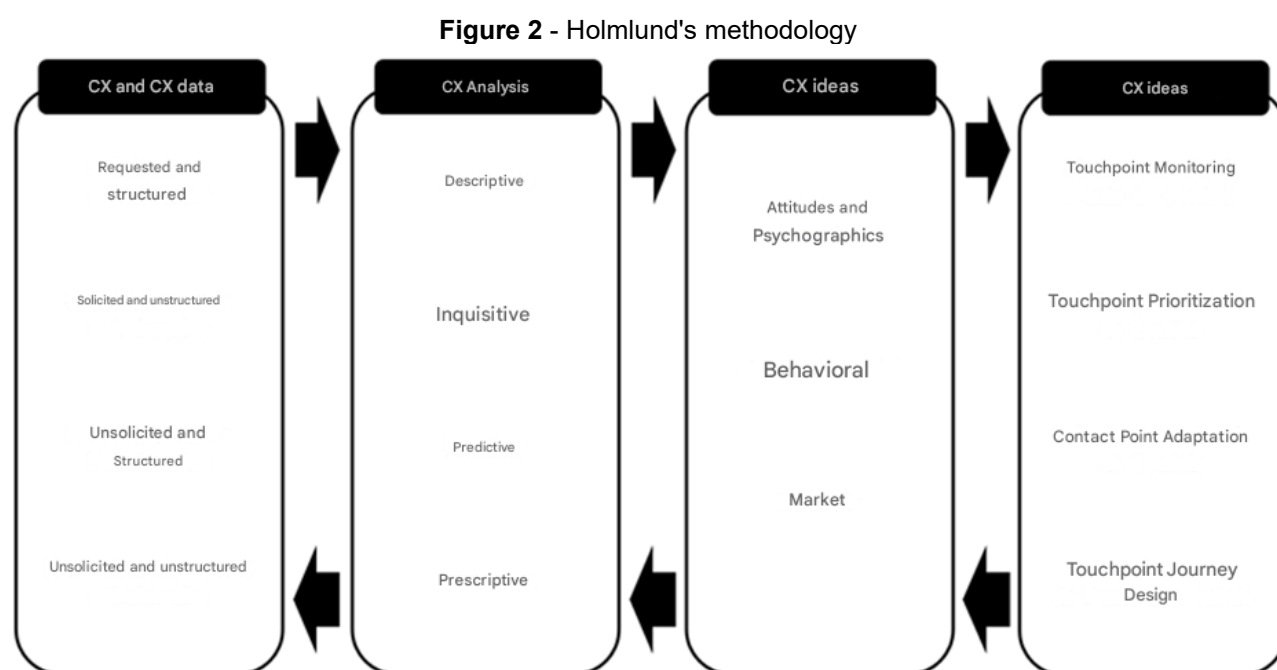
Source: adapted from Salvatore (2021)

In figure 1, there is a quadrant with six divisions, four of which (1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4) focus on the user's perceptions in terms of what he thinks, feels, hears, sees, speaks and does. The second part (2.1 and 2.2) focuses on the results that these insights can bring. For example, with regard to what the customer hears (1.1), their perceptions, external influences, and rumors to which they have access are considered. When we refer to what he sees (1.2), we are more focused on the facts and his observations. In item 1.3, we analyze what the customer thinks and feels, where we can identify their thoughts, concerns, and aspirations. In item 1.4, in relation to what the customer says and does, we must consider their attitudes, behaviors and form of communication.

This methodology can be applied to analyze the social concept of empathy (STUEBER, 2013), allowing the systematic collection of information in an organized way. This results in a deep understanding of the real problems, preferences, needs, and expectations of stakeholders, referred to as the target audience. According to Ferreira et al. (2015), it is possible to create different types and levels of personas in detail using the empathy map as a tool.

Holmlund's methodology

The approach proposed by Holmlund (2020) uses the combination of big data analysis and customer experience management, exploring the possibilities that these two areas offer to companies. This can be clearly seen in Figure 2.



Source: adapted from Holmlund (2020)

In Figure 2, the presence of four distinct segments in the model developed by Holmlund (2020) is evident. Through the analysis of Customer Experience (CX) data, the insights obtained can direct actions at both the strategic and cultural levels. Initially, the focus falls on actions of an operational nature, progressively evolving to cover strategic levels and, consequently, promote a transformation in the organizational culture. Additionally, companies can use CX insights to guide actions related to monitoring, prioritizing, adapting and designing the customer journey.

CX and CX Data

Information is widely dispersed and available at all times when customers interact with the company or access products and services. This data can be organized in a structured way, providing accurate and easy-to-understand information, or it can be unstructured, requiring processing to obtain deeper insights (BALDUCCI AND MARINOVA,

2018). Zaki (2019) adds that the data may or may not be requested by the company from the customer.

The requested and structured data is obtained through customer feedback requests, such as customer satisfaction surveys (CSAT) or loyalty measurements through the Net Promoter Score (NPS) (VÉLEZ, 2020). This data is easily collected and has a lower fixed cost, although the variable cost can be high if it relies on vendors to perform the work.

Solicited and unstructured data, on the other hand, is present in open-ended questions, customer interviews, or even focus groups. The analysis of this type of data is more complex, as it requires skills to extract information from customer interactions. However, if done manually, the ability to scale this information is lost. An alternative is to automate this process through text mining.

Structured, unsolicited data can originate from the rating that customers assign to the company on independent platforms. They can be tracked and captured by the company through web scraping, which implies an increase in fixed costs. In addition, they can be acquired through counting devices, Google Analytics, cookies and other tools available in the digital environment. According to Wedel and Kannan (2016), this data can also be collected through the use of the Internet of Things in devices used by people, which have identification sensors.

Unsolicited and unstructured data is present in videos, written emails, social media interactions, and various other forms of online analytics. The author also points out that many public spaces equipped with surveillance cameras can provide a large amount of data, but this entails a high fixed cost.

CX Analytics

According to Sivarajah (2017), the data collected in the previous step and Big Data analysis can be classified into four main types: descriptive, inquisitive, predictive, and prescriptive.

Descriptive Big Data provides information about events and facts, answering the question "What happened?" and describing the situation for further analysis. It enables organizations to understand customer experience patterns based on past events.

Inquisitive Big Data aims to analyze root causes and answer the question "Why did things happen?". Its intent is to validate or reject different deals or research hypotheses.

On the other hand, predictive Big Data aims to predict future events, analyze trends, and identify new opportunities. It is based on the question "What could happen?" and involves using tools and methods to predict future trends and possibilities. It offers insights into what might occur in the customer experience.

Finally, prescriptive Big Data is focused on providing proposals for actions to solve problems and enhance the customer experience. Your guiding question is "What should happen or what is the best action or outcome?"

CX Ideas

Perceptions or ideas focused on Customer Experience can be categorized considering the customer's attitudes and behaviors, taking into account both their individual perception and the market context in which the company is inserted.

According to Bottomley and Doyle (1996), customers' attitudes towards experiences are influenced by their current and past interactions, and by the experiences reported by others. In turn, psychographic insights are directly related to clients' thoughts and feelings, involving the temporary mental states that clients adopt when relating to their experiences. These insights are associated with the level of customer satisfaction and effort.

Behavioral insights, on the other hand, are related to the actions of customers and the decisions they make throughout their journey. Finally, market insights assist organizations in evaluating and monitoring the performance of their Customer Experience relative to the competition, as well as in understanding the overall brand and trends that may impact the business.

Use of CX Ideas

The framework proposed by Holmlund (2017) was developed for organizations that operate in data-intensive environments and are relatively new to BDA (Business Data Analytics) and CXM (Customer Experience Management). Therefore, the focus is on actions that can improve the customer experience through the insights obtained. Based on previous CXM concepts (HOMBURG et al., 2017), the author suggests that organizations should use this framework to build a dynamic system of actions related to the customer experience, involving the monitoring of touchpoints, prioritization, adaptation, and design of the customer journey.

The first three CX actions are directly related to the customer's touchpoint with the company: monitoring, prioritization, and adaptation, while the last type of CX action is more strategic and long-term. Touchpoint journey monitoring is the foundation for identifying the performance of touchpoints.

Organizations can utilize CX insights to coordinate and represent a broad collection of touchpoint-specific performance indicators, prevent premature failures, minimize downtime, increase operator efficiency, reduce repair costs, and recommend solutions. Prioritization is related to the management of financial, technical, and human resources to direct the development and modification of single points of contact in the short term.

Touchpoint adaptation aims to proactively generate concrete suggestions to develop and modify customer touchpoints. And the design of the journey touchpoints uses CX insights to suggest changes to the business plan, the business model based on the data collected throughout the framework, as well as to communicate clear requirements across the product and service provided. In this stage, there is the greatest possibility of carrying out a radical innovation, while in the earlier phases it is more common to obtain incremental innovations.

Net Promoter Score

One way to assess the degree of customer loyalty is through NPS, a metric developed by Reichheld (2011) that analyzes customer loyalty. The research methodology involves asking customers of a specific company the following question: "On a scale of 0 to 10, how much would you recommend this company to a colleague or family member?"

Based on the score, it is possible to identify whether the customer is a detractor, neutral or promoter. Those who give a score of up to 6 are considered detractors, those who respond with 7 or 8 are considered neutral, and those who give a score of 9 or 10 are considered promoters. After this analysis, just subtract the percentage of promoters by the percentage of detractors. If the result is between 50 and 75 points, the company can be classified in the NPS quality zone. If the score is above 75, the company can be considered to be in the NPS excellence zone, indicating a large loyal customer base.

A study conducted by Guimarães (2020) on a company that manages credit cards, analyzing the 24-month history (2019 and 2020) of NPS surveys with 8,729 customers, revealed that a promoter customer generates 17% higher revenue compared to a detractor customer.

METHODOLOGY

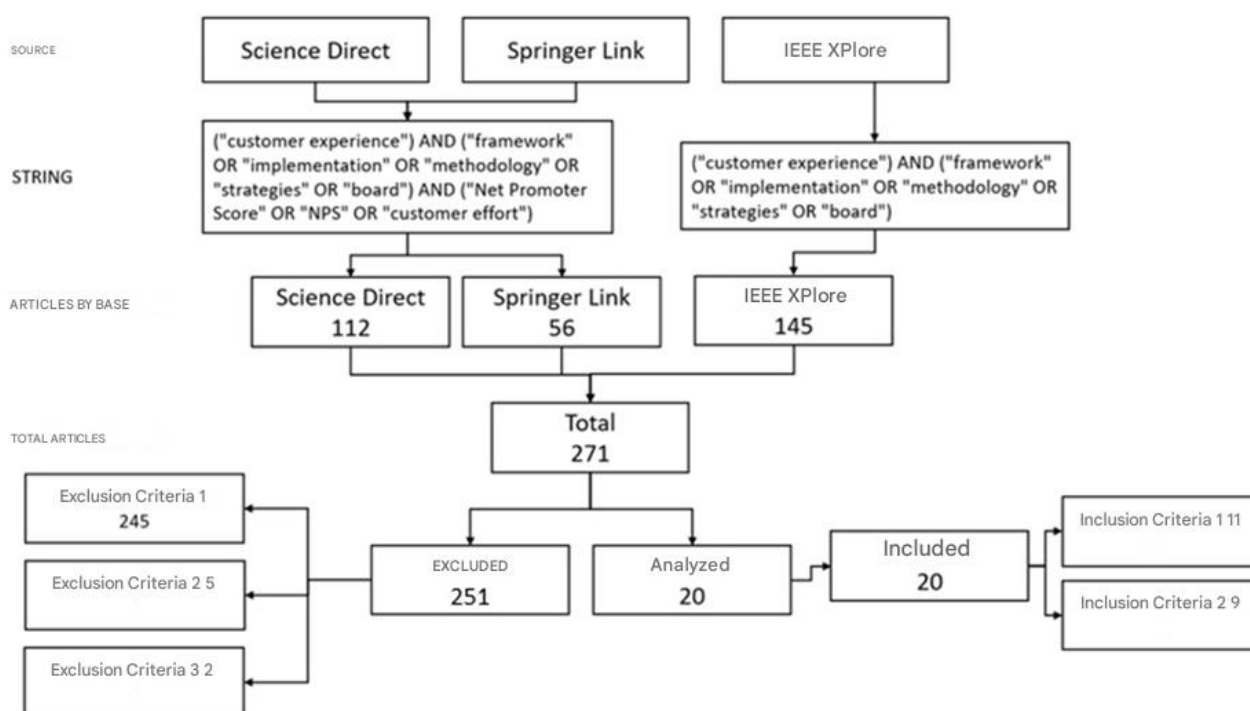
This research is classified as a qualitative approach and of an exploratory and descriptive nature, using a Systematic Review of the Literature (RSL).

Data were collected, analyzed and interpreted in order to achieve the following objective: to analyze the needs and critical factors for the success of Customer Experience in micro and small companies.

The systematic review of the literature (RSL) followed the indications of Budgen and Brereton (2006) and was divided into planning (identification, selection and evaluation of studies), conduction (investigation, inclusion and exclusion criteria and refinement of studies) and report (communication and dissemination of the RSL).

The analysis was carried out through articles found in 3 different academic collections (IEEE Xplore, Science Direct and Springer Link), considering as population the universe of companies focused on customer experience strategies, for the intervention the objective was to identify the main existing tools such as frameworks, methods, methodologies, metrics and good CX practices, For the analysis of the comparison, the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies were identified; good practices and critical success factors, resulting in the identification of the best strategies used.

Figure 3 - RSL design



Source: authorship

This research was not restricted by the date of publication of the articles studied, because it is a current theme, the research object "Customer Experience" itself already makes the research restrictive because it only gained notoriety in the 2000s, bringing the importance of the value generated in the work carried out jointly by companies and consumers (WAQAS, 2021).

In the refinement of the research, primary research written in English was initially considered. In addition, using the inclusion criteria, only methodologies focused on the application and measurement of customer experience strategies were selected. In the exclusion criterion, the studies removed were those that do not have the customer experience as their main objective, those that are focused on a specific segment and those that have a number of less than 4 pages.

Also in the refinement of the studies, aiming to analyze the quality of the material found, scores from 0 to 3 were considered based on pre-established questions as shown in Chart 1. From the sum of the results obtained, the degree of priority was established, generating a selection of articles with a high level of clarity, focusing on the theme studied.

Table 1 - Quality issues

Quality issue 1	Was the purpose of the study made clear?
Quality issue 2	Was the research methodology made clear?
Question of quality 3	The study answers one of the research questions contained in the Table 1?
Quality issue 4	Does the study address a case study?
Quality issue 5	Does the study provide support related to metrics and CX strategies simultaneously?

Source: own authorship

To achieve the purpose of the survey, it seeks to answer the question: "Do technology companies have difficulty implementing customer experience strategies?".

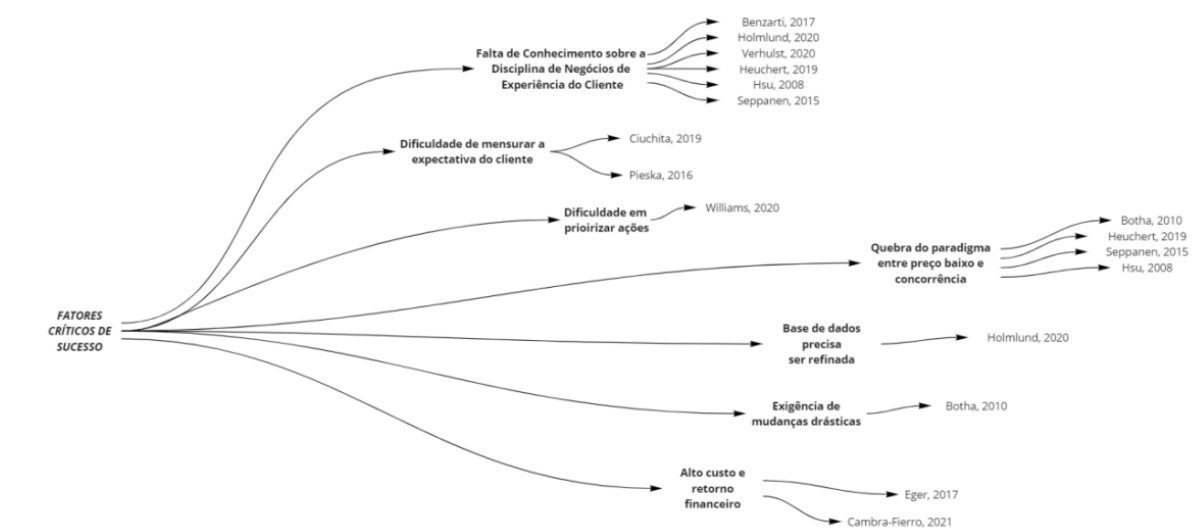
Finally, after 251 articles found, only 20 articles were selected for this study where it was possible to identify 7 different critical factors related to customer experience (CX) success:

- Lack of knowledge on the subject;
- Difficulty in measuring customer expectations;
- Breaking the paradigm of low price and competition;
- Database needs to be refined;
- High cost and financial return;
- Demand for drastic changes;
- Difficulty in prioritizing actions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was found that the main critical success factors for the implementation of the Customer Experience business discipline in companies are: 1) lack of knowledge; 2) difficulty in measuring; 3) difficulty in prioritizing; 4) breaking the paradigm that low price wins the competition; 5) need to refine database; 6) demand for drastic changes; 7) High cost considering long-term return. As can be seen in Figure 4:

Figure 4 - Summary of needs and critical success factors



Source: authorship.

Figure 04 shows the difficulties of companies to propose Customer Experience strategies. In general, companies do not know the business discipline of CX and need to

deepen their knowledge of Customer Experience even if it generates a great deal of effort (VERHULST, 2020). Customer Experience Management needs to carry out a set of practices, processes and tools with the purpose of customizing all interactions, at different points of contact, taking into account the desires and needs of customers (BENZARTI, 2017). There is also a lack of studies that consider customers' emotions within their experience with the brand (VERHULST, 2020).

There is technical difficulty about CX tools and strategies, such as: information about journey management (HEUCHERT, 2019), about big data and customer experience management (HOLMLUND, 2020) and the efficiency of metrics related to customer satisfaction, this lack of knowledge increases the barriers to the adoption of these strategies (HSU, 2008). Seppanen (2015) considers that customer experience is not an easy matter to replicate, each company must seek its model to maintain competitive advantage.

DIFFICULTY IN MEASURING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

The advancement of technologies makes customer expectations change constantly and quickly due to several factors, such as: ease of obtaining information in a short period of time and living diverse experiences in various types of services (CIUCHITA, 2019). Pieska (2016) argues that exceeding customer expectations with the so-called WOW experiences, that moment when the perceived quality of a certain product or service transcends what is expected, may not be so easy, but it is increasingly important and has become a differentiation strategy.

BREAKING THE PARADIGM OF LOW PRICE AND COMPETITION

The increase in competitiveness in the digital age from both the web and physical stores is not only due to the use of products, but also from services (HEUCHERT, 2019). Customers can choose between a series of products and services from different companies and, consequently, increased bargaining power of customers due to the possibility of using more companies (BOTHAS, 2010). Hsu (2008) points out that price is no longer the only differential of companies as it was said in a past paradigm and customers who seek a company by the price of its products and services are not loyal to its brand. As a result, customer experience has gained importance as a tool for differentiation and

competitiveness, but companies do not always have this perspective clearly (SEPPANEN, 2015).

DATABASE NEEDS TO BE REFINED

Holmlund (2020) identifies that the world is covered in data in what we call big data, there are several sources of data and its collection, such as: requested and structured, requested and unstructured, unsolicited and structured, and unsolicited and unstructured. However, for data to be used strategically, it needs to be organized and facilitate decision-making, as failure to structure this information can cause divergence in the customer's real perception of value.

HIGH COST AND FINANCIAL RETURN

Eger (2017) identifies that there is a millionaire cost carried out annually within companies to develop methods of analysis and customer management, with the intention of making customer service and interactions with consumers more proactive possible, states that these investments increase exponentially year by year, but companies crave positive financial returns as soon as possible by investing in customer experience and the return on investment in customer experience management. customer is long-term (Cambra-Fierro, 2021).

DEMAND FOR DRASTIC CHANGES

Companies need to reengineer their processes so that it is more customer-centric, this process often generates great effort for organizations and requires a strategic and cultural change (BOTH, 2010).

DIFFICULTY IN PRIORITIZING ACTIONS

There is often a need for managers to decide between investing more in memorable experiences or improving the delivery of the experience, minimizing the impact of moments that generate greater effort for the user (WILLIAMS, 2020).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aimed to analyze the needs and critical factors for the success of Customer Experience in companies, answering the question: "Do technology companies have difficulty implementing customer experience strategies?".

Using the Systematic Review of the Literature (RSL) it was possible to identify the 7 main critical success factors for the implementation of the Business Discipline of Customer Experience in companies. As detailed in section 4: 1) lack of knowledge; 2) difficulty in measuring; 3) difficulty in prioritizing; 4) breaking the paradigm that low price wins the competition; 5) need to refine database; 6) demand for drastic changes; 7) High cost considering long-term return.

The absence of more specific studies regarding the CX implementation strategy and methodologies that deepen the subject with a greater scientific basis, makes this research bring significant gains, contributing both to academia as a basis for new studies and to companies at different levels of maturity. It is still possible to go deeper into some themes in order to broaden the discussion.

Thus, it is concluded that the existing gaps in research on the most recent business strategies could be studied in order to generate greater economic results.

The results raised opportunities to deepen different themes of Customer Experience, we were faced with a much larger universe of articles related to Customer Experience and was restricted to those that corresponded to a specific search string, excluding potential articles that could contribute to this research.

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