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School of Business and Management

International Marketing Management

MASTER'S THESIS

**EXAMINING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICE DESIGN METHODS IN THE
CONTEXT OF RECORD STORES**

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Tässä Pro gradu -tutkielmassa tutkitaan asiakaskokemusta levykaupoissa palvelumuotoilun menetelmien avulla. Tutkimuksen teoreettisessa osuudessa tutustutaan asiakaskokemuksen ja palvelumuotoilun käsitteisiin – sekä palvelumuotoilun menetelmiin ja työkaluihin, aiempaan tutkimukseen pohjaten. Tutkimuskirjallisuuden perusteella voidaan sanoa, että yritysten tulisi pystyä järjestämään kokonaisvaltaisen palvelupolun kontaktipisteet kattavasti, jotta asiakaskokemus olisi onnistunut. Empiirinen tutkimus tehtiin laadullisena monitapaustutkimuksena, jossa tutkittiin kolmea levykauppaa. Tutkielman aineisto kerättiin kolmivaiheisesti: vaiheet olivat suora observointi, tapaustutkimukseen valituissa levykaupoissa tehdyt puolistrukturoidut asiakashaastattelut, sekä yksi levykauppiin haastattelu. Asiakashaastateltavien valintakriteeri oli satunnainen. Heitä oli yhteensä 18, joista neljä oli naisia ja 14 miehiä. Asiakashaastateltavien keskimääräinen ikä oli 30 vuotta, ja ikähaarukka oli 21–42 vuotta. Tutkielman tulosten mukaan palvelumuotoilun menetelmiä voidaan soveltaa levykauppakontekstissa. Väitteen tueksi tutkielmassa esitetään tutkimustulosten pohjalta luodut persoonat ja näiden palvelupolkukartat. Tutkimuksen perusteella voidaan tehdä se johtopäätös, että palvelumuotoilun avulla levykaupat voivat tulevaisuudessa tunnistaa potentiaalisia asiakasprofiileja, luoda miellyttävämpiä asiakaspolkuja, tunnistaa palvelun kontaktipisteet ja näin ollen otaksuttavasti parantaa asiakaskokemusta.

ABSTRACT

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This thesis studies customer experience through service design methods in the context of record stores. The theoretical objective has been to explore customer experience and service design, as well as service design tools and methods, based on prior literature on these concepts. Companies should be able to orchestrate touchpoints on a holistic customer journey in order to provide successful customer experiences. The empirical research was conducted by examining three record stores, using a multiple-case study approach and qualitative methods. The data collection was a three-phase process: it comprised direct observation and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the customers at the stores and with one record store keeper. The selection criteria for the customer interviewees were random. Out of the total of 18 interviewees, four were female and 14 were male. Their ages ranged from 21 to 42 years with an average age of 30 years. The results suggest that service design methods can be applied in the context of record stores. This study gives examples of personas and customer experience maps that are created from the empirical research data. Based on the results, service design can be used in the future to help record stores to identify their potential customer profile, create more pleasant customer journeys and recognize different touchpoints, thereby potentially improving the customer experience.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SD Service design

UCD User-centered design

CX Customer experience

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis studies service design and customer experience in the context of record stores. In the present chapter, the motivation, the background and the relevance of the research topic are presented and the research objectives and problems are defined. A literature review introduces the work of some of the most relevant authors in the field combined into a theoretical framework. Short definitions of key terms and concepts are provided. The research methodology is explained along with the delimitations of this study. The final part of this chapter summarizes the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

The proportion of services in the economies of industrialized countries has steadily increased from the 1970s, while the agriculture and manufacturing sectors have declined. The service sector has clearly become quantitatively the most important sector of all OECD economies. (Wölfl 2005, 3–7.) In the industrialized countries worldwide, the service sector is growing in size, in employment and in importance. In the UK, the service sector accounts for approximately 80 percent of employment and 67 percent of GNP. The rate and the importance of services will continue to grow in the future, not only in Europe and in the USA, but also in developing countries. (Hollins, B., Blackman, C. & Shinkins, S. 2003, 1.) In Finland, services count for over 60 percent of GDP (Miettinen 2011, 21).

The service sector consists of a wide variety of different activities ranging from fast food to brain surgery. Higher disposable incomes have increased particularly finance, insurance and business (Wölfl 2005, 7), as well as entertainment, eating out, travel, personal healthcare, and fitness services (Hollins et al. 2003, 1). Services also reflect directly on manufactured products, as these often contain a large service element as a whole. In manufacturing businesses, an estimated 20 percent of employees are working in a service role. Pine & Gilmore (1998, 100) explain that it is an indication of the maturity of the service economy that IBM and other manufacturing companies now generate greater profits from services than from the actual goods they produce. For example, the revenue of a well-known elevator manufacturer Kone

Oyj mostly comes from installation and maintenance services, with the help of service design (Miettinen 2011, 21). Services are seen as original and independent products sold to the customers and as long-term strategies (Mager 2004, 8–17), or functioning as a platform for other services (Moritz 2005, 25). We can even talk about experience economy when describing the importance of services (Pine & Gilmore 1998).

The so-called 'service economy' forms an unmistakable part of most people's everyday life, yet the shift to service economy has not resulted in a service revolution. The lack of research and design has led to conventional, uncreative and non-customer-centric services. Above all, customers complain about poor service quality. Frustration, unfriendly or incompetent service staff, endless waiting or following formalities characterizes many interactions with service organizations. Too often it may feel like the user's happiness is forgotten to highlight the profit incentives. (Parker & Heapy 2006, 7; Mager 2004, 19.) Very often the underlying cause of service failure is the lack of a systematic method for service design and control, and not human incompetence (Shostack 1984, 133).

Surrounded by increasingly similar mass-produced products, a "bare" product does not meet the customer's desire for identity and individuality. A product-related service lifting steps up to individualize the product from anonymity to exclusivity. (Mager 2004, 14.) Long aisles filled with homogenous home appliances and electronics show how retailers often fail to create a theme that would distinguish the products from one another and create "the shopping experience" (Pine & Gilmore 1998, 102–103). Moritz (2005, 27) states that today's customers are complicated, with highly individual needs and expectations that cannot be standardized. In a store, somebody wants to browse around, whereas some might expect alert service directly. Selling, advertising and pricing are not considered sufficiently efficient actions to stand out in the competition and in value offering. This is where service design (SD) can help: creating new, meaningful relationships between organizations and people.

Service design is a new and emerging field of expertise which includes innovating new or improving existing services to make them more useful, usable, and desirable for the customers, as well as effective for the organizations (Moritz 2005). The founding Dean and Professor Michael Erlhoff at Köln International School of Design (KISD) first introduced SD as a disciplinary field. Since 1992, SD has been taught in education and researched, and today it has

become a popular topic in business and a disciplinary subject at schools. (Mager 2004, 3; Mager 2009, 33; Curedale 2013, 4–9.)

SD can bring economical value and competitive advantage for businesses both in the public and the private sectors (Miettinen 2011; Shostack 1984, 134). Lovlie & Reason (2010) conducted a SD project in 2005 for a company called live|work in the city of Sunderland in North East England. Affected by the loss of coal and shipbuilding heavy industries, the city had suffered one of the highest unemployment rates in the UK. The task was to redesign the journey to work for the unemployed, especially for those with complex reasons, such as bad health. Their in-depth fieldwork with a small number of individuals resulted in a service blueprint and a model that led to improvements in the user experience of employment support services and an increase in employment in the area.

The consumers of today have a great number of choices and more channels through which to pursue them than before. In such an environment, simple and integrated solutions often attract consumers. (Meyer & Schwager 2007; Shaw & Ivens 2002, 14.) For example, people often prefer to make banking transactions from the comfort of their home or on the road, instead of waiting physically in a bank. Customers are fragmenting into finer segments that reflect their personalized needs. (Harvey, Lefebvre & Lefebvre 1997, 29.) However, organizations offering just products or services are no longer enough: customers need to be provided with satisfactory experiences. Companies need to have a comprehensive understanding of the customer's journey (Berry, Lewis, Carbone & Haeckel 2002, 85). In the literature, both SD and customer experience (CX) scholars address the importance of touchpoints and of the entire customer journey to manage the experiences (Mager 2004; Moritz 2005; Berry et al. 2002, 85; Shaw & Ivens 2002, 14; Meyer & Schwager 2007).

There has been very little research that would incorporate the music industry and SD or CX. Recent discussions in music industry research have concentrated on the changing dynamics and the digitalization of music consumption or on its privacy- and legal issues (Sinclair & Green 2015). According to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI 2016), the music industry is currently in a crucial era of transformation of recorded music. After two decades of almost uninterrupted decline in sales since 1998, global music revenue rose 3.2 percent in 2015 totaling US\$15.0 billion. In comparison, the previous year faced a 0.3 percent market decline. Music consumption is exploding, and for the first time, digital, especially

streaming services overtook physical formats, such as compact disc (cd) and vinyl. Digital revenues account currently for 45 percent of total revenues of US\$ 6.7 billion, compared to the 39 percent sales of physical music formats.

While the emphasis is on music digitalization, according to Bartmanski & Woodward (2015, 1) vinyl records have undergone resurgence and are currently one of the fastest growing areas in music sales. They have studied the phenomenon of vinyl 'comeback' and state that the format is in a renaissance of sorts. The Nielsen Company's *Global Music Report* (2016) confirms, that vinyl LPs set all-time sales with nearly 12 million units sold in the US, independent record stores being the biggest drivers for growth. In 2015, the retail value of vinyl records totaled US\$ 416 million in the US and US\$38.5 million in the UK. In Europe, physical format sales have decreased 6.0 percent respectively. (IFPE 2016.)

Despite the decline of physical music formats, according to Stu Bergen, CEO, International and global Commercial Services at Warner Music (IFPE 2016, 11), fans want to access music in various formats. As a curious example, Bergen points to Norway, where almost half of the physical sales come from vinyl. In Helsinki, Finland, three new record stores opened only in 2015, one of these being Good Grates (Digger's Gym) in Punavuori that sells house, techno, rap, drum'n'bass, disco, and other. In 2016, Mind Records, which concentrates strictly on selling house and techno music on vinyl, re-opened in Helsinki. When the shop operated in Turku during 1995–2001, the physical record store had mainly the role of a marketing tool and a meeting place. However, it seems there is a need for a relaxed spot where customers can meet each other (Mononen 2015, 93–95; 261–263; Kärppä, H. 2016).

Not much research or information exists on the link between service design and record stores or on the link between service design and the music industry in general. The following chapter presents the objectives and the research questions of the study, as well as the research gap.

1.2 Research Objectives and -Questions

This thesis focuses on understanding what service design is, what are its tools and methods, how customer experience is currently constructed in record stores, and how SD could be applied to physical record stores. Three record stores are used in a multiple-case study.

Applying the SD methods *customer journey map* and *personas* in data collection and analysis, the study aims to give a viewpoint of customer experience and use empirical data findings as a basis of **customer experience improvements**.

The managerial implications of the study are to raise acknowledgement of SD and customer experience in brick and mortar stores and to encourage people from all work fields to practice user research. Although all the case companies have online stores in addition to the physical stores, the web stores were left out of the study because of the research focus. Furthermore, this study was not conducted to make a comprehensive list of all SD tools and methods available, but to pick the most relevant and descriptive methods for this specific multiple-case study.

To the knowledge of the author, SD as a methodology for improving customer experience in record stores, and in the music industry in general has not been examined before. Therefore, the current lack of research on SD and customer experience in this field constitutes a research gap. An observation has been made that in spite of the rising importance of SD, as well as the acknowledgement of the role of customer experience, there is yet little research and practical knowledge on how SD can be utilized for improving customer experience in record stores. Hence, there is a need for research in this field. On the basis of these research objectives and the research gap, the following research questions and sub-questions have been constructed for the study.

Main research question:

1. How service design can improve customer experience in the context of record stores?

With this research question, the author strives to share an understanding of service design and customer experience concepts, to give examples of their methodologies and tools and to explain how to use them.

Sub-questions:

1.1. How is customer experience constructed in record stores?

1.2. How is customer experience perceived in record stores?

1.3 How can service design principles and methods be applied to customer experience development in the context of record stores?

To answer these questions, three record stores were selected for a multiple-case study. The record stores are examined as empirical case studies on how the current customer experience is conducted in these stores. The selected SD tools are applied in the research project to determine whether they could enhance the customer experience.

1.3 Literature Review

In this thesis the theoretical aspect mainly discovers the concepts of service design and customer experience. Service design is yet an evolving approach and it is without a common identified definition or terminology (Stickdorn, & Schneider 2011, 29). Mager (2009) defines service design to aims to ensure that the service interfaces are useful, usable, and desirable from the customer's point of view and effective, efficient, and distinctive from the supplier's point of view. According to Moritz (2005, 6) SD can be utilized in creating new services or improving the existing ones. As the approach does not have a universal definition, it can be, however, be defined with commonly accepted principles and characteristics; it is a human-centric, customer-centered, holistic, interdisciplinary, strategic, creative, innovative, and visual approach (Mager 2009; Miettinen 2011, 13–22; Saco & Congalves 2008; Saffer 2007, 179). In this study Mager's and Moritz's definition of service design is seen as such: it is an approach for developing new or for improving existing services with an aim to design useful, usable, and desirable services from the user's perspective, as well as efficient, effective services from the provider's perspective (Mager & Sung 2011, 1; Moritz 2005.) This study examines on improving existing services of the record stores.

Because services are systems that include different factors, the customer experiences are observed with an overall focus on the customer journey, before and after the service encounters. Studies that arise from understanding the customer and the market across different touchpoints unveil opportunities, produce ideas, solve problems and generate implementable solutions. In other words, SD helps in innovating and in creating new services or improves existing ones (Mager & Sung 2011, Moritz 2005, Stickdorn & Schneider 2011).

In the literature, SD is seen as a source of value creation (Mager 2004; Moritz 2005; Miettinen 2011; Stickdorn & Schneider 2001). SD helps service providers to understand the consumers, the market, available resources, and customer insights, needs and experiences across

touchpoints. Service experiences are shaped with tools and methods to make the service experience more consistent, desirable, useful, viable, and in line with the brand. SD can offer customers an increased quality of experiences, products, and services, and it can offer businesses a better use of resources, a better connection with the customers, as well as differentiation from competitors. (Moritz 2005, 40.)

According to Pine & Gilmore (1998, 98–99), customer experiences are inherently personal and existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on some level. Shaw & Ivens (2002, 6) state that customer experience is an interaction between an organization and a customer, where the organization's physical performance, and the customer's stimulated senses, evoked emotions, and expectations blend across all moments of contact. Customer experience is not perceived as a rational decision but an experience strongly influenced by feelings and unconscious interpretation (Löytänä & Korteso 2011, 11). This study concludes that customer experience is an inherently personal and emotional interaction between a customer and an organization. In this study, a research interest focuses on understanding the customer experiences three record stores provide customers on physical and emotional levels.

Numerous theorists agree that well-orchestrated customer experiences are a source of sustainable differentiation, customer value and a source of long-term competitive advantage (Shaw & Ivens 2002; Lockwood 2009, 163–171; Meyer and Schwager 2007; Berry, Carbone & Haeckel 2002). Both service design and customer experience scholars address the importance of companies' ability to orchestrate touchpoints on a holistic customer journey (Berry et al. 2002, 85; Mager 2004; Meyer & Schwager 2007; Moritz 2005; Parker & Heapy 2006; Shaw & Ivens 2002, 14; Tuulaniemi 2011, 78–79). The customer journey and touchpoints are studied in both disciplines of service design and customer experience.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The contemporary service economy presents three trends: the expansion of the service sector has resulted in an increase of the proportion of services in economies, and the demand for services keeps on increasing; a change in the customers' needs from material to immaterial is taking place; and technology and digitalization have changed the interaction between the customers and the service providers.

Service design is seen as an approach – yet without a common definition, for developing new or for improving existing services with an aim to design useful, usable, and desirable services from the user's perspective, as well as efficient, effective services from the provider's perspective (Mager & Sung 2011, 1; Moritz 2005; Stickdorn, & Schneider 2011, 29). Although service design does not possess universally agreed definition, some characteristics apply: SD is a *human-centric design* approach that focuses on customer experience and often and understanding influence of human behavior. It is a *strategic* approach that combines different methods and tools from various disciplines (Stickdorn, & Schneider 2011, 29). Service design is creative and *visual*, in which often ideas are visually presented (Mager 2009; Miettinen 2011, 13–22). With service design tools, the user experience is often designed, described, and illustrated visually (Maffei et al. 2005, 6). A service design tool, persona is a fictional “character” that presents and merges patterns that have been identified from the research insights (Moritz 2005, 228). The customer experience map is a structured service design tool used for the visualization of a service user's experience (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 158).

The customer journey describes how a customer navigates through a service and experiences it (Tuulaniemi 2011, 78–79.) Touchpoint is any occasion, where customers interact with the organization and its offerings, before purchasing and after (Rawson, Duncan & Jones 2013, 1). Customer experience is an inherently personal and emotional interaction between a customer and an organization (Pine & Gilmore 1998, 98–99). Customer experience is an experience where emotions and subconscious interpretations have an impact (Löytänä & Korteso 2011, 11; 45). Physical customer experience elements, such as in-store environment also have an impact on emotions and the experience is perceived (Beck & Childers 2006). Figure 1 presents the theoretical framework of this thesis.

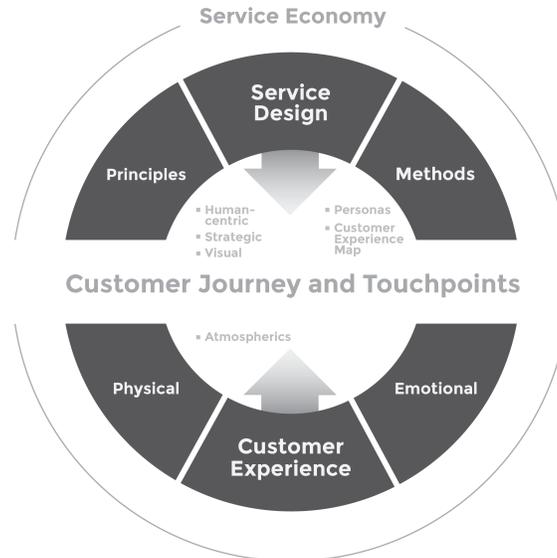


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

1.5 Definitions of Terms and Concepts

In this section, the key concepts that are used in this thesis will be presented. These concepts are *customer experience*, *customer experience map*, *design*, *design thinking*, *service design*, *personas*, and *touchpoint*.

Customer experience is an interaction between an organization and a customer, where the organization's physical performance, the customer's stimulated senses and evoked emotions, and customer expectations blend across all moments of contact. (Shaw & Ivens 2002, 6.)

Customer experience map, also called *customer journey map*, is a method for documenting and visualizing customer experiences and responses as the customers use a product or service (Curedale 2013, 119).

Design means giving form, beyond simply designing objects (Mager 2004, 27). "Design is a process, a service, a way of thinking, and an activity that results in objects, systems, artifacts and outcomes. These results must all work aesthetically, functionally, and commercially. In short, design is applied creativity." (Stone 2010, 14.)

Design thinking is essentially a human-centered design process that emphasizes observation, collaboration, fast-learning, rapid concept prototypes, visualization of ideas, and concurrent business analysis in integrative and multidisciplinary manner (Lockwood 2009).

Personas are fictional profiles created to represent the various user types of a certain group based on their shared interests. These characters are given names, photos and details relevant to the task at hand, ensuring that the different customer segments of the product or brand are given a voice. (Moule 2012, 71.)

Service design helps to develop new or to improve existing services (Moritz 2005). The aim is to design useful, usable, and desirable services from the user's perspective, as well as efficient, effective services from the provider's perspective (Mager & Sung 2011, 1). SD is an interdisciplinary and strategic approach that combines different methods and tools from various disciplines. It is an evolving approach – yet a young and new stand-alone academic discipline. A common definition or a clear terminology have not yet stabilized. (Stickdorn, & Schneider 2011, 29.)

Touchpoint is any occasion where the customer encounters a brand and a product, from casual observation to an actual personal experience or mass communications (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen 2009, 397). Touchpoints are the critical moments when customers interact with the organization and its offerings, before purchasing and after (Rawson, Duncan & Jones 2013, 1).

1.6 Research Methodology

As stated in *Chapter 1.2 Research Objectives and -Questions*, the study identifies the applicability of service design approaches to improving customer experience in the context of record stores. The empirical research will concentrate on three case companies, and thus a multiple-case study approach was chosen for the research (Curedale 2013, 103; Yin 2009, 53–57). Research data was collected through direct observation (Curedale 2013, 202), through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with customers at the chosen stores, and through an interview with a record store keeper. (*Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 2005, Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2002, 172; Collis & Hussey 2003, 168–179.*) Prior to the field research, three outline guides were

created for observation, customer interviews and an interview with a record store keeper, on the basis of recent literature on user research, SD and CX (Portigal 2013, 40). The research approach is deductive (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 95). 3D models were made to demonstrate and visualize touchpoints of each case study store, based on observations and pictures taken on the field. Based on observations and semi-structured interviews with the customers at the selected case study stores, *personas* were created to identify a visitor profile. In addition, a *customer experience map* was created to demonstrate and to document the experience journey the customers had when they were in contact with the different touchpoints. (Moule 2012, 71; Curedale 2013, 119.) Research design and data collection are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

1.7 Delimitations

This study aims at using service design methods to improve customer experience in the context of record stores. The focus of the study is on private end-users. Due to the research focus, the web stores of the case companies were left out of the study. The aim of this thesis is not to present a comprehensive list of all available SD methods and tools.

In this study, the following matters will not be discussed:

- Service quality
- New service development
- Digitalization of music or piracy
- The web stores of the selected record stores
- Customer relationship management (CRM)

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the background for the study, its theoretical extent, and the aims of the thesis.

Chapters 2 and 3 open up the theoretical part of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the empirical research.

Chapter 5 discloses the data analysis.

Chapter 6 contains the discussion and conclusions on the research findings.

2. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

This Chapter looks into the definition of customer experience (CX) and into its principles. When was the last time you had a wonderful customer experience? According to Shaw & Ivens (2002, 3), if you were like most people, it would typically take a fair minute to process this question and recall a great experience. Referring to the service economy as discussed in Chapter 1.1, people's incomes rise, and thus material needs become satisfied and needs become less material. Customers are looking for experiences that enable them to realize their dreams and allow them to achieve the desired lifestyle. A credit card can permit climbing to Mount Everest or a trip to outer space. Customers are seeking for suppliers who go beyond to meet their unique needs.

2.1 Definition of Customer Experience

Verhoef, P., Lemon, K. N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M. & Schlesinger, L. A. (2009) argue that in traditional academic literature on marketing, retailing, and service management, customer experience is not seen as a separate construct. Instead, researchers have focused on measuring elements like customer satisfaction and service quality. The term 'customer experience' (CX) spread in business language in the early 2000s with the pioneer authors B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Löytänä & Kortesuo 2011, 11). According to Shaw & Ivens (2002, 11) well-orchestrated customer experiences are a source of long-term competitive advantage.

Customer experience is an interaction between an organization and a customer, where the organization's physical performance, and the customer's stimulated senses, evoked emotions, and expectations blend across all moments of contact (Shaw & Ivens 2002, 6). Customer experience is the sum of the interactions, images, and feelings that a customer has in connection with a business (Löytänä & Kortesuo 2011, 11). Customer experiences are inherently personal and memorable, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even on a spiritual level. Even if two people went through the same service, they could not have the same experience because experience derives from the interaction between the staged event and the individual's state of mind. (Pine &

Gilmore 1998, 98–99.) Shaw & Ivens (2002, 7) agree that customer experiences are all measured subjectively and intuitively. Customer satisfaction is essentially the culmination of a series of customer experiences, the net result of the good experiences minus the bad ones (Meyer & Schwager 2007).

CX is not a rational decision but an experience influenced strongly by feelings and unconscious interpretations. It's not possible to predetermine completely what kind of experience a company can offer its customer, but it is possible to aim for a certain kind of experience. (Löytänä & Korteso 2011, 11.) Verhoef et al. (2009) add that CX is holistic in nature and involves the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses to the retailer. Some of the elements of CX can be controlled in retail, such as the retail atmosphere, the assortment, the price, and the service interface. However, there are also elements beyond the retailer's control, such as the influence of others and the purpose of the shopping.

Customer experience encompasses holistically every aspect of a company's offering – advertising, packaging, product and service features, ease of use, customer care, and reliability. CX is the internal and subjective response customers have in any direct or indirect contact with a company. Direct contact generally occurs in the actions of purchase, use, and service, usually initiated by the customer. Indirect contact can include word-of-mouth recommendations or criticisms, advertising, reviews, news or representations, etc. (Meyer & Schwager 2007.) The stages of customer experience and the buying process are examined widely in various publications. These stages include expectations, search, purchase, consumption, and post-sale phases and may involve multiple retail channels (Puccinelli et al. 2009; Verhoef et al. 2009; Shaw & Ivens 2002.)

Expectations are set as part of people's previous experiences with a company's offerings. New experiences are instinctively compared with previous ones and judged accordingly. Personal situations, market conditions, and competition also affect expectations. (Meyer & Schwager 2007.) Shaw & Ivens (2002, 24–27) broke customer experience down into five different stages in Figure 2:

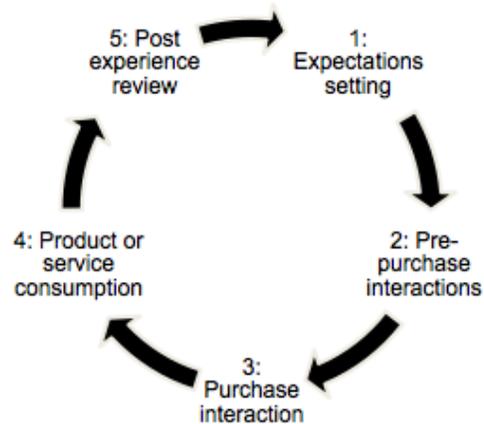


Figure 2: Stages of Customer Experience (Shaw & Iwens 2002, 24)

Expectation setting builds on the company brand image, on advertising, and on people's word of mouth. Pre-purchase interactions encompass activities that lead up to the buying decision, such as gathering information about the location or about stock updates, visiting the company's website, or reading a magazine. The purchase interaction stage is at the heart of customer experience; a phase where the decision of buying occurs, for example an order is placed at the service counter. At the product or service consumption stage, the customer is actually using the purchased item or a service: eating a meal or listening to a recording. At the final post-experience review stage, the actualized customer experience is intuitively reviewed by the comparison of performance and expectations. The cycle returns to setting expectations, and intuitively, articles and social media advertisements are matched with the existing customer experience. Expectations are then rejected or amended on the basis of the customer experience in preparation for a new one. (Shaw & Iwens 2002, 24–27.)

According to Tuulaniemi (2011, 74), customer experience can be divided into three levels:

1. Action,
2. Feelings, and
3. Meanings.

The action level describes the service's ability to meet customers' functional needs: process fluidity, availability, usability, efficiency, and versatility. This functional level needs to be operative for the service even to be on the market. The feelings level means the immediate and

personal experiences: amiability, ease, attractiveness, atmosphere, style, and ability to stimulate senses. The level of meanings includes personal mental images, cultural codes, dreams, stories, promises, and realizations, as well as the customers' relationships to their habits and identity. Löytänä & Korteso (2011, 43) point out that shopping may be part of a person's lifestyle and identity. Therefore, bad customer service or experiences hurt and are told onwards with a low threshold.

2.2 Emotional and Physical Customer Experience

According to Shaw & Ivens (2002, 3; 42), strategically speaking, differentiating solely by traditional physical elements, such as price, delivery, lead times, and availability is not enough, but businesses need a customer experience that stands out. Businesses have long ignored the role of emotions, and a logical process has been favored. The authors present some of the reasoning behind this traditional view. Firstly, companies have been adequately successful without having to think too much about emotions. Secondly, emotions are unpredictable, unstructured, and hard to measure. Thirdly, the authors claim that neglecting emotions is due to male domination in businesses, and to an incapability to deal with feelings. While companies collect data about customers' buying habits, incomes, and other classifying characteristics, little is known about their thoughts, emotions, and states of mind, which have an effect on how they interact with products, services, and brands (Meyer & Schwager 2007). However, businesses are made of people, who are driven by emotions. Shaw & Ivens (2005) claim that emotions can be a major differentiator and are perhaps the most underestimated of the available assets.

Customer experience is perhaps not a rational decision, but rather an experience where emotions and subconscious interpretations have an impact. Thus, it is not possible to control completely what kind of experience a customer will get, but businesses can choose what kind of experiences they try to give. (Löytänä & Korteso 2011, 11; 45.) Focusing and stimulating planned emotions can affect customer experiences. For example, Amazon created the emotion of anticipation with their customer experience in the online environment. Pre-ordering and releasing are important events for the entertainment industry: young customers queue outside the shops for music, DVDs, and video games. Amazon extended the excitement of pre-ordering to the book industry and sold 65 000 pre-orders of Harry Potter, shipped in one night and

arriving at everyone's door the following morning – before the shops were open. (Shaw & Ivens 2005.)

In a publication on customer experience management, Puccinelli, N., Goodstein, R., Grewal, D., Price, R., Raghurir, P. & Stewart, D. (2009) argue that without direction and constraint, customers might pay attention to almost an endless number of features while shopping. Goals help to focus attention on the retail environment and provide motivation for information searching and organizing. Customer experience is the sum of the interactions, images, and feelings that a customer has in connection with a business. The stronger these emotions are, the stronger is the CX. The experience can be a positive emotion with a strong feeling of joy, happiness, gaining an insight, or being pleased. (Löytänä & Korteso 2011, 11; 45.) Table 1 shows examples of positive emotions on which companies could focus when trying to evoke a specific emotion.

Table 1: Emotion Types for Possible Customer Experience Direction (Shaw & Ivens 2005)

Emotion	Sub-elements
Enjoyment	Happiness, joy, relief, contentment, bliss, delight, amusement, pride, sensual pleasure, thrill, rapture, gratification, satisfaction, euphoria, whimsy, ecstasy
Love	Acceptance, friendliness, trust, kindness, affinity, devotion, adoration, infatuation
Surprise	Shock, astonishment, amazement, wonder

In addition to the emotional customer experience, also physical elements have an impact on how a customer perceives the customer experience, and they can have an effect on emotions. A great number of situational variables can affect the customer experience, such as the in-store environment, the lighting, the music, and the layout (Beck & Childers 2006). Puccinelli et al. (2009) argue that context has an important role in creating consumer attitudes, especially in retail store environments. Atmospheric is perhaps one of the most studied contextual elements in retail. Atmospheric refer to the tangible and intangible elements that influence the subjective

experience of the customers, especially pleasure and arousal. Milliman & Turley (2000) divide atmospheric stimuli or elements into five categories (See Figure 3 for further illustration):

1. External variables (entrance, display windows, building architecture, parking)
2. General interior variables (lighting, scents, music, merchandise)
3. Layout and design variables (space design, merchandise and cash register placement, work station placement, furniture)
4. Point-of-purchase and decoration variables (signs and displays, prices, pictures, artwork)
5. Human variables (employee characteristics, customer characteristics, crowding)

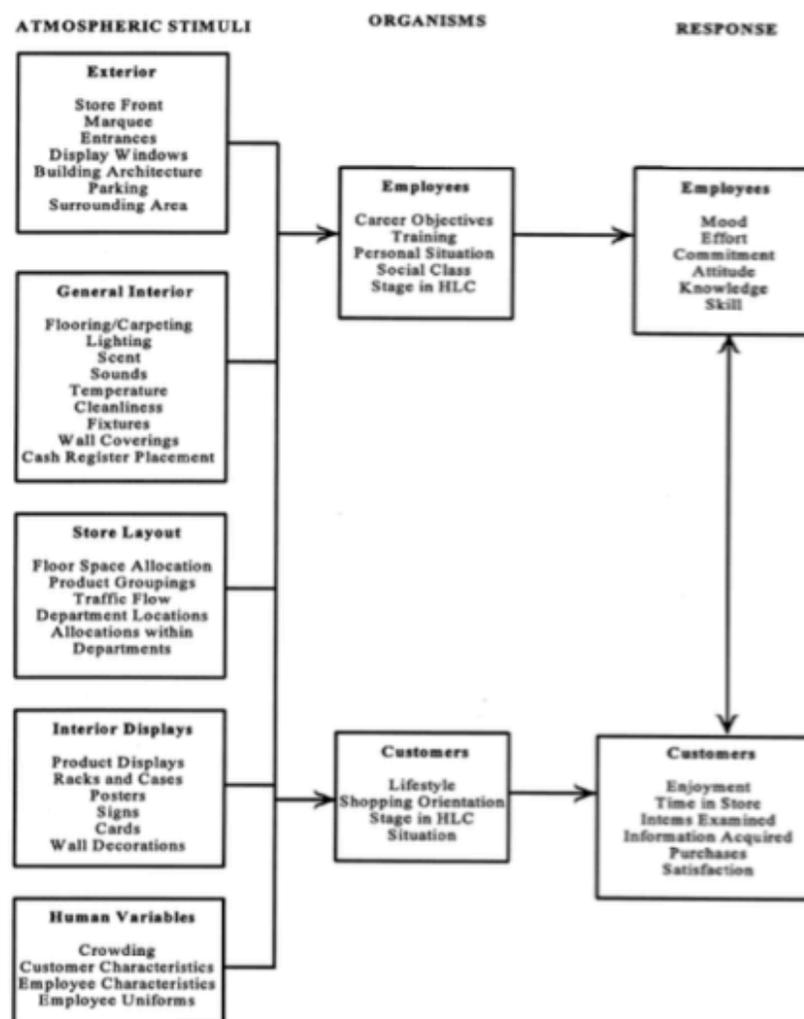


Figure 3: The Retail Atmospherics (model by Milliman & Turley 2000)

Servicescapes ie. the ambience and physical environment in which a service occurs, can be seen as the ambient and holistic manner in which environmental stimuli, such as *the store lighting* can affect customers' buying behavior. For example, smooth and dimmed lights might lead customers to perceive the store as more pleasant and make them stay longer. *Music* can be an incorporated background factor that reinforces holistic perceptions and makes a provider stand out. (Puccinelli et al. 2009.) Pleasant music helps customers sense the servicescape as more pleasant and can have a positive impact on sales, perception, shopping time, and in-store traffic flow (Turley & Milliman 2000). In particular, signs that encourage exploration may increase the salience of *touch*, which motivates customers to *touch* and impulsively buy displayed items (Beck & Childers 2006). In addition, *a personal experience* with a product can affect customer experience (Puccinelli et al. 2009).

Smith & Wheeler (2002) stress the importance of the right kind of employees by stating that people make the difference, which enables a great experience over time. A personal contact with an employee can be a significant factor in creating customer loyalty. Moreover, the number of staff can affect the customer experience positively or negatively: an appropriate number of employees should be present, but not too many in the sense of crowding. (Puccinelli et al. 2009.) The atmosphere of the store influences the customers as well as the employees, and they all interact and influence each other. For managerial implication recognition, the classification and tailoring of appropriate atmospheric elements can help communicate the desired image or create the desired environment for a particular shopper segment to get a response. In general, retail environments should be designed with a particular customer in mind, with smaller specialty stores intended for narrower target markets (Turley & Milliman 2000).

Modern-day retail stores call for holistic experiences as the store design, displays and visual merchandising are becoming more unique and experimental. In an increasingly fierce competition with online shops, in brick and mortar stores, it's all about the customer experiencing the staging of offerings and a continuous representation of new goods. A store can operate also as a multifunctional space: as a club, a cafe, a gallery, a cinema, or perhaps as a place for meditation. (Teufel & Zimmermann 2015, 298.)

2.3 Customer Journey and Touchpoints

Service is a process in which a customer passes through different, either digital or physical touchpoints throughout a customer journey and experiences them (Tuulaniemi 2011, 78–79). Berry et al. (2002) suggest that in order to successfully provide a satisfactory customer experience, companies need to master orchestrating all ‘clues’ that people distinguish in the buying process, in other words, during the customer journey. According to Parker & Heapy (2006), services need to be understood as a journey, which is a series of critical encounters that take place over time, at a place. The key is to bring the *user* into focus and to contribute organizational resources to creating experiences and outcomes.

The service process is illustrated with the concept of customer journey, a journey that a customer is taking, and as such to be analyzed and designed in detail. At first, it has to be determined which part of the journey is to be designed. The customer journey can be divided into pre-service, core service and post-service. In pre-service, the customer has, for example, ordered movie tickets online. In core service, the customer experiences the service. Post-service means the subsequent contact with the service provider, such as customer feedback. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 78–79.)

The customer journey describes how a customer navigates through the service and experiences it. The customer journey is divided into service moments and related touchpoints (Tuulaniemi 2011, 78–79). A touchpoint is any occasion where the customer encounters a brand and a product, from casual observation to an actual personal experience or mass communications (Kotler et al. 2009, 397), and at any time (Rawson et al. 2013, 1). At all touchpoints, customers can experience the service and the brand with their senses: hearing, smelling, tasting, seeing, and touching (Koivisto 2011, 51; Parker & Heapy 2006). Together, these elements form the service (Moritz 2005, 44). Companies should pay attention to every touchpoint and consider whether they empower the user to achieve the desired outcome (Parker & Heapy 2006).

Touchpoints can be environments, objects, humans, and courses of action. Environments can be either physical or digital and can have a great impact on customer experience. For example, theme parks and restaurants can affect mood and behavior. In digital environments, a functional user interface is highly fundamental. To provide a service, physical objects are often used as

well, like cutlery in a restaurant. A *human touchpoint* includes the customer and the customer service employee. A *course of action* means the behavior models for the service employees, for example greeting the customer upon their arrival. The service provider should plan the customer journey within the appropriate environment and its touchpoints, objects, and employees. Especially functional and well-planned spaces are growing as subjects of service design. For example, spaces targeted primarily to children need to satisfy the needs of adults as well. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 80–84.) The customer journey and touchpoints will be further discussed in Chapter 3.6.2.

In summary, customer experience success has become one of the central objectives in today's business world in the hope of achieving sustainable differentiation and customer value. Also, customers demand experiences and seek for suppliers who fulfill their needs. Customer experience has been examined in the literature in quite a thorough manner; the concise definition is an inherently personal and emotional interaction between a customer and an organization. Customer experience can be divided into a physical and an emotional aspect. Companies should be able to orchestrate touchpoints on a holistic customer journey in order to provide successful customer experiences.

3. SERVICE DESIGN

This chapter examines a phenomenon called service design (SD). First we observe how design has evolved in general during time and what value design-related thinking brings for businesses. We attempt to define service design through the evolvement of both design and services and to share an understanding of its relevance and its necessity in the contemporary world. We will only look at those SD tools and methods that are relevant for this study.

3.1 Design as a Competitive Advantage

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2015), design can be defined as “a plan or drawing produced to show the look and function or working of a building, garment or other object before it is made”, “as a result of a plan” or a “decorative pattern”. Kotler & Rath (1984, 17) define design as a potent strategic tool that companies can and should use as a sustainable competitive advantage. In the aspect of the buying process, the task is to optimize customer satisfaction and company profitability. This is done through using the major design elements (performance, quality, durability, appearance, and cost) and through combining these elements to products, environments, information, and corporate identity. Design means giving form that goes beyond simply designing objects (Mager 2004, 27). “*Design is a process, a service, a way of thinking, and an activity that results in objects, systems, artifacts and outcomes. These results must all work aesthetically, functionally, and commercially. In short, design is applied creativity.*” (Stone 2010, 14).

Design is an activity that can target industry, trade, and service companies as well as organizations in the public sector. Likewise, products, services, communication, environment, or the identity of businesses or communities can be subjects for design. The design process can be abstract and visual or artifactual with models. The end result can be abstract, for example a vision or a concept, or palpable, with a material product. When design is professionally exploited, it can embody the identity of a service or a product. This can be seen as aesthetics, functionality, usability, safety, or understanding. Usually, the products and the services that have the highest success have designers included from the beginning of the creation project,

starting from conceiving user preferences, visualizing product concepts and ideas, and moving on to usability testing and designing the final product or service. (Lindström, Nyberg & Ylä-Anttila 2006, 28.)

The prevalent common conception of design has for long been that of making product-related objects more aesthetic. Companies have discovered the importance of design in innovation processes, which has caused a shift towards design as a strategy. Today design concerns strategies, processes, and interactions, but most of all, it's about services. (Mager 2009, 32; Mager & Sung 2011.) As the technological, social, and economical factors and cultures change, so do human needs, desires, and problems. The awareness of the fact that design evolves beyond objects has deep roots in the *Bauhaus movement* (Mager 2004, 27). What differentiates SD from traditional design is that SD offers a wider perspective for a problem at hand with its user-centered design methodology (Miettinen 2011, 26). Traditionally, reflections on design and business were merely based on the purpose of adding aesthetic radiance to boost sales. Nowadays, the role of design has changed and is seen as far more multidimensional. Companies that invest in innovative and well-designed products in the long term and use design as a strategic business tool are more successful. The effect of design on economic success has been hard to measure quantifiably in monetary value. (Zec & Jakob 2010, 22–51.)

The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (ETLA), the Finnish Innovation Fund SITRA (by Korvenmaa 2007) and the British Design Council (2008) have done research on the value of design and on its effect on the competitive advantage as an example. It seems that the importance of design has been recognized in these publications, which point to a positive correlation between design investments and economic success. Maarit Lindström, Martti Nyberg and Pekka Ylä-Anttila (2006, 28–29) discuss in an ETLA publication how technology, design, and creativity affect the success of businesses and economies. Usually, the goal of using design methods is to create added value for the customer by improving the experience and the desirability by means of making products or services more understandable and in line with the brand.

In the Design Council's publication *Design in Britain 2008*, 1,522 companies across the UK were surveyed to gain insights on how businesses regard and use design. Design clearly has an increasingly important and valued role, especially in larger, rapidly growing, and manufacturing businesses. It is used to reinforce profits and maintain competitiveness. Overall, 30 percent of

businesses view design as integral, and the number has doubled since a similar survey made in 2005. 85 percent of rapidly growing businesses consider design as integral or significant to their operations. Design is considered the sixth most important factor driving business success, a higher ranking than R&D or marketing.

In *user-centered design* (UCD), people are at the center of attention. UCD is based on acquiring information from people who are potential users of a product or a service; they are the experts on their needs, goals, and preferences. Ideally, users would participate in every stage of the design process. (Huotari, Lautakari-Svärd, Laako & Koskinen 2003, 15–20; Hyysalo 2006, 1–9; Saffer 200, 31.) The ISO 13407 standard *Human-centered design processes for interactive systems* describes the different stages of the UCD process. Firstly, the need for design is identified. Secondly, the contexts of use and user requirements are determined. Then designing solutions begin. The work continues with evaluation and iteration until the set requirements are met. (Huotari et al. 2003, 18; Mattelmäki 2006, 29.) The roots of UCD are in industrial design and ergonomics. In the 1980s, computer scientists and designers working with human-computer interaction shifted the focus of computer software design from computers to users. (Saffer 2007, 31.)

Decision-making is not based on rational or logical reasoning but rather on *emotions*, which have a significant importance. The image of a rationally thinking and passive user has changed into that of a complex, emotional, and active influencer. The purpose of UCD is to collect and interpret user knowledge required for the design. This user knowledge is then specifically adapted to identify new opportunities. (Mattelmäki 2006, 27.) Lovlie et al. (2010) place people who are going to use the service at the heart of the design process. Working with users changes the course of design from perfecting each touchpoint to perfecting customer journeys. What matters is how much people love the service and if it makes their lives happier.

In UCD, users are involved in the design at an early phase. Designers are not necessarily the typical users of the products or services, and therefore the actual users should be interviewed and their action observed. User observation can produce valuable research material on usability. (Kettunen 2000, 33–37.) While designing, the designers should put an emphasis on the user experiences rather than on their own prejudices, as the success of a product or a service depends greatly on how interesting and useful the target group experiences it. (Huotari

et al. 2003, 16–17; Saffer 2007, 33.) The purpose of UCD is not only the creation of effective and functional services but also unique and additional value creation (Miettinen 2011, 38).

3.2 What is a Service?

Service design is an evolving approach, which becomes particularly apparent when trying to define it. The scholars have not yet mutually agreed on a definition, although there are universally agreed principles. A common definition or a clear terminology have not yet stabilized. (Stickdorn, & Schneider 2011, 29; Curedale 2013.) We can start by defining service.

Grönroos (1990, 27) defines service as an activity or series of activities of a possibly intangible nature that usually happen in interaction between a customer and a service employee. The service may include the service provider's physical resources or systems which will provide a solution to the customer's problem. Edvardsson, Gustafsson, Johnson & Sandén (2000, 31–32) complete the definition by adding that a service can be described in various ways and characterized as a chain of sequential, parallel and/or recurrent activities or events that create value and form a process. In this process, a customer usually takes part as an active participant by performing different elements in interaction with the employees of the service company for the purpose of achieving a particular result.

According to Clatworthy (2011, 80), a service is a series of various interactions between the customer and the service system that occur interactively through many different touchpoints during the customer journey. Saffer (2007, 175) explains that service is a chain of activities that form a process which adds value to the end user, in other words to the customer. Services are everywhere and form an enormous part of our economy from restaurants, dry cleaners, and hospitals to governments. You participate in a service every time you travel by taxi, uber, train, or plane or visit a fast-food restaurant. The usage plan of a mobile phone is a service and it works as a platform to use the communications service (Moritz 2005, 26). Service is normally perceived subjectively, and when customers describe it, highly abstract words, such as experience, trust, feeling, and security are often used (Grönroos 2015, 51).

Most services have the following characteristics (Hollins et al. 2003, 2; Hollins & Shinkins 2006, 8–9; Grönroos 2015, 49–51; Moritz 2005, 29–31; Saffer 2007, 175–176; Mager 2004, 43):

Services are *non-material* and therefore have no physical form – only the physical embodiments of it like the food in a restaurant. They cannot be seen before purchase or taken home after. One cannot touch a legal advice or a travel journey, though often a result can be seen. As services are intangible, they usually cannot be stored, inventoried or transported. (Grönroos 2015, 49–51; Moritz 2005, 29–31; Saffer 2007, 175–176.)

Customers expect services to be *accessible* at most times. Services simultaneously lose value if they are not used, for example an empty seat on an airplane. In services, production and consumption tend to occur at the same time. Services need the involvement and the *engagement* of customers; the service providers do not produce them alone. (Grönroos 2015, 49–51; Moritz 2005, 29–31; Saffer 2007, 175–176.)

Services are *used* rather than owned; customers who use a service may end up with an owned object, such as a cup of coffee or a rented car, but they do not own the service itself. Nobody owns a massage, for example. Services happen over time and across several touchpoints. (Moritz 2005, 29–31; Saffer 2007, 175–176.)

No two service delivery experiences are the same, but on the contrary, services are *heterogenic*: every time a service is offered, it may be different due to personalities and mindsets of the individuals receiving and giving it. Customer service can often determine the success or the failure of the company. The measurements of services tend to be qualitative rather than quantitative like in manufacturing. As a result, there is a wider variability in services, and it is hard to control their quality. (Grönroos 2015, 49–51; Hollins et al. 2003, 2; Hollins & Shinkins 2006, 8–9; Mager 2004, 43.)

These unique features of services have major influences on the service experiences. Traditional design focuses on the relationship between a user and a product. SD, in contrast, focuses on context – designing the entire system of use, as people use products in environments in structured processes. Service works with the user's interaction through multiple touchpoints over time. Every encounter or part of a service is called a touchpoint. They are typically environments, objects, processes, and people. The total experience is the sum of different encounters with these components. (Moritz 2005, 31; Saffer 2007, 175–176.)

3.3 Evolvement of Service Economy and Service Design

In this chapter, we examine a methodology called service design. To understand why this methodology is worth of knowing, we will look into some of the reasons and into the background of SD: changes in society and in employment in general terms.

The evolvement of SD is closely related to the shift from industrial manufactured goods to the expansion of the service sector in the world economy. The proportion of services has steadily increased from the 1970s, and services have become undoubtedly the most important sector in the OECD economies, while the agriculture and manufacturing sectors have declined. Service amounted to approximately 70 percent of total value added in most OECD countries by 2002. (Wölfl 2005, 3–7; 57.) Over recent decades, most advanced economies have experienced a substantial change in their occupational structure with the service sector growing in size, in employment, and in importance (Hollins et al. 2003, 1). The economy basis and our society have changed from manufacturing to the provision of information and services, and design has created conceptual and methodological answers to this fundamental change (Mager 2009, 28; Mager & Sung 2011, 1).

D'Agostino Antonello, Roberta Serafini and Melanie Ward-Warmedinger (2006, 5–8) have studied the service sector employment in the EU-15 countries (excluding Ireland and Luxembourg). Their European Central Bank publication shows that both Europe and the US have seen an increase in the proportion of service related jobs to total employment over the recent decades, as well as a correlating reduction of the number of jobs in agriculture and industry following the general economic development, though Europe has had relatively poor labor market performance as compared to the US. In the beginning of the year 2000, about three quarters of the workforce were working in the service sector, accounting for about 70 percent of total employment. Furthermore, the service sector is the largest and almost an exclusive sector in job creation. Relatively high proportions of employment in the service sector are met in the UK, the US, Canada, and New Zealand. (D'Agostino et al. 2006; Wölfl 2005, 10.) For example in the UK, the service sector accounts for 80 percent of employment and for 72 percent of the economy. The rate and the importance of services will keep growing also in the

developing countries. (Hollins et al. 2003, 1; Hollins & Shinkins 2006; 7.) According to Reason, Løvlie & Flu (2016, 1–7), it is no coincidence that service design has emerged in the twenty-first century. Just as industrial- and product design emerged alongside mass manufacturing, service design is seen as a response to significant economic, social, and technical trends. These trends set the context in which SD has emerged as a new discipline that is relevant and enjoys a growing interest of the businesses.

The first trend we will look at is the booming of the so-called ‘service economy’ as discussed above. The increase of the service sector is widely acknowledged in the literature (for example Miettinen 2011, 21; Moritz 2005, 25–27; Parker & Heapy 2006, 7; Pine & Gilmore 1998, 100). The capital-intensive industry, the so-called second stage of economic development, has shifted to a tertiary stage that is driven by knowledge-intensive services. As incomes rise, people’s material needs become satisfied, and needs become less material. Services within healthcare, education, and entertainment become more important. Nonetheless, labor productivity in services does not grow as fast as in agriculture or in industry because most service jobs require human labor. This makes services relatively expensive compared to agricultural or industrial goods, which further increases the percentage of GDP coming from services. (Curedale 2013, 25; Marger & Sung 2011.)

Mass and serial production have made products homogenous: wandering around the aisles in the supermarket and picking up the right washing powder from twenty similar options can be insignificant from the customer’s point of view. The market is full of products, and therefore companies need to find new ways of individualizing the offering to stand out in a highly competitive market. Selling, pricing, and advertising are no longer sufficient ways to reach out to the customer. (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Moritz 2005, 25–27.) Services are used to support product competitiveness and to add value. Many products are now functioning as platforms to services. (Moritz 2005, 25–27.) Charles Loving presents (2011, 31–40) a case study on how IBM changed its whole business model from product-based to service dominated offering. The transformation into technology services increased the contribution of services to annual revenue from 23.2 percent in 1992 to 57.2 percent in 2008. An indicator of the success is Interbrand’s global brand value survey that ranked IBM the 284th most valuable brand in 1994 and the second most valued technology brand in 2008. Pine & Gilmore (1998, 100; Loving 2011, 39) add that it is a manifestation of the maturity of the service economy that companies like IBM now generate greater profits from services, such as business- and technology consulting, than

from the actual goods they produce. According to Hollins & Shinkins (2006, 8), approximately 20 percent of the employees of manufacturing companies work in service roles.

The second trend is a change in customer demographics and in customer needs. Alteration is seen in the demographic demand segment factors, such as demographic development in society, notably the aging of population. Increased per-capita income levels, high income, elasticity of demand of services, female participation and urbanization are some of the reasons behind this development. (D'Agostino et al. 2006, 5–8; Wöfl 2005, 57.)

The customer has not been the focus when products have been mass-produced. The lack of research and design has led to bland and uncreative services, often with poor quality. Customers normally expect services that enable the use of products or make it easier, raise the standard of living, create space for personal freedom, and generate experiences. However, frustrations, unfriendly service staff, endless waiting, formalities, incompetence or a lack of responsibility characterizes many interactions with service organizations. (Mager 2004, 19.) Customers feel maltreated when they are facing situations like arguing over consumer rights and feeling ignored and misunderstood. Managers on the other hand might blame individual employees as the source of the malfunction. The underlying cause of service failure often is the lack of a systematic method for service design and control, and not human incompetence. Better service design can provide the key to market success and growth. (Parker & Heapy 2006, 7; Shostack 1984, 133–134.) Where once people accepted what they got, customers nowadays expect increasingly more. Customers have become more aware and conscious of their consumption. (Reason et al. 2016, 3.) Moritz (2005, 27) adds that customers are complicated individuals with important human needs and expectations that cannot be standardized. A strong relationship between an organization and its customers is a crucial factor for the survival of the organization and SD can help to build meaningful relationships.

Finally, the third big trend and an important characteristic in the new economy is the technology infusion. Technology has changed the relationship between customers and service providers. The internet, telecommunications, wireless computers, and other devices have opened up many extensive possibilities. Physical boundaries do not exist anymore, and one can for example conveniently access banking services online from a mobile phone anytime. (Edvardsson, Gustafsson, Johnsson & Sandén 2000, 14–15; Moritz 2005, 25–27.) Digital technologies have driven radical change and disruption in the service sector. Primary human-delivered services

are now mediated by a technology revolution. Financial advisory or banking services used to be face-to-face interactions, but now they happen increasingly often as self-service and online. Digitalization has impacted on almost every sector. However, despite the constant accessibility of services, technology can dehumanize and make it hard for the customer to navigate through the service. SD offers tools to smooth and to humanize technology. (Reason et al. 2016, 3–4.)

These trends in society and economics have been some of the reasons for the development of SD, which stands in the tradition of *product-* and *interface design* and connects with the expertise developed during several decades in *marketing*. However, SD goes beyond the foundations of design and marketing by focusing on more service-specific challenges with processes and methods to meet these challenges. (Mager 2009, 34–35.) SD also has roots in *design thinking* (Moritz 2004, 47). Lockwood (2009) elaborates that design thinking is essentially a human-centered design process that emphasizes observation, collaboration, fast-learning, rapid concept prototypes, visualization of ideas, and concurrent business analysis in an integrative and multidisciplinary manner. Generally, the term ‘design thinking’ refers to the designer’s sensibility and methods in problem solving. Roger & Eucner (2012) specify that design thinking is a mixture of analytical and intuitive thinking. It is a collaborative methodology that focuses on empathy and on people, with divergent and convergent phases, such as prototyping (Curedale 2012, 3).

Although it is a relatively new field of expertise, many designers and other professionals have been practicing service design without calling it by that name. The founding Dean and Professor at Köln International School of Design (KISD) Michael Erhoff introduced service design as a disciplinary field in 1991. (Curedale 2013, 4–7.) KISD was the first school that initiated an academic program in SD in 1992. The Polytechnic University of Milan, American Carnegie Mellon University and Swedish Linköping University followed this development and established SD as a subject of the academic field. Nowadays, universities concentrating on SD education can be found around the globe especially in the Nordic countries where design education enjoys a high level of innovation. (Mager 2009, 33; Miettinen 2011, Miettinen 2013, 6.)

As a discipline, SD operates in a new space between design-, marketing-, and research agencies and management consultancies (King & Mager 2009). Agencies operating in the field of SD, notably established companies like IDEO and Continuum, have shaped and formed the practices and the principles of SD successfully. London acts as a major hub for companies

working in this field, and by now, the field is spreading internationally, especially in Scandinavia. Numerous companies from distinct industries, from banks to hospitality and hospitals, are integrating SD as part of their organizational operations or on a project basis. Virgin Atlantic has, for example, its own SD department. The Service Design Network, initiated in 2004, connects and informs professionals and others interested in this growing discipline. (Mager 2009, 33–34.)

3.4 Definition and Principles of Service Design

As stated above in Chapter 3.2, there is no universally agreed definition for service design. There is, however, a great variety of descriptions, and there are also some commonly agreed characteristics.

According to Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry (1990, 157–158), service design has been one of the key challenges concerning service quality in the 1990s. It has become an important management issue (Grönroos 2015, 221). SD is a form of architecture that involves processes in order to bring high quality into the service system from the outset and studies and reacts to customers' expectations in favor of carefully designing the service elements (Zeithaml et al. 1990, 157–158). SD is an evolving approach – yet a young and new stand-alone academic discipline. A common definition or a clear terminology have not yet stabilized. (Stickdorn, & Schneider 2011, 29.) A SD frontline pioneer, Professor Birgit Mager (2009) defines service design as follows: service design aims to ensure that the service interfaces are useful, usable, and desirable from the customer's point of view and effective, efficient, and distinctive from the supplier's point of view. Moritz (2005, 6) adds that SD helps to develop new or to improve the existing services.

Mainly based on Mager's (2009) definition of service design, the SD literature confirms some main characteristics that describe the approach as follows:

SD is a *human-centric* design approach that *focuses on CX* and often has to understand the influence of human behavior. It explores the vivid world of emotions, experiences, and needs (Curedale 2013, 19; Mager 2009.) People are an essential part of services because only through people most services become alive, usually through complex choreographies (Saffer 2007, 179).

The SD approach is *holistic*; it looks at systems and subsystems of relationships and interactions. Strategic, system process, and touchpoint design decisions are considered in the same process. Services are living systems, and the context is taken into consideration. Mapping the service ecology and creating stakeholder maps are the first fundamental steps in understanding the system to be designed. (Mager 2009; Saco & Congalves 2008.)

SD work is often *interdisciplinary* by necessity. There are two sets of users to design for: the customers and the employees. SD projects connect users, stakeholders, and experts. Depending of the objective and the phase of a project, it can include various specialists from the client side, such as the marketing or IT department, or an external expert. The SD process embraces *co-creation* by those who are at the heart of the service. (Mager 2009; Mager & Sung 2011; Saffer 2007, 179–180.)

Service design is a *strategic* approach that combines different methods and tools from various disciplines (Stickdorn, & Schneider 2011, 29). It also integrates as an important, substantial, and incremental part of business strategy, not just as a decorative approach (Mager 2009).

Service design is creative and *visual*; it goes beyond the given, challenges the existing beliefs, and orchestrates viable solutions that do not yet exist (Mager 2009). Design research and visualization help create a holistic understanding where ideas can be visually presented in pictures, videos, or drawings. (Miettinen 2011, 13–22.)

Service design combines cultural and social interaction with design methods. It is part of a bigger process, in which the emphasis of product design has shifted towards creating new ideas on the basis of work done with the customers. Understanding the customer is the basis for SD, which talks about customers, customer experience, users, and user experience. The service business has changed the customer's role from the receiver to an active party. (Miettinen 2011, 13–22.) SD is the design of the overall experience, strategy, and process of a service (Moritz 2005, 39). SD reacts to new environments and needs. In SD, value is built by new means, such as experiences that emphasize the satisfaction of common needs. In this context, the users produce information that is interpreted for the design of services. (Miettinen 2011, 26–30.)

3.5 Who is a Service Designer?

Since design has evolved, new fields have opened up for designers. Designers with a traditional design education have expanded their field of expertise to meet the new market needs and possibilities. New roles, such as service-, interaction-, gender-, and experience design have emerged. Design has also opened up as a new field for people considered non-designers with multidisciplinary approaches. SD is a multidisciplinary platform that enables the collaboration of people from various backgrounds and with different expertise. (Moritz 2005, 34–35, 85.) Various organizations, multidisciplinary design teams, and networks have arisen (Mattelmäki 2006, 36). Tuulaniemi (2011, 68–69) talks about the democratization of design. SD gathers professionals from various fields, such as analytics, graphic designers, engineers, cultural anthropologists, economists, marketers, industrial designers, and so forth. These people add research-, design-, business-, and technical knowledge to the projects. Design connects various types of people, knowledge, and disciplines in a new way to collaborate and to work in projects. Working closely with experts from another field is a necessity (Hämäläinen & Lammi 2009, 190). John Thackara (2005, 226) even states that everybody is a designer now.

Designers have to understand and bond the value, the meaning, and the usage of a product/service to the users' everyday life. Service designers take a deep dive into the service ecologies and explore the vivid world of the needs, emotions, and experiences of users and providers. Service designers concentrate on how people experience the provided services. (Mager 2009, 35, 38; Miettinen 2011, 26–30.) Service designers should be aware of the starting points and of the complex emotional journeys on which people are induced (Parker & Heapy 2006). Furthermore, Mager (2009) points up that a service designer should be radical in his/her thinking. They should challenge the existing, rethink, reinvent, and make sure the end result is not only a minor decorative improvement realized in order to avoid 'hurting' stakeholders during the design process.

3.6 Service Design Tools & Methods

In SD, methods and tools are used to make the service experience consistent, desirable, useful, viable, in line with the brand, and commercially successful. For customers, this can mean a better customer experience and for companies, this can create additional value, differentiation

features, better use of resources, and a desirable connection with the customers. (Moritz 2005, 40.) SD methods are both an evolution of marketing-, management-, and design tools and the result of a dedicated design approach (Maffei, Mager & Sangiorgi 2005, 6). Moreover, the tools are drawn from social anthropology, linguistics, market research, organizational design, and from quality management approaches, like process- and customer experience management (Saco & Goncalves 2008). In service design, customer research is made for understanding the users – what is meaningful for them and their true motives. Research functions as inspiration and support for the design. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 153.)

The main and distinctive focus of SD tools is the design, description, and visualization of the *user experience*. Interactions, paths, and choices are illustrated with flow diagrams, storyboards, use cases, video sketching, dramaturgy, and the customer journey, etc. Other tools, such as blueprints, service system maps, etc. demonstrate the complexity of the service organization. (Maffei et al. 2005, 6.) The application of tools is situational and depends largely on the service project, on the available resources, and on the objectives (Saco & Goncalves 2008). SD methods are capable of developing design solutions to meet human needs, even before the needs are identified (Curedale 2013, 19). Throughout the design process, service designers usually work visually, which means that ideas and solutions are formulated and choreographed visually into visible or tangible forms. Ideas gain a new dimension of life as soon as they are visualized. This is not only stimulating but it also helps to construct complex processes and to see the 'big picture'. Mockups, prototypes and storyboards are some of the tools and methods applied. (Mager 2009, 35, 38; Miettinen 2011, 26–30.) Good methodological knowledge and practical fieldwork skills in applying and in innovating are essential for service designers (Miettinen 2009, 76).

As explained in Chapters 1.2 and 1.7, the purpose of this thesis is not to form a comprehensive list of all possible SD tools and methods, but rather to highlight the most relevant ones regarding this research project. This study aims to examine the service design methodology in relation with the customer experience in the context of record stores. The selected SD tools and methodologies concentrate on knowing the people and the context (Curedale 2013). We will look in detail at the selected SD tools, *personas* and the *customer experience map*, give them definitions, examine their usage, and investigate why they are used in SD research.

3.6.1 Personas

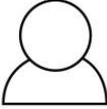
Personas are a tool invented by Alan Cooper in 1998 (Curedale 2013). Personas have a strong link to the scenarios-tool, which has long been used to organize, to justify, and to communicate ideas. Personas are a method for enhancing engagement and reality, and they can be used side by side with other methods. (Grudin & Pruitt 2002.) A persona is a fictional “character” that presents and merges patterns that have been identified from the research insights (Moritz 2005, 228). Designers should devise personas by observing and talking to users (Saffer 2007, 97). Stickdorn and Schneider (2011, 178–179) add that most personas are developed and collated from research insights into common-interest groups through interviews, shadowing, and the like. A single finding from the research data can be remarkable, but it is even more important to observe how the group or the ‘tribe’ operates (Tuulaniemi 2011, 154).

Personas are created to represent the various user types of a certain group based on their shared interests. These characters are given names, photos, and details relevant to the task at hand, ensuring that different customer segments of the product or brand are given a voice. (Moule 2012, 71; Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 178–179.) See Figure 4 for a Persona Canvas example. Grudin & Pruitt (2002) emphasize the human perspective of personas by stating that they are fictional people with demographic attributes, such as age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status, and with other attributes, such as likenesses, clothes, occupations, families, friends, pets, possessions, and so forth. They have life stories, goals, and tasks. According to Saffer (2007, 98), most of all, pictures will humanize them and make them memorable. The persona document should clearly state the behaviors, motivations, and goals that make the characters individual. Quotes are pulled out from the actual research for distinguishing and identification. See Figure 9 and Figure 10 for a persona example drawn from the empirical research.

Instead of grouping people on the basis of demographics or interests, personas help to identify relevant patterns that cluster qualitative findings. In SD, this is very relevant, because it enables a more detailed and personalized understanding of a group of customers. Personas can help the design team to see people as individuals and reference them in different design decisions. (Moritz 2005, 228.) Personas represent a character with which a design team and client can engage. The key to a successful and functional persona is in its engagement, thus many

techniques, ranging from visual representations to detailed anecdotal profiles, can be used to bring these profiles to life. (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 178–179.)

PERSONA CANVAS Persona type _____ Author _____ Date _____ [BDT]

 Name _____ Age _____ Occupation _____ Internal trigger _____ Technology used/Fave apps _____	Statement/behaviour	What am I like	What I do in my free time
	Where to reach me	What makes me get involved	Challenges to engagement
Reasons to use your product/service		Reasons not to use your product/service	

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Figure 4: Persona Canvas by Giulia Piu (Business Design Tools 2016)

Grudin & Pruitt (2002) suggest that people often find fictional people engaging in soap operas and in dramatic series. Dramatic figures, however, are not needed for personas. Even though personas are fictional, effective personas can present the needs and wants, the motivations, and the reactions of real people (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 178–179.) As a rule of thumb, one to seven personas should be a sufficient number of personas per project (Saffer 2007, 97). Design personas can be followed by building customer journeys (Curedale 2013, 210). Basing the customer experience map around personas gives them much more meaning and empathic engagement than just names on a page (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 178). Next we shall have a look of the customer experience map tool.

3.6.2 Customer Experience Map

The customer experience map, also called the *customer journey map*, is a method of documenting and visualizing customer experiences and responses while the customers use a product or service (Curedale 2013, 119). Services are processes that happen over time with multiple service moments. Every service is composed of discrete moments, and for each service moment, a touchpoint should be created. The 'service chain' concept is commonly used in services marketing and easily mixed up with the service journey. In the service chain, customers are seen as a mass of people that mainly follow the process provided by the service organization. The concept of customer journey, instead, makes note that customers follow the process but they also make their own choices based on needs and individual behavior. When all service moments are connected and recognized, the customer journey is founded. (Koivisto 2011; Saffer 2007, 176–179.) A typical customer journey is multichannel and time-based. Customers might get information from various sources, some of which, like friends and family, are beyond the service provider's reach and control. (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 160.) Customer experience or journey mapping is a strategic management tool used by academics and practitioners (Rosenbaum, Otolara, & Ramírez 2017).

The customer experience map is a vivid but structured visualization of a service user's experience, for example a physical trip in a building (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 158). Mapping allows the research team to access and to analyze the integrating factors that form CX. It presents an overview of CX from the customer's point of view and helps to develop consistency and predictability to it. (Curedale 2013, 119.) Hämäläinen & Lammi (2009, 188) emphasize that acquiring user information and modeling the existing service journey requires that companies recognize and look at these encounters from the customer's perspective.

The tool is used to identify the touchpoints where a user interacts with the service. These touchpoints can take many forms, from a personal face-to-face contact to virtual interactions with a website service. The identified touchpoints are constructed into a "journey" that is an engaging story based on user insights into their experiences. The story details the service interactions and the accompanying emotions in an accessible manner. Once the touchpoints are identified, they can be mapped to form an engaging visual presentation of the overall experience with a sufficient amount of detail from real user insight. An overview of the map enables identifying possible problem areas and opportunities for innovation. Focusing on

specific touchpoints allows the breakdown of service experiences in individual stages for further analysis. (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 158–159.) In their research on a shopping mall, Rosenbaum et al. (2017) claim that not each horizontal touchpoint is equivalent, but on the contrary, some are more important for the customers than others, and the users of the customer experience map tool should put more emphasis on the particular touchpoints that are important from the customers' perspective.

As illustrated in Figure 5, in a customer journey map, the timeline is often divided into three periods: pre-service, service and post-service (Stickdorn & Schneider 2016). The pre-service period refers to the customer experience before the service begins, such as seeing and hearing advertisement or receiving an email solicitation. The service period occurs at the touchpoints where the customer actually receives the service: *entering the shop, engaging with the employees, and purchasing*. The post-service period refers to the customer experience after the service, which may include posting a picture of a purchased item on social media, returning merchandise, or receiving an incentive to return to the shop. The vertical axis of the customer experience map should include managerial cross-functional actions that are directly linked to the touchpoints. (Rosenbaum et al. 2017.)

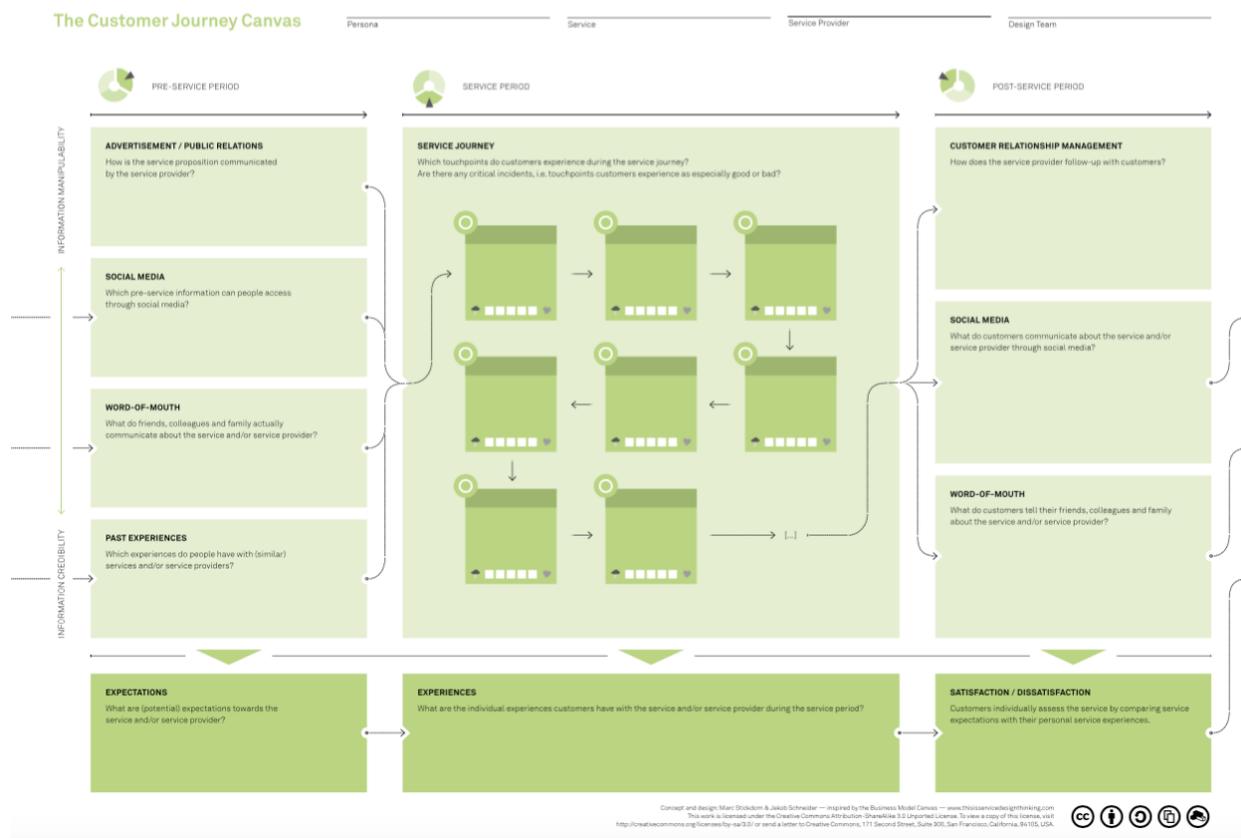


Figure 5: The Customer Journey Canvas (Stickdorn & Schneider 2016)

In summary, the contemporary service economy presents three trends: the expansion of the service sector has resulted in an increase of the proportion of services in economies, a change in the customers' needs from material to immaterial is taking place, and technology and digitalization have changed the interaction between the customers and the service providers. These trends set the context in which SD has emerged. Service design can be defined as a human-centric, customer-centered, holistic, interdisciplinary, strategic, creative, innovative, and visual approach to creating new or improving existing services in order for the services to satisfy both the customers' needs and wants for usefulness, usability, and desirability as well as the service providers' needs for efficiency. Service design tools *personas* and the *customer experience map* were introduced in detail.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter presents the empirical research methodology of the study together with the study design and the data collection. The record stores studied as cases are presented individually. We also take a look into data analysis methods and assess the reliability and the validity of the study.

4.1 Study Design

As stated in Chapter 1, this study examines customer experience through service design methods in the context of record stores. The empirical research has been conducted using a *multiple-case study* approach and qualitative methods. (Yin 2009, p. 53–57). The study applies an existing theory and framework to the gathered empirical data; hence the approach is deductive (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 95).

According to Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2007, 157–161), the main principle of *qualitative research* is to present real life phenomena and to research them as comprehensively as possible. In *ethnographic research*, people's actions are studied and data is collected in the field in a 'natural' setting that is not set up for research purposes (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 3–4). The 'voice' and the user perspective are highlighted, and methods such as *theme interview* and *participatory observation* are favored. The research events are to be handled as unique opportunities, accepting that the nature of the research is evolving rather than consistent. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2007, 157–161; Curedale 2013, 36.)

Considering the aspects of voice and user perspective, when designing services at the level of individual touchpoints and service moments, the focus should be on the environment where the service takes place. What customers might perceive subconsciously with their senses has a profound impact on the service experience, and designers can reach an advised awareness of that perception through interviews (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 44). Acquiring customer insight through interviews is a typical ethnographic research method used to understand the customer's *life, thoughts, motives, and experiences*. The research data is used as a source of inspiration and to guide design. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 147.) Kettunen (2000, 33–37) calls attention to the importance of interviewing and observing the actual users, as the designer is not necessarily the

typical user of the product or the service. User observation can produce valuable research material on usability.

4.2 Data Collection

As explained above, a multiple-case study approach is used in this study. Three record stores, Bikini Waxx Records, OYE Records in Berlin, Germany, and Mind Records in Helsinki, Finland, were contacted in the hope of getting them to participate as empirical cases. These stores were selected on the grounds of their focus on electronic music, especially techno and house, and their small size that would allow the cases to be comparable. All of the companies agreed to participate in the research at their stores. The focus was on understanding, *in order to create a certain kind of profile of the customers that visit the stores* and to see how the *customer experience* is currently constructed in these stores. Appendix 1 illustrates the empirical research work made in each store. The data collection was a three-phase process:

First, the data collection included **direct observation** by the author at the case record stores. According to Curedale (2013, 202), direct observation is a method in which at the time of events, activities, or tasks, a researcher observes and records them. Applying the research method started with getting to know the space and identifying the touchpoints. An Observation Outline Guide (see Appendix 2) was created on computer, printed, and used as a basis for the direct observation. The observation examined things such as the general atmosphere, the number of staff and their behavior, the service attitude, the interaction with the customer, customer service, the customer base (approximate age and gender), the customers' behavior at the shop, and the purchasing process. Photographs were also taken to support the observation.

Secondly, in order to comprehend the profiles of the customers of the record stores, short **semi-structured face-to-face interviews** were made in each store. Theme- or semi-structured interviews operate with pre-selected themes and a set of questions. The method allows the interviewer to apply intuitive and experimental thinking to the question framework and to change the order and the entire set of questions, if necessary. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 74–75; Ruusuvoori & Tiittula 2005; Yin 2003, 91.) The customer interviews followed loosely an Interview Outline Guide for Customers that was created beforehand for the interviews (see Appendix 3), and depending on the customer's situation and responses, the set of realized

questions and their order varied individually. Table 2 presents the themes for the customer interviews.

Table 2: Themes for the Customer Interviews

Theme	Questions
Personal	Forename, age, nationality, and city (occupation)
Records	Customer's consumption habits; do they buy records, how they buy music (online or offline), preference in music format (physical or digital) ,how often and why they buy records.
Store	Whether the shop in question was familiar to the customer in advance; whether the location was easy to find; what was the purpose of the visit (seeking something special or browsing). The customers were asked to describe the store in terms of how they sensed the space and the atmosphere and to tell about their first-hand observations. Questions were made also about specific touchpoints, such as the record listening setups.
Service/Customer Experience	Interaction with the staff, service quality, the shopping process, and the customer experience as a whole were in focus.

In the beginning of each customer interview, the author presented herself and described the research project shortly. The customers' estimated time of arrival and the time spent in the store was observed. The customers' time frame at the store excludes the interview time, and therefore it reflects the actual time spent at the store naturally. The selection criteria for the customer interviews were *random* to get the most representative image of the customer types that the record stores have. Of the total of 18 interviewees, four were female and 14 were male. Their ages ranged from 21 to 42 years with an average age of 30 years. The average duration of the interview was 11:51 minutes at all stores. Table 3 demonstrates the profiles of the interviewed record store visitor. The visitor profiles are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.3.1.

Table 3: Record Store Visitor Profiles

Record Store	Interview wee	Age and Gender	Nationality and City	Visitor Profile
Bikini Waxx Records	1	28, Female	Dutch/Berlin	Buys records seldom, for listening
Bikini Waxx Records	2	22, Male	German/Berlin	dj who prefers vinyl
Bikini Waxx Records	3	26, Male	French/Berlin	dj, mostly vinyl
Bikini Waxx Records	4	25, Male	French/Lisbon	Collector and a dj
Bikini Waxx Records	5	36, Male	German/Munich	dj
Bikini Waxx Records	6	22, Female	German/Berlin	dj
OYE Records	7	38, Male	German/Berlin	Loyal customer, collector
OYE Records	8	36, Male	New Zealander/ Auckland	Buys music primarily for music production, dj
OYE Records	9	21, Male	French/Berlin	Recently started dj'ing
OYE Records	10	25, Male	New Zealander/Berlin	dj who runs an independent record label
OYE Records	11	33, Female	German/Berlin	dj
OYE Records	12	42, Male	Macedonian/Skopje	dj, Radio producer
Mind Records	13	34, Male	Finnish/Helsinki	Buys music mostly for listening, occasionally djs
Mind Records	14	30, Male	Finnish/Helsinki	Music Producer, dj
Mind Records	15	32, Male	Finnish/Helsinki	Buys music mostly for listening, occasionally djs
Mind Records	16	33, Male	Finnish/Helsinki	Collector, dj
Mind Records	17	34, Female	Finnish/Helsinki	dj, Radio Host
Mind Records	18	25, Male	Finnish/Helsinki	Buys music mostly for listening, dj

Each research day, technical data collection started with setting up the research gear, which included a Zoom H4N for audio recording. Some interviews were also double recorded with QuickTime Player. An Olympus E-M1 was used for pictures and videos. In addition, a GoPro

Hero4 and a 360fly 4K were used to support identifying the store layouts. They were placed at the positions that would allow filming most of the store surface. The customers were informed of the filming with a note at the entrance. According to Smith (2003) from the American Psychological Association, the research ethics require that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with the interviewees. Before the interviews, the interviewees were asked for their consent for the recording of the interviews and explained how the audio data would be used. The interviewees' first names were replaced with an anonymous indication of only gender and age.

In the beginning of the empirical research, at the first case location, Bikini Waxx Records, three individual customers were greeted at the entrance, and the research project was shortly explained to them. From their part, the research started with a short *shadowing* exercise where they were encouraged to explain their observations and behavior aloud. Shadowing is observing people in context. The researcher accompanies the user and observes their experiences and activities. (Curedale 2013, 233.) Some questions were asked, following the prepared Interview Outline Guide in a flexible way, sometimes while the interviewees browsed for records. The customers were left their own time to browse for records and to listen to them. After the purchasing, they were interviewed again about their whole experience. This two-stage method turned out to be challenging as two interviewees were at the store at the same time, and it was possible that they exit at the same time, which would result in losing one of the latter interviews.

Starting from the second research day, the method was changed to interviewing customers only once at the time they were leaving to get data on the entire customer experience. As the first three interviews that were carried out with the two-stage interviewing method followed nonetheless the same semi-structured Interview Outline Guide as the latter interviews, the responses were included in the study. In addition, at OYE Records, one interview was with the help of an employee of the store who kindly acted as an interpreter between the German-speaking interviewee and the interviewer who was using English. However, due to the intimate nature of the interview questions, for example, about the interviewee's personal feelings about the store, the author decided to exclude that particular interview from the study.

Thirdly, the author faced some challenges during the gathering of the empirical research data. Gathering responses from the customers took time as customers could spend hours at the record store, listening to music, and so forth. Also, some potential interviews were missed out,

as the potential interviewees left the shop while an interview was going on. Interviews of the **record store keepers** turned out to be challenging due to their hectic schedules. The purpose of these interviews was to understand the business and the operative side of keeping a record store; what it takes for a vinyl record to end up on a shelf in a customer's home. However, Jussi Uusitalo from Mind Records was interviewed face-to-face on November 11, 2016 in Helsinki, Finland. For the questions, an Interview Outline Guide for Record Store Keepers (Appendix 4) was created and used, and the interview was recorded with QuickTime Player (Mac) and a Zoom H4N. The challenges in acquiring record store keeper interviews from OYE Records and Bikini Waxx Records led to narrowing down the research scope into a more customer-centered view.

4.3 Case Descriptions

This multiple-case study includes three record stores as cases. The stores were selected on the basis of their relatively small size, their stock selection of electronic music – more specifically, house and techno music – and their accessibility. The case companies are Bikini Waxx Records, OYE Records in Berlin, Germany, and Mind Records in Helsinki, Finland. In the following subchapters, the stores are presented individually.

4.3.1 Bikini Waxx Records

Bikini Waxx Records was officially founded in 2013 when the founder Gerd Tammist moved to Berlin, Germany, from Estonia to study. The record store started from the passion for finding music. Tammist took a loan and started to sell records in quite a curious manner: at his own home. He explains that it was due to a lack of resources and to a willingness to create a new concept for a record store. Awareness of the store's existence happened mostly via word of mouth. (dBs Music Berlin 2016.) Customers were requested to reserve time for record digging, and some of them were surprised that the store was actually operated from a home. In the late 2015, Bikini Waxx was inaugurated in a brick and mortar store in the same district at Manteuffelstrasse 48 with an official business space open from Monday to Saturday. (Möttus 2015.) Until the opening of the physical store, Bikini Waxx was run as a solo project, but nowadays it employs four persons (dBs Music Berlin 2016).

Bikini Waxx offers a music selection of house, techno, electro, disco, soul, jazz, and world music in both new releases and second hand. Bikini Waxx has hosted in-store sessions, and there have been discussions of starting their own music label – and also a distribution company. (dBs Music Berlin 2016; Möttus 2015)

4.3.2 OYE Records

OYE Records, which stands for 'Oye Como Va' was founded in 2002 by Tinko Rohst in Prenzlauer Berg district in Berlin, Germany. The store is still located in its original site, but more rooms have been opened for the customers, and stock quantity has increased since the opening. (Pirnog 2015.) In addition, in 2013, OYE Records opened a second, smaller one-room store in Neukölln or the Kreuzköllner Kiez precinct for a more accessible location for the regular customers (Fersch 2013).

Initially, the selection was more concentrated on brazil, latin, funk & soul, and jazz records (Pirnog 2015). Over the years, OYE has shifted more towards electronic music, namely house and techno, as well as hip hop (Discogs Blog 2016). Due to the small size of the Kreuzköllner Kiez store, it has a more focused selection of mainly house, techno, neo-disco, and bass music (Fersch 2013). OYE has a philosophy to be diverse and to filter the best of a lot of genres for their customers, which, according to the co-owner Markus Lindner, is not always an easy job (Pirnog 2015). Lindner was a regular customer of the store, and Rohst asked him to play records at an event. Soon after, in 2006, Lindner started working at the store, and in 2007, became partners with Rohst. Currently OYE employs around ten employees who are also active in the music scene. (Pirnog 2015; Discogs Blog 2016.)

OYE is well known for a diverse selection and a recommended place for crate digging. The store also has a culture of openness and functions as a prominent meeting place for djs, music producers, label managers, and promoters. (Pirnog 2015.) In addition, OYE hosts in-store gigs for artists and djs, as well as events in established Berlin clubs. They also make exclusive releases with in-house labels and collaborate with other labels (Discogs Blog 2016; Fersch 2013.)

4.3.3 Mind Records

Mind Records originated from Turku, Finland, where Marko Laine started the company in 1995 as a mail order company after he had parted from Groove Beat Records. In 1996, the city saw the brick and mortar store, although most of the orders were delivered via mail. The purpose of the store was to function more as a cultural meeting place and to boost marketing. (Mononen 2015, 261–263) Mind Records Store Manager Jussi Uusitalo (2016) tells that the store was located in the Kupittaa district and later on, in the center of Turku until 2001 and had three employees. During 1999–2000, the company had a second store in Helsinki for half a year with two employees.

In September 2016, Mind Records opened again in the Kallio district, in Helsinki. (Uusitalo 2016.) The emphasis was – again – on creating a meeting place where people can relax after work and listen to music (Kärppä 2016). Mind Records recognized the demand for a store that would concentrate on electronic music and bring the electronic music community together (Uusitalo 2016). In January 2017, Mind Records moved into a 50m² one-room business space in an inner yard in the Kaisaniemi district in the Helsinki city center. Currently, Mind Records has four employees (Mind Records 2017). Mind Records focuses purely on electronic dance music, mainly on house and techno vinyl records. They have a selection of new releases and a relatively large second hand variety. The store hosts weekly in-store gigs with labels, djs, and artists.

4.4 Data Analysis

After the empirical research, both the customer interviews and the record store keeper interview were transcribed to form a basis for the data analysis (Hirsjärvi et al. 2013, 222). The transcriptions of the customer interviews are attached as appendices (see Appendices 5, 6, and 7). The transcribed material was analyzed using the qualitative research methods presented in Chapter 4.1. The customer interview responses indicated saturation already at the first two record stores, but the author continued studying the third case as planned. Usually, ethnographic research data records, such as observations and interview transcripts, are stored in chronological order. In the process of analysis, however, data is reorganized into themes and categories. (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 152.) The empirical data of this study was coded in

categories (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009) using the *Atlas.ti software*. With the software, codes and quotes were drawn from the user data. After the analysis, the results were interpreted, and conclusions were drawn (Hirsjärvi et al. 2013, 229).

The observations and the photographs taken at the stores were used as a basis for 3D models, were created to visualize the case store layouts and identified touchpoints. The photographs were formed as a photo canvas of each store to work as a base for the 3D models, as well as help to form an understanding of each store (see Appendix 8). The 3D models were created with SketchUp and finalized with Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. Based on the customer interviews, personas and customer experience maps were created with Adobe Illustrator to visualize an identified record store visitor profile. *Skalgubbars*, i.e., pictures of people for visualization purposes (2014) were used in the 3D models to give an understanding of architectural proportions, and for the personas, to bring the visualizations to life.

4.5 Reliability and Validity

In the scientific literature, research methodologies are evaluated with the criteria of reliability and validity (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 136). According to Collis & Hussey (2003, 58–59), findings are reliable if and when a second, repeated research obtains the same result as the first one. The objective of reliability is that a latter investigator can repeat the operations of the study, such as data collection procedures, and obtain the same results as the prior investigator (Yin 2003, 35–37). The empirical study was conducted in three record stores with a three-phase method: *direct observation*, *customer interviews* and *a record store keeper interview*. The process of preparation for data collecting, and the analysis of empirical data are presented in this study. All observations were made on-site and reported in detail later on. All interviews followed Interview Outline Guides, some more rigorously than others. A challenge for reliability, which the interviews of this study might face, is that every person is an individual and forms their own opinions. However, with careful research design, it was made sure that the responses showed saturation.

The research and the findings are valid if they represent the phenomena claimed to be under research (Collis & Hussey 2003, 58–59; Tuomi Sarajärvi 2009, 136). In Chapter 1.2, the author states the research objectives and -questions. The objectives of the study are to understand SD

and CX in theory and to apply this understanding in practice in the context of record stores. Three record stores were selected as cases, and the empirical data was collected through interviews and analyzed using selected SD methods presented in Chapter 3.6.1 and in Chapter 3.6.2. The author concludes that the performed research is reliable and valid.

In summary, this study has a multiple-case study approach and examines three record stores selected on the basis of their specialization in electronic music. The stores are Bikini Waxx Records and OYE Records in Germany, and Mind Records in Finland. The cases were studied with qualitative and ethnographic research methods that were divided into three phases: *direct observation* and *semi-structured interviews with the record store customers* at each store, and a *semi-structured interview with one record store keeper*. The empirical research data was transcribed and stored in chronological order. In the analysis phase, the data was reorganized into themes and categories and coded with the Atlas.ti software. In conclusion, the scientific objectives of reliability and validity were achieved.

5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The following sections contain the empirical findings of the study and their analysis. To answer the main research question “*How can service design improve customer experience in the context of record stores?*” different service design methods and anthropological research methods were used as presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The analysis is made according to the three research sub-questions, and it is divided accordingly into three main sections. The answers to the research sub-questions provide theoretical and managerial implications, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

5.1 Physical Customer Experience in Record Stores

To answer the first research sub-question “*How is customer experience constructed in record stores?*” this chapter focuses on identifying the physical customer experience elements. The focus of the findings is on describing the stores and on identifying their touchpoints, atmospherics, and characteristic elements, such as record division styles, in the light of existing theory. The findings on each case are presented individually to construct a better understanding of the store in question.

5.1.1 Bikini Waxx Records

Empirical research was done at Bikini Waxx Records on November 2 and 3, 2016 from the afternoon until evening. At the time of writing and research, Bikini Waxx Records was located in Manteuffelstraße 48, 10999 in the Kreuzberg district in Berlin, Germany. See Appendix 8 Bikini Waxx Record’s photo collage. In Milliman and Turley’s (2000) definition, atmospherics refer to the tangible and intangible elements that influence the subjective experience of the customers, especially pleasure and arousal. External variables include elements like address and location, entrance, and building architecture. To enter Bikini Waxx Records, one has to ring a doorbell to get into the inner yard, where a separate two-floor building can be found. After a pass through the patio with sofas and plants, there is a door that leads to the store. When asked if the store

was easy to find, the customers responded that some confusion arose finding the store, either just when entering the inner yard or because of false address information on the social media. In general, although the store is located in an inner yard, also new visitors found it with ease. *“Well, I mean once I know but when you don’t know, it’s a bit confusing, because you don’t recognize just a sign at the door immediately, so I was asking directions from the store next to it in the first time.”* (Female, 22). *“It’s— a bit escondido [hidden]. —in the Facebook I think it’s another direction, and when I searched for the direction, it was another one and I saw in — pictures one in the commentary: ‘now we have changed a direction’, so — thanks to this picture I’m in the right direction now.”* (Male, 25)

Layout and design variables include space design and allocation, cash register placement, workstation placement, and furniture (Milliman & Turley 2000). At the store, there is a small selection of kitchen supplies, such as a microwave and a coffee maker, immediately in front of the entrance door. Beside the entrance door, there is a clothing rack and a toilet. The service counter and the main section of records are downstairs. At the store, the records are divided either by genre, e.g., disco, funk, house, and techno; by price, or by description, e.g., deep Detroit, Rominimal, lofi-house, and warm pads. Records are not price tagged at Bikini Waxx, unless they are on sale at a reduced price. During the shopping process, the customer collects the desired items, and an employee checks the prices from the stock list on Google Drive. The employees play the store’s music on a vinyl player located next to the cash register. The music includes ‘staff picks’, i.e., selected records, which are placed on the wall. A small selection of merchandise, such as record label T-shirts, hangs next to the window.

Wooden stairs with a metal handrail lead upstairs, where there is an office space for workers, three record listening setups for customers, and a small quantity of secondhand records. Placing the turntables for record listening upstairs may result in customers not noticing them. When asked if she had noticed the listening setups, a customer replied: *“No? That’s upstairs I guess.”* (Female, 28). *Some customers felt that carrying records upstairs was a small obstacle: “I went up to with a stack of records, listened to them, then came back [downstairs] and then found one more but then I was like ah the thing [the stairs] is really steep and I’m not really sure if I want to go back for this one record and then I didn’t listen to it. —”* (Male, 36). *“— The stairs are sometimes a bit tricky, I need to say.—”* (Female, 22).

As established in Chapter 2.3, a touchpoint is any occasion where the customer encounters a brand and a product, from casual observation to an actual personal experience or mass communications (Kotler et al. 2009, 397), and at any time (Rawson et al. 2013, 1). Experiencing the service and the brand with the senses forms the fundamental elements of a service (Koivisto 2011, 51; Moritz 2005, 44; Parker & Heapy 2006). Figure 6 illustrates the store layout and the identified touchpoints of Bikini Waxx Records.

The general atmosphere is relaxed and casual. Two staff members were present during both research days; most of the time, one was working upstairs in an *office* corner and the other at the service counter downstairs. Customers are served with a friendly attitude; if someone asks about a specific record or about an event, a recommendation is given. On the first research day, many customers came seeking for the latest release of a certain EP that was limited to one copy per customer. When the EP was sold out, the customers without a copy either left the store directly or stayed to browse. Some customers seemed to know the store very well and headed directly to the record shelves or to the service counter to ask about a specific record or about a pre-order, while others wondered around at first and then started browsing records, listening to them upstairs, asking prices, and purchasing. Neither of the two research days was busy for the store, so customers were served directly without having to wait.

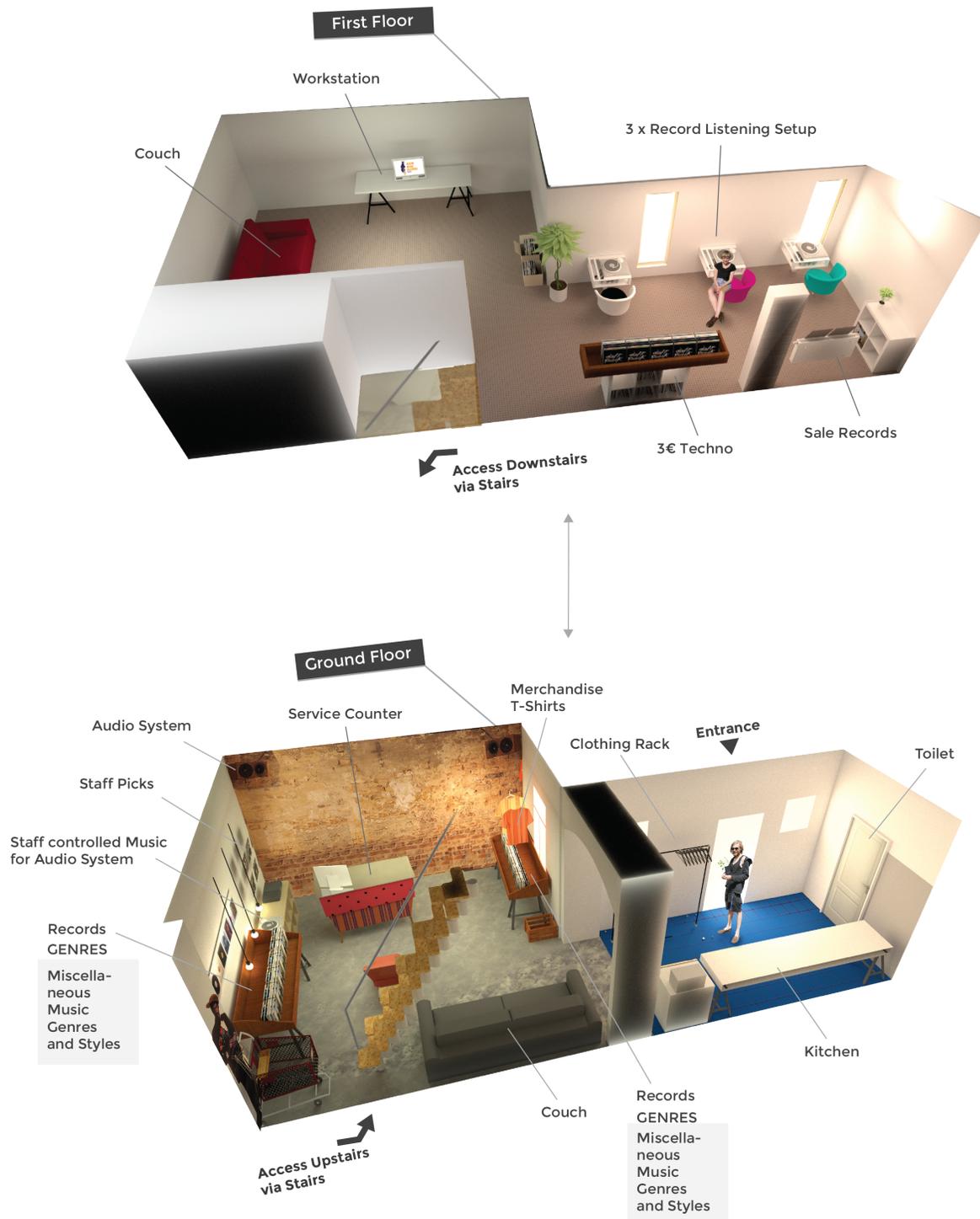


Figure 6: Bikini Waxe Records 3D Store Layout Model with Identified Touchpoints

5.1.2 OYE Records

OYE Records has two stores in Berlin, Germany. The main store is in Prenzlauer Berg, and the smaller one is in Kreuzkoelln. The research was conducted at the main store, on November 8, 2016, 13:30 p.m.–17:00 p.m. See Appendix 8 OYE Record's photo collage. The store is divided into three different rooms according to the music styles. Figure 7 demonstrates OYE Record's store layout and identified touchpoints. In the main room one first enters, there are sale items, four record listening setups for customers, and a *news section* that contains the latest record releases of various types of music, mostly house and techno. All records are priced, labeled with the music genre, and equipped with a small description of the style on a sticker on the outer record sleeve. In addition to records, also cassettes, CDs, T-shirts of record labels, and OYE merchandise can be found at the store, mainly in the main room. Staff picks, i.e., a highlighted selection of records, are presented on the wall nearest to the service counter. There is also a couch for taking a break or for people to leave their coats.

The second room is decorated in a distinctive manner with a floral pattern on the wall and has a wide selection of different types of music, such as disco, electronica, funk, soul, world, etc. According to Tuulaniemi (2011, 80–84), the physical service environment can have a great impact on customer experience. Well-planned and functional spaces are a trending subject for service design. The third room can be accessed through a short hallway from the main room and contains mostly electronic music with an emphasis on house and nu-disco. The interviewees made positive comments on the selection and the division of records: “— *well stocked. Good diversity of music, well organized.*” (Male, 25). “*Big list of tasty music, very good choice [selection]. You don't lose too much time for choosing, and it's very well organized.*” (Male, 42). Customers have one record listening setup. There are also two workstations and one record stock shelf for the employees. The third room, however, felt unclear to one customer:

I don't know if I can go back there [points to the third room with electronic music], because it's a thing. But I think I can, it doesn't say I couldn't. It's maybe because here is the counter, so then [the other room] feels like a storeroom. But that one [second smaller room] doesn't feel like a storeroom, but more like oh, more records. — there are people talking about records, which makes me nervous. If there would be a sign 'more records' with explanation mark, I'd be in it. (Male, 36)

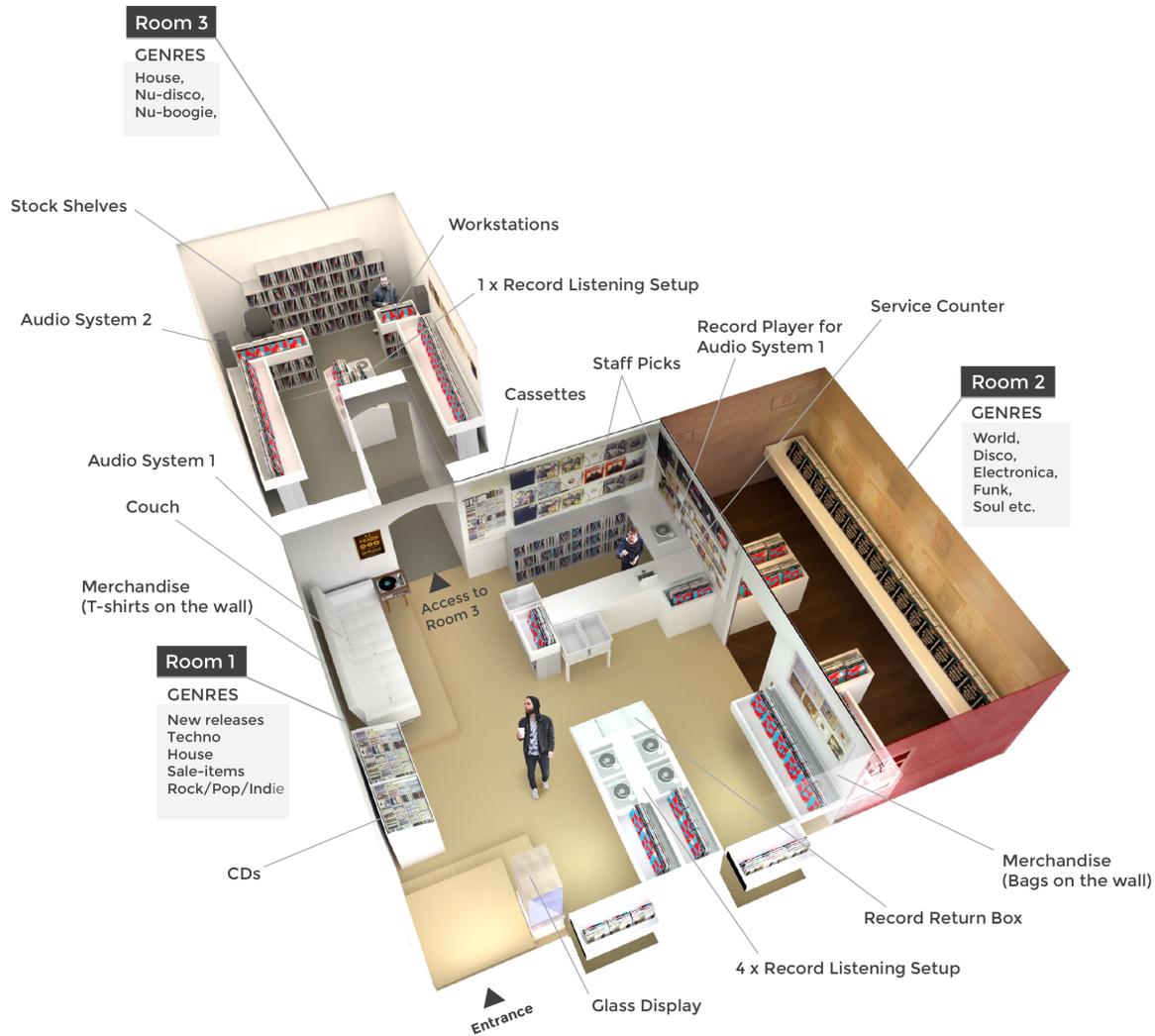


Figure 7: OYE Records 3D Store Layout Model with Identified Touchpoints

As we established in Chapter 2.2, according to Puccinelli et al. (2009), *music* can be an incorporated background factor that reinforces holistic perceptions and makes a provider stand out. Pleasant music can help the customer have a pleasant feeling (Turley & Milliman 2000). As for a record store that sells music, playing records in the store not only helps to generate the desired mood, but also to get familiar with new stock items as well as to introduce them to the customers. The general atmosphere in OYE Records is relaxed, while one staff member serves a steady flow of customers from behind the service counter. He plays music on a separate record player next to the service counter. Different music is played in the main room and in the third room. However, the employees control both audio systems. In the situations where the staff is in the other rooms when a new customer arrives into the main room, a staff member

enters the main room and greets the new customer. Most of the time, the two other staff members are mainly on computer in the third room workspace, helping with the customer service occasionally, when it gets hectic. Customers are greeted in a laid-back manner, and assistance is offered often. Many customers begin to browse peacefully immediately after entering the store, usually starting from the news section. Once, a staff member instructed customers to handle records with a more careful attention.

5.1.3 Mind Records

At the time of empirical research, November 10, 2016, 15 p.m.–20 p.m. and November 15, 2016, 15 p.m.–19 p.m., Mind Records was located in Stidilä, which is a multifunctional space for events and meetings, with sauna facilities. The space is in an old match factory located in an inner yard in the Kallio district in Helsinki, Finland. The store was open from Monday to Thursday 12 p.m.–19 p.m. and occasionally on Fridays, according to the possibilities to rent the space. Records were on wheeled movable shelves, which were relocated for the weekends. In January 2017, Mind Records moved into a 50m² one-room business space in an inner yard in the Kaisaniemi district in the Helsinki city center. The analysis is made of the research data acquired in November 2016 in the Stidilä premises. Figure 8 shows Mind Records' store layout and identified touchpoints. For further demonstration; see also Appendix 8 Mind Record's photo collage.

When asked if the store was physically easy to find, the customers responded being familiar with the area and its clubs and bars. “— *Yeah, I'm familiar with the Complex [closely connected clubs and bars under same ownership]. Let's say if a foreigner would come to visit, it could be difficult but isn't that part of the case?* (Male, 32.) “— *I knew the location in advance but I don't know how easy this is to find for an ordinary person. They don't advertise the location much outside, which I guess, is part of the thing.*” (Female, 34.) The customers felt at ease with the inner yard location. Curiously, one customer had found the store by accident:

I accidentally walked here, because I was going to check out Stidilä's premises for a gig about five weeks ago. Then I found out about a record store, which came to me as a total surprise. The atmosphere was good and people drank beer on an ordinary weekday without any [in-store] gig. (Male, 30)

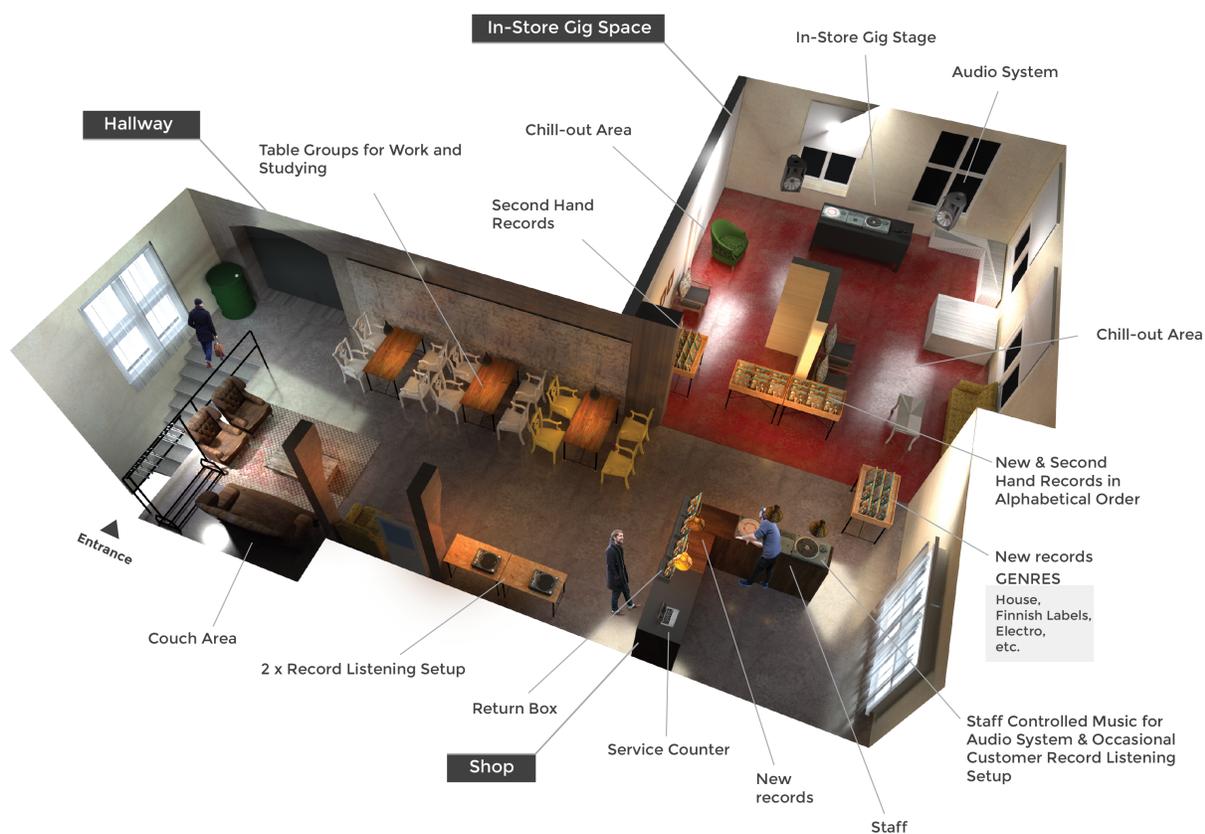


Figure 8: Mind Records 3D Store Layout Model with Identified Touchpoints

Entering the store, one walks through a hallway containing sofas and table groups and sees the service counter at the end of the hallway. Next to the counter, there are two record listening setups. One customer commented on the amount of turntables available for listening to records: *“They could have one or two more record listening setups, which could relieve pressure on busier days. Otherwise, it’s really nice.”* (Male, 25.) On the other hand, another customer made the following remark: *“The setting is in order: listening setups function well, which means a lot to me —.”* (Male, 32). Behind the corner, there are four different record shelf clusters: one section contains secondhand records in cardboard boxes in a mixed order; a second section mostly techno records divided by labels in alphabetical order; a third section mostly house and local production by labels or style; and a fourth section in front of the service counter contains the latest releases. Price tags are attached on record sleeves. On the counter, there is also a return box for the listened records. The connected room, furnished with couches, is used for displaying records, for in-store gigs, and as a relaxation area. Many customers were interested in the re-

opened store, and recurring topics in the interviews were the store and the division of the records in the store.

— *One thing that I'm not sure about is if they have shelves for the latest records? Another thing that I miss compared to Hardwax are the descriptions of individual records that indicate what type of music they include. I like those kinds of approachable descriptions, so you don't have to search for label names. I'd like that the latest [newest] records would be divided on some basis, either by style or country of origin, for example British, Europe, Germany, French, or US. — In bigger record stores it's hard to find a selection that would be as coherent as here. Or in some cases, one label is organized but the rest are a complete mess. Here the secondhand records are somewhat mixed, but they present quality records, and I'm happy to browse them. (Male, 30)*

I prefer a division in alphabetical order by artists to by labels. That's because I feel like I can find records more easily as I don't have to go through the whole label. — It doesn't bother me that much, I just have to browse more, which is great in the sense that this way I might find something I wouldn't find otherwise. This applies also to secondhand records, where you seek interesting records by their looks. (Male, 33)

— *I like the fact that the Finnish records are well represented; I'd think they would be highly interesting for foreign visitors. The division by alphabetical order is ok. They could have 'weekly choices' or highlights presented and tell stories why they have been selected to encourage conversation and raise thoughts. For example Lifesaver had this, which was a fun way to get inspired. I like to educate myself musicwise, when possible. (Female, 34)*

The atmosphere at Mind Records is professional and relaxed. The staff constantly select records that they play on the record players on the service counter, through the speakers in the store. Occasionally during rush hours, also customers may listen to records at that setup. Two employees are present on both research days. The staff's service attitude is helpful and new customers are welcomed. Generally, people do not have to wait for the service but are served immediately. Usually, some kind of interaction occurs at the time of purchasing.

In summary, the three observed record stores concentrate on electronic music, namely on house and techno. Mind Records is the oldest company: it operated from 1995 until 2001, and restarted in 2016. OYE has the longest continuous history of keeping a physical store, which started in 2002. The company also has two stores, whereas the others operate currently at only one location each. Within a few years, Bikini Waxx Records has changed its identifiable concept from a living room record store into an official business space.

This chapter has focused on identifying the physical customer experience elements in the case stores. To answer the first research sub-question, we will sum up the elements of which customer experience is constructed in the stores based on the empirical research. First, we will consider the location. OYE is located in Brenzlauer Berg in a lively shopping street, whereas Bikini Waxx and Mind Records are both in trendy neighborhoods, but at more hidden inner yard locations *one has to know*. From the research data we can conclude that in general, the customers found the stores located in inner yards with ease, although some confusion arose because the customers did not recognize just a sign at the door immediately, or because there was false address information on the social media. Some customers also doubted whether this kind of inner yard locations are easy to find for everyone, including foreigners.

The general atmosphere at each store is professional and relaxed, customers are greeted and assistance is offered, if needed. The stores present their own style and personality through the layout and the interior design. At each store, the employees play the store's music from vinyl records on separate turntables. Considering the layout and furniture, in Bikini Waxx, some customers found the wooden stairs difficult to climb. The discomfort of the stairs had the effect that a customer did not bother to climb upstairs to listen to the records. One customer did not notice the record listening setups because she didn't visit upstairs. Although positive comments were made on Mind Record's record listening setting, a third record player was hoped for to relieve pressure on busy days. OYE Record's retail space being divided into three different rooms according to the music styles, the third room felt unclear to one customer, as he didn't know whether it was a storeroom or included items on sale. The customer mentioned that if there was an informative sign, he would feel comfortable to enter the room.

Each store has a selection of new releases and a secondhand record selection. OYE's history shows in its selection, as it has the most variation in its stock with disco, soul, jazz, and world music in three rooms. Bikini Waxx and Mind Records offer small, carefully curated selections, displayed in a more spacious way than OYE's selection. Mind Records' selection is the most specialized, concentrating on mainly house and techno. Mind Records had, on the other hand, recently re-opened the store at a new location, and when the empirical research was conducted, the new store had only been in operation for a few months. OYE's records are all price tagged, labeled with the music genre, and equipped with a small description of the style, *which makes it easier for the customer to get acquainted with new music, labels, and producers*. Records are price tagged also in Mind Records. Bikini Waxx has a policy of displaying records without price

tags, unless the item is on sale at a reduced price. Prices are checked at the moment of purchase together with an employee. The Table 4 below presents a summary of the physical elements of customer experience in the examined record stores.

Table 4: Physical Customer Experience Elements in the Record Stores

Physical Customer Experience Elements	Bikini Waxx Records	OYE Records	Mind Records
Location	hidden, trendy neighborhood	exposed, lively shopping street	hidden, trendy neighborhood
General atmosphere	professional and relaxed	professional and relaxed	professional and relaxed
Background music	played by employees	played by employees	played by employees
Layout and furniture	steep stairs	third room use unclear	more record players for customer use hoped for
Selection	both new and secondhand	both new and secondhand, most variation	both new and secondhand, specialized (mainly house and techno)
Price tags	no	yes	yes

5.2 Perceived Customer Experience in Record Stores

In the previous chapter, we looked at the physical customer experience elements at the case stores in a descriptive manner, specifically the layouts, the interior design, and the touchpoints. To answer the second research sub-question *"How is customer experience perceived in record stores?"* this chapter presents the empirical data from the emotional and social customer experience viewpoint. Emotions and underlying interpretations have an impact on customer experience. As yet, however, according to Meyer & Schwager (2007), little is known about

customers' feelings, thoughts, and emotions. Shaw & Ivens (2005) claim that emotions can be a major differentiator and perhaps the most underestimated of the available assets. To answer the second research sub-question "How is the customer experience perceived in the record stores?" the following key elements are in focus: how customers perceived and felt the customer experience, from the first impressions to the overall feelings.

When the interviewed customers were asked about their first impressions on the store, most said that they observed how the records are divided and presented. "*The categories, how they separate the records with different styles of music, and how many turntables we have to use.*" (Male, 42, OYE Records). "*The five-euro crate; stuff on sale. It's always what you see first when you arrive to a record shop and I looked at it directly.*" (Male, 21, OYE Records). "*I observed the little kitchen and I thought is this only meant for the staff? Then I noticed the record shelves and how nicely they're put.*" (Female, 28, Bikini Waxx.)

As stated in Chapter 2.2, Turley & Milliman (2000) explain that the atmosphere of the store has an effect both on the customers and the employees, who will interact with each other. Also the general atmosphere and the impression of the space were noticed by the customers: "*I had a feeling like you're entering someone's house. Feels like cozy with the kitchen here, and you go up with the stairs: it feels like a flat, so you don't feel like in a standard shop.*" (Male, 26, Bikini Waxx). "*I remember that I walked in and saw the movable record shelves, and I got an instant feeling that is this a pop-up happening. It was a great feeling —. The atmosphere is warm, it's not like somebody would measure the customers, which is really nice.*" (Male, 30 Mind Records).

I was curious about the space, it was different than I expected. I had a smaller space on my mind, even though I had heard that they organize events and stuff. I expected an oblong space with record shelves on the sides, but it turned out to be spacious and well designed with movable record shelves. (Male, 34 Mind Records).

Smith & Wheeler (2002) state that it is crucial for a business to select the right kind of employees that make the difference. A personal contact with an employee can help to create customer loyalty. Most of the interviewed customers encountered the staff when entering the store and were greeted with a simple 'hi' or another greeting. Some customers found that it was not necessary for them to engage with the staff immediately and felt at ease with it: "*I'm pretty much a guy who goes in and then rarely talks; just looks for records, but I mean, even if I only*

exchanged a few words, it was still quite warm from the vibe.” (Male, 36, Bikini Waxx). One customer talked about the contact in record stores in general and felt that he had been noticed by the staff:

—Another thing that usually bugs me a great deal is that the customer is not noticed even with a simple ‘hi’, because of the eccentric nature of the record store keepers. Even though one might not be in a talkative mood, they could still make note of the customer. — I think that’s really important. If the customer is not greeted, I might feel like I’m trespassing somebody’s private territory, not welcomed, and taking a sneak peek. (Male, 34 Mind Records)

When the customers were asked to describe the staff, positive attributes, like *“Also friendly, helpful, immediately there for me.”* (Female, 28 Bikini Waxx), *“helpful, professional, warm-hearted and right-to-the-point.”* (Male, 30 Mind Records), and *“very good”* (Female, 33 OYE Records), rose from all responses. One customer appreciated the contact with the staff: *“For me a record store, it is people who own a business but it’s nice to have a contact with them and not just be seen as a simple customer, who gives money.”* (Male, 25 Bikini Waxx). Customers also appreciated the relaxed atmosphere and the fact that help was not intrusive nor pushed too much: *“service is not pushed here, which is really nice. That kind of service fits clothing stores but not record stores. The staff doesn’t comment too much your choices. You can be in peace but service and opinions are available, if needed. You don’t feel stupid asking.”* (Male, 30 Mind Records). *“— you can be at peace. They [staff] don’t come to ask if you need assistance, which is a good thing. At the purchasing moment I was served and I asked how long it would take to get a record to the store if I order it online.”* (Male, 25 Mind Records). *“Friendly, no problems.”* (Male, 36 OYE Records). One regular customer of OYE Records said:

They [the staff] are very nice, kind, friendly and a little bit crazy about records. Sometimes they give me recommendations. In the past they were only two or three guys who run the shop, and [the staff] were more familiar. Now there are many people who work here, this is sometimes pity but they are growing, so it’s also ok. It’s not so nerdy here. (Male, 38 OYE Records)

Customers also noted and welcomed negotiated prices when they bought a larger quantity of records or when something had gone awry with an order. *“— the guy [staff] gave me a reduction because they didn’t have all of my vinyls, so there was like a re-contact with the client.”* (Male, 21 OYE Records.)

— *I felt that they [the staff] tried to help me. It's also a bonus that they round down the prices when you buy more records, which happens often everywhere. I guess vinyl sales are not that large, so when you buy more, you get a discount. I have a very good feeling: the kind that you're helped and taken care of.* (Male, 32 Mind Records)

When the customers were asked to describe the store in question, Bikini Waxx was mostly noticed for its warm atmosphere and described with adjectives like 'cozy' and 'warm'. *"really familiar, it's like a house"* (Male, 25). *"Familiar or small and cozy"* (Male, 36). *"I really like the atmosphere; it's really chill, like basically chilling at home. How the furniture's are placed creates a feeling of a living room. So I really like it. The stairs are sometimes a bit tricky, I need to say. I like to come here; I would even chill here and have a drink or whatever."* (Female, 22.) The customers who described OYE Records mostly commented on its layout, atmosphere, and selection: *"really good, it's nicely laid out and exciting"* (Male, 36). *"It's good; well stocked. Good diversity of music, well organized."* (Male, 25). *"Big list of tasty music, very good choice [selection]. You don't lose too much time for choosing, and it's very well organized."* (Male, 42). At Mind Records, the space was a topic that the customers brought up when describing the store. As Teufel & Zimmermann (2015, 298) point out, a modern brick and mortar retail store can function as a multifunctional space.

One has to consider that as a store it's also a multifunctional space. You can clearly see that it opens on weekdays for record store purposes and closes for the weekend for other use. On the other hand, it's fun even. Nowadays it's fashionable to have hybrid things, such as work studio/shop, café/shop, and record store/club combinations. Clothing stores might organize movie nights and so forth —.
(Female, 34 Mind Records.)

Pretty 'scene-like'. — I like that it's a multifunctional hybrid-like space —.
(Male, 32 Mind Records)

Also another customer commented on the space: *"The space is wonderful, and the retro-look caught my eye. I guess it's nice to hang out otherwise as well."* (Male, 25). One customer felt that the store should have a larger selection but understood that the store had been operating again only for a few months: *"Probably I would hope for a bigger selection but I guess that will be fixed when the store gets continuity and stability."* (Male, 32). Another topic that rose from the comments was the atmosphere at Mind Records, which was described, however, as *"A bit manly, but that's the case habitually at record stores."* (Female, 34 Mind Records). Also another customer commented on the atmosphere: *"It's quite a nice record store. I feel that the store has a bit of an insider feeling to it. When you come in, you can at times feel like am I in the right*

place? But still it's a nice place to visit." (Male, 25.) In general, all the stores left the customers with positive feelings.

When asked about their feelings regarding their overall customer experience, none of the customers mentioned any negative feelings. All interviewees considered their feelings as positive and described them as: *"pretty nice feeling, you feel comfortable and welcome over here. After work it's kind of stress release, so really good."* (Female, 22 Bikini Waxx) and *"really great, I feel welcomed —."* (Male, 30 Mind Records). They also felt excitement for their latest purchases: *"I look forward to playing the latest records I bought."* (Male, 25 Mind Records). In addition, many customers said that they were pleased with the customer experience and indicated a desire to return to the store: *"— in general it's a very nice shop and I will definitely come back. I will add it to the list of shops that I visit when I'm in Berlin."* (Male, 36 Bikini Waxx), *"I have a really good feeling; I will come back."* (Male, 21 OYE Records), *"Good, I'm going to come back."* (Female, 33 OYE Records), *"Because it's located in Stidilä, it has a character to it as few do, which is a really good thing, because it's different. I like this store, I will come again."* (Male, 32 Mind Records), *"Very good; I feel like I've been taken into consideration, and served well. I will come back."* (Female, 34 Mind Records).

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on identifying emotional customer experience elements, such as observations, interaction between the staff and the customers, service moments, the customer's perception of the stores, and their feelings about the overall customer experience. Based on the findings, we can conclude answers to the second research sub-question *"How is customer experience perceived in record stores?"* Regarding the customers' first impressions at their arrival to the store in question, most said that their immediate attention was drawn to how the records were divided and presented. Also the atmosphere and the retail space were observed; for example, in Mind Records, one customer noticed immediately that a part of the record shelves were movable; to another, the movable shelves created the impression of a temporary pop-up happening.

Regarding the interaction with the staff, a clear majority of the interviewees were in contact with the staff upon arrival and were greeted. Others thought that they had no need to engage with the staff. The customers had very positive feelings about their service experience and about the staff, who were seen as professional and friendly in all of the stores. Many customers

appreciated the non-intrusive service attitude and considered that it fits the style of the service that they expect to receive at a record store.

Bikini Waxx was mostly noticed for its warm and familiar atmosphere, in which people felt at ease and relaxed. At OYE Records, people appreciated the wide music selection, the order and the store layout. At Mind Records, the multifunctional Stidilă space was a point of interest, and people were aware of the renting and the other functions of the place. In addition to the positive comments, however, the store's atmosphere was also described as manly, fitting the exclusive community and conveying a bit of an insider feeling. All interviewees considered that their feelings about their overall customer experience were positive. At each store, many interviewees mentioned that they are happy to return as customers. The Table 5 below presents a summary of the emotional and social customer experience elements that were observed in the empirical research.

Table 5: Emotional and Social Customer Experience Elements in the Stores

Emotional and Social Customer Experience Elements	Bikini Waxx Records	OYE Records	Mind Records
General atmosphere	chill, cozy, warm, familiar	orderly, well organized, not nerdy	warm, manly
First impressions	like someone's house	store layout appreciated	resembles a pop-up happening, spacious
Interaction with the staff	positive, professional, friendly	positive, professional, friendly	positive, professional, friendly, service not pushed
Feelings about the store	at ease, relaxed	really good	insider feeling, good
Overall customer experience	positive	positive	positive

5.3 Service Design Methods in Customer Experience Development

In the previous sections of Chapter 5, we have looked into the physical and the emotional elements of customer experience in the selected record stores. In this section, we explore the possibilities to apply service design methods to developing the customer experience. According to Maffei et al. (2005, 6), the main and distinctive focus of service design tools is the design, the description, and the visualization of the user experience. To answer the third research sub-question “*How can service design principles and methods be applied to customer experience development in the context of record stores?*” we shall focus on applying service design tools. The tools applied in this study are *personas* and *customer experience map* as presented in Chapter 3.6.

5.3.1 Identified Personas

As explained in Chapter 3.6.1, a persona is a fictional “character” that presents and merges patterns that have been identified from the research insights (Moritz 2005, 228). The characters should be drawn from observing and talking to real users, and their quotes pulled from the actual research (Saffer 2007, 97-98). Customer research functions as an inspiration and a support for the design (Tuulaniemi 2011, 153). This chapter investigates the users or customers who were interviewed in the stores. The objectives are to create *user profiles* that represent the group of potential record store customers, and to explain the process of their making. The user profiles are created and quotes are used from the gathered interview material.

Personas are created to represent the various user types of a certain group based on their shared interests (Moule 2012, 71). This study provides personas drawn from a qualitative ethnographic research on people that are interested in records, and more specifically, in electronic music. According to Tuulaniemi (2011, 154), instead of a single finding, however remarkable, even more important in creating personas is observing and researching how the group behaves. This principle was followed and applied to creating personas in this study. A fictional picture was added to humanize the characters and to make them memorable, using pictures from *Skalgubbar* (Saffer 2007, 98; Skalgubbar 2014).

In the beginning of the persona creation process, the author divided the interview responses in two groups according to the interviewees' age, regardless of their geographic location: under 30 years and 30 years or over. The idea was to examine how the responses differed with this distribution principle. The results of this division, however, showed no clear distinction and would have further resulted in a quite similar type of personas. Therefore, in order to create more distinctive and versatile personas and customer experience maps – still based on user research, *the design categorization was changed into themes and responses that showed similarity*. Based on the empirical data as a source of information and inspiration material, two personas were created. The process of creating the personas followed the customer interview themes, presented in Table 2: *Themes for the Customer Interviews*. The findings on the physical and emotional customer experiences, presented in Chapter 5.1 and Chapter 5.2, were also applied in the design process.

Although the literature states that personas should be given attributes, such as a life story, goals, and tasks (Moule 2012, 71; Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 178–179), this study concentrates mainly on showing the persona's relationship to music and to the record stores. We will explore themes, such as *the demographic attributes, hobbyism, the relationship to records, and the purpose of shopping at the time of the interview*. Each theme is concluded with an explanation of the design process, showing how the theme was used to creating the personas.

The first theme comprises the demographic attributes of the interviewees from each store. Grudin & Pruitt (2002) emphasize the human perspective of personas by stating that the personas have demographic attributes, such as age and gender. At Bikini Waxx Records, the majority of the customers were men, but also women visited the store frequently. The average age of the six interviewed customers was 27 years, and the age range was from 22 to 36 years. Two out of the six interviewees were female. Overall, the interviewees represented the youngest sample population of all the case stores. On average, the interviewees spent 1 hour and 10 minutes at the store, which was the longest of the average time spent at the case stores. Three of the interviewees at Bikini Waxx Records were of foreign, European origin and living in Berlin or elsewhere in Europe. The customers arrived mostly alone or in pairs. Four of the interviewees were first-time visitors at the store; the two others had visited the store before two and four times respectively. The usual sources to find out about Bikini Waxx were friends or the Internet.

At OYE Records, the customer population was mixed-sex but comprised mostly of men. The six interviewed customers represented an older customer base than the customers interviewed at Bikini Waxx Records, with an average age of 32.5 years and an age range from 21 to 42 years. The interviewees at OYE Records represented an international customer base, four out of six being of foreign nationality. One interviewee was a woman. On average, the interviewees spent 39 minutes at the store, which was remarkably less than at Bikini Waxx. The research was limited to the main OYE store in Prenzlauer Berg, which is located in a rather active shopping area of small stores, and the customers found the store to be very easy to find. As OYE Records has an uninterrupted history of a brick and mortar store since 2002, the interviewed customers varied from first-timers to loyal long-time customers. In addition to Google and friends, sources through which the customers knew OYE Records were its releases as a record label and newspapers.

At Mind Records, the large majority of the customers were men, more than at the other case stores. During an in-store music gig, the store attracted more women than at other times. The average age of the six interviewed customers was 31 years, and the age range was from 25 to 34 years. One out of the six interviewees was a woman. The interviewees spent on average 49 minutes at the store. All six interviewees were from Finland and lived in Helsinki. Customers arrived mostly alone. Two interviewees were first-timers, whereas the rest had visited the physical store from four to ten times before.

As presented in Table 3: *Record Store Visitor Profiles*, at the Berlin stores, 7 interviewees of foreign nationalities represented an international customer base, and 8 out of the total of 12 interviewees were living in Berlin. At Mind Records, all interviewees were Finnish and lived in Helsinki. Because of the location of the case stores, one persona is placed in Berlin, Germany, and the other in Helsinki, Finland. As the majority of the customers in all stores were men, 14 out of the total of 18 interviewees, the male gender was fixed for both personas. The average ages were quite alike at each store, being respectively 27 years, 32.5 years, and 31 years. As the ages of the interviewees ranged in total from 21 to 42 years, age variation for the personas was created on the grounds that 8 interviewees were under 30 and 10 interviewees were 30 or over.

The second theme for the customer interviews was record hobbyism. The question topics in connection with the second theme were *the purpose of shopping, the purchasing channel preference* (offline or online), and *music format preferences* (physical or digital). Most of the interviewees, 12 out of 18, said that they buy records for dj'ing purposes or "*in the hope to get some dj gigs, and some other records for listening purposes*" (Male, 25 Mind Records). Some of the interviewees bought vinyls for collecting or simply for home listening. Some bought them for music production: "*Primarily for making music; sampling or research. I dj as well but part-time.*" (Male, 36 OYE Records). Others bought them for inspiration: "*now it's about inspiration. They are treasures, memories of places.*" (Male, 30 Mind Records). The question on why the customers bought records also had a close relation to the physical format: "*I sometimes dj a little bit but mostly I like to have something in my hand.*" (Male, 38 OYE Records).

— *I really like the old stuff from the 70s and I mean, I can find everything from Youtube but it's not always really good quality. So it's better to air directly and when you want to start dj'ing, I was going into vinyls and mp3s but with vinyl you have a physical contact and everything. That makes you a feeling of collecting something.* (Male, 21 OYE Records.)

— *This is the eternal question that it's also a physical object, with which you can manipulate the recorded media that is not only in your hard drive in bit format. On the other hand, people rarely feel as connected to CDs [as to vinyls]. To some extent it's about collecting, even weird things. As a format, it pleases me.* (Male, 34 Mind Records.)

Although the empirical research was done at record stores, where the customers are most likely to be into music in a physical format, such as vinyl or CD, the interviewees were also asked about their purchasing habits related to digital music formats, such as mp3 files. Some customers strictly preferred the physical format: "*No, [I buy] just records. To have a memory, you'll have an object.*" (Male, 25 Bikini Waxx), "*I buy only records.*" (Male, 38 OYE Records), "*Vinyl only.*" (Female, 33 OYE Records). Some customers had no dislike for digital music, but purchased it rarely and preferred vinyl: "*— it's really rare that I would buy digital music. Also if a record includes a digital download code, it's often left unused.*" (Male, 32 Mind Records), "*Mostly, sometimes I buy CDs if something is not published on vinyl, but vinyl is my preference.*" (Male, 34 Mind Records), "*— I've bought a lot of digital music for dj'ing purposes, because of quantity, but I wouldn't say I'm an active consumer of digital music anymore.*" (Male, 30 Mind Records). Others combined digital and physical formats: "*I buy also digital music. I prefer vinyl,*

but in moments of rush for a (dj) gig, it's faster to acquire digital files." (Male, 25 Mind Records),
"Yeah, I also buy digital [music]." (Male, 36 OYE Records).

Some customers preferred online purchasing as their purchasing channel, others preferred purchasing offline. Customers that bought music also online mentioned *Discogs* several times. *Discogs* is a crowdsourced database of vinyl and CD audio recordings, originally a hobby project started by Kevin Lewandowski in 2000. *Discogs* combines the database to a digital marketplace with thousands of sellers and buyers. (*Discogs* 2017.) Other online shops mentioned by the interviewees were *Deejay.de*, *Decks.de*, *Juno*, and *HHV*. Some customers described their purchasing preferences as *"More online"* (Female, 33 OYE Records) and *"— I prefer offline but sometimes it's easier to buy them online, for example from Discogs."* (Female, 25 Bikini Waxx).

Another customer preferred offline channels because of high shipping costs: *"offline mostly, because on Discogs for example, I mean you can find a lot from there but you always have to buy for shipping and ridiculous prices sometimes."* (Male, 22 Bikini Waxx). Some customers preferred the offline experience – actually going to a store and browsing records: *"Offline, because I like to visit record stores. Because a record store is like a second house for a guy like me — usually I go to visit a record store because you have a people between a record and the customer."* (Male, 25 Bikini Waxx). Some felt emotionally attached to buying records offline, to have a memory of the experience: *"Preferably offline, all good memories come from browsing records at stores."* (Female, 34 Mind Records); *"— I have about 2000 vinyls at home and I remember tolerably the origin and timing of every record if I have bought it from a vinyl store. If I have ordered the record online, I have no clue of these factors."* (Male, 34 Mind Records).

When asked about the estimated personal ratio of online and offline purchasing, Mind Record's customers answered that they have a strong habit of buying records online or abroad, mainly because before, there was a lack of stores where one could buy electronic music. *"It has been strongly online oriented, because there hasn't been a place in Helsinki where one could find interesting records. Most of my records are from foreign web stores."* (Male, 33 Mind Records). *"Nowadays I try to come here [Mind Records] as often as possible. Before I bought more online, because you couldn't get techno on vinyl [in Helsinki]."* (Male, 25 Mind Records).

— *Before with electronic music, one simply couldn't get records from Helsinki. Now that this store came, it helps the situation. — In Helsinki I haven't visited many record stores, mainly my purchases have occurred while on trips abroad, like this year for example.*
(Male, 32 Mind Records)

Based on the empirical research, we can conclude that the most popular reason for purchasing vinyls was for dj'ing purposes. Some bought records for home listening or for music production, more specifically for sampling, research, or inspiration. Preferences for the physical or the digital music format varied: some customers preferred vinyls exclusively, others had a preference for vinyl but sometimes acquired digital music, and some combined the two formats freely. In addition, some customers preferred online as their purchasing channel. *Discogs*, *Deejay.de*, *Decks.de*, *Juno*, and *HHV* were mentioned. Others sought experiences and had made memories particularly through shopping at physical record stores. In Helsinki, the interviewed customers explained that their ratio for online purchases was high, mainly because there was no store that would have met the demand.

The third theme for the customer interviews was the purpose of shopping at the time of the interview. According to Verhoef et al. (2009), there are customer experience elements that a retailer can control, such as the service interface and prices, but the purpose of shopping is one of the elements that are beyond the retailer's control. Some customers came looking for specific records they had in mind or had even reserved before pickup. *"I gave a shortlist to a guy [staff] that he would look if he'd have those records on a list. — I came here with a precise idea of certain records."* (Male, 21 OYE Records). *"I came to look for a release but all the copies are unfortunately reserved. I came for the one record but ended up spending 130 euros for something else but that's how it usually goes."* (Male, 32 Mind Records). Some were just browsing and discovering new music, either for a purpose or without any special purpose. *"Just browsing, I never have anything on my mind."* (Male, 36 OYE Records). *"To find some nice records for a mix I want to do."* (Male, 22 Bikini Waxx). *"I get the newsletter from the store and there were some records I wanted to hear."* (Male, 38 OYE Records). *"To discover new music, and first I'm looking for there is a lot of name(s) I don't know, and when I listen randomly, I asked the owners [the staff] if they can suggest me some records."* (Male, 25 Bikini Waxx)

Out of the total number of interviewees, six came to look for a specific record, either having pre-contacted the store by email or simply by coming to the store with the intention to buy that

release. Some customers' shopping purposes were determined by a specific genre they had in mind, while others came to discover and to browse.

As explained, the objective was to create user profiles that would describe the group of potential record store customers. Within the design process described above, we have explored three themes: the demographic attributes of the potential customers, record hobbyism, and the purpose of shopping. The empirical findings are examined according to the themes. These findings formed the base for the created personas and their presentation illustrates the design process. The created personas are *24-year-old Clement Leroy from France, who currently lives in Berlin, Germany*, and *35-year-old Antti Kivelä, who is Finnish and lives in Helsinki, Finland*. The empirical findings are summarized as personas in Figure 9 and Figure 10 in a creative, visual and descriptive manner.

Persona 1

name:

Clement Leroy



Social Stats:

Age:
24

Sex:
Male

Nationality:
French

Home City:
Berlin, Germany

Occupation:
Student

About Clement

Clement has moved to Berlin to study. He has just recently started dj'ing in the past few months. So far, he has played on Berlin Community Radio and at a bar in Wedding with his friends.

Clement mostly buys records for dj'ing and in the hope to get some dj gigs. He usually buys vinyl, but when he's in a rush for a dj gig, it's easier to buy digital music too, also to get more music for the price.

Clement buys records offline and online. He prefers offline, because for example on Discogs, shipping costs can sometimes be high. He buys records basically every time he has the money, on average 10 records twice a month.

Usually, Clement likes to spend time at the record store to discover music. He can also have an idea for an upcoming mixtape.

"I was going into vinyl and mp3s, but with vinyl, you have a physical contact and everything. That gives you a feeling of collecting something."

Figure 9: Persona 1: Clement Leroy

Persona 2

name:

Antti Kivelä



Social Stats:

Age:
35

Sex:
Male

Nationality:
Finnish

Home City:
Helsinki, Finland

Occupation:
Works in Media
Production

About Antti

Antti bought his first vinyl record as a teenager. He's from Finland and lives in Helsinki. He works at a media production company.

Antti has mostly collected music for himself, but he has also played records at bars on occasion, more actively in the past. Nowadays, he collects records mainly for music production: for sampling and for inspiration. "Vinyl only" is Antti's principle.

Antti often orders records online, on Discogs, Decks and Juno. He also likes to visit offline record stores when he has the time, especially on his trips abroad.

Antti buys about 150 records per year. Sometimes he can spend up to 50 euros on a special release, rather than on a bigger quantity of records.

"I used to do dj'ing more as a kid, but I can't find the time for it so much anymore"

"— I have about 2000 vinyls at home and I remember tolerably the origin and timing of every record if I have bought it from a vinyl shop. If I have ordered the record online, I have no clue of these factors."

Figure 10: Persona 2: Antti Kivelä

5.3.2 Visualized Customer Experience Maps

The customer experience map is a structured tool used for the visualization of a service user's experience, for example a physical trip in a building (Curedale 2013, 119; Maffei et al. 2005, 6; Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 158). Incorporating personas into customer experience maps can give depth and meaning to them. (Curedale 2013, 210; Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 178). In the pre-service phase, the customer takes part in activities that have an effect on the buying decision. The service period occurs in the touchpoints where the customer receives the service.

In the beginning of the customer experience map creation, the designer should determine which part of the customer journey is the object for the design. (Rosenbaum et al. 2017; Tuulaniemi 2011, 78-79). In this chapter, the two tools, personas and customer experience maps, are integrated to make the personas more engaging. The maps designed in this study are intended to explain the persona's usual customer journey at record stores in general. The focus of visualizing the customer journey in this study is on the pre-service phase and on the service period. The design process is based on the empirical user research and on applying creativity.

In addition to the findings presented above, the customer's shopping process was examined. Approximately half of the customers estimated that they listened to ten records or more, some listened none or a few. Some customers came for a specific record, and in one case, the shopping took 5 minutes: *"This time I came for the record I had reserved. Usually my process includes dawdling, listening to music, digging and hanging out. The feeling is victorious if I find something unexpected at the record store or in the music."* (Female, 34 Mind Records). One customer, who spent 50 minutes at the store, described his shopping that day, as well as his normal habits as follows:

Today I was here to buy a record for a friend but the record was not available anymore and since this was the first time, I just browsed. I'm not working these days, so I would be able to spend more time but today was very quick. Normally I would spend three hours [at the shop], one shop per day, because otherwise it would be too much and you don't hear the music anymore. (Male, 26 Bikini Waxx)

Some customers headed straight to the news section and picked up records for listening: *"I go to the news-section, then to the house-section and dig the interesting ones. Sometimes I know the names of the artists or the labels. Then I picked up some records; some afrobeat but mainly house records today."* (Male, 38 OYE Records), *"I went through the latest records and listened to some but nothing really caught my attention."* (Male, 33 Mind Records). Some customers explained that they pick up records, listen to them and then listen to the preferred ones again: *"I'm getting some records and went upstairs for listening. Listened to them once, checked what I like and made a selection, maybe five to six records, and then I listened them again, because I cannot afford all of them, so I'm making a choice of two or three [out of 20-25 records]."* (Male, 26 Bikini Waxx). The customer experience maps created in this study are presented below in Figure 11 and in Figure 12.

Persona 1: Clement Leroy
Customer Experience Map:

Time spent in the store
1h 32 min
First-time Visitor

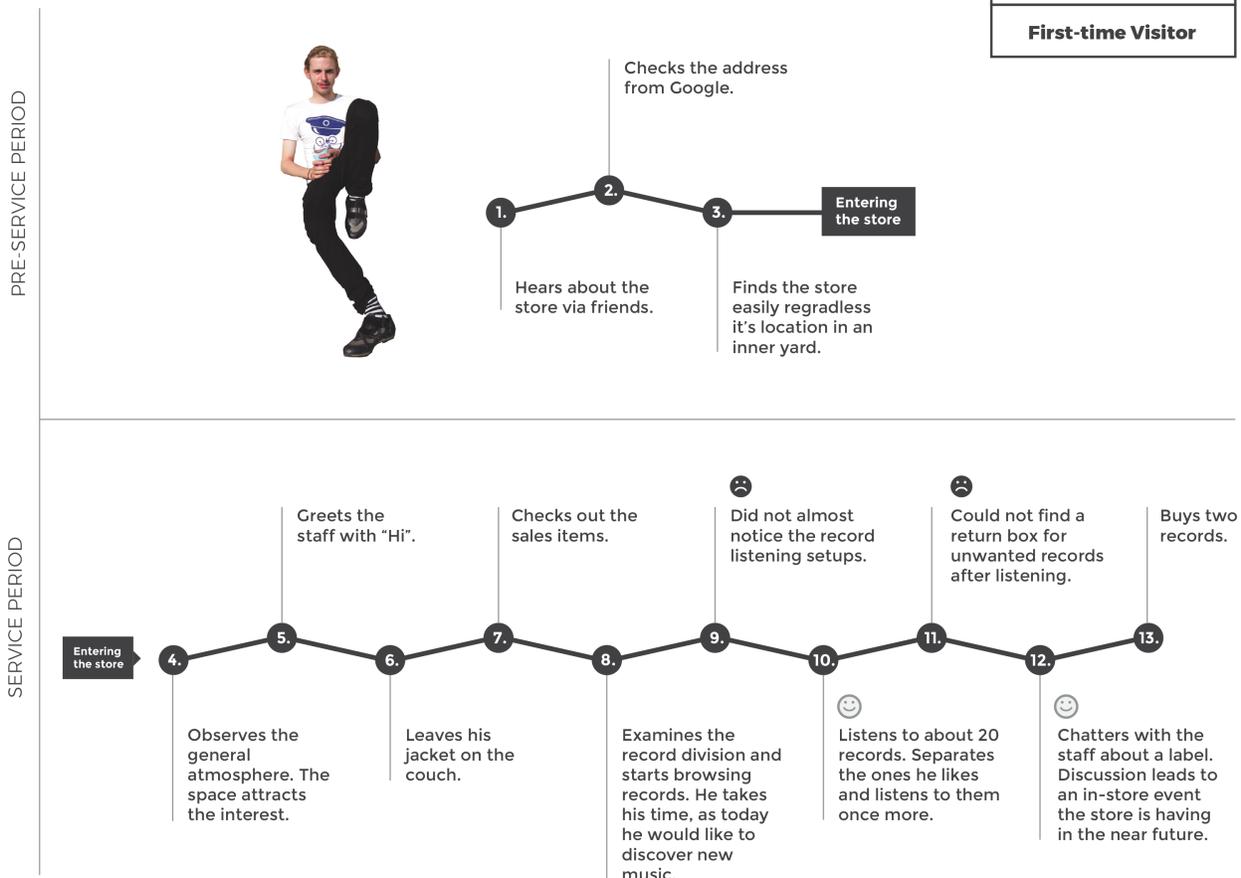


Figure 11: Customer Experience Map 1: Clement Leroy

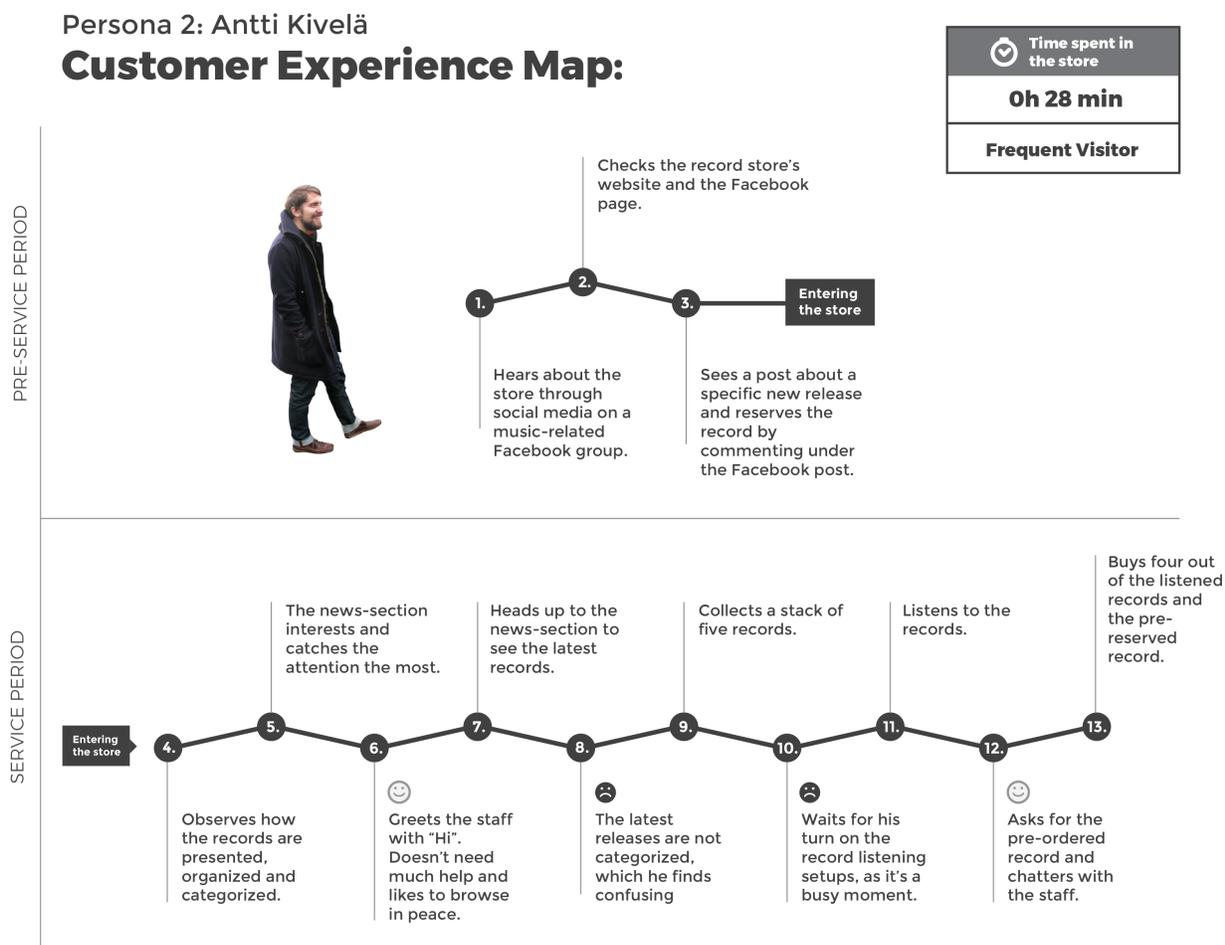


Figure 12: Customer Experience Map 2: Antti Kivelä

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on adding building elements for the creation of customer experience maps. The maps are combined with the created personas, which can be found in Chapter 5.3.1. The chosen service design tools were used with the objective to give a concrete, practical answer to the third research sub-question *“How can service design principles and methods be applied to customer experience development in the context of record stores?”*. The managerial implications of these tools are that they can offer information, inspiration and ideas for different stakeholders, for example to record store keepers and retailers of small stores. The tools help to identify touchpoints and possible problem areas, and they provide suggestions for improvement and future innovation, with the aim of creating more pleasant customer experiences. The managerial implications for each of the stores examined in this study will be discussed in the next chapter. In this study, the service design methods were applied by

creating two personas and customer experience maps. To utilize these tools and to design and create illustrated results, empirical data was gathered by observation and by interviewing record store customers. In the design process, solutions were built on the empirical data by applying creativity.

6. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has studied customer experience through service design methods in the context of record stores. The study identifies the applicability of service design approaches in analyzing and potentially improving the customer experience in record stores. In order to identify the applicability of service design approaches in the chosen context, the theoretical objective has been to share an understanding of some of the concepts of customer experience and service design, to give examples of their methods and tools, and to explain how these are used. The empirical objective has been to apply two service design tools, personas and customer experience maps, in practice.

This study concludes that service design can be used to help record stores to identify their customer profiles and the customer journey, and to recognize different touchpoints, thereby potentially improving the customer experience. Based on the results, this study states that service design methods can be applied in the context of record stores. The study provides examples of the application of two service design tools by presenting two personas and two customer experience maps that are created from the empirical research data.

The empirical research was conducted using a multiple-case study approach with qualitative and ethnographic methods. Three record stores, Bikini Waxx Records, OYE Records in Berlin, Germany, and Mind Records in Helsinki, Finland, were selected on the grounds of their focus on electronic music and their relatively small size, which allow for comparison. Prior to the data collection, three outline guides were created on the basis of user research and prior literature on service design and customer experience, one for each phase of the data collection. The data collection was a three-phase process: it consisted of direct observation, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the customers, and a semi-structured face-to-face interview with one record store keeper. The outline guides were used loosely to direct the research, but intuitive thinking was used in each interview. The research approach is deductive.

Although recent discussions in the music industry have been concentrating on the digitalization of music consumption, vinyl records have undergone resurgence and are currently one of the fastest growing areas in music sales. Vinyl is not – at least not yet – a dying format, and new record stores that concentrate on vinyl are founded. Little, or practically a non-existent amount

of research was found on using service design methods for improving customer experience in record stores or in the music industry in general. The lack of research in this field constitutes a research gap.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

To answer the to first research question on how service design can improve customer experience in the context of records stores, the concepts of customer experience and service design were examined. Based on the theoretical research, both customer experience and service design can be seen as sources of sustainable differentiation, competitive advantage, and customer value.

In today's world, consumers have a great number of choices and channels through which to pursue their dreams and desires (Meyer & Schwager 2007). Customer segments are becoming more and more fragmented and personalized, and to fulfill customers' needs, service providers have to offer satisfactory customer experiences and understand the customer journey (Berry et al. 2002, 85; Harvey et al. 1997, 29). *Customer experience* has origins in marketing, retailing, and service management literature and was introduced as a term in the early 2000s (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Verhoef et al. 2009). The literature recognizes many definitions for customer experience, and the subject is examined in the literature quite thoroughly. This study concludes that customer experience is an inherently personal and emotional interaction between a customer and an organization.

Customer experience can be divided into a physical and an emotional aspect. Traditionally, businesses have ignored the role of emotions, however. In customer experience, emotions and subconscious interpretations have an impact, and also businesses consist of people with emotions. Emotions have an underlying value as a differentiating asset. (Löytänä & Kortesoja 2011, 11; 45; Shaw & Ivens 2002, 3; 42.) Yet, only little is known about customers' thoughts, emotions, and states of mind, which have an effect on how they interact with products, services, and brands (Meyer & Schwager 2007). Therefore, this study also examined record store customers' emotions and feelings, thereby possibly adding new knowledge to the existing theory. Physical customer experience elements, such as the in-store environment, the layout, the lighting, and the music, can also have an impact on emotions and on how the customer

perceives the experience (Beck & Childers 2006). In addition, servicescapes with environmental stimuli, such as dimmed lights and incorporated background music, can make the service provider stand out and affect customers' buying behavior (Puccinelli et al. 2009). In the empirical research, the emotional and physical customer experience elements were taken into consideration in the observation and in the face-to-face customer interviews. The observation concentrated on the store layout, the furniture, the music, the service and the general atmosphere. The customers were interviewed on their experience, their opinion about the store and the service, and on their feelings.

Both service design and customer experience scholars address the importance of companies' ability to orchestrate touchpoints on a holistic customer journey (Berry et al. 2002, 85; Mager 2004; Meyer & Schwager 2007; Moritz 2005; Parker & Heapy 2006; Shaw & Ivens 2002, 14; Tuulaniemi 2011, 78–79). The customer journey describes how a customer navigates through a service and experiences it. The customer journey is divided into service moments and related touchpoints, which can be any occasions where the customer and the company meet: environments, objects, humans, and courses of action. (Kotler et al. 2009, 397; Tuulaniemi 2011, 78–79.) Both concepts, the customer journey and touchpoints, are subjects that are studied in the overlapping disciplines of customer experience and service design.

Service design is seen as a response to significant economic, social, and technical trends (Reason et al. 2016, 1–7). The contemporary service economy presents three trends: the expansion of the service sector has resulted in an increase of the proportion of services in economies, and the demand for services keeps on increasing; a change in the customers' needs from material to immaterial is taking place; and technology and digitalization have changed the interaction between the customers and the service providers.

Service design has roots in marketing, in product- and interface design, and in design thinking (Mager 2009, 34–35; Moritz 2004, 47). As an academic discipline it was introduced in 1991 (Curedale 2013, 4–7). Service design is an evolving approach – young and without common definition or clear terminology (Stickdorn, & Schneider 2011, 29). In this study, service design is seen as an approach for developing new or for improving existing services with an aim to design useful, usable, and desirable services from the user's perspective, as well as efficient, effective services from the provider's perspective (Mager & Sung 2011, 1; Moritz 2005.) Service design can be defined with commonly accepted characteristics; it is a human-centric, customer-

centered, holistic, interdisciplinary, strategic, creative, innovative, and visual approach. This new discipline and the evolvement of design have uplifted the role of design as a multidisciplinary approach (Hämäläinen & Lammi 2009, 190; Moritz 2005, 34–35, 85).

The distinctive focus of service design tools is the design, the description, and the visualization of the user experience (Maffei et al. 2005, 6). As a basis of inspiration and support for the design, customer research is done to understand the user's emotions and meanings (Tuulaniemi 2011, 153). Kettunen (2000, 33–37) calls attention to the importance of interviewing and observing the actual users in such a way that valid information is obtained and can consequently be used as an inspiration for the design, in order to create smart and usable products and services.

Service design tools, *personas* and *customer experience maps*, are used for knowing the people and the context. Personas are created to present user types based on their shared interests. These interests and user insights are identified through user research. (Moule 2012, 71; Moritz 2005, 228.) The persona tool is effective when used together with a customer experience map, which makes the personas meaningful and engaging (Curedale 2013, 210; Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 178). The customer experience map documents and visualizes customer experiences (Curedale 2013, 119). In this study, a sample of service users' experiences and physical trips in the record stores has been examined. Based on the user insights, the persona tool was used to create a record store visitor profile, i.e., to gain an understanding on what kind of person visits record stores. The personas are presented together with customer experience maps, which describe the usual journey that the persona would take in a record store. The personas were created concentrating on the specific themes chosen for the empirical research, rather than by describing them on a highly general level with unspecific personal attributes like their life goals. Within the delimitations of the research, a practical approach was chosen, considering that it would provide more valuable insight for the record stores. Some might argue that the specific attributes that are presented in the literature should be applied.

The findings suggested that customers recognized Mind Record's premises as a multifunctional space and felt open and positive about it. The hybrid functions of a daytime record store and nighttime club seemed to interest the customers. This finding is in line with Teufel & Zimmermann's (2015, 298) observation of the fact that a modern retail store can operate as a

multifunctional space, also as a club. Although Mind Records did not per se operate as a club, events were frequently organized in the same premises.

The findings illustrate the fact that spending time at record stores is a part of the buying process. People tend to discover music at a slow pace, which is part of the experience. Each of the examined stores provided a place for relaxation for the customers, for example a couch where customers sat down or left their belongings. In Helsinki, there was a recognized demand for a record store that would offer electronic music and bring the electronic music community together by offering a relaxed place for spending time (Mononen 2015, 93–95; Kärppä 2016; Uusitalo 2016). The data gathered from the Helsinki-based interviewees showed similarity with the theory and with the content of an interview with Jussi Uusitalo from Mind Records. The customers confirmed that there was a demand for a physical store selling electronic music in Helsinki. Before the reopening of the store, customers had been purchasing records through online channels or abroad.

6.2 Summary of Empirical Results

The results of the analysis show that physical customer experience elements, such as the location, the store layout, the furniture and the record division, were subjects that had an importance in the customers' opinion. Two of the case stores were located in inner yards, which caused slight hesitation, but in general, also new customers found the stores with ease. The physical touchpoint elements were a fundamental factor in the observations the customers made and in the impressions that they had of the store. In particular, customers paid attention to the record division and the space in general, as well as to the layout and the furniture. Multifunctionality was seen as a positive thing.

To show and to visualize the touchpoints of each store, 3D models were made with SketchUp, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop, based on direct observations and photographs taken at each store. The results indicate various touchpoints in each store with a certain repetition: the entrance, the record shelves, the sale items with a reduced price, the record listening setups for the customers, the service counter, a place for relaxation, such as a couch or a group of couches, the return box, the places for merchandise. In addition, the results showed that the stores reflected their own style and character with the layout, the music selection and the record

division criteria. Some stores divided music mostly by description, others mainly by labels in alphabetical order, and some by genre or country of origin. The division criteria could also vary within a single store. At each store, the employees played the background music on separate turntables. The results implicate that customers have personal preferences for the division but clarity and certain logic was hoped for.

The results of the analysis of the emotional customer experience elements revealed that in addition to the record division and the space, people were also sensible to the general atmosphere and paid attention to it upon arrival. A majority also interacted with the staff upon arrival with a greeting. In general, throughout the interviews in each store, customers evaluated their overall customer experiences as highly positive. Several indicated that they would return, also first-time visitors. Also, the staff at each store were perceived as friendly, helpful and professional. Many customers felt that help was available if needed; intrusive service was deemed as inappropriate in the record store context. The results of the empirical research on the physical and the emotional elements were used in applying the chosen service design methods. In general, already as a single discovery, they could function as inspiration for improving the customer experience at record stores.

In this study, service design methods were applied by creating two personas and customer experience maps based on the empirical research, which included observation and face-to-face customer interviews. The creation process utilized the empirical data through the research. In order to create more distinctive and versatile personas and customer experience maps, during the design process, *the design categorization was shaped into themes and responses* that showed similarity. In this way, the findings were recognizable and generalizable, for example when it came to determining the preferred music formats or purchasing channels that could describe the personas' personalities. The design process comprised analyzing the data according to the interview themes, i.e., the demographic attributes, record hobbyism and the purpose of shopping at the time of the interview. In addition, the shopping process was examined for the creation of the customer experience maps, which also went hand in hand with the analysis of the empirical results. The themes and the rest of the empirical results were overlapping subjects and could perhaps have been organized differently for a more coherent presentation. However, the division of the analysis according to the research sub-questions and themes was considered a valid method.

The personas and the customer experience maps summarize the user research data visually and present the results of the customer interviews and of the observations in a clear and comprehensible way. For example, different responses were given to the question on music format preference. Some interviewees stated clearly that they only buy vinyl records, while others stated that they also buy digital music. This led to the solution that one of the personas only buys vinyl and the other buys also digital releases. This logic was followed throughout the design process, both in creating the personas and the customer experience maps. As a result, the created personas represent the potential record store customers' user profiles and describe their buying habits and their record hobbyism comprehensively.

The first persona is Clement Leroy, who is 24 years old, originally from France and resides currently in Berlin, Germany, for his studies. He has recently started dj'ing. He mostly buys records for dj'ing purposes, but he buys also digital music, as it is faster and less expensive to acquire. He prefers the offline store experience to online shopping. Clement likes to spend time at the stores and discover music at a slow pace. The second persona is Antti Kivelä, a 35-year-old Finnish man, who lives in Helsinki, Finland. He works in media production, and due to busy working schedules, he mainly visits record stores when he has the time. He used to dj when he was younger, and in general, he has been mostly a record collector, owning a great quantity of records. Nowadays, he collects music primarily for music production: for sampling and for inspiration. As there has been a lack of record stores that would have offered electronic music on vinyl, his record buying habits have had a strong emphasis on online purchasing channels, and he has purchased offline mostly on his trips abroad. He is more for the quality of the records than for the quantity, and buys and plays only vinyl.

The customer experience map helps to identify the touchpoints and the customer journey that the particular persona would go through at record stores in general. The focus is on the pre-service phase that indicates the source through which the persona got the information about the store's existence, and on the service phase, which explains the shopping process. This can clarify what that particular user type would do in the store and help to see the customer journey from the user's perspective. In this study, the customer experience maps were created on a general level to show the outlines and the themes of the customer journey. The maps could have been created and illustrated for each store respectively as well.

Considering the reliability of the results, there are factors that could change the course of the results. It is possible that before a hypothetical latter researcher is to repeat the operations of the study and obtain the same results, the consumption habits, especially with regards to the format, may have changed. The music industry is currently facing an era of transformation of recorded music. Streaming services are increasing in popularity, which can have an effect on the demand for vinyl pressings. Although vinyl has, at the time of the writing of this thesis, undergone resurgence, the peak may perhaps be reversed at some point. Perhaps the CD format faces nostalgia by the next century. Additionally, although in qualitative research one has to obtain saturation from the responses, people still are individuals and responses can always change according to their opinions. Furthermore, record stores generally are a kind of personal lifestyle stores whose customer base and loyal customers can show variation from a store to another.

Based on the findings, the theoretical contributions of this thesis are that first of all, it includes research in an area that has not previously been studied. Therefore, it adds value to the existing research both on the theoretical and on the empirical level, by giving practical examples of applying the service design methods in the context of record stores. Secondly, this thesis offers small retail companies a practical example on how they could tap into service design in their everyday business. The thesis has made the concepts of service design and customer experience more familiar and accessible both on a conceptual and on a concrete level. Thirdly, designers and others do not always use the persona tool in as a detailed and scientific way as they were used in this research-based design project, in which the design process was precise and based on empirical data. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the theory also by giving a description of the design process. Lastly, creating the personas and customer experience maps has had an emphasis on the user data. Rather than using generic attributes for the personas, the personas were built specifically around their relationship to music and to record stores, in order to create more engagement and meaningfulness in a specific context.

6.3 Managerial Implications

The objectives of this study have been to understand service design and customer experience in theory and to apply this knowledge in practice in the context of record stores. The managerial implications of this study focus on raising acknowledgement of how these concepts and related

principles can be used in practical context in small retail business. In general, specialty retail stores should be designed with a particular customer in mind. In order for any kind of brick and mortar store to have an advantage in today's fierce competition, especially with online stores, modern day retail stores need to push for holistic experiences. Creating successful and memorable customer experiences calls for careful attention in service design, so that the customer journey is well orchestrated and every touchpoint is identified and carefully taken into consideration within the journey. The services, the products, and the servicescapes where retailers and customers interact should be designed from the user perspective, but also be business-driven, so that they are profitable. Well-planned touchpoints and layouts help the customers to navigate in the space and to feel comfortable.

In this study, two service design tools, personas and customer experience maps, were used to identify the profiles of the customers that visit record stores and to visualize the touchpoints the customers come to contact with at a record store. These tools can offer information, inspiration, and ideas for different stakeholders, for example, when designing a retail space: the tools can help in identifying touchpoints and possible problem areas, in creating more pleasant customer experiences, as well as in looking at things from the user's perspective during these phases of design. The stores could use these profiles to identify their target groups and to target their messages for example in content marketing, on newsletters or on social media. The results from each store are comparable and open up the possibility for each of them to take a look at good practices and opportunities for improvement. The findings seem to suggest that one opportunity for improvement for Bikini Waxx are the stairs that should be rebuilt, as the customers find them difficult to use, especially while carrying records. In the case of one customer, this resulted in that he didn't bother to listen to more records, although he was interested in them. This is a noteworthy finding, as it might indicate that Bikini Waxx is at times losing business because access upstairs and back downstairs causes obstacles. Next, we will consider the managerial implications of this study for each of the examined record stores in detail. Suggestions are proposed in order for the stores to improve their customer experiences.

At Bikini Waxx, one customer did not notice the record listening setups meant for customers. This result indicates that in a record store, a significant touchpoint was passed unnoticed. Since customers do often listen to records prior to the purchase, it would be advisable to place a record listening setup for customers also downstairs. This solution would also serve physically disabled people who could not consider climbing up the stairs. Although one possible solution

that would allow for the customers to listen to records could be using the separate turntable that is usually used for the store's music, however, for customers with a bigger quantity of records to listen, it might be more comfortable not to listen to a stack of records through the store's audio system, but to have their own setup with headphones.

The results revealed that there was uncertainty about the purpose and function of the different rooms at OYE Records. The third room, which can be accessed through a hallway from the main room, gave the mixed impression of a storeroom and a shopping area. To prevent misunderstandings, informative signs could be placed in the store to indicate that all three rooms contain records on sale. These signs could also include indications of the available music genres in each room. This could help the customer to navigate more easily in the store.

At Mind Records, the results confirmed that the settings for record listening were in order. However, a remark was made about the quantity of the setups: a third record player was desired to relieve the pressure especially on busier days. Although the customer also had the option to listen to records on the turntables available on the service counter, it is to be suggested that it would be advisable to acquire an extra record player clearly for customer use. The results suggest that a method of setting records on display as weekly choices was also hoped for at Mind Records to encourage conversation and to give inspiration. This method was used in OYE Records and at Bikini Waxx. Mind Records has applied this course of action at the newest store in Kaisaniemi.

During the research, it became evident that the record division criteria caused contradictory opinions. Some thought that dividing the records mainly by labels in alphabetic order was fitting, but also division in alphabetical order by artists was preferred. Also, a customer did not notice the shelves for the latest releases on the service counter. A remark was made that the new releases could be divided either by style or by country of origin, and that individual records could have comprehensible descriptions that indicate the music style. Each record store has its own ways and its own style of dividing records. These results indicate suggestions for possible solutions to dividing the items. The latest releases – and why not also the rest of the records – could be indicated with a visible sign that describes the music type. In addition, Mind Records could also apply describing new records with a small description that would make it convenient to get information about the release, awaken interest, and help in getting acquainted with new music easily.

Although the general atmosphere and the perception of the overall customer experience in Mind Records was described as positive, the results revealed that to some customers, the atmosphere was manly and had an insider feeling that may have caused slight discomfort. These results could open up a discussion on how record stores should or could be more accessible for people in general. For example, most of the customers – as well as of the employees at the stores – were men. However, there is a growing number of female djs and music enthusiasts who can create an increasing source of business for record stores. The findings of the study suggest that it could be profitable for the record stores to increase the number of female employees and invite female artists to in-store events. Some of these suggestions are already applied in the case study stores.

The findings of this study and their managerial implications can also be used as a foundation for a design brief – or as parameters for further design projects or for concept design. Companies should invest to create customer experiences that are memorable, enjoyable and pleasant. Small businesses could conduct design projects, for example together with an academic team.

6.4 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this research project face limitations. Firstly, 18 interviews were made and analyzed in the research altogether. The sample size of the study was small and therefore, the study cannot guarantee a comprehensive description of all kinds of record store visitors. Secondly, all face-to-face interviews made as part of the empirical research followed the same pre-prepared Interview Outline Guides, but some more flexibly than others. Intuitive and experimental thinking was applied to the question framework. Therefore, the interviews were not completely identical, but the set of realized questions and their order varied individually, depending on the customer's situation and responses. Thirdly, as the interviews were not scheduled beforehand, consequently, due to the limited amount of time available for the interviews, the interviewees were selected randomly, which showed in the length of the interviews. For the creation of more comprehensive personas, more time for discussion with the users would have been needed.

A fourth limitation of this study was its scope. Usually, a service design process involves more stakeholders, for example employees who participate as a source of empirical data or as co-creators. Co-creation and constant iteration were not, however, methods or subjects in this research project. The scope of the research and consequently, the scope of its empirical results were limited, to provide only a basis for design parameters and a starting point for a potential future design project.

This study has defined service design by its characteristics, as a common definition and a clear terminology have not yet been established. The growing interest for service design shown by both academics and businesses will presumably keep on its course in the following years. It would be good to stabilize a mutual language to avoid misunderstandings in applying service design principles or methods. As stated above, the sample size of this study was limited. If the record stores should wish to undertake a comprehensive study on their visitor profiles, the author suggests for future research the compilation of a digital customer base and the use of quantitative research methods to obtain precise information on the purchasing behavior of that specific customer base. A second subject for future research could be to form a comprehensive understanding of the operative side of record store business – of what a record store actually does. A *service blueprint* tool could be used in the future research on the operative side. Thirdly, this study revealed the fact that to this day, research and literature on applying service design methods in the specific context of record stores or in the field of the music industry in general is extremely scarce. Exploring how the service design methodology could be applied in the field of the music industry would open up a vast subject for future research. Finally, automatization and the *Internet of Things* are future trends that will undoubtedly also have impacts on how service design research is conducted and how customer experience is tracked or measured. Scientific and economic interests might lie in studying how service design tools could be used in an automated manner.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Empirical Research at the Record Stores

Research Day	Store	Date	Time	Number of Interviews
1	Bikini Waxx Records	2th November 2016	14:00 - 20:00	3
2	Bikini Waxx Records	3rd November 2016	15:30 - 20:00	3
3	OYE Records	8th November 2016	13:00 - 18:00	6 (7)*
4	Mind Records	10th November 2016	14:00 - 19:00	3
5	Mind Records	15th November 2016	15:00 - 19:00	3

*One interview was excluded from the study as explained in Chapter 4.2.

Appendix 2: Observation Outline Guide

STORE ACTIVITIES

- Get to know to the staff, introduce yourself and the project
- Identify the touchpoints
- Get to know to the space: take pictures of the space and floorplan
- Gear: GoPro, Camera for video and pictures, Zoom H4 for audio recording

OBSERVATION

TOUCHPOINT ELEMENTS

- Store - how is the space
- General atmosphere observation - busy, relaxed etc.
- Which are the touchpoints, can people relax?
 - Record listeners: are they often used actively?
 - Service counter
 - What else?

STAFF

- Staff - how many staff members are present? What they do and how they interact with the customers? Service attitude, vibe, expressions
- Customer service - how are the individual customers greeted? With what kind of attitude are they served? What happens in the service encounter?

CUSTOMERS

- Features - how are they, age young (approx. 15- 30) middle aged (approx. 30-60) to elderly (approx. 60 and up), gender
- Entrance - when they arrive, how do individuals enter the shop, do they come individually or in groups? Do they seem to know where they are coming (are they determined)?
- Customer behavior - do customers 'wander around', do they 'know' it beforehand? Are they familiar with the space? Are they going to ask records straight from the service counter or browse through records in shelf? Do they look records randomly or by a categorization (artist, label, genre)? Do customers buy items they browse/listen to? How many records they buy from the browsed/listened ones?
- Purchasing process - what happens through a to d typically?
- Service encounter - how long people have to wait for the purchase/request? What the customers do while waiting for a service? How long does the service take?

Appendix 3: Interview Outline for the Customers

PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS TOPIC

- Interview occurs after the purchasing moment
- Introduce yourself and the project
- Ask permission to record the interview with an audio recording
- Mark the arrival and leaving times

THEMES FOR THE INTERVIEW:

PERSONAL

- Name
- Age
- Nationality/citizenship

RECORDS

- Do you buy records?
- How? (online vs.offline, mp3 etc.)
- Why? (dj, collector etc.)
- How would you describe your record purchasing activities? (active, passive, here and then)

STORE

- Is the record store familiar to you? Have you visited here before (how many times)?
- How do you know this store?
- Was the shop easy to find?
- What is the purpose of your visit?
- How would you describe the shop? (space, atmosphere)
- What things did you observe when you first walked in? What did you think of those?
- Did you encounter with the service staff when you entered? How would you describe him/her/them?
- How would you describe your shopping process? Were you searching something special or browsing?

TOUCHPOINTS

- Did you notice the record listening setups?
- Did you listen to records? How many did you (approximately) listen to? Did you listen to all songs of a record? Did you buy some of those?

SERVICE/CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- How would you describe the purchasing or service moments? Did you wait for the service? Did you do anything while waiting?
- How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole (entering, space, service staff, shopping, purchasing etc.? What feeling you might have?

Appendix 4: Interview Outline for the Record Storekeepers

PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS TOPIC

Recording gear: Zoom H4N/QuickTime player

PERSONAL

- Name
- Age
- Nationality/citizenship
- Occupation

GENERAL

- Please tell a bit about yourself?
- Can you walk us through the history of *the shop* and how you got involved? (Foundation year, by who, location(s), number of employees etc.)
- Could you describe briefly the evolvement of the vinyl record? (Impact of digital sales)

MUSIC/GEAR

- Tell a bit about the music genres, do you concentrate on a certain type of music?
- Do you sell something in addition to records? (Gear, merchandise, fan products)
- How many staff members are in the shop? What is your opinion about the number of staff?
- How do you buy music?
- How would you describe a process before a record ends up to a customer? (Logistics, distributors, record labels, direct sales)
- How would you describe your pricing methodology?

SHOP/CX

- How would you describe the store? (Space, atmosphere)
- What is essential to you in the store?
- Can you tell about the store's culture?
- What kind of customer experience you want customers to obtain of the store?
- What kind of *feeling* you would like customers to have from the shop?

TOUCHPOINTS

- What kind of customer experience elements you recognize in the store?
- How the records are divided? Does the same division apply also in the web store? Have you got comments or feedback of this solution?
- Can you tell about the record listening possibilities? How did you end up to this solution?
- What happens in the service counter when customer comes to purchase a record (price sticker, bar code etc.)?

CUSTOMERS

- For who is this store for? Who is your target customer? What is he/she like?
- How do you interact with the customers? Do you have a service policy?
- Do you organize events or other activities for the customers? Are they meant for all (open)?
- Marketing/Do you practice any after sale/regular customer activities? If yes, how often?
- Do you receive customer feedback? Do you collect feedback from them? Do you utilize it somehow, can you think of an example of an improvement or such based on feedback?

FUTURE

- Compared to other record stores, how is :::?
- How is a dream record shop like?
- Any future plans for the shop?

Appendix: 5 Customer Interviews in Bikini Waxx Records

5.1 Bikini Waxx Customer Interview 1

Interviewed in English 2nd November 2016 at Bikini Waxx Records

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 16:00
LEAVING TIME 16:15
INTERVIEW TIME 10 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Female
Age 28
Nationality/city of residence Dutch, lives in Berlin

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yes

How often? I buy about one record per a month.

How do you like to buy records (offline, online)? I like to purchase them from the shops

Why do you buy records? I buy music more for listening and the kind of music you'd listen at home. I'm not a dj.

BIKINI WAXX

About this store, Bikini Waxx, have you visited here before? No, I haven't, this is my first time here.

How do you know this store? My boyfriend told me about this.

Was this store easy to find? No, because my boyfriend had told me the wrong (street) number, so I stood up in the rain outside looking for the shop.

What was the purpose of your visit? To buy a Traumprinz record for my boyfriend as a surprise present.

How would you describe the store? It's cozy and warm

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? I observed the little kitchen and I thought "*Is this only meant for the staff?*" Then I noticed the record shelves and how nicely they're put.

SERVICE

Did you encounter the service staff when you entered?

Well I didn't saw them, I saw you (the interviewer) first but it was a good welcome.

How would you describe them (the staff)? Also friendly, helpful, immediately there for me.

How would you describe your shopping process? Successful.

Did you notice the record listening setups? No? That's upstairs I guess.

How would you describe the service? Good

You didn't have to wait for the service? No

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole (like entering, the staff, service, purchasing etc.) or what kind of feeling you might have? Very good.

5.2 Bikini Waxx Customer Interview 2

Interviewed/shadowed in English 2nd November 2016 at Bikini Waxx Records.

The customer had been to Bikini Waxx before, but he was still encouraged to tell about his observations. After 'shadowing' a little while, I left him collect and listen to records. After his moment of purchase, I tagged along with him again and made a short interview with him.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 16:40
LEAVING TIME 19:06

INTERVIEW TIME 15 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Male
Age 26
Nationality/city of residence German, lives in Berlin

The interviewee was asked to make observations aloud. The shadowing lasted 10 min.

Now that you've entered the shop, what you observe? What I see are the records over there, and I really like how they doing it here, having like different parts, like a huge electronic part (Florian offers Julius some tea), and I like this shop actually.

Hangs a jacket to coat hanger.

What do you think of the records? Well to be honest, I don't know all the interprets always, but Im mostly just taking something and checking it.

How do you like the division of records? Pretty fine, I mean we have different kind of record stores here in Berlin: some stores just have a really lot of records. This store doesn't have that much, thus this selection is a bit more careful and they have pretty small sections but pretty much *takeable*, so that's nice.

Do you like to browse records and see what there is or do you have something specific on your mind? I have something specific on my mind: today I want for sure something from electro (genre), not the normal four to four techno.

Do you buy records? Yeah

How often? Every week

How do you buy records (offline, online)? Offline mostly, because on Discogs for example, I mean you can find a lot from there but you always have to buy for shipping and ridiculous prices sometimes.

Do you mostly buy music on vinyl (records) or also in another format? Only vinyl, sometimes I buy a digital track from Hardwax, actually just vinyl.

Why do you buy records? To play

Are you a dj? Yeah

BIKINI WAXX

You said you've visited here before, how many times? I think just four times or so

How you know about the store? I think from a friend who was telling about it

Was this store easy to find? Yeah

What was the purpose of your visit? To find some nice records for a mix I want to do

When was the last time you visited Bikini Waxx? Maybe two weeks ago. Every time I'm staying for maybe one or two hours, so I cannot check everything. That's why checking something now, something else next time.

4 min interview at the time of leaving

How would you describe the store? It's a nice shop with nice people working here, and good records.

When you arrived here, did you encounter the service staff? No

How would you describe your purchasing process? I'm getting some records and went upstairs for listening. Listened to them once, checked what I like and made a selection, maybe five to six records, and then I listened them again, because I cannot afford all of them, so I'm making a choice of two or three

From how many records did you end up with two or three pieces? I think minimum from 20-25.

How many records did you buy? 2

Did you listen to all of the songs on a record? Yeah, definitely

How would you describe your service moments? The staff is very friendly, helpful. They make it possible to pay even with *Paypal*, which is very convenient, because no one is carrying cash in these days.

Did you have to wait for the service? No, they served me directly.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? Good: nothing negative to say.

What kind of feeling might you have? Positive feeling.

Compared to the other record stores, how is this one? This one (Bikini Waxx) is pretty cozy maybe with more familiar feeling, because *not that many people know it*. For example, when you go to Hardwax, you have the feeling like in the row in *Berghain*: everybody going also to Hardwax once. So many people, so it's very anonymous.

Does it feel more personal here? Yeah

5.3 Bikini Waxx Customer Interview 3

Interviewed/shadowed in English 2nd November 2016 at Bikini Waxx Records

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 16:50
LEAVING TIME 18:50
INTERVIEW TIME Shadowing 5:17 minutes, Interview 4:55 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Male
Age 26
Nationality/city of residence French, lives in Berlin

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yeah

How often? Every week but it's not regular, for a month I can be not buying records, and then suddenly 50

Do you buy more offline or online? More online from *Discogs*, *sometimes from HHV*.

Do you buy music on vinyls or also in other formats? Mostly vinyls.

Why do you buy records? Because I play with them (dj).

BIKINI WAXX

This is your first time here (at Bikini Waxx) right? Yeah

How did you know about the store? Friends

Was this store easy to find? Yeah, it took me five seconds to figure out but it (the shop sign) is written on the bell, so it is ok.

What is the purpose of your visit? I was going to buy the last Traumprinz record, and it's all gone. So I'm also going to browse some, because *I've never been here*.

What was the first thing you observed when you walked in? The labels and the shelves, and then I looked at the proportions, if there is more house, techno or electronica, just to get an idea of the main styles.

What you think of those? Well, I'm definitely going to check out some stuff.

What kind of music interests you? Old school, dark atmospheric or slow down techno and acid. Sometimes classic house. My taste is very broad.

Shortly interviewed while he is browsing records

How do you select the records you're interested in? Today it's very random. Depends: sometimes I just go with the names I know; another times it's more from names and design. I'm not going to buy a lots and lots, because I'm out of work at the moment.

Is it easy to browse the records here? Yeah, because the quantity is *fine school*, and I like the shelves: how it's displayed.

Interview after shopping

How would you describe the shop? Well I will come back. Today was really random: I only looked for ambient stuff, because it's what I like to listen to home or when I work. Yeah, there is some work stuff to dig.

What were you observing when you walked in the store? I had a feeling like you're entering someone's house. Feels like cozy with the kitchen here, and you go up with the stairs: it feels like a flat, so you don't feel like in a standard shop.

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? Yeah, when I arrived we said hi.

How did you like the staff? I didn't encounter with them that much. Today he just told me about a label, so it's better instead of just selling the record; you speak a bit about the label to allow the customer to discover more music, which was cool.

What did you chat about the label? Basically he said that there is cool stuff on this label, so I'm going to check that later.

How would you describe your shopping process? Today I was here to buy a record for a friend but the record was not available anymore and since this was the first time, I just browsed. I'm not working these days, so I would be able to spend more time but today was very quick. Normally I would spend three hours (at the store), one shop per day, because otherwise it would be too much and you don't hear the music anymore.

Did you notice the record listening setups? They were pretty cool, especially the white *record racks*, I was thinking of doing the same actually.

Did you listen to some records? Yeah.

How many did you listen to approximately? About 20.

How many did you buy? Two

How would you describe the purchasing or service moment? Sort of relaxed, you feel like you can just talk and you're just not here to buy.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? As I said, you don't have the feeling to be in a classic shop, it's more like *a living room* upstairs. It feels cozy, because you don't have the pressure to buy records just because you're in a shop. *It feels more like you're at home.*

What kind of feeling might you have? Tranquility.

5.4 Bikini Waxx Customer Interview 4

Interviewed in English 3rd November 2016 at Bikini Waxx Records.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

ARRIVAL TIME	15:15
LEAVING TIME	18:07
INTERVIEW TIME	15 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
Age	25
Nationality/city of residence	French/Latin-American, lives currently in Lisbon

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yeah

How often do you buy records? Every two weeks

Approximately how many? Depends of the price, I would say, ten records per a month

Do you buy records mostly online or offline? Offline, because I like to visit record stores. Because a record store is like a second house for a guy like me, and they propose different things they love, you know. I don't like to buy (from the) Internet, but I buy some records I don't find (from the shops), but usually I go to visit a record store because you have a people between a record and the customer.

What kind of record stores do you normally visit? A lot of Brazilian and African records and since two or three years I've used to buy more funk and disco, and now it's reversed (the other way around) I'm now interested of electronic records: deep house and techno, percussive depends.

Do you also buy digital music? No, just records. *To have a memory, you'll have an object.*

Why do you buy records? That's a good question, because of course we love music, but it's for me *a way to organize my journey.* For example in the morning, now I take time to wake up slowly and to listen to record, so you have to take it out (from the sleeve) and put it on the turntable, and during this time I'm

preparing a coffee. And in the afternoon I like to find and to search different records from my bags, and it's another way of listening music. For example in the morning I listen to different things than in the night and that's why music, it's part of my life.

Are you a collector or do you also dj? Yeah, I was a collector and now I start to mix in different places, in France and Portugal, where I live.

BIKINI WAXX

Was Bikini Waxx familiar to you before? No, I just heard heard about Bikini Waxx when I searched it from the Internet. I really appreciate the atmosphere they made in the pictures, because you have time to be *tranquilo*, and listen to good music without another guy who is pushing you, you know -it's really familiar, it's like a house.

So you searched this store on the Internet? Yeah. I was looking for a record store in Berlin and I found it.

Was this store easy to find? Quite easy, in the Facebook I think it's another direction, and when I searched for the direction, it was another one and I saw in your (Bikini wax, talking to Florian) pictures one *in the commentary*, 'now we have changed a direction', so I -thanks to this picture I – the right direction now.

What was the purpose of your visit? To *discover* new music, and first I'm looking for there is a lot of name(s) I don't know, and when I listen randomly, I asked the owners (Yannik and Florian) if they can suggest me some records.

And did you find something through those records, from the recommendations? Yes, thanks to them (staff)

You already described something about the store, one question would be: how would you describe the store? I will say really good mood, and records; you have second hand and new records. The offer is rich. So it's really nice, *I hope they will continue*.

What things did you observe when you first walked in? I will say the handmade the description of the jar (the record box) of music, and I saw coffee, so (I thought) it's a nice place with a sofa. Yeah, so I appreciated it.

SERVICE

Did you encounter the staff when you walked in? Yeah, *we said hello, how are you*. It was nice too

Were you searching for something special or more like browsing? Yeah, I was here just to discover. So, yeah I had a little idea what I'm looking for but I wanted to come here to discover.

How would you describe your shopping process? Depends but normally I look everything before to search, to see what they propose, and after it I start to research the boxes. And at the second time I ask help to (from) the owners, and that's all.

Did you notice the record listening setups? Yeah.

How many records did you listen? I will say about 20, something like that.

And how many did you buy from those? I bought four.

How would you describe the purchasing moment? Really peaceful with a lot of time to listen music with good conditions. It sits well, and that's really important; the condition you listen to music, for example if you are in a big record store, you have a lot of people who are pushing you to, to listen fast, and sometimes I don't appreciate it. For me a record store it is people who own a business but it's nice to have a contact with them and *not just be seen as a simple customer, who gives money*.

Maybe we can draw this question: compared to the other stores, how is this one? I really appreciate it, as I said to you, it's little and a bit *escondido* (hidden). It's interesting when you're going for the first time to this record store.

How did you like the customer experience as a whole experience like entering the shop, buying, listening, and service. How did you like it? For me it's really important, to enter (to the) atmosphere of the sellers who said you *hallo*, and to have time, and not a lot of clients of customers. So for me it's to have time, to be in good condition and to have a good people.

What kind of feeling might you have? Here? Really nice feeling.

5.5 Bikini Waxx Customer Interview 5

Interviewed in English 3rd November 2016 at Bikini Waxx Records.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 18:31
LEAVING TIME 19:28
INTERVIEW TIME 15 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Male
Age 36
Nationality/city of residence German, from Köln, lives in Munich at the moment

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yes

What kind of records do you buy? Not so much real dance music, that's why I didn't find here anything probably. I mean I also like some disco and house stuff but lately I've been buying more experimental or ambient music or very silent stuff and not so much the louder dance stuff. Yeah, but I buy records.

Why do you buy records? Well I started 20 years ago when I was 16 or I bought my first record when I was 13 but I started to buy more records about 16, 20 years ago. It stopped for a little while in between because I'm dj'ing every now and then and I dj'd with a laptop at some point and really lost the fun of dj'ing but didn't really know why. Then at some point I got back to the records and (it) just feels much better and I'm also very visual person, so it helps me to see the cover and find the right track. Yeah.

Do you also buy digital music? Very seldom, maybe if there is a record I really cannot get anymore but *I spend no money on iTunes*, if I buy anything digital then it's probably from *Boomkat* or *Bandcamp* directly.

And records, do you buy them offline or online? Both. I don't order so much online from shops, rather from *Discogs*, but every now and then I order a record, or I already ordered from Bikini Waxx at some point, from the online store. But I also go to records shops regularly.

And how often do you buy records? Oh, I don't know. I'm ordering maybe three to five times a month from *Discogs* and then in Munich, there are basically only two shops I can check maybe every other week or so. But *I specifically go to Amsterdam to buy records*. Sometimes I also make a small journey for it.

Which record stores would you recommend in Amsterdam? *Red Light Records* definitely and then also *Rush Hour* is also ok. They had much more limited space and now they moved into much bigger one but I think they have a bigger stock of second hand records. And then there is also *Waxwell (Records)*. Those are the three records stores, I'd recommend.

BIKINI WAXX

And what about this store, Bikini Waxx, was it familiar before? I was once in Gerd's (the owner's) living room in the old flat, and also my friend *Heikki* from Helsinki, he did the website, I think for the shop and he asked me, because I'm also designing websites or programming, (Heikki): *'ah, do you have a solution to this problem?* So I already knew about the shop before it came and then I visited Gerd in the old flat, but I haven't been to the shop here yet, so that's my first time here. Yeah.

Was this store easy to find? I was at *Sound Metaphors* before and spoke to the guys and they, I asked them that I want to go the Bikini Waxx and they pointed me but I already, I think I would have found it, because the sign is very, I mean if you have the number then you see the big sign and then everything is good.

What was the purpose of your visit (to the store)? I just wanted to see it and I was hoping that Gerd would be here but he is, I wrote with him and he was still in Tallin but he said check out the shop anyway so I did. And I also like, I mean record shops are also social places, I mean right now I really wanted to go for records but I like usually I find nice people in the record shop or sometimes. But I like it as a place where you can play music to each other, hung around a little bit

How would you describe the store? *Familiar or small and cozy*, and I think very *specialized in house and techno*, which is not really the music I'm into at the moment, so *I saw many records I didn't even*

know of, or I didn't know the titles or the labels but the disco stuff that was there I had few of them already, it's small selection but good.

What did you think of the division of the records? It's very particular, because of the descriptive way but I like that and everything sounds like (ah) you could find something here, even if I don't, it sounds very browsable, it makes you want to browse the thing (the shelf), and (it is) interesting division also.

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? The first thing I observed was oh, this door is really thin; that it feels very plastic. But I already saw the records through the window, so that was nice and that always get you: *'oh I want to go there'*. Then I saw that it looks very self-made and that's something I like. This not being very polished, like the way a record shop should be in my opinion; similar to Red Light Records.

Were you searching for something special or just browsing? No, I wasn't searching for something special. I'm buying more old records than new ones nowadays and I wasn't really sure to what to expect but I was in the area anyways, so I wanted to see the shop.

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? I'm pretty much a guy who goes in and then rarely talks; just looks for records, but I mean, even if I only exchanged a few words, it was still quite warm from the vibe and we also (us) talked when sharing the sentiment about my bag (Red Light Records bag).

You didn't buy any records, right? How would you describe the process you went through in this store (coming in, browsing, listening perhaps)? Yeah, yeah, I mean that was the only little.. I mean it's definitely a shop where you should take your time also I think, because it's very comfortable to sit there and listen to the music but I went up to with a stack of records, listened to them, then came back (downstairs) and then found one more but then I was *like ah the thing (the stairs) is really steep and I'm not really sure if I want to go back for this one record and then I didn't listen to it*. So maybe that's a *small obstacle* but otherwise it would not probably be possible: the steps are really steep.

How many records did you listen? Six I think.

Did you listen to all of the tracks? Yeah, I had a, two were total fail and way too hard for me and not my thing. Then I listened to one record a friend of mine put out, that I haven't listened to yet and I sort of liked it but it's nothing I would buy on vinyl. *I sometimes buy expensive records, so I have to be a bit more special what I buy. I rather buy one for 50 or 60 euros and then three I skip*. Yeah, but I wanted to listen to them, it sounded really well and it's a nice art work and I took guesses of what I picked and most of it was just not my thing, except for the one record, but it was also not so much my thing that I would have bought it.

How would you describe your service moments? Or did you have them? Yeah, as I said I didn't really interact much, but still I think it's always nice to say something before you go out if you listen to the records and everything, so *I just told to guy, the person behind the counter that unfortunately I didn't find anything but nice shop and all the best*, and that was really more or less, except for the welcoming talk all I spoke about in the shop.

What is your impression about the service you received? I didn't really look for it, so I mean if I would had seen about 30 records that would have interested me, and I would have been a bit lost, I would have definitely the *staff is capable* of telling me, ok if I tell them, this is what I like, for example to pick out or give me some records and that's, but I really rarely do that.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole (like entering, listening, service like)? For me it seemed very much like a place to meet and speak about things, not necessarily check records, which always a good thing I think. Service wise it's always good to have a good selection, as I'm not really into all the techno and house stuff but from the disco and other stuff that I saw, selection wise it was good. I never had a feeling I couldn't ask for something if I wanted to.

What kind of feeling might you have? I was just actually wondering where they put the djs when they have an in store session. In general it's a very nice shop and I will definitely come back. *I will add it to the list of shops that I visit when I'm in Berlin*.

How often do you come to Berlin? Not as much as I would probably like, because I just moved from Köln, but maybe once a year.

5.6 Bikini Waxx Customer Interview 6

Interviewed in English 3rd November 2016 at Bikini Waxx Records.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 19:20
LEAVING TIME 20:05
INTERVIEW TIME 8 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Female
Age 22
Nationality/city of residence German, from North Germany, lives in Berlin

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yes

Do you buy records offline or online? Both, I prefer offline but sometimes it's easier to buy them online, for example from *Discogs*.

Which records stores do you like to visit? Bikini Waxx, *black.round.twelve*, *Spacehall* and *Audio-In*.

Why do you buy records? Because I like to listen and play them

Do you dj? Yes

And how often do you buy records? Basically every time I get money, so mostly in the beginning of the month and then sometimes in between but it really depends how much money I have left.

How many records you'd buy generally monthly? Like 20.

BIKINI WAXX

Is Bikini Waxx familiar to you? Yeah

Have you been here before? Yes

How many times? Two times

How do you know this store? I know it through friends, for instance through Florian (staff member), with whom we studied together, and also from another friend from the Netherlands, who recommended Bikini Waxx to me.

Did you visit in the old store? No

Is this store easy to find? Well, I mean once I know but when you don't know, it's a bit confusing, because you don't recognize just a sign at the door immediately, so I was asking directions from the store next to it in the first time.

What was the purpose of your visit? Well this time, I informed myself in advance, if they'd have a specific record (YYY). I asked Florian if they would have the record. Actually I just wanted to buy this record but I ended up, of course, buying three more records.

How would you describe the store? I really like the atmosphere; it's really chill, like basically *chilling at home*. How the furniture's are placed creates a *feeling of a living room*. So I really like it. *The stairs are sometimes a bit tricky*, I need to say. *I like to come here*; I would even chill here and have a drink or whatever.

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? I noticed that it is really a small store but with a really nice and familiar atmosphere, which made me feel comfortable immediately. And I noticed that all the listening (setups) is upstairs.

SERVICE

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? Yeah, I greeted them.

How would you describe the staff? It was really friendly.

How would you describe your shopping process? He (Florian) gave me the record immediately, because he knew I was looking for it and asked if I want to listen to it, and of course I wanted to. Then I checked out some other records, so it's worth to go upstairs.

How many records did you listen to? I think ten.

How would you describe your service moments? Really nice, really good

Did you wait for the service? No

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? I think it's really nice, like as I said *I'd come back definitely*. I would come back just to check out some records after work to enjoy a bit.

What kind of feeling might you have? Pretty nice feeling, you feel comfortable and welcome over here. After work it's kind of *stress release*, so really good.

Appendix 6 Customer Interviews in OYE Records

6.1 OYE Records Customer Interview 1

Interviewed in English 8th November 2016 at OYE Records, Prenzlauer Berg.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 14:00
TIME AT THE SHOP One hour
INTERVIEW TIME 17:26 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Male
Age 38
Occupation Works in education
Nationality/city of residence German, lives in Berlin

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yes

How often do you buy records? Sometimes once a week.

Do you buy music on (vinyl) records or also in other formats? I buy only records.

Why do you buy records? Because I think they are *sexier* than mp3 files.

Why do you buy records? I sometimes dj a little bit but mostly *I like to have something in my hand.*

Do you have record players at home? Yes, I have three record players.

OYE RECORDS

How about this store, OYE Records, is it familiar to you? Yes, *I've visited here since 2004 and buy my stuff.*

Do you normally come to this store or visit in the other (Neukölln) store? To this one.

How do you know this store? Back then it was in some promo newspaper. I liked the people who work here. They were kind, nice and very helpful.

What was the purpose of your visit (this time)? I get the newsletter from the store and there were some records I wanted to hear.

How often do you receive this newsletter? It comes once a week

How often do you visit OYE Records approximately? Every two weeks.

What kind of music do you normally listen to or buy? Sometimes afrobeat, afrodisco, disco stuff, house music and some movie edits.

How would you describe the store? *It's a place for music and vinyl lovers.*

How do you like the space and the atmosphere? I like it very much, because it's *gemütlich* (cozy). It has some flair. Sometimes I go to another store called *hiphopvinyl.de (HHV)* in Grünberger Straße in Friedrichshain, and I think it's terrible: they have no flair.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

What kind of things did you observe when you walked in this time? The new releases and *who is there from the staff.*

Do you know the staff? I don't know them personally but when I come here often, I know who is who.

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? I said hello.

How would you describe the staff? They are very nice, kind, friendly and *a little bit crazy about records.* Sometimes they give me recommendations. *In the past they were only two or three guys who run the shop, and (the staff) were more familiar. Now there are many people who work here, this is sometimes pity but they are growing, so it's also ok. It's not so nerdy here.*

How would you describe your shopping process (what did you do in the store)? I go to the news-section, then to the house-section and dig the interesting ones. Sometimes I know the names of the artists or the labels. Then I picked up some records; some afrobeat but mainly house records today.

Were you searching for something special or just browsing? Just browsing.

Did you listen to some records? Yes

How many did you listen approximately? About 10–12. Today I didn't buy anything.

Did you have service moments today? Yes, the service was helpful and friendly.

Is there something you don't like about the shop? No, it's a fantastic place, little bit chaotic sometimes (laughs).

How do you like about the customer experience as a whole experience, like entering the shop, buying, listening, service.. as an overall experience how is it? I like it very much, and when I have a record store, it's a good example (of how) to do it. It's very lovely with the record descriptions

Compared to the other stores how is this one? *It's the only one in Berlin, I think. I don't go to other record stores, I come here, because they have all what I want. I the past I visited other stores but now I'm familiar with it (OYE) and come here.*

Would you say that this is your favorite (record store)? Yes, it is my favorite record shop.

What makes OYE Records special? It's a whole combination of the place, rooms, and grouping of records. *The flow, which is behind the record store, is sometimes more than a record store.* It's not so nerdy like other record stores, and there is passion behind the scenes.

Do you go to events OYE Records might organize? No, not so often. I only come here to hear records and buy them. I like to come here by daytime when it's not so full.

6.2 OYE Records Customer Interview 2

Interviewed in English 8th November 2016 at OYE Records, Prenzlauer Berg.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL	About 15:12
TIME AT THE SHOP	20 minutes
INTERVIEW TIME	8:54 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
Age	36
Nationality/city of residence	New Zealander, lives in Auckland, New Zealand. On a holiday

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yes

How often do you buy records? Once in every two weeks.

And how many records approximately? Probably three.

Do you buy music on vinyl or also in other formats? Yeah, I also buy digital (music).

Why do you buy records? *I collect primarily for making music; sampling or research.* I dj as well but part-time.

What kind of music do you normally buy? Jazz, soul, funk and rock. All of it but mostly soul.

Do you go to record stores in New Zealand? Yeah, we have two record stores in Auckland where I visit every fourth night and buy records.

OYE RECORDS

Is OYE Records familiar to you? First time.

How do you know this store? Google

Was this store easy to find? Yes

What was the purpose of your visit (to the store)? Just to have a look.

How would you describe the store? Really good, it's nicely laid out and exciting.

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? The new-section.

Were you searching for something special or browsing? Just browsing, I never have anything on my mind.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? No.

How would you describe your shopping process? I just went from crate to crate to find something that I like or that looks good.

Did you notice the record listening setups? Yeah, once I got to the back, I was wondering if I could listen to the records. Then I saw them but I didn't notice them at the start even though I stood beside them.

Did you listen to some records? Yeah

How many? Just one.

Did you end up buying that record? Yeah. *I probably haven't bought it if I wouldn't have listened to it. I probably would have just put it back, and then gone back to my hotel and had a listen, then maybe would have come back and bought it.*

Do you normally listen to records at the store? Yeah, I find it hard to buy one if I don't know what it is, because *I try to buy ones I don't know or the ones I've always wanted but I need to have a listen in case I buy.*

How would you describe the purchasing moments? Was really good.

How would you describe the service staff? Friendly, no problems.

Did you encounter them otherwise than at the purchasing moment? No and that's good.

And you didn't have to wait? No

Is there something you don't like about the shop? *I don't know if I can go back there (points to the smaller room with electronic music), because it's a thing. But I think I can, it doesn't say I couldn't. It's maybe because here is the counter, so then (the other room) feels like a storeroom. But that one (other smaller room with variable music) doesn't feel like a storeroom, but more like 'oh, more records'.*

Do you feel like it's (the small room with electronic music) is not welcoming? Yeah, and there are people talking about records, which makes me nervous. If there would be a sign 'more records' with explanation mark, I'd be in it.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? Good, enjoyable, I want to come back.

Are you going to come back before you head up home? Yeah

What feeling might you have? I feel like I should look through more records but if I do, I'm going to spend more money.

Compared to the other stores, how is this one? It's good, the labeling is really good. *Actually the last crates I visited were too full and I couldn't look through them, and it pissed me out and I felt like I was damaging the records.*

Have you visited other record stores here in Berlin? Yeah, two other down the road. Here I'll probably go to a record store every day, while I'm here, because I'm here for ten days. *Because here are records we cannot get from Auckland, for example the African reissues, which is the one I got.* We don't have these.

6.3 OYE Records Customer Interview 3

Interviewed in English 8th November 2016 at OYE Records, Prenzlauer Berg.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL	15:00
TIME AT THE SHOP	35 minutes
INTERVIEW TIME	9:28 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
Age	21
Occupation	Civil servant (teaches French to children at elementary school)
Nationality/city of residence	French, lives in Berlin since two months

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yeah

How often? I haven't bought records since a long time, I just got two turntables recently and before I bought them just for listening. Now I buy records like every week, like one per week.

Do you buy music also in another format like digital? Happens sometimes, not really often.

Why do you buy records? *Because I really like the old stuff from the 70s and I mean, I can find everything from Youtube but it's not always really good quality. So it's better to air directly and when you want to start dj'ing, I was going into vinyls and mp3s but with vinyl you have a physical contact and everything. That makes you a feeling of collecting something*

Have you recently started dj'ing? Yeah, not even one month ago. Really recently.

OYE RECORDS

And how about OYE Records, is this store familiar to you? It's the only the second time here. *I heard about it, because I was trying to find a job in a record shop that has nu disco edits and I was advised that this is maybe the best shop in Berlin to find this kind of stuff.*

So another store told you to come here? Yeah, it was a store in an old building in Kreuzberg.

Was this store easy to find? Yeah, really easy.

What was the purpose of your visit? The other shop advised me to come here.

Were you searching for something special or just browsing? I gave a *shortlist* to a guy (staff) so that he would look if he'd have those records on a list. I've waited my turntables since ages and I had a lot of ideas on what I will buy when I get them, so *I came here with a precise idea of certain records.*

How would you describe the shop? It's really nice I think. The collection is crazy, for example in the city where I'm from; there are not that many electronic music records.

How would you describe the atmosphere? I didn't spend so much time here but it's really nice.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

When you first walked in this time, what did you observe? The five-euro crate; *stuff on sale. It's always what you see first when you arrive to a record shop and I looked at it directly.*

Did you encounter the service staff? Yeah, I said hi and went to talk with them because of my list.

How would you describe your process in this store? I went to look for nu-disco or afro edits.

Did you notice the record listening setups? Yes.

Did you listen to some records? Yeah, I'd say five.

Did you buy some of those? I bought one of the records from my list.

How would you describe the service? The people I've used to see are really nice. For example, the guy (staff) gave me a *reduction* because they didn't have all of my vinyls, so there was like a re-contact with the client.

Did you wait for the service? No.

Is there something you don't like about this store? No.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? I think it fits really well, how they have done here: *when you want to listen to some vinyls, you don't have to wait so much. From the experience I've had; there was a guy that had his stuff and he tried to use the turntable only for himself that was quite frustrating.*

What kind of feeling might you have? *I have a really good feeling; I will come back.*

Have you visited the other store (in Neukölln)? No, I've only been to this one and I don't even know where the other one is.

Compared to the other stores, how is this one? It's chill, for example, *we are sitting on a couch, I think that's really cool, not every record store have it. Usually they are really narrow everywhere. Here you can just sit and listen to your stuff; it's really nice.*

6.4 OYE Records Customer Interview 4

Interviewed in English 8th November 2016 at OYE Records, Prenzlauer Berg.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL	15:20
TIME AT THE SHOP	40 minutes
INTERVIEW TIME	6:34 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
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Age 25
Occupation Unemployed, runs an independent record label
Nationality/city of residence From New Zealand, lives in Berlin since three months

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yeah.

Do you collect records? Yeah, I have a huge collection back in New Zealand.

Could you describe more your work with the record label? I just want to expose weird and wonderful music that I like, that you haven't even heard about this point. I run it by myself. I publish other musician's music that I find through Internet. I'm just basically walking around and looking for Berlin records stores willing and open to take them.

How often do you buy records? Not very often at the moment, because I have no money. Back in Auckland I bought records every week I guess, every payday.

How many? Depended how much I got paid, on average maybe five per week.

Do you buy records for dj'ing or more for collecting? I dj yeah.

What kind of music do you play? Everything.

Have you dj'd here in Berlin? Yes in *Berlin Community Radio* with a few friends and at a bar in *Wedding*

OYE RECORDS

And how about OYE Records, is this store familiar to you? Yeah, I'm well aware of the stock they of local Berlin labels. *When I first came to Berlin, this was the first record store I came to.*

Have you visited the other store in Neukölln? No, I had no idea of that one.

How often have you visited in this store? About four times.

How did you know about the store? *From the releases they do as a record store.*

How would you describe the store? It's good; well stocked. Good diversity of music, well organized.

How about the atmosphere? It's chill, I like it.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

What things did you observe when you first walked in? Everything really. I went to the sections I was interested in. I guess the cassettes caught my eye, you don't often see places with nu school cassette collections,

Did you encounter the staff? Yeah, I sold them some records and they greeted me when I entered the shop.

How would you describe the staff? Friendly, good.

How would you describe your shopping process? I went to the afro section in the smaller room at first

Did you notice the record players? Of course

Did you listen to some records? I listened to one but didn't buy it because I have no money.

How would you describe the service? It's good, cannot complain.

Did you have to wait for it? No, not really, like two minutes, that ok and understandable.

Is there something you don't like about the shop? No, it's cool.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? I think it's good; *I've came here quite a few times and always found it easy.* Staff is friendly and if you have a *query*, they normally help you with it.

What kind of feeling might you have? *Positive feeling.*

Compared to the other stores, how is this one? I think this (OYE) has better selection compared to other stores I've been to in Berlin. And *they have a lot of in-house releases they do as OYE Records, which you can only find from here, which I really quite like.*

6.5 OYE Records Customer Interview 5

Interviewed in English 8th November 2016 at OYE Records, Prenzlauer Berg.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 15:40

TIME AT THE SHOP 40 minutes
INTERVIEW TIME 10 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Female
Age 33
Occupation Piano teacher
Nationality/city of residence From and lives in Berlin, Germany

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yes.

What kind of records do you buy? Mainly 60's music, latin, soul, boogaloo, french

Do you also buy music on vinyl or also digital? Vinyl only.

And records, do you buy them offline or online? More online.

How often do you buy records? I buy records five to six times per a month.

Why do you buy records? For dj'ing.

OYE RECORDS

Is OYE Records familiar to you? Not so much, I've been here only few times.

How do you know this store? Via friends.

Was this store easy to find? Yes.

What was the purpose of your visit? To find new records (browsing).

How would you describe the store? Surprisingly friendly. It offers a good variation of world music.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? We greeted and said 'hi'.

How would you describe the service? Very good.

How would you describe your shopping process? I choose records mainly from the small room, listened about 15 and took one of them. I couldn't afford to get more, so it was pretty tough choice.

Did you wait for the service? No.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? Friendly, helpful, peaceful, and easygoing.

What kind of feeling might you have? *Good, I'm going to come back.*

Compared to the other stores, how is this one? *It's one of them I like to visit.*

6.6 OYE Records Customer Interview 6

Interviewed in English 8th November 2016 at OYE Records, Prenzlauer Berg.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 17:00
TIME AT THE SHOP 40 minutes
INTERVIEW TIME 6:53 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Male
Age 42
Occupation Dj, Radio producer
Nationality/city of residence From Skopje, Macedonia

RECORDS

Do you buy records often? Not that often, *twice in a year*. But when I'm in a situation like this (in a record shop) I spend maximum time here.

Do you play vinyl or also digital music? Sometimes I combine, sometimes only vinyl.

OYE RECORDS

Is OYE Records familiar to you? *Yes, it's familiar from the web shop and I like the choice (selection) of OYE Records.*

Have you visited here before? No, this is my first time actually.

Was this store easy to find? Yes, it was easy because our flat is near.

How would you describe the store? Big list of tasty music, very good choice (selection). You don't lose too much time for choosing, and it's very well organized.

What kind of music you were searching for? I'm searching for different kind of styles: house, electro, and techno. Some good albums.

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? The *categories*, how they separate the records with different styles of music, and *how many turntables we have to use*.

Did you listen to some records? Yes, 15 in half an hour.

What did you do in the store? I go to the shop and listened to records: I saw the room with the classics and the room with house and techno.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Did you encounter the staff when you came in? I just said 'hi'.

How would you describe your service? Very good: I'm satisfied.

Was there something you didn't like about the store? Actually no, everything was good.

And the overall customer experience, how was it to you? Very nice, comfortable

What kind of feeling might you have? Lovely, like at home.

Compared to the other stores, how is this one to you? *This is like my second home. Really, because first of all, the choice of music. I like their choice of music, because I don't lose my time, I found everything: some good classics and I'm surprised.*

Appendix 7 Customer Interviews in Mind Records

7.1 Mind Records Customer Interview 1

Interviewed in Finnish 10th November 2016 at Mind Records. Translated into English.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL	16:00
LEAVING TIME	16:35
INTERVIEW TIME	18:24 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
Age	34
Occupation	Researcher at University
Nationality/city of residence	Finnish, lives in Helsinki

RECORDS

Do you buy records often? It depends, quite seasonally. Now I haven't bought so many records, but I go abroad often because of my job, for example for a conference, I combine the trip with going through the record shops. But in Helsinki, here I don't bother to run in record shops, this is my first time here. Let's say that I buy approximately 100 records or more per a year.

Do you buy exclusively vinyl records? Mostly, sometimes I buy CDs if something is not published on vinyl, but vinyl is my preference.

Do you buy digital music? No, but maybe few times, not usually.

Why do you buy (vinyl) records? I was 14 when I bought my first record, 20 years ago. At some point I bought cds, I don't know what it is, there is something. This is the eternal question that it's also a physical object, with which you can manipulate the recorded media that is not only in your hard drive in bit format. On the other hand, people rarely feel as connected to CDs (as to vinyls). To some extent it's about collecting, even weird things. As a format, it pleases me.

Why do you buy (vinyl) records? Mostly for myself, sometimes I play at some bars, but that's more like a hobby.

MIND RECORDS

How about Mind Records, you said that it's your first time here. How did you find out about this store? From social media: Facebook

Do you remember, was it from a sponsored add or from a friend? I remember it was general discussion in a music-related group (on Facebook). *Now that many record stores have closed and this is new*, I've indented to come here before, but yesterday I saw a post about *Finnish italo disco cover record* by chance, and I have these previous records that came approximately ten years ago, so I had to get this new one as a continuum (to my collection). Peculiar customer experience or perhaps a modern one: I sent a message yesterday that could you put one (italo disco album) on the side, and I would collect it today, so here I'm getting the record. This was kind of a reservation made online, but, of course, I'm getting the record by myself, I prefer to buy from the shop. If we are side tracking, I have about 2000 vinyls at home and I remember tolerably the origin and timing of every record if I have bought it from a vinyl store. If I have ordered the record online, I have no clue of these factors.

Do you buy music also online? Somewhat yes, maybe more before when I played (dj) more at some bars and the similar. Nowadays I try to reduce the quantity of my records that I don't want or listen to by actively selling them. Everything else that I like can by

So the purpose of your visit was to collect that specific record? Yes, this exact record. If I'd have more time, I would have gone through all the shelves.

Was this store easy to find? I had to think a little bit because it's such a big complex, but sure I found it pretty quickly. I thought that the entrance was on the other side.

How would you describe the store? Pretty unusual retail space -that it's not on a brick and mortar store on street level. Surprisingly spacious, the decoration is weird with all the chairs and tables etc. It's a little bit café-like. My first impression is that do they have an alcohol license. The space looks multifunctional.

Some record shops have plenty of records that are dusted, but this (Mind Records) instead, looks *organized and well though*.

How would you describe the feeling in the store? Pretty cozy, and unusual for a Finnish record shop, but in a good way I'd say. This is moving though, right?

Yeah.

I'm wondering about the space, because it's so big, as everybody knows record business is hard, and how to make that profitable is a good question, and I appreciate trying. I've understood that they (Mind Records) organized lots of live gigs and dj events, which is great and European style. Many records stores in Helsinki do not necessarily have an opportunity for this due to lack of space, but this seems fine for that.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? I said hi and went to browse some records. When it was time to leave I asked for the record I had reserved. Sometimes or rarely I would ask for recommendations. More I like to brose what looks interesting. I don't normally chat much while at records shops, especially in Finland, unless one has visited some specific space often. Probably the closest relationship was with Jazz & Sould record shop, that was run by a master of engineering, Jukka. With him I chatted more about music, because I paid him a visit often and he could make me good recommendations.

How would you describe your service moments in Mind Records? Very good. For a moment I don't doubt that I wouldn't have service around here.

What did you do in the store? I didn't do much more than looked at the record over there (points the new record section) and how much they offer second hand records, which always interests me. I like to acquire old records that are very good, even though they might be a bit more expensive. Usually at a record shop I like to look how the records are organized and put out. Especially in countries at the Meditterrian Sea, some record shops have vinyls on the floor and they claim that they would be in mint condition, although one can clearly see that that's not the case. It's important how the records are handled and taken care of.

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? I was curious about the space, it was different than I expected. I had a smaller space on my mind, even though I had heard that they organize events and stuff. I expected an oblong space with record shelves on the sides, but it turned out to be spacious and well designed with movable record shelves.

Did you notice the record listening setups? Yes, because another customer was listening to records over there.

You didn't listen to records? I didn't have time. Usually I spend quite much time to listen to records at a store and don't buy it non-listened, unless I know it before. Especially if I have time and I'm not in a hurry, I see familiar artists, names or producers, I start digging and from that curiosity one finds records but that requires time.

Is there something you don't like (about the store)? Not that I would be able to say. It's not cramped, which can annoy me in record stores. Another thing that usually bugs me a great deal is that the customer is not noticed even with a simple 'hi', because of the eccentric nature of the record store keepers. Even though one might not be in a talkative mood, they could still make note of the customer.

And here you were noticed? Yes, and I think that's really important. If the customer is not greeted, I might feel like I'm trespassing somebody's private territory, not welcomed, and taking a sneak peek.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? Very good, I got the record as promised, even though there has been great demand and there had been other reservations on the Internet. I had reserved cash, but I appreciated card payment highly. For example, I don't remember that any record store or very few in Germany would accept card payment. Maybe in bigger cities with a record store with large volume, but in smaller stores they would laugh at you with card payment. That's because the card payment operation expenses are relatively higher. In this sense, the experience was smooth.

What kind of feeling might you have? Very good.

7.2 Mind Records Customer Interview 2

Interviewed in Finnish 10th November 2016 at Mind Records. Translated into English.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 17:20, in store about 40min
LEAVING TIME 18:07
INTERVIEW TIME 23 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender Male
Age 30
Occupation Recent graduate. Limited company CEO in the field of media production.
 Music producer.
Nationality/city of residence Finnish, lives in Helsinki

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yeah, mostly abroad though. Usually I spend approximately three hours just browsing intensively to pick up the ones to listen and from those select only a few. Goal is to have one record per an hour.

How often do you buy records? I haven't bough so much recently, due to lack of money. I've invested more in instruments and concentrated on music production. But maybe once a month I pay a visit to a record store. The last time was in San Francisco and now I bought some here (in Mind Records). Last week I tried to buy records but unfortunately I got a traffic fine in front of the store, so I had to cancel the purchases.

What kind of music do you normally buy? Traditionally in-between house and techno, so one can stretch the music into both directions. Now I'm into experimental music, because I don't play (dj) sets so much anymore. I look for melodic and experimental house and ambient music with raw ankle. Techno has lost a bit of interest recently.

Why do you buy (vinyl) records? Now it's about inspiration. They are treasures, memories of places. For example in San Francisco I appreciated wine and records in the same way: they remind me of the day I heard the song. I buy everything blindly; of course I select records according to their labels but I don't pre-hunt any releases beforehand. I rather enjoy the feeling of discovery, or that I have heard the song in a nightclub and I face it in a record shop. That way I form a special relationship with a record and it's nice to own when I can go back to the same feeling. This is why exactly a vinyl record is nice to own.

Do you buy also digital music? Yes, I've bought a lot of digital music for dj'ing purposes, because of quantity, but I wouldn't say I'm an active consumer of digital music anymore.

Do you perform as a dj often? Not so much anymore, maybe once in every two months or so. We have so active band at the moment, and I prefer to suggest gigs for it (instead of a personal dj gig).

MIND RECORDS

How about Mind Records, is this familiar to you? In recent weeks it has become familiar. It's great that they have founded this. Helsinki has missed a place like this for the last years. When I bought my first vinyl records at the age of 15, in Iso-Roobertinkatu there was a similar kind of store, also in Aikatalo, right in the center, and then they disappeared. This reminds me of those.

How did you find about this? I accidently walked here, because I was going to check out Stidilä's premises for a gig about five weeks ago. Then I found out about a record store, which came to me as a total surprise. The atmosphere was good and people drank beer on an ordinary weekday without any (in-store) gig.

Was this store easy to find? You couldn't say that it was easy to find, when I found it accidently

What was the purpose of your visit this time? To listen to our test-pressings from a big sound system to accept them, and this is not open tomorrow (on Friday), so I came today as I got it just from the post office. Also I indented to buy the records that were left here the last time due the parking ticket I got.

Do you visit here often? I've been in Finland about two weeks from five and visited here four times in that time, I guess that's pretty often.

How would you describe the store? Fits very well to the environment and very *real* place, it's feels unique because it's spacious, it's not messy. I like that it's clinical, like Hardwax. I don't like to dig endlessly messy boxes. Well organized and there you have the full functional decks and headphones, and you can listen to records without an effort. The staff is relaxed and involved with the scene. I couldn't hope for a better record shop.

How would you describe the feeling in the store? The feeling reminds me of a nightclub, of course because it (Mind Records) is in a nightclub, which is a great thing because you seek for this kind of feeling when you buy music like this. You kind of hope to find those similar feelings you encounter at a nightclub. I used to buy music for nightclubs with precisely determined tempos and play well in different pitches. Too distinctive melodies were out of game too. This shop is great, because it caught the feeling why you buy these records.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? I remember that I walked in and saw the movable record shelves, and I got an instant feeling that is this a pop-up happening. It was a great feeling, and I remember that it was exceptionally open on Friday and people had beers in their hands. When I arrived, I saw Jussi (Uusitalo) and Axel Hjertmann smoking, talked with them and came in. It felt cozy and intimate, just like a record store should be. It's real that people smoke and drink alcohol; that everything's all right with your own style. The atmosphere is warm, it's not like somebody would measure the customers, which is really nice.

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? Yeah, pretty much when I first walked in asking all sorts of questions from Jussi; help with the test pressing listening and also asking who is buying records here, are they buying second hand records and how does this all work. It seems that they select records based on quality and with narrow focus and sell everything like in *Black & White Records* in Hakaniemi.

How would you describe the staff? Helpful, professional, warm-hearted and stays in subject.

You mentioned that you bought some records, did you listen to those? Yeah I listened to those. One of them I bought so that Jussi played the tracks from the shop's sound system, if the records would have two good tracks, one could spend ten euros, which in my opinion is the full price. When the third song was also good, I decided to buy that. Then I bought two records more, a Phonogenic record, because we have worked with him. Then I bought a six-euro white label record, with a stamped text of Villalobo's remix. I think it was the non-remixed version that I liked. It was a slowly developing song with organic and a bit tropical percussion instruments. To that song, it would be easy to end a *dance feeling* or build on a set. Those kinds of records are always good, because you can control feelings of own and others in every moment.

What did you do in the store? I came initially to listen to the test-pressings, sat on the dance floor, and went to the toilet with my daughter. Then I gave her a game and went to ask Jussi and Olli (Koponen) about the quality of the pressings for every song. After I was pleased with the test pressing, I noticed the record Jussi put on and asked for the records that I didn't buy the last time and Olli promised to look if those come across. Then I got a few records and bought them.

How would you describe your service moments? Service is not pushed here, which is really nice. That kind of service fits clothing stores but not record shops. The staff doesn't comment too much your choices. You can be in peace but service and opinions are available, if needed. You don't feel stupid asking.

Did you wait for the service? No, not really.

Is there something you don't like (about the store)? Nothing comes to my mind (is quiet for a while). One thing that I'm not sure about is if they have shelves for the latest records? Another thing that I miss compared to Hardwax are the descriptions of individual records that indicate what type of music they include. I like those kinds of approachable descriptions, so you don't have to search for label names. I'd like that the latest (newest) records would be divided on some basis, either by style or country of origin, for example British, Europe, Germany, French or US. The return box where you put records after listening seems to be in the right place. Nothing else I guess.

Would you like the latest records to be divided on the basis of their country of origin? Yes.

Discussion about the location of the latest records. The descriptions should definitely be on the latest record, that's why Hardwax is the best, because you can easily find music you don't know at all. And I guess these guys could execute this easily.

How would you describe your customer experience as a whole? I've had a very pleasant customer experience: it's easy to come. One improvable thing could be that, despite the musical focus being already sharp, it would be brought to as clinic state as possible. I would hope them to move towards this, so they won't drop to endless shelves of records of old break collectors funk records, but so that the offer

would stay fresh or in classics, second hand with quality. This is why I like it here; it's hard to find crappy music.

Let's go back to the division; are the secondhand records divided? No, but there are so few, so they are findable. In bigger record stores it's hard to find a selection that would be as coherent as here. Or in some cases, one label is organized but the rest are a complete mess. Here the secondhand records are somewhat mixed, but they present quality records, and I'm happy to browse them. I haven't spend that much time here: maybe listened to some 30 records overall, not even one record has been a complete failure. One record was in bad condition but the music in it was so good that that fact over came it. I don't need the second hand records to be more divided as long as the quality stays. One should remember that somebody listens to those records first.

Compared to other stores, how is Mind Records? Easily with this quantity of house and techno music, it is a high-grade place. I don't know if I've seen similar. For example in San Francisco there was only one store specialized in house and techno with approximately similar size of selection, a little bit more. The selection they had, though, was weaker. If we don't just talk about the local specialties that are interesting in its context, I felt that the record acquiring method was concentrating on larger pressings that were obvious. Here I like that they have put an effort to real classics and variance. On international scale it's cool that there is a place to find Finnish records, also used. I find this culturally worthy place.

What kind of feeling might you have? Really great, I feel welcomed. It's nice and in my opinion Jussi is a splendid record storekeeper. He presents the style a record store should be kept. I like that behind the counter there isn't a self-assertive or rotter person. I like that the storekeeper is sharp, and also modest at the same time. Then you feel welcomed, otherwise you can feel awkward at a record store whit '*what you doing here*' feeling. It shouldn't be similar situation as a presentation or a business meeting, rather very relaxed. When they move out from Stidilä, I don't know will it work as well as now but that's another story. The place's strongest point is the space and one thing that makes it better than most record stores is the big sound system with real subwoofer, which with you can assure how the record sounds from a sound system. That's great.

7.3 Mind Records Customer Interview 3

Interviewed in Finnish 10th November 2016 at Mind Records. Translated into English.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL	17:00
LEAVING TIME	19:00
INTERVIEW TIME	10 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
Age	32
Occupation	Runs a little production company
Nationality/city of residence	Finnish, lives in Helsinki

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Pretty much

How often? It depends, I've bought records since I was 16-years-old. During student life I didn't have that much money to spend on records, now I've had more active year this year. I was in Japan and just recently two weeks ago in Toronto, where I bought quite many records. This year alone, I've bought approximately 300 records.

Do you buy records mainly from record stores or also online? It also depends, some releases are the kind one has to order online. Before with electronic music, one simply couldn't get records from Helsinki. Now that this store came, it helps the situation. Online I order from Juno, HHV and Decks, otherwise from record shops. In Helsinki I haven't visited many record stores, mainly my purchases have occurred while on trips abroad, like this year for example.

Do you buy also digital music? Not really. It's really rare that I would buy digital music. Also if a record includes a digital download code, it's often left unused.

Why do you buy (vinyl) records? I own a pair of Technics, and I play records. I don't do dj'ing that actively, about three to six times per a year. It all started when I was 16-years-old and bought my pair of Technics. I used to do dj'ing more as a kid, but I don't find time for it so much anymore.

MIND RECORDS

How about Mind Records, is this familiar to you? I haven't had the time to visit before, so this is my first time here.

How did you find about Mind Records? Probably a friend told on Facebook. Through worth-of-mouth kind of.

Was this store easy to find? Yeah, I'm familiar with the Complex. Let's say if a foreigner would come to visit, it could be difficult but isn't that part of the case? (Laughs)

What was the purpose of your visit this time? I came to look for a release but all the copies are unfortunately reserved. I came for the one record but ended up spending 130 euros for something else but that's how it usually goes.

How would you describe the store? Well, this (space) is temporary but it's very pleasant, because of the good sound system, which in my opinion is relevant, the listening setups were very good. Sometimes in some rat holes one has to listen to music with half broken headphones, which is unpleasant when making decisions on what to buy. Probably I would hope for a bigger selection but I guess that will be fixed when the store gets continuity and stability. But I really appreciate, mainly because Helsinki hasn't had a record store that concentrates on (electronic) dance music.

How would you describe the feeling in the store? Pretty '*scene-like*'. I'm pretty excited to see how the new place will be like. If it becomes more traditional, I'd prefer this (store in Stidilä), because there is space to hang around and for more records. I like that it's a multifunctional hybrid-like space. But for the storekeeper I understand if you're not able to keep the store open on weekends and you have to move the stock aside and so forth.

You mentioned that you liked the listening setups, how many records did you listen to? About 30.
How many did you buy from those? About 15.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Did you encounter the service staff when you came in? Yeah

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? More about the general feeling and a bit of how the records are presented. I guessed before coming here that the place would hold a good sound system when you know about the place. It sounds good, there's not quiet.

What did you do in the store (from the moment you walked in)? I put my jacked on the side, because I guessed it would take a while. First I headed to the '*Finnish section*', and then browsed some labels that interests me, and went to listen to those as soon as I had enough records. While listening I made selections what to take, maybe and not to take. Repeated this process and chatted with the staff what's coming, what is where, and is there a possibility to acquire the record I was looking for.

How would you describe your service? It was very good, *factual* as it should be.

What kind of feeling the service left you? Good feeling. I felt that they (the staff) tried to help me. It's also a bonus that they round down the prices when you buy more records, which happens often everywhere. I guess vinyl sales are not that large, so when you buy more, you get a discount. I have a very good feeling: the kind that you're helped and taken care of.

Did you wait for the service? No but there wasn't any rush.

How would you describe your customer experience as a whole? I'd say my customer experience was very good. This applies also to record stores in general.

What kind of feeling might you have? The setting is in order: listening setups function well, which means a lot to me. Also the basic human interaction courtesies meaning friendly reply etc. apply here.

Compared to other stores, how is Mind Records? Because it's located in Stidilä, it has a character to it as few do, which is a really good thing, because it's different. I like this store, I will come again.

Is there something you don't like (about the shop)? No.

7.4 Mind Records Customer Interview 4

Interviewed in Finnish 15th November 2016 at Mind Records. Translated into English.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL 17:00
LEAVING TIME 17:35
INTERVIEW TIME 23min

PERSONAL

Gender Male
Age 33
Occupation Designer in public business
Nationality/city of residence Finnish, lives in Helsinki

RECORDS

Do you buy records? I have bought records during the last few years, maybe 10-20 per a month. Last month I didn't buy any.

Why do you buy records? It all started from techno, and after that I've been through various genres. At some point I listened to house music a lot and through that I found techno in between, which hit hard. At first I had one Technics record player, and I started to buy records that I liked. I didn't think that I'd be interested in playing records (as a dj), but gradually I thought of that started growing. I bought a second record player and started practicing. Even though I play (dj) quite rarely, the purpose of buying records is that I like vinyls; to have a physical object. I've never played digital files, and I doubt whether I'd know how to use those players. I buy and collect vinyls for my own enjoyment. At some point I bought records more for dj'ing purposes, but I don't dj regularly, maybe once in a month. I started dj'ing in spring 2015.

MIND RECORDS

How about this store, Mind Records, was it familiar before? I know the shop through Marko Laine, so I know it has operated also before but I didn't buy records at that time.

Have you visited this store before? Yes I have.

How many times? About then times.

How do you know this store? I heard about it from the founders.

Was this store easy to find? It has been easy to find, because I know the location but I believe that when the door is closed and you wouldn't know exactly where the shop is, it could be easy to walk pass. Then on the other hand when you think about different record store locations internationally, they are sometimes located in difficult places to find, even more difficult than here.

What was the purpose of your visit? I came to say hi to Olli (Koponen a staff member) and to browse some records

How would you describe the store? *It's easy to come here; the atmosphere is welcoming.* My friends are working here, so that might affect on this, but even though one wouldn't know them, I'd think they are approachable if you'd have a question on your mind or something. It's not completely rare that the staff is unhelpful, for example *Hardwax* is pretty infamous for this.

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? The place looks great. Of course how the records are presented: how clearly they are organized, how many are they and how browsable they are, are they divided by artist or by labels, affects a lot. I prefer a division in alphabetical order by artists to by labels. That's because I feel like I can find records more easily as I don't have to go through the whole label.

Have you given feedback about this? No as a matter of fact, I have not. I guess they have their reasons to divide records as they do. It doesn't bother me that much, I just have to browse more, which is great in the sense that this way I might find something I wouldn't find otherwise. This applies also to secondhand records, where you seek interesting records by their looks.

How would you describe the staff? All the workers here have extensive and strong knowledge of music, and they've been within it for a long time. Despite Olli being young, he still has a wide and good knowledge of music. He will surely bring a good addition to Mind Records.

What did you do here today? I went through the latest records and listened to some but nothing really caught my attention.

How many records did you listen? Three.

Were you searching for something special or just browsing? I wasn't looking for anything special. Most of the records I buy come from the foreign record (online) shops, from which I follow monthly the latest releases. Since I haven't bought records in one month, I don't know what I have missed out. The resources are limited, so one has to consider carefully what to take and what to leave out. I feel like they (Mind Records) have collected good new releases here, which is great, because *I absolutely prefer visiting a record store, especially when there are activities I want to support. I will try to buy everything I can from here that is possible.* They have also asked the customer to make record requests they'd wish to be sold at the shop, and as I have understood they have close relationships between the distributors.

Where do you order music elsewhere? I order mostly techno and alike, and the German stores have large offering, especially *Deejay.de*, which I got to know a few years ago. It was quite unknown that time as everybody ordered from *Decks.de*. I felt that if all the other big stores had run out of a record, you could still find it from *Deejay.de*, nowadays it isn't so much the case anymore. In addition, those records you buy from web stores, you ponder and listen to them more. Compared to offline purchasing moment: you walk in here, listen to a record and base your decision to this.

What is your buying ratio between online and offline? It has been strongly online oriented, because there hasn't been a place in Helsinki where one could find interesting records. Most of my records are from foreign web stores.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

How would you describe your service moments? Or did you have them this time? We talked a bit about the latest second hand records that had arrived today. In general I browsed through some records, listened to them and returned them to the return box. *I didn't need much service.*

Is there something you don't like (about the store)? No there's not. One thing that would also apply in another stores is that *if the store plays music loudly, it can be disturbing when listening to records, as it can come through the headphones.*

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? Pleasant, easy and effortless. The fact that I know the people (staff) might also have an affect on this.

What kind of feeling might you have? Very pleasant. One thing is also nice that they listen to records (in the store) that they've putting on sale, and you can make findings through that.

Compared to the other stores, how is Mind Records? I honestly like my experience and compared to other record stores this has plenty of records and the space is really nice; *ragged* in a good way. I like that there is space to hang and to be. *Many friends come here often too. I don't know how the new place will be like.*

You mentioned that you've visited here about ten times, have you been to the in-store events?

Yes, I have couple of times and I've played here once. I've heard they gather nicely people and I think it's great such things are organized. Then the shop is open later than normally. When it closes normally at six p.m. and you get out from work at five p.m. there is not that much time left. Records stores take time when you really want to go through the records.

What stores do you like to visit abroad? My shopping experiences have been limited to some shops in Berlin, Stockholm and New York. The customer experience in Mind Records reminds me of some Berlin stores with the atmosphere and the music they play (at the store).

7.5 Mind Records Customer Interview 5

Interviewed in Finnish 15th November 2016 at Mind Records. Translated into English.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL	18:00
TIME AT THE SHOP	5 minutes
INTERVIEW TIME	23 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender	Female
Age	34
Occupation	Radio host, Project Worker in media industry

Nationality/city of residence Finnish, lives in Helsinki

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yes, I started buying records when I moved to Tampere in 2001. Recently it's been quieter with record purchases as I have reduced the amount of my records, *so I can buy new ones*. Usually I like to dive deep into new music styles with records. In addition, I get some releases from friends and acquaintances.

Why do you buy records? That's a question my ex asked actively. Buying records has also a professional aspect. When I played more regularly, I got records for work purposes (dj). Nowadays the emphasis is more on lifestyle, a will to invest on music culture and that I'd have a record shelf with valuable contents that present style and time. One thing that drives me is to get into a new music style, for example before — radio show started, old American female soul collection publications were repressed. And for that you needed to dig and listen to it, that time there was no *Spotify*. It's also refreshing to listen to new music, get excited and enjoy that time of your life.

Do you buy music on vinyl or also in another formats? My buying habits have an emphasis on vinyls.

Do you buy them online or offline? Preferably offline, all good memories come from browsing records at stores. At time I started playing (records) in Tampere I considered *Voltti Records* as my second living room where I went after school and spend time until evening. The essence of experiencing records stores have been strongly present in my life, of course you can order small releases online neatly but I've always preferred specifically records stores.

In which record stores have you liked or like to visit? *Voltti* from Tampere, which doesn't exist anymore. In Helsinki I spend time at *Lifesaver's* two different locations in Punavuori, *Eronen*, *Digelius Music*, where in fact I went straight after maternity, which makes my son the youngest customer of *Digelius*. From time to time I also visit antiquarian bookshops, *Good Grate's*. Abroad I visit record stores that have recommendations.

What kind of music do you usually buy? It depends what interests me at the time. Recently I've listened more electronic, slightly more obscure and techno. Constantly I listen to 50s jazz. The latest big shift in music style was soft 80s boogie in 2014, which almost was even embarrassing to like it that much.

MIND RECORDS

How about this store, Mind Records, was it familiar before? I've followed the development through *Samuli (Kemppi)* and social media updates. Wednesdays are bad days for me to participate on the in store gigs but hopefully I will have a change for those in the near future. *Although I haven't spend so much time here time wise, I like to visit here and I feel like I'm conscious and been part of Mind's birth phase by following the news and updates.*

How many times you have visited here? Physically under ten times.

How did you know about the store? The shop had pretty extensive subject when it was opening on social media and among friends.

Was this store easy to find? Of course, when I knew the location in advance but I don't know how easy this is to find for an ordinary person. They don't advertise the location much outside, which I guess, is part of the *thing*.

What was the purpose of your visit? I had emailed them and reserved a record. I came for the latest release of *Roberto Rodriguez*, and to get a Shure 447 needle. I like to buy these things offline, if possible.

How would you describe the store? One has to consider that as a shop it's also a multifunctional space. You can clearly see that it opens on weekdays for record store purposes and closes for the weekend for other use. On the other hand, it's fun even. Nowadays it's fashionable to have hybrid things, such as work studio/shop, café/shop, and record store /club combinations. Clothing stores might organize movie nights and so forth.

How would you describe the atmosphere? A bit manly, but that's the case habitually at record stores.

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? I noticed that there were more people present than the last time I visited here.

How would you describe your shopping process? This time I came for the record I had reserved. Usually my process includes dawdling, listening to music, digging and hanging out. The feeling is victorious if I find something unexpected at the record store or in the music.

How much time do you spend in a record store usually? In Tampere I spent about four hours at a time. Now in an adult world I cannot spend that much time in stores. At *Lifesaver* times *Sampo (Axelsson)*

would invent some things for my son to do while browsing occasionally. When I was a kid my dad used to take me to boring PC electronics shops, where he stayed for long times, I've been cautious for preventing that feeling happening to my kid.

Did you notice the record listening setups? Yes

What did you think of those? They are a must and essential in a record store. Again, I believe Eronen might be the only record shop, where process is completely different: customer has to ask Pekka for the listening, and the chatting and researching moment is shared. Here you can browse by oneself.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

How would you describe your service? Very friendly, nice and professional. I haven't faced sour customer service here.

Did you have to wait for the service? No

Is there something you don't like (about the store)? No.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? Very good; I feel like I've been taken into consideration, and served well. I will come back.

What kind of feeling might you have? Good

Compared to other stores, how is Mind Records? Pretty different in a sense that it operates on weekdays and does not present 'normal' type of hybrid functions like clothing store/record shop. The music selection is focused, *so one can expect that the findings and purchases present a certain music style; I don't expect to find Sarah Vaughan or other funk or boogie stuff from here, except as edits or remixes.*

What did you think of the division of the records? They have the latest releases and plenty of second hand records. I guess they have records from *Juho Kusti* and *Samuli Kemppe* pools. I like the fact that the Finnish records are well represented; I'd think they would be highly interesting for foreign visitors. The division by alphabetical order is ok. *They could have 'weekly choices' or highlights presented and tell stories why they have been selected to encourage conversation and raise thoughts.* For example *Lifesaver* had this, which was a fun way to get inspired. I like to educate myself musicwise, when possible.

7.6 Mind Records Customer Interview 6

Interviewed in Finnish 15th November 2016 at Mind Records. Translated into English.

APPROXIMATE TIMES

TIME OF ARRIVAL	17:40
TIME AT THE SHOP	2 hours
INTERVIEW TIME	11:35 minutes

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
Age	25
Occupation	System specialist in an IT firm
Nationality/city of residence	Finnish, from Kuopio, lives currently in Helsinki

RECORDS

Do you buy records? Yes

How often? I try to buy records maybe once a month when I get my salary.

Do you buy them offline (in a store) or online? Nowadays I try to come here (Mind Records) as often as possible. Before I bought more online, because you couldn't get techno on vinyls (in Helsinki).

Where have you ordered them online? I ordered records from an Austrian shop.

Why do you buy records? In the hope to get some dj gigs, and some other records for listening purposes.

For how long have you been buying records? About seven years.

Do you buy music merely on vinyl or also in digital format? I buy also digital music. I prefer vinyl, but in moments of rush for a (dj) gig, it's faster to acquire digital files.

Do you do dj'ing often and how are your gigs like? I'd say two to three times in a year. Usually they are at bars or in underground events.

MIND RECORDS

How about this store, Mind Records, was it familiar before? I've visited here since it's opening.

How many times have you visited here? About three to four times

Was this store easy to find (the first time)? *Kaiku* is familiar but I've never visited *Stidilä* before. The sign at the door is pretty informative

What was the purpose of your visit this time? I had to get new records.

Were you searching for something special? Yes, I came to search for specific latest releases that I had an eye on before on their website. From those I found only one and the rest were as a result of browsing. I do pre-check quite often, as I don't bother to come here everyday to see the latest stuff.

How would you describe the store? It's quite a nice record store. *I feel that the store has a bit of an insider feeling to it. When you come in, you can at times feel like am I in the right place?* But still it's a nice place to visit.

How would you describe the space and atmosphere? The space is wonderful, and the retro-look caught my eye. *I guess it's nice to hang out otherwise as well.*

When you first walked in, what things did you observe? The ceilings and the floor look like they've untouched, which given an unfinished impression overall of the space. I guess that's in fashion.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Did you encounter the service staff when you entered? I try to say hi each time when I arrive.

How would you describe your shopping process? I listened to records mainly after browsing them. I try to listen to them before purchase, unless it's a record I know is good for sure.

How did you like the record listening setups? They are pretty good in a sense that while you're standing you cannot really conquer them for hours. In some places people sit down with stack of 40 records.

How many records did you listen to approximately? I bought all the five records I listened.

What kind of music do you normally buy? Mostly techno, house too

How would you describe your service? It was good; you can be at peace. They (staff) don't come to ask if you need assistance, which is a good thing. At the purchasing moment I was served and I asked how long it would take to get a record to the store if I order it online.

Is there something you don't like (about the store)? *They could have one or two more record listening setups, which could relieve pressure on busier days.* Otherwise, it's really nice.

How did you perceive the customer experience as a whole? Very good +. I got what I came for.

What feeling might you have? I look forward to playing the latest records I bought.

Compared to other stores, how is Mind Records? *It's special; because it's unique for it's music selection or not that I'd know there would exist a similar shop.* It's great that I can get the music that I like.

Which stores have you visited before? In Kuopio there was only *Levykauppa Äx*, in which the offering of rock, heavy metal and Finnish rap is limited. I got some cornerstone records of Finnish electronic music though.

Appendix 8: Photo Collages of the Record Stores

8.1 Photo collage of Bikini Waxx Records



Appendix 8: Photo Collages of the Record Stores

8.2 Photo Collage of OYE Records



Appendix 8: Photo Collages of the Record Stores

8.3 Photo Collage of Mind Records

