

Master's thesis

Astrid Vandecandelaere 2018

Lappeenranta University of Technology

School of Business and Management

MIMM program in double degree with SKEMA

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"The impact of user experience on customer purchase
intention in a highly competitive market?"

Master's thesis, 2018

Olli Kuivalainen & Peter Spier

Abstract:

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With the help of previous researches and study, the thesis questions the influence of user experience on customers, from the decision process to the purchase intention. The focus is set on high competitiveness markets are they are indicated to highlight such capacities. In this research the case studies exploit the case of a price comparator and its potential to develop user experience to gain market share on the French online E-tourism bargain market.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Preliminary research on User experience

Researches such as “Analysis of usability factors affecting purchase intention in online e-commerce sites “by R A Perdana and A Suzianti suggest that user experience does have an impact on potential customers purchase decision, that it is necessary to orientate and push the customer to a purchase decision specifically in an online contest. Moreover, the paper implies that different aspects of user experience impact more or less the consumer depending on the industry, the consumers sensibility and on the consumer base target.

This research is focused on digital marketing and online user experience, however many online business articles mentioned phygital marketing, which is using both physical and digital marketing in one strategy meaning that these two fields of marketing which are often strategically separated are being put together to implement a homogenous strategy. Phygital marketing is a relatively new concept in marketing, it is nonetheless an import part of digital marketing which is why it should be considered during the background research. To provide as much foundation to the research as possible, it is wise to include research on offline user experience since we will see in the development that although different, digital and online marketing are tied. (Perdana & Suzianti, 2014)

In their research on User Experience and buying intention Giuseppe Fedele, Mario Fedriga, Silvano Zanuso, Simon Mastrangelo and Francesco Di Nocera use the Treadmill user experience as a phygital case study. On one hand, this research also highlights the impact of user experience on a potential customer buying intentions. On a second hand it also emphasises the idea that the impact of digital and physical user experience doesn't always have equal weight in the customers decision choice. Moreover, we understand that depending on the type of product the digital or physical user experience doesn't necessarily impact the decision-making process significantly enough to say that it is determinant in the purchase decision. Other similar researches and studies have shown that, in cases of phygital strategies or digital strategies the concern physical goods, the digital user experience isn't critical to the customers purchase decision. In contrary, other researches and cases studies, around industries that have a strong online presence, tilt in favour of the theory in which User

experience would be important to purchase decisions. (Fedele, Fedriga, Zanuso, Mastrangelo & Di Nocera, 2016)

1.1.2. Research relevance

Since the recognition of user experiences importance in marketing and business development many studies and researches have demonstrated that some elements of UX, that user experience could have a positive influence into pushing the customers purchase decision or even that it could be an asset when abording a new purchase method.

However, the potential of user experience on a customer's purchase intention is always implied, the conclusion is implicit and rarely affirmative of the causality between the user experiences externality and the customers purchase intention.

This research focuses on user problematic but exposes two inquiries, can it be affirmed the user experience influences customers in their decision processes and purchase intentions, and if so could this influence go as far as being a decisive element of a marketing strategy in a highly competitive context?

In today's economical context with the shift from retail to online, increasing competitiveness and companies having to face new challenges through market digitalisation the question of what would have the capacity to make a difference and be a competitive advantage has to be explored!

User experience is in line with the companies need, the market evolution and the customer demand, is easy for companies to develop and is proven to have good potential.

1.2. Preliminary Literature review

The concept of user experience was first mentioned in the 90's. The term was almost exclusive to specialised publications such as "Learning from user experience with groupware" by Christine Bullen and John Bennett, although this work is using a specific angle which is the study of the TeamWorkStation technology, it still is valid insight into the vision of user experience prior to digital marketing.

Further on, in the late 90's, publications such as "Web Navigation: Designing the User Experience" by Jennifer Fleming, which was first edited in 1998, marked the first association of user experience and online business. In her work the author references User experience as a critical element of web development and website building. The book is mostly focused on guiding the reader into developing its own website, nonetheless, it still offers a rich insight into how user experience was perceived at this early stage of digital marketing and what evolution perspective was given to it. Obviously, User experience was already perceived as a determining point of online user/customer relationship. However, considering the amount of publications dedicated to it at the time it still wasn't a major focus of web designers and e-commerce companies.

The early 20's, the premises of digital marketing as well as the expansion of online businesses, increased the importance given to user experience, which became an important aspect of marketing strategies for companies at the forefront of online trade. with researches such as "Variables affecting information technology end-user

satisfaction: a meta-analysis of the empirical literature" conducted by Mo Adam Mahmood, Janice Burn, Leopold Gemoets and Carmen Jaquez. The work highlights the impact of user experience on the potential customers in its decision process and interaction with the company, as well as the lack of consideration of UX of many stores during the conception of their website.

Since the consideration of user experience has evolved and is slowly being perceived as a key point of web design and marketing strategies. Researches like "Usability in online shops: scale construction, validation and the influence on the buyers' intention and decision" made by Udo Konradt , Hartmut Wandke , Björn Balazs and Timo Christophersen, in a collaboration between the Humboldt University of Berlin and the institute in psychology of

Kiel's University, introduces the idea of the influence of the usage ease of a given online store on its users purchase intentions.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

According to studies reported by impactbnd.com:

- 70% of consumers learn about a company through their blog rather than ads
- 79% of people who don't like what they find on one site will go back and search for another site
- 52% of users say that a bad user experience on a mobile device made them less likely to engage with a company

User experience is obviously an important aspect of a company's marketing strategy, these numbers are the manifesto of the effect of bad use experience on customers long term purchase intention.

So far, the impact of some of user experience elements on purchase intention has been questioned by multiple studies and researches. The existence of a link between a positive customer experience and a positive perception of a company has been demonstrated manier times before.

The questions raised, which are also the reason for this study, is the strength of this impact and the weight that it may have when put against other impacting factors of a customer purchase decision, specifically in a highly competitive market condition. Is user experience enough to make a difference in the customers decision process, can it shift a customer impression enough to influence the purchase intention?

To define our theoretical framework, we must identify the main concepts of our study as well as their stakes.

User experience is supposed to have influence on a customer's impression of a company, its brands and products. The theories that evolve around UX are that it can give a little push and foster an already potential customer into becoming a customer. Or turn a onetime customer into a regular customer. The theoretical assumptions that this research and its case study

make is that user experience can have a larger range of leverage on a customer go as far as creating a need or triggering a purchase. These assumptions are in line with the findings exposed in the preliminary literature review but will need to be further demonstrated.

An exhaustive answer of the research questioning requires good understanding of a customer's decision process, precise definitions a user experience and of previous studies carried on the subject, field expert and customer population inquiry. This research requires to investigate both end of the user experience, the companies and end users.

1.4. Definitions and delimitations

1.4.1. Definitions

1.4.1.1. User experience

The International Organization for Standardization defines user experience as:

“a person's perceptions and responses resulting from the use and or anticipated use of a product, system or service.”

In other words, user experience is a group of elements and items that accompany the customer in its entire journey through the purchase / consumption of a product, system or service. User experience is defined from the search of the product, through the purchase process and pass the final post purchase use / consumption of the enquiry.

Other entities such as the Nielsen Norman Group, a California based company that is considered to be one of the world leaders in Research-Based User Experience, include the service/ product provider within the definition of user experience:

““User experience" encompasses all aspects of the end-user's interaction with the company, its services, and its products.”

In both cases, the customer, its needs and the relationship it has of the product is defined as user experience core.

1.4.1.2. The purchase decision process

Customers are humans, and for the most part humans are considered to be rational creatures, capable of taking rational decisions. Purchase, especially in a non-monopoly context requires to take a decision. Do I need this? If yes at what price? What model? Can I postpone this purchase? Choosing a product instead of another one, favouring a brand over a competitor all of these are decisions.

Decisions derive from processes. A decision process is the paths and mechanism used by an individual's brain that will lead him to favour option A over option B. By identifying the steps and semantic that go into a decision purchase one is more likely to understand the power that user experience might have over it.

Marketer define customer purchase decision into a 5 step process: first the “Need recognition”, the customer identifies a need and start his quest to fulfil it, second “the information search”, the more option the customer is confronted to the more it will seek information to make the right decision, followed by “the evaluation of alternatives”, at this stage the customer has identified his options and evaluates their capacities to fulfil its need, eventually comes “the purchase decision” and finally the “Post purchase behaviour” which is the customer evaluating the degree to which his need has been fulfilled and Werther he is satisfied with his decision.



In other word, a consumer identifies a void, gathers information about how to fill it, scales and hierarchies his options, he then uses this ranking to decide which option is best, proceeds to purchase and evaluates the success of the purchase item to fill the void. Each step of this process is important because either has its own characteristics, sensitivity and each will respond and react differently to potential user experience strategies.

1.4.1.3. The terms of a highly competitive market

The market is the milieu / industry in which a company evolves and sets business. The competitiveness of this milieu is defined by the number and density of entities sharing its

activity. As well as the fierceness of the strategic moves required to evolve in this market. Lastly the stability of the market and the share distribution also is a strong indicator of its competitiveness.

From an economic standpoint highly, competitive markets are defined by the following characteristics:

- Many Buyers and Sellers: There are no monopoly in either end of the market and the number of potential association is high from a customer as well as vendor position.
- Few if Any Barriers to Exit or Entry: it is easy for entities to start and stop competing on this market. Meaning that any company who would want to integrate the market could do so with little difficulty, and even so if it was to choose to leave it.
- Homogeneous Products, the similarity of the competitor's product or services favours competition, they must be little to no technological monopoly and the offers are similar to one another.
- Low bargaining power, this is more a consequence than a cause, the abundance of competitors associated with product homogeneity creates difficulty for retailers to be in a power position and the same is true for the abundance of clients. These parameters create a low bargain situation for both ends of the market.

1.4.2. Delimitations

The research limits are the following:

- Many of the exploited studies for the literature review research an aspect of user experience and fail to demonstrate the effect of user experience in its entirety.
- User experience is a use / customer focused strategy axes. Meaning that each industry, market and product has specific parameters, customers purchasing products don't have the same approach, sensitivity or expectations are customers purchasing a service. Therefore a user experience strategy that was demonstrated to have influence on a certain situation might be obsolete for another situation. In other words, although the results are relevant to prove that user experience influences or not a purchase decision, this specific demonstration might not work for another situation.

- Although every theory was backed up by a case study some of them had their own limits either in the research context or the population observed meaning that although the case studies are all reliable the result that they feature must be tempered.
- The population researched in the case study made specifically for this research represents the population of the studied company meaning that the results are viable for this situation but must be nuanced when applied to other situations.

1.4.3. The empirical context

The empirical context will be the study of the Easyvoyage case. Easyvoyage is an online travel price comparator. It has lost its position in the French online travel market despite great efforts in offer and service diversification as well as business partnership consolidation.

During a semestrial assembly the question was raised of why the company would lose market shares and customer despite its business development investment and strategies.

The honest situation of Easyvoyage is that the company has favoured its partnerships and technological development at the expense of its website presentation, usability and performance, in other words at the detriment of its user experience. The website is covered in the company's partners ads, the product information provided are sparse and obviously written with marketing purposes. Moreover, Easyvoyage is the only one of its markets that has not developed a user focused experience.

The strategic vacuum that is the absence of consideration for user experience at Easyvoyage makes it a great case study for this research.

1.5. Research questions

This research focuses on the role of User experience on the potential customers decision process. This problematic is formulated with the following question:

"What is the impact of user experience on customer purchase intention in a highly competitive market?"

This problematic raises the question of the usefulness of User experience for online companies and their customers and the relevance of the impact it may have. This interrogation is complex and requires answering multiple sub-research questions.

The interrogation here concerns:

1. The impact of user experience on the potential customer in general
2. The strength with which it impacts the subject
3. The ability to have an impact even for a purchase that concerns a highly competitive market.

These questions have helped me during my entire research process to identify the problematic and the frame in which I was working. They underline the different elements of the questioning appropriately and allow a smooth and logical processing of the data, theory and response to the problematic.

1.6. Research Methodology

1.6.1. Academical research

Regarding the academical research for the literature review, keywords related to the research questions were chosen to run researches through literature databases.

Among the chosen keywords, the most relevant were: user experience, UX, Impact, purchase intention, decision process, competitive, influence and impact. The chosen databases were Google Scholar, scholarvox, Researchgate and Sciencedirect.

Over 90 articles were found, reduced to 32 according to the following process. The articles have first been sorted by relevance of the title, then by relevance of content to the thesis and finally by relevance of author or source.

1.6.2. Empirical research

The difficulty faced when choosing and designing the research methodology is that many articles and case studies evolving around the link between User experience and the buying decision mentioned the fact that consuming the product or service is part of the User experience. Furthermore, studies often showed that when making a buying decision, customers are often biased and influenced by their experience, or lack thereof, with the seller. In the scheme of our case study there is no significant post purchase experience because the company is only the intermediate between the customer and the seller. This aspect gave a new perspective to how the empirical research should be designed. To have better insight and

more relevant answers to our question the decision was made to first interview experts of the field in which the company is as well as people within the company to clearly define what question should be asked in the quantitative research in order to be relevant to the research question.

1.6.2.1. Qualitative research

The qualitative research was developed with the aim to define the user experience of offered by the company (before during and after the purchase, since the post purchase experience can influence the future buying decision) and to identify the impact of user on the buying decision.

Therefore the interviewees had to have strong knowledge of the companies and its industries situation as well as insights of the impact of User experience in the digital industries on purchase decision. To collect the data, I attended the IFTM topresa convention which is for professionals of the tourism industry and interviewed the general director of Easyvoyage, which is the subject of the case study.

In summary, the qualitative research methods will be interviews of the general director and founder of the studied company as well as question asked during the IFTM top resa convention.

1.6.2.2. Quantitative research methods

The quantitative research was developed with the aim of having the user/consumers perspective. The Qualitative research abled a better insight from user experience and industry expert, however the research has a focus on consumer in a global perspective. In order to have data focused on the research question and the case study situation the decision was made to use a qualitative user research to collect consumer focused data.

The chosen method is a closed-question questionnaire send to a pool of customers as well as potential customers (individual who travel or have an attention to travel with a budget focus).

1.6.2.3. Methodology relevance

The decision was made to use both qualitative and quantitative methods for this case study precisely for a relevance matter. The qualitative research is required because a research on user experience is customer/user focus by nature, specialist opinions alone would not have

been sufficient to support any theories, it was mandatory that any potential theory was tested on a population. Especially in consumer-focused research, a theory could not be positively affirmed if it had been neglected to confront the theories to a potential consumer pool.

However, the market at hand is intricate and therefore complex to understand, qualitative research permitted to understand the market better, have a better insight into the challenges that were at stakes and to help develop the quantitative questionnaire appropriately. Furthermore, having the specialist insight and opinion on the question at hand helped to better analyse and apprehend the qualitative results.

Both methodologies were chosen not as a matter accuracy, better analyses and understanding of the research and its results.

1.7. Structure of the study

The study is structured with the following architecture.

The literature review is built to demonstrate the potential of user experience as well as the different ways in which it can beneficiate businesses. This is demonstrated by studying the customers decision process, which will be defined in different steps, existing literature is then studied to identify how user experience can act in each of these steps. further on, additional literature will help to define in which way user experience is relevant in influencing customer behaviour offline then online. and lastly the mobile shopping situation will be singled out as an example of how user experience can prove to be a differentiation asset in competitive markets.

These theories will then be tested by the case studies, the qualitative data will be used to analyse the plausibility of these theories on a customer end. The quantitative data will come in support of the qualitative data but also will be used to test the theory from a retailer's end.

The finding will then be discussed and question to identify what can be affirmed and identity the limits and reasonable doubts faced by the research.

2. Literature review

The overall goals of this chapter are to establish the link between User experience and the customers purchase intention using pre-established research, then identify a place where a new contribution could be made and identify the right approach for investigating the research question.

The literature review was written the following a Funnel logic. First the studied focused on the customers decision process and purchase decision in the larger sense, researching the human decision logic and psychology.

Secondly, the researches were narrowed to User experiences and its impact on the customer's experience, this subpart was used to define User experience, define the effect of user experience on a customer will power and priority management, the object here is too target definite elements of a customer's decision process.

Lastly these theories were applied to online and highly competitive contexts, although this part isn't mandatory it allows the study to have a stronger background thanks to similar case studies and theories close to our problematic.

I decided to illustrate all the main theories presented by at least one case study to verify that they were applicable beyond a theoretical framework.

The main article used for the literature review are catalogued in the following table, they are organised by reading order. The table contains the title, date of publication, name of the author, country and/or university of research and a short resume of each of the main articles used for the literature review. The purpose of the table is to give the reader a rapid overview of the literature review to allow a better understanding of the theories at hand.

1. The decision process and purchase decision

A. The decision process and how a customer identifies and organises its needs and priorities

Publication title	Publication date	Author	Country	Institution	Contribution
Decision making with the analytic hierarchy process	2008	Thomas L. Saaty	United states of America	University of Pittsburgh	Description of the processes and logics used when making a decision
Heart and Mind in Conflict: The Interplay of Affect and Cognition in Consumer Decision Making	December 1999	Baba Shiv and Alexander Fedorikhin	United states of America	University of Chicago	Study of the influence of cognitive and emotional variables on consumer decision making.

B. Online consumer behaviour and purchase intention

Publication title	Publication date	Author	Country	Institution	Contribution
Influencing the online consumer's behaviour: The Web experience	2004	Efthymios Constantini des	The Netherlands	University of Twente	Study of the influence of the online user experience on its decision process and abilities.

<p>An Empirical Study of Consumer Switching from Traditional to Electronic Channels: A Purchase-Decision Process Perspective</p>	<p>2014</p>	<p>Alok Gupta, Bo-chiuan Su & Zhiping Walter</p>	<p>United states of America / Taiwan</p>	<p>University of Minnesota, National central University of Taiwan and University of Colorado</p>	<p>Demonstration and study of behavioural differences between online and offline customers</p>
<p>A comparison of purchase decision calculus between potential and repeat customers of an online store</p>	<p>2009</p>	<p>Hee-Woong Kim and Sumeet Gupta</p>	<p>India</p>	<p>Shri Shankaracharya Institute of Management and Technology</p>	<p>Demonstration that the judgement of value made by a customer isn't influenced by non-monetary variables, especially for the first purchase. This is interesting for the research because it induces that perceived value could be created by factors such as user experience.</p>

2. The impact of user experience on the customer and its decision process.

A. Users experience definition and delimitation

Publication title	Publication date	Author	Country	Institution	Contribution
The Elements of User Experience: User-Centered Design for the Web and Beyond	2002	Jesse James Garrett	United states of America	university of Florida	Defining and delimiting user experience, the evolution from product design to user experience design and the importance of a well-designed user experience.
User Experience Basics	-	-	United states of America	www.usability.gov	Establishing the basics of User experience and the Human needs that it touches and responds to.

B. User experiences influence on the customers and its decision abilities

Publication title	Publication date	Author	Country	Institution	Contribution
Understanding online purchase intentions: contributions from technology and trust perspectives	2002	Hans van der Heijden, Tibert Verhagen & Marcel Creemers	Netherlands	Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Study of the contribution and influence of technology and trust impression during an online purchase

Can User Experience affect buying intention? A case study on the evaluation of exercise equipment	November 2016	Giuseppe Fedele, Mario Fedriga, Silvano Zanuso, Simon Mastrangelo & Francesco Di Nocera	Italy	Sapienza University of Rome	Demonstration of the influence of a perceived usability and positive user experience on the customers buying intention. Which implies the necessity to have a user experience focused development strategy.
Analysis of usability factors affecting purchase intention in online e-commerce sites	2014	R A Perdana and A Suzianti			Demonstration of the link between a positive user experience on the Buying point and the purchase intention during an online purchase.
C. Demonstration of the influence of user experience on purchase intention					
Publication title	Publication date	Author	Country	Institution	Contribution
Website attributes that increase consumer purchase intention: A conjoint analysis	January 2009	Ying-Hueih Chena I-ChiehHsub and Chia-ChenLina	-	-	Study of the effect of User experience among other variables on customers preferences and purchase intention.

<p>The influence of hedonic and utilitarian motivations on user engagement: The case of online shopping experiences</p>	<p>April 2010</p>	<p>Heather Lynn O'Brien</p>	<p>Canada</p>	<p>University of British Columbia</p>	<p>Study and demonstration of the positive externalities created by User experience on a potential customer and how they affect it's buying motivation and engagement towards a product.</p> <p>Implying that user experience can push a customer into a buying decision.</p>
<p>Effects of reputation and website quality on online consumers' emotion, perceived risk and purchase intention: Based on the stimulus-organism-response model</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Jiyoung Kim and Sharron J. Lennon</p>	<p>United states of America</p>	<p>University of Delaware and University of North Texas</p>	<p>Study of the effect of negative user experience, among other variables on a website, on the consumers purchase intention.</p>

3. Highly competitive market, how it impacts purchase decisions.

A. Demonstration of user experiences potential to be a differentiation factor

Publication title	Publication date	Author	Country	Institution	Contribution
Welcome to the Experience Economy	August 1998	B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore	United states of America	Harvard University	Introduction of the notion that experience is the next step in the "progression economy", how user experience is an added value and how to take advantage of it.
The New Experience for Business: Why User Experience Is the Differentiation Strategy in the Cloud Context	2011	Andrey Sirotkin & Bronan McCabe	Finland	VTT Technical Research Centre OULU	Illustrates differentiation through user experience development with the cloud industry case study

B. How user experience proves to be a key factor in a competitive market

Publication title	Publication date	Author	Country	Institution	Contribution
Analysing the intention to purchase on hotel websites: a study of travellers to Hong Kong	September 2005	James Wong and Rob Law	-	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Case study analysing the effect of an improved UX on a hotels website on the customers purchase decision and perception. Case study of the hong Kong hotel market, which is a highly competitive market due to the high density of competitors on a limited geographically defined market.
Consumers' perceptions of e-shopping characteristics: an expectancy-value approach	2013	Heejin Lim and Alan J. Dubinsky	United States of America	Purdue University	Thesis questioning the importance of certain variable on a website to stand out from the competition through the underlayment of customers values.

C. The mobile shopping phenomenon

Publication title	Publication date	Author	Country	Institution	Contribution
The mobile shopping revolution: Redefining the consumer decision process	March 2018	David J. Faulds, W. Glynn Mangold, P.S. Raju and Sarath Valsalana	-	Business Horizons	research and study of the user experience when online shopping on a mobile device, how it affects the customers and helps to stand out from the competition.
On the Go: How Mobile Shopping Affects Customer Purchase Behaviour	June 2015	Rebecca Jen-Hui Wang, Edward C. Malthouse and Lakshman Krishnamurthi	United states of America	-	Demonstration on how the new user experience that is online purchasing through mobile devices has changed customers behaviour.

2.1. The decision process and purchase decision

In order to understand how customers, take purchase decision and what process drives these decisions. The first subpart of the literature review focuses on these elements of customer behaviour as well as how the online purchase context influences them. These researches are determinant to understand the further analysis of the research.

2.1.1. The decision process, how a customer identifies and organises its needs and priorities.

It is vital to understand decision making process, in order to understand the effect of user experience and marketing in general on customers. In his work “Decision making with the analytic hierarchy process “, Thomas L. Saaty suggests that humans take decision through a measuring and scaling process, in which they identify and hierarchise their needs and wants. This process allows individuals to rank the different options offered to them and take a decision with the highest chance to satisfy their needs. Further in the development of his theory Thomas L. Saaty indicates that while most of the decision process is made consciously, the unconscious still carries an important weight when scaling the needs and the ability of any given option to satisfy it. (Saaty, 2008)

The recognition of that both, conscious and unconscious, have on decision making gives us important insights on what to take into consideration when designating the elements of decision making process, and which one are influenced by user experience. The article written by Thomas l. Saaty was estimated as a secure and relevant source since it was quoted as a source for multiple of the other articles that were researched regarding the questioning of human decision-making process. (Saaty, 2008)

For a better apprehension of our problematic one must understand what aspects of human psychology affects decision making. The case study driven by Baba Shiv and Alexander Fedorikhin at the university of Chicago has demonstrated the role of the conscious and unconscious in the process of decision making and pinpoint when each was the strongest, to which instinct they responded as well when they came in action. Their study “Heart and Mind in Conflict: The Interplay of Affect and Cognition in Consumer Decision Making”, puts a population at a decision stand point, the subject must choose between two deserts, one being a less healthy however more tempting and the second is more healthful but less appetizing.

The research is testing whether the individuals would be more tempted by their cognitive or emotional stimulus. The research shows that the more the participants had access to information about the different choices the more inclined they were to respond to their cognitive senses. In other words, the further the customer proceeds to gather and scale information the more one must speak to its cognitive abilities. Meaning that, the more the customer has information the more the user experience must interact with the cognitive abilities of the customer. (Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999)

2.1.2. Online consumer behaviour and purchase intention

Once the different components with which an individual takes decision are identified alongside with the mechanism used and the process used, it was decided to research how the online purchase context affected these elements. As said in the previous subpart, the customers purchase decision processes are also influenced by emotional and non-rational information processing systems. It is only logical that the change of purchasing context would affect these elements.

In their research Zhiping Walter, Alok Gupta and Bo-chiuan Su, support the idea that channel changing affects the consumer's behaviour as well as its priorities evaluation. The case study shows that on a population from over 300 interviewees, more than 50% of the researched population would change behaviours and intentions towards either how they perceived the product or how they prioritized their needs. For instance, online purchase increases the importance of the price tag in comparison to traditional on-site purchase. The subjects experience an impression of time optimisation when purchasing online when it in fact took them more time to effectively acquire the purchased item, because they didn't consider delivery time as a time spent on the purchase. (Walter, Gupta & Su, 2004)

“Influencing the online consumer's behaviour: The Web experience” upholds this theory, to which it adds that because the customer scales and prioritizes its needs and the product's ability to fulfil these needs differently when purchasing online, the entire approach to its decision process must be adapted. Suggesting that although the customer uses more of its cognitive abilities online it is also more prone to interpret more elements as value information. Meaning that it will identify more elements as information and more information as being significant for its decision making. (Constantinides, 1991)

On another hand, the research from the Shri Shankaracharya institute of management and technology (SSTC) in India suggests that some aspects of the offline decision process are kept during online purchase and only pushed to an extreme. Confirming the results demonstrated in “Heart and Mind in Conflict: The Interplay of Affect and Cognition in Consumer Decision Making” research, according to which the more a person has access to information the more it will be inclined to use its cognitive capacities over its emotional instincts when taking a decision. (Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999)

With the research driven by Hee-Woong Kim and Sumeet Gupta, the SSTC advances the theory according to which the online customer still uses first it’s emotional reasoning followed by its cognitive reasoning once more data is accessible. Merely, the information is made available more rapidly online than it is offline, giving the impression that the customer is more prone to use its cognitive capacities online when in fact it is simply confronted to information at a faster pace. This implies that, the stage of decision making concerned with emotion reasoning when online shopping in the first impression phase. The further implication of this theory is that only new customers will be sensitive to non-cognitive related information such as the websites lay out or the websites navigation design. Concretely this hints that when developing the online user experience, one must focus on new customers when developing the emotional responsive communication and provide a more pragmatic and information fuelled strategy when attempting to promote the product or brand. (Kim & Gupta, 2009)

2.2. The impact of user experience on the customer and its decision process.

Once it was determined that customers take decisions through a process of information and need scaling and ranking, and how they drift when exposed to an online purchasing context, it’s important to identify the leverage that User experience could have on these processes.

2.2.1. Reminder of users experience definition and delimitation

To understand the impact of User experience on anything, one must first understand user experience in itself.

“User experience (UX) focuses on having a deep understanding of users, what they need, what they value, their abilities, and their limitations. [...] UX best practices promote improving the quality of the user’s interaction with and perceptions of your product and any related services.”

Via www.usability.gov

To allow a better understanding of User experience we will use two major sources to define the term. First, www.usability.gov, which is the website from which the previous quote was taken. Usability.gov belongs to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The definition made of UX is the most precise and complete definition found and its source is credible which is important when defining a key term. Secondly, “Elements of User Experience, the: User-Centred Design for the Web and Beyond” by Jesse James Garrett gives an empirical definition of User experience with tangible examples and a less theoretical approach. (Garrett, 2002)

In his paper James Garret describes User experience as developing the “little thing that counts” to bring a product from functional to fully functioning. He also explains that UX isn’t adding functions to a product but is thinking of every consumer situation and issues and solving it. For example, a coffee machine, adding a tea function to the coffee machine is product development not user experience, however, adding an alert function to let the customer know that the coffee is ready is User experience improvement. An element was added to optimise the existing use of the product, not to add a new function. (Garrett, 2002)

Now that User experience has been defined from the receiving end, the focus will be shifted to the sending end. What elements should be considered when company defines its use experience?

From a sending end viewpoint, user experience is best explained through Peter Morville’s honeycomb graph:



In order to be efficient a user experience must be:

- Useful, to answers the consumers need
- Desirable to increase the perceived value of the product
- Accessible to be efficient for all users
- Credible, to gain trust and belief
- Findable, a user cannot use what he cannot find
- Usable, the easier the use the best the experience
- Valuable, it must increase user satisfaction

(Morville, 2004)

2.2.2. User experiences influence on the customers and its decision abilities

The early 2000's is the rise of User experience, when UX gained recognition and started to be taken more seriously in company's product and marketing strategies development. It also is, when Hans Van der Heijden, Tibert Verhagen and Marcel Creemers research about the contribution of technology and trust in the online purchase context, first established a link between User experience and perceived value. The study demonstrated that the way a

customer perceives a website or the use of it directly influences its purchasing intention, implying that user experience could be used to influence a customer into buying a product if it increased the perception that the customer had when using the website. (Van der Heijden, Verhagen & Creemers, 2003)

This theory was supported further by the “Can User Experience affect buying intention?” case study, made at the Sapienza University of Rome. The experience concerned offline product but lead with a simpler case study and therefore more concluding results. In this experience customers were confronted to the treadmills; these treadmills had been developed with a user experience focus rather than a performance focus. The results showed that the treadmills were perceived as more functional and potential customers were more inclined to purchase the treadmill due to the gain in perceived value. (Fedele, Fedriga, Zanuso, Mastrangelo & Di Nocera, 2016)

The “Analysis of usability factors affecting purchase intention in online e-commerce sites” of R A Perdana and A Suzianti, further supports the theory into the online purchasing context. Demonstrating that user experience influences purchasing intention and therefore decision process through website usability. However, this research goes further in depth in defining which aspects of user experience affected the customer directly or indirectly in its decision process. In this research the elements that influence the customer in a truly tangible and measurable manners were credibility, readability and telepresence. The other measured elements such as simplicity and usability alongside consistency and interactivity were also found to influence the decision process but the results were not as concluding? In their paper Perdana and Suzianti do insist on the fact that the last four elements did have an influence on the populations decision process, but that it was considerably less than the influence of credibility, readability and telepresence. They also indicate that it could be a specific to their chosen research population or case study conditions.

(Perdana & Suzianti, 2014)

2.2.3. Demonstration of the influence of user experience on purchase intention

The previous subpart demonstrated that elements associated to user experience had enough impacts on a potential customers decision making process to potentially influence its purchase intention. Implying that user experience would by extent also be able to influence

these parameters. This final subpart demonstrates the theories implied in the previous subpart with case studies that mention user experience in it's all and validate multiple elements of user experience as influencing.

Heather Lynn O'Brien's case study "The influence of hedonic and utilitarian motivations on user engagement: The case of online shopping experiences" demonstrate that the positive externalities created by a positive user experience increased the purchase intention through potential customer usage satisfaction. Variables such as user experience durability and website usability created positive externalities that drove the potential customer to develop trust and perceived product usability. Furthermore, Aesthetic associated to a good website usability proved to increase the potential customers focus on the task at hand, increasing the likeliness of the customer to assimilate better the product information and associate it with it a positive feeling. As we have demonstrated previously, customers a drawn to information to satisfy their cognitive sense when online shopping, and if the information is associated to an experience secures an increase in purchase intention. (O'Brien, 2010)

With the same idea in mind, Jiyoung Kim and Sharron J. Lennon studied the effect of negative user experience on purchase intention. The intention is to see the power is user experience externalities, so far it was demonstrated that it can push a potential customer to purchase, but has it enough power to pull a potential customer away from it? The case study supported the notion that a positive user experience by providing the potential customer with emotional and cognitive satisfaction. Moreover, it also demonstrated that a negative user experience decreased purchase intention. The variables impacted by negative user experience are noteworthy, regarding what is impacted, a positive UX speaks to the perception of the product and its ability to satisfy a need, whereas a negative UX creates an overall impression of risk taking. It's interesting to note that Positive and negative User experience don't impact the same variables in the customers perception and affect. Although this research does indeed demonstrate the power of user experience to pull the customer away from a purchase decision, it must be noted that the interrogated population is mostly feminine, women are more sensitive to risk taking which is indicated to be a limit to this study. Nonetheless, the negative externalities have created an increase of the perceived risk across the entire population, only it is more likely to go as far as impacting purchase intention by woman than by men. (Kim & Lennon, 2013)

Lastly, in a technology focused research: “Website attributes that increase consumer purchase intention: A conjoint analysis”, Ying-Hueih Chena, I-ChiehHsub and Chia-ChenLina explore the effect of the technological side of user experience on purchase intention. They categorize User experience elements in 3 groups, technology factors, shopping factors and product factors. While variables such as perceived product value, trust and acquisition time are categorized to Shopping and product factors, three key variables are associated with technology. Meaning that the level of technological development of these variables would impact the quality of the user experience and therefor the customers purchase intention. The concerned variables are the platforms perceived security, privacy and usability, the research shows that the more a customer was tech savvy the stronger it would respond to these variables. Meaning that the more technology-aware a customer is the more it will translate website’s perceived security, privacy and usability as relevant and valuable information when estimating the value of a product and taking the purchase decision. (Chena, ChiehHsub and ChenLina, 2009)

2.3. Highly competitive market, how it impacts purchase decisions

It has been demonstrated that user experience had impact on potential customers evaluation and decision process as well as purchase intention, so much so that it could both push a customer towards a purchase decision and pull it away from it. Here the question regards the extent of user experiences pull as well as its longevity.

The online purchase context increases competitiveness by aggregating competitors, providing more product information and consumer feedback as well as permitting faster comparison systems. To fully evaluate user experience potential, it must be confronted to present circumstances, to see whether it’s abilities are relevant for a long-term strategy.

2.3.1. Demonstration of user experiences potential to be a differentiation factor

The modern world exists in an economy of growth and added value, in 1998 James Wong and Rob Law theorized that the next level of this economy would be experience. Their assumption was that after moving from selling products to selling services we would move on to selling experiences to customers. They designed the following graph to model their theory:

Progression of Economic Value



The concept was that the economy was moving from a service economy onto an experience economy. Companies should now, develop and advertise an entire experience around their product or service as an added value, to differentiate themselves from their competitors. This notes the rise of user experience and the demonstration of its function as a differentiation factor. The advantage of using user experience development as a differentiation strategy would be that it is relatively cost efficient since it doesn't involve further development of the product. UX is an added value that doesn't require heavy investments such research and development cost. It is efficient since it gives the impression of being tailored to the customer, any other innovation, especially product development, would be to tailor to each customer. User experience, because it involves the individual in its making, gives the impression of being tailored to each customer, at every single of its visit. (Wong & Law, 1998)

The following chart is an illustration of User experience as an added value in the experience economy. The case study is coffee and Starbucks, the trade of raw coffee beans is the equivalent of the agrarian economy, it's also the first step of the progression economy. Further on, the commercialization of pre-grinded and roasted coffee is the equivalent of industrial economy, in other words, the raw material was processed into a consumable good. Thirdly, the coffee sold at a café, already served, ready to be consumed is the service economy, a waiter has done all the needed manual labour for you. So, what is the last step? Why makes the difference between drinking a coffee at a café and drinking a coffee at Starbucks? Why can Starbuck charge 3 extra dollars for the same espresso any customer could get anywhere else?



1

The difference is, user experience! As James Garrett said, it's "the little things" like writing the customer's name on the cup. The customer knows that he isn't acquainted with the barista, nonetheless, the fact that he is called by his name gives an impression of belonging. That what user experience and the experience economy are about, they entice the customer to purchase not because they want the product but because of the perceived experience provided by the purchase/obtention of the product. (Wong & Law, 1998)

¹ This case study was found in multiple papers about the economy of experience and was never attached to any source. It is from researchgate.com but can not be associated to a preciser reference for certain.

This is also true for the online trade market, the case study “The New Experience for Business: Why User Experience Is the Differentiation Strategy in the Cloud Context” explores the potential of added value offered by user experience on the Cloud market. The research demonstrates that because user experience is a user focused development of the business strategy it is adaptable to most industries, once the customer need is identified. For instance, for the cloud industry, Andrey Sirotkin & Bronan McCabe demonstrated that the development of certain user experience variable on the Cloud such as usability and aesthetics provided the customer with an impression of a safer platform although these two functions are solely customer-oriented function and affect in no way the safety of the cloud. This impression alone drove more users to the clouds because it gave them the impression that their data would be safe in an easy to use and polished cloud. (Sirotkin & McCabe, 2011)

2.3.2. How user experience proves to be a key factor in a competitive market

The next step of our demonstration is to demonstrate how user experience by being a differentiation asset is also a key factor to develop when facing a competitive market.

In their research “Analysing the intention to purchase on hotel websites: a study of travellers to Hong Kong”, James Wong and Rob Law analyse the effect of user experience development of a hotels online booking process and website. The hotel industry in Honk Kong is subject to high competitiveness due to the number of competitors and that the potential customers have access to little information given the amount of possibility given plus although the market is online the potential customer pool is still highly restricted by the fact that the market is geographically defined. The improved system shows to be more efficient and drives more booking than the previous system which as less customer focus. Moreover, the new pull of the website allows the hotel to adopt a better pricing strategy which also is a key point when in dealing with highly competitive markets. (Wong & Law, 1998)

In support of this theory, Heejin Lim and Alan J. Dubinsky’s research on “Consumers’ perceptions of e-shopping characteristics: an expectancy-value approach”, demonstrate the efficiency of user experience as a differentiation asset in hyper-competitive market.

These studies find their limits in the fact that they don’t go as far as affirming the pull of user experience on purchase decision, they suggest it either through result or as a potential

extension of their studies, but the question is never positively confirmed. (Lim & Dubinsky, 2013)

2.3.3. The mobile shopping phenomenon

The revolution of mobile shopping is introduced by Rebecca Jen-Hui Wang, Edward C. Malthouse and Lakshman Krishnamurthi in their article “On the Go: How Mobile Shopping Affects Customer Purchase Behaviour”, published in 2015. The research highlights the rise of online shopping through mobile devices, how it has revolutionized the consumer behaviour and how user experience has evolved through it. The opening of their research describes why mobile shopping is different to any other kind of shopping from a consumer as well as from a retailer stand point. Mobile shopping has a much longer browsing and comparing phase, followed by a waiting time where the potential consumer will only put the desired item in a waiting list in the form of either a Wishlist or a “bag” and purchase can be triggered by notifications or by giving the consumer the impression that he might wait too long and miss out on being able to purchase the item. From a consumer behaviour standpoint this implies that the scaling and hierarchizing phase is longer, a new phase arises in the form of the Wishlist moment and lastly the purchase time can happen anywhere as long as the customer has his mobile with him and it can be triggered. This is where the study reaches his limits in terms of user experience analysis, however given our previous demonstrations we can develop the analysis a touch further. Given the impact of mobile shopping on the consumer behaviour with the itinerant function and the trigger possibility, the consequence on user experience are simple to bring to light. The itinerant ability of mobile shopping gives retailer the opportunity to develop a user experience strategy that will involve the customer on a 24/7 basis. Before mobile shopping retailers had to wait for customers to be either in the store or on their website to provide an active user experience, with mobile shopping and notifications retailers can allure their users to their apps or websites. Moreover, the user has now access to much more information, some of which can be used as purchase trigger! (Wang, Malthouse & Krishnamurth, 2015)

The article “The mobile shopping revolution: Redefining the consumer decision process” explores the potential of mobile shopping further, especially the trigger power. In their paper David J. Faulds, W. Glynn Mangold, P.S.Raju and Sarath Valsalana insist of mobile shopping trigger power and introduce the idea that mobile shopping gives retailers a unique and sustainable competitive advantage. Prior to mobile shopping information regarding the

popularity of an item, the available stock or the price evolution were virtually impossible to give to the customers and even so with such timely precision! This information coupled with push notification give retailers power to potentially trigger a purchase intention whenever and wherever. Furthermore, the study demonstrates the power given to the retailers through mobile shopping experience in which it reduces competition. Once a customer has the retailers application on its smartphone the retailer has a considerable advantage in that it can provide a constant and more inclusive user experience to the potential customer, in addition to the purchase trigger potential. (Fauldsa, Mangold, Raju & Valsalana, 2018)

The power of user experience over purchase decision is undeniable in the mobile shopping context, this axe was pursued to emphasize the potential impact on customer purchase decision in a highly competitive market such as the hotel market in a highly touristic place or the mobile shopping context. To extrapolate further we could even go as far as suggesting that user experience could be the tool to reduce the competitiveness in certain purchase context and industries.

3. Research design and methods

As seen in the literature review the questioning around Werther user experience has or hasn't power over purchase intentions in a highly competitive market context is best studied in specific case studies. There for the case study chosen develops in a hyper competitive market but also very specific in its nature and with unique parameters that will be further explained in the research context.

3.1. Research context

As stated in the introduction this case study takes place in a very specific context, the market and product parameters are unique, and it develops in one of the largest and most competitive industries in the online purchase context.

3.1.1. The market

The market that interest this research is the E-tourism market, meaning the online travel trade. This market is of interest because of its product parameters such as the absence of stock and the life cycle of its products but more importantly because it is among the biggest retail market online with a growing number of competitors entities and categories. The research will focus on the French E-tourism market and more precisely on the "bargain" E-tourism, because it corresponds to the market in which the company is most active, plus it is the most highly competitive part of the market which allow a better and more accurate test of our questioning and hypothesis.

The French E-tourism bargain market (FETBM) is a hyper competitive market, the different competitors can be identified and organized in four categories and 12 sub-categories. The four main categories are Producers, digital travel intermediates, non-specialist intermediates and traditional intermediates.

Producers are the entities that create and trade bargain bundles, these are flash sales groups, group sales, brand outlets ... etc. Digital travel intermediates and non-specialist intermediates are entities that regrouped offers from different producers, they provide a variety of bargain bundles from multiple producers. The difference between digital travel intermediates and non-specialist intermediates is that non-specialist intermediates don't specialise in travel, their catalogue extends to other types of products and services. Lastly traditional

intermediates are entities that also operate in the offline market. Retailers and travel agencies who have travel offers on their website as well as on their offline sell points are considered traditional intermediates.

The following chart is a representation of the FETBM, with its main elements organized by categories and subcategories.



3.1.2. The company

The studied company is Easyvoyage, founded in June 2000 by Jean-Pierre Nadir who then became and still is the CEO of the company. Easyvoyage started as a pioneer of the French E-tourism and the French E-tourism bargain industry but has since lost an important part of its market share due to the abundance of new competitors. The company is a digital travel intermediate that developed a price comparison software allowing customers to buy the best flight at the best price possible.

The argument in favour of Easyvoyage being the case study for this research is the reason for which it has lost its market share. The company was well developed and established long before the competition augmented, it strongly benefited of its CEO large network among the Tourism industry, it interests many investors and was well known in France until the early

2010's. since then the company is stagnating and can't seem to get by and stand out from its competition. To make the matter worse some of its competitors use Easyvoyage search engine technology for their website and obtain better market shares.

During the semestrial meeting, the CEO rose the question of whether our user experience could be one of the reason/solution to our market share loss issue. He stated that so far, the company had focused on developing a better price comparison technology and strengthening their business partnership but that it hadn't pushed the company's growth as much as it was expected too.

3.1.3. The parameters to take into consideration

There are a few industry specific parameter that one must be aware of for a better apprehension of the E-tourism market:

- The product (travel fares) are highly perishable and time sensitive. It isn't a service but has its specificities, plane fares cannot be stocked, once the plane has left the ground the tickets are obsolete and there for the gain that they represented is lost.
- Not all competitors are equal, due to certain legal vacuums and business arrangements a minority of competitors are able to have more aggressive marketing strategies.
- Easyvoyage is one of the few travel specific price comparator that doesn't belong to either a Hotel group or airline company.

3.2. Data collection methods

The data used for this case study was collected through both qualitative and quantitative methods. The reason for this are twofold, first as said previously the FETBM is a very complex market with intricate parameters that must be understood to apprehend this research correctly and secondly because as it is the case in many case studies researched in the literature review quantitative research are often biased by the fact that the population knows it is being interrogated and observe and their for provides biased responses.

The data was collected with the following strategy. First qualitative interviews were drive with industry experts such as Easyvoyage CEO and a E-tourism marketing specialist, in addition to which short interviews were conducted during the TOPresa conference to validate some theories regarding consumer behaviour in the online tourism market. These first

interviews were made to get a better apprehension of the company, the market if evolved in, gain insight into the consumer behaviours insight that had been observed so far and identify how to create the quantitative questionnaire. The interviews were semi directives interviews with questions organized by categories. This abled the interview to cover the overall facets of the research problematic but also made the questionnaire adaptable to the person interviewees speciality during the shorter interviews.²

Once these interviews had been made, a questionnaire was created with the ambition to provide a clear insight into customers decision process and behaviour when purchasing travel fares online. Moreover, the questionnaire was developed to avoid biased response as much as possible. the guidelines followed to avoid bias from the respondents were to make the questionnaire as short and direct as possible. The idea was that the longer the questionnaire the more the interviewee would get an idea of the kind answer awaited from it, so to avoid this expectation bias the critical questions had to be asked when the respondent was still answering mechanically meaning the questionnaire could only take a few minutes to be completed. The questionnaires were sent to Easyvoyage's customers pool, the population observed was reach via email, 30 questionnaires were filled and analysed.

3.3. Data analysis methods

The quantitative data was synthesised using google form and Microsoft excel. considering the analyses certain parameters were taken into consideration, these parameters will be further developed in the subpart 4, "reliability and validity"

After the quantitative and qualitative data had been collected the results were compared to see whether they would resonate or differ. The intention with this confrontation was to invalidate the research and re-examination the population had the result differed too strongly to be judged relevant to the study. Fortunately, the results resonated and were estimated to be relevant to this research.

² Qualitative questionnaire: appendice 1

3.4. Reliability and validity

The reliability of the data relies on two arguments, first the quantitative data and qualitative data are compatible and resonate to one another, meaning that one does not invalidate the other one. Secondly the result show to be compatible with the result found and studied in the literature review.

Moreover, the chosen interviewees were picked specifically because of their compatibility with the case. Jean Pierre Nadir, the CEO of Easyvoyage is known in the French tourism market and his experience and position make him to be a credible source of information regarding the company as well as the customer and market. Lea Gury, although lesser know is a young digital marketer specialised in E-tourism and consumer behaviour, she has done multiple research on consumer behaviour in online tourism and worked for 3 of the most prominent companies of the FETBM. Lastly the professionals interrogated at the TOPresa conference were contributors to the conference who were speaking on digital marketing, user experience or consumer behaviour focused lectures.

The question of data validity was raised with the quantitative data because of three parameters of the population that seemed potential problematic.

First of all, male represent 57% of the interrogated population, then 80% of the interrogated population was born between 1980 and 2000 (Generation Y) and lastly almost 70% of the population indicated to travel more than once a year. These parameters did not seem to be representative of the targeted market, which put the research's validity in jeopardy.

After further research the lack of correspondence was explained by the fact that the population was a match to easy voyages audience. Thus far the interrogated population had been compared to the French population which is why characteristics such as the gender, age and travel frequency were problematic. These characteristics are an imperfect representation of the population but are nonetheless valid for this case study for they are representative of Easyvoyages customer pool. Given the compatibility of the researched population with the customer base, the research can be considered viable.

4. Findings

The results finding, and analysis will unfold as follow:

1. Quantitative research and results exposé

This part allows a better understanding of the quantitative research process and results. The research process and its objectives will be thoroughly exposed and explained to allow a better understanding of the results and why they are or not conclusive. Followed by the analysis of the quantitative results, what they are, how they can be interpreted and what it means for the research.

2. The E-tourism market, its challenges and stakes

This part will expose the findings made during the interviews of the qualitative part of the research. The E-tourism industry will be thoroughly discussed and studied to identify the customers and retailer's positions and challenges as well as the key opportunities to develop user experience.

3. The online customer decision process

The online customer decisions process theories developed in the literature review will be confronted to the results from the quantitative and qualitative data. First, to test if they correspond to the case at hand. Secondly to access what it means for our study at a larger scale.

4. User experience potential for the E-tourism industry and Easyvoyage

Using Both the quantitative and qualitative data, we will analyse and research the potential that user experience represent of the modern E-tourism industry, how it can be seen as an asset and what it implies for Easyvoyage. This part will use mainly the qualitative data and the quantitative will come as an empirical support.

4.1. Quantitative research and results exposé

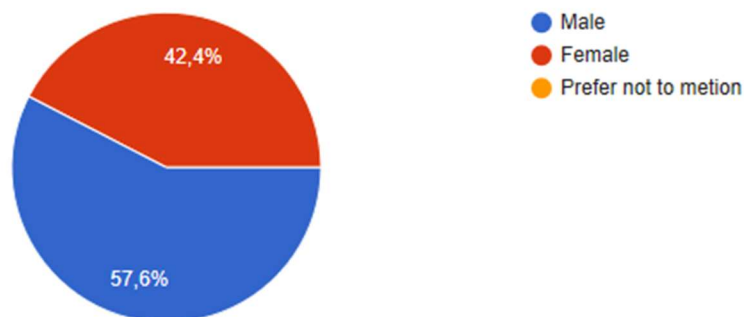
4.1.1. Demographic data

It was necessary to collect demographic information on the research populations since as it was mentioned in the literature review, some studies could be affected by some demographic characteristic of their population. For example, in their study “Effects of reputation and website quality on online consumers' emotion, perceived risk and purchase intention: Based on the stimulus-organism-response model”, Jiyoung Kim and Sharron J. Lennon manifested that the preponderance of women amongst their studied population influenced their result. Although this does not invalidate the study it does however requires adjusting the findings accordingly. These findings obligate to gather information regarding some sensitive demographic parameters.

Chart 1: Gender

You are:

33 réponses

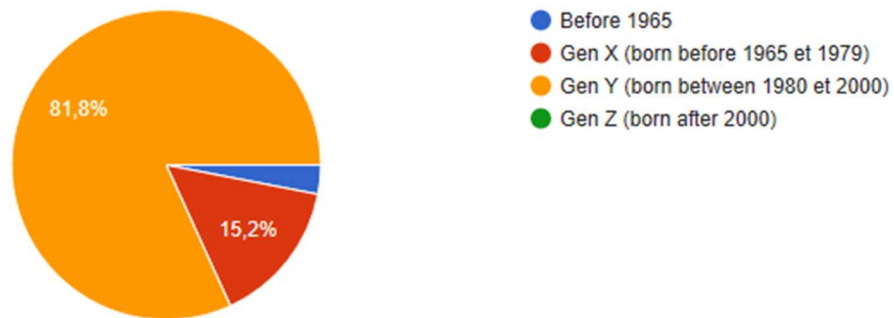


This chart displays the men to women ratio in our population, it is observed that men represent a majority of the interrogated population, this however isn't considered to be unrepresentative of the researched case since these statistics coincide with Easyvoyages customer base. Moreover, preliminary data analysis made with excel show that for the questions regarding the user experience questioning, the proportions of men to women stayed the same as those from the overall population indicating that gender in fact did not have an impact on user experiences influence on consumer behaviour or purchase intention.

Chart 2: Age group

Your age rank is:

33 réponses



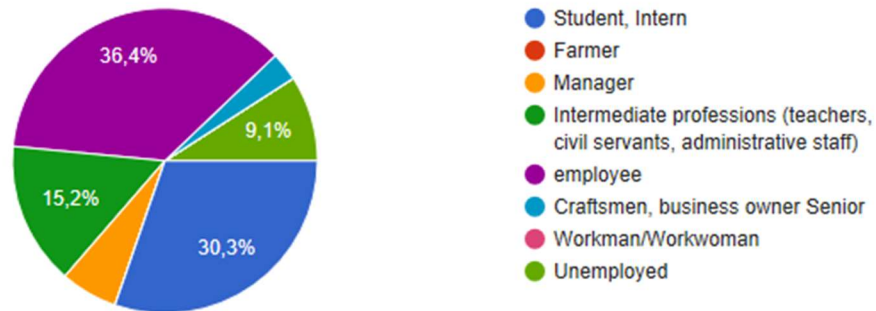
The literature review also indicated that the acquaintance with technology had an impact on user experiences ability to affect a customer. This assumption further followed that therefore the elder generation would be less reactive to user experience, implying that the age of the population would have to be considered during the study.

The questioned population is, in a large majority, representative of the Y generation, not only does this virtually indicates that the individuals would have basic acquaintance and knowledge of technology, it is also representative of the Easyvoyage customer base. Again, considering the critical questions of the study, the age proportions are faithful to the overall population proportions, indicating that age also didn't affect the influence of user experience on customers in the present research.

Chart 3: Socio-economic status

What is your socio-professional status?

33 réponses



The socio-economic status is the category with the most surprises. The majority of students and employee is no surprise as well as the absence of Farmers, however the lack of work woman and woman is surprising, and possibly to do the wrong definition of the term. The majority of Students and employee represents well the demographics observed at Easyvoyage and the absence of agricultural employee is explained by the difficulty know by this profession to take vacations due to their work requirements.

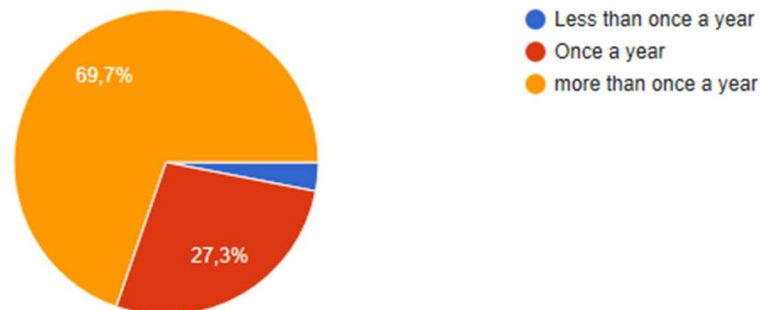
Another demographical surprise seems to arise from the result provided by the unemployed population. Although one would suspect that this socio-professional category is the most value aware category, it was found that they are the most sensitive to user experience and the least likely to use a price comparator, which would theoretically be an economical help.

Lastly due to the small population at hand, the only profession that will be studied are Student & interns, employees, intermediate professions and unemployed.

Chart 4, 5 and 6: Travel preferences

How often do you travel by plane?

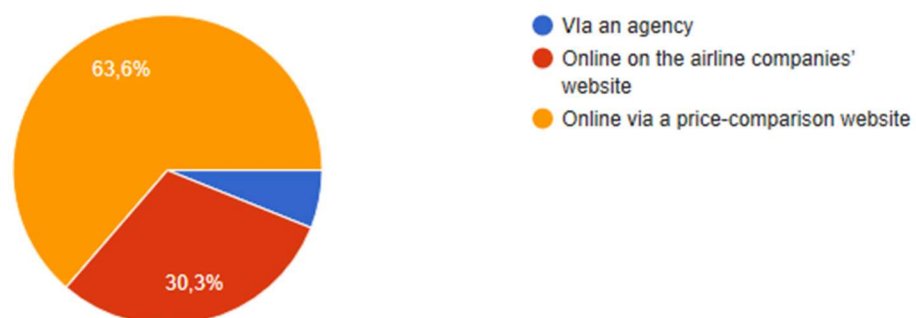
33 réponses



The population at hand seem used to traveling, this data is surprising if confronted to the French population (which is the market at hand) however it is in line with a travel company's customer base. This indication provides information about the customer habits regarding plane tickets purchase. Considering that 70% of the population travels by plan more than once a year, one could assume that they are in fact advised on online travel purchases. The following chart will confirm this hypothesis:

How do you book your tickets?

33 réponses



This chart is in line with the idea that most of the questioned population is acquainted with the online travel purchase process, except for 6,4% of the population who favours ticket booking through agencies. The following table shows no correlation between the previous

demographics and the decision to purchase offline rather than online. Although it is important to note that none of them had chosen the price of a fare as an important element when purchasing a travel.

Your age rank is:	What is your socio-professional status?	How often do you travel by plane?	Motives for which you travel:	How do you book your tickets?
Gen X (born before 1965 et 1979)	Manager	Once a year	Leisure	Via an agency
Gen Y (born between 1980 et 2000)	employee	more than once a year	Professional	Via an agency

Rank your purchase criteria in order from 1 to 4 (1 most important ; 4 least important).



Lastly the population was asked to rank their purchase criteria in order of importance, 1 being the most important and 4 the least important. This sorting process is easier to understand to interviewee and allows an easy scaling of the most chosen answers. To identify the importance of the criteria one must see the interviewees ranking as points. Once the data has been collected the “points” are added, since 1 indicates a high preference and 4 a low

preference, the criteria with the least “points” is considered to be the one that was favoured by the audience.

Preference calculation:

- Price range: $1 \times 20 + 2 \times 6 + 3 \times 4 + 4 \times 3 = 56$
- Trust in the airline and/or website: $1 \times 9 + 2 \times 10 + 3 \times 10 + 4 \times 6 = 75$
- Flight dates: $1 \times 8 + 2 \times 9 + 3 \times 10 + 4 \times 6 = 80$
- Fare length: $1 \times 3 + 2 \times 15 + 3 \times 8 + 4 \times 7 = 85$

The most important criteria overall seem to be a low price as it has been chosen as the number one criteria by 60,6% of the questioned population and a score of 56. The next criteria are the trust in the airline/website with a score of 75, followed by the dates of the flight with a score of 80 and finally the length of the fare with a score of 85.

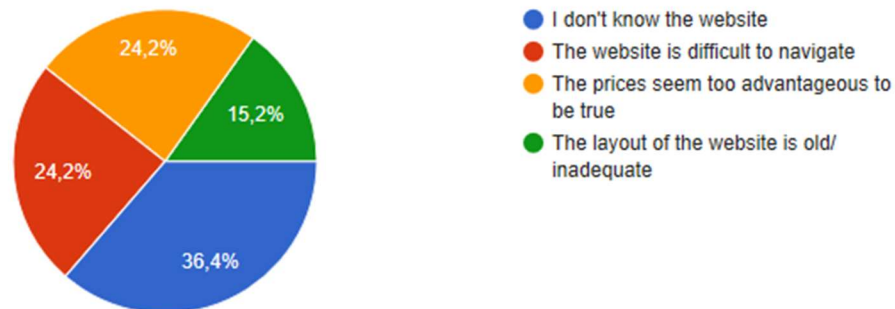
4.1.2. Consumer behaviour and user experience focused data

As mentioned ahead the questions regarding user experience must be answered as candidly as possible to be able to evaluate the true effect of user experience on a customer behaviour and decision process. To do so only a few questions were asked and in a manner that gave the impression that their traveling habits were researched instead of their online purchase processes. Although some questions had to reference website layout or experience the these target questions were hidden among questions that either concerned their demographic and in one case an empty question that solely served the purpose of giving the impression that the study was focused on their travel habits (the motivation for travel question, this questions purpose isn't to provide data but to preserve the focus of the interviewee on travel rather than on the purchase process).

Chart 7: Purchase barriers

Which of the following would prevent you from purchasing your tickets on a website?

33 réponses



The purchase barriers propose the options that interviewees were offered when demanding which of the them would be the strongest barrier to purchase on a website. The results demonstrate that user experience can have negative externalities strong enough to prevent the purchase with the categories “The website is too difficult to navigate” and “The layout of the website is old/inadequate”. The 39,4% (=15,2+24,2) of the population that chose either of those 2 categories allow us to theorise two hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is that the lack of attention to user experience can be a serious drawback for a business development, preventing potential customers to become active customers.

The second hypothesis would be that the bad user experience is seen as more doubtful than the fact of not knowing the website/company or even than information that seems unbelievable, indicating that a positive user experience could push these 39,4% to disregard the absence of information about the purchase platform or even to neglect the doubtfulness of a given information. With further extrapolation this theory implies that an effective user experience could potentially help a business to gain acceptance within a market even if it is not well position to start with. Indicating that user experience could indeed be an asset in a competitive market.

Lastly the “the price seem too good to be true” variable aimed to demonstrate the need of trust among customer when purchasing online, as we have demonstrated in the literature review, trust is an element that can be induced through user experience optimisation,

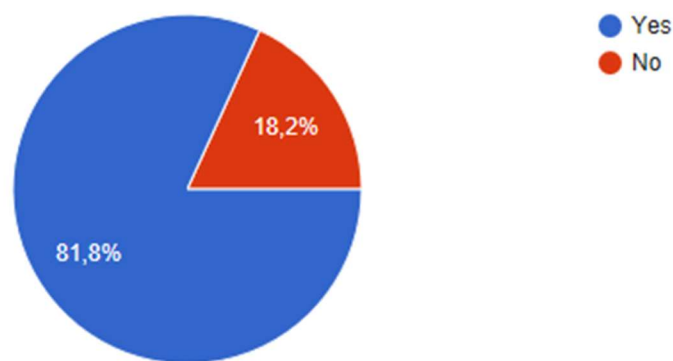
implying that these 24,2% of the interrogated population could be lured into purchasing on the said website with efficient user experience development.

The category of “I don’t know this website” is the limit of user experience. Although a significant part of the population could be convinced by improved user experience, it is undeniable that user experience cannot solve every problem. Some customers still require to have heard of a product or a company to trust it and will require the intervention advertisement or public relations.

Chart 8: Website layout and safety

Do you associate the websites layout as a pledge of safety?

33 réponses



This question is directly related to user experience, it is one of the more upfront questions of the questionnaire. Since it was only possible to ask a few questions they had to be precise and well adjusted, unfortunately it was difficult to develop this question with more subtlety. Nonetheless the result is very conclusive, with a whopping 81,8% of the population admitting being sensible to a website layout when valuing the trustworthiness of a website. Considering the proportion of the interviewee considering safety as being a determining argument in a purchase decision, this data is very encouraging regarding the potential of user experience to influence a customer in its purchase decision.

4.1.3. Test result analysis

The last question is decisive for the research and was complex to design. The aim of this last question is to see if user experience whether it be in its all or in a single of its element, could push a customer to go against its pre-set values.

As we have seen in the literature review as well as the previous questions, is that a customer hierarchize its priorities to than identify what decision to take regarding a purchase. The test was to see if user experience could push a customer to go against the hierarchy it had made for himself.

The complexity of the questionnaire design resided almost completely in this question. Of course, the customer could not know that it was interrogated about user experience to avoid bias, but also it had to be conscious of the choices it was making along the questionnaire regarding its purchase preferences.

During the qualitative interviews the user experience was often evoked when talking about one of easy voyages main competitors. This competitor uses another price comparing technology than Easyvoyage, their technology as well as their partnerships are less developed than Easyvoyage's, in consequences this competitor offers almost always superior to Easyvoyage. Nonetheless, they possess a bigger market share and have a stronger customer base. This question was raised by the CEO, who theorized that it was probably the "price crossing thing". After research on the competitor's website, it was found that the "price crossing thing" is in fact a user experience hack in which the company suggest a price for a fare and adds another number next to it, this number is crossed and corresponds to what the price would have been in average. This is a website layout detail, that seems quite insignificant. But could this little UX hack push a customer to go against its ideas?

To test this theory the following question was asked to the interviewees:

Between these two offers, which appears to you as being the most advantageous? *

The screenshot shows a flight offer for a round trip between CDG and BCN. The first leg is CDG to BCN on 10/01 at 10:00, and the second leg is BCN to CDG on 10/02 at 17:35. The total price is 86€, with a 124€ reduction from the original price. A green button labeled 'Voir' is visible. Below the flight details, it says 'Calcul d'un bagage en soute: 30€' and 'Non remboursable Échangeable moyennant des frais'.

Round trip for 86€ reduce from 124€

The screenshot shows a flight offer for a round trip between CDG and BCN. The first leg is CDG to BCN on 10/01 at 10:00, and the second leg is BCN to CDG on 10/02 at 17:35. The total price is 80€. A green button labeled 'Voir' is visible. Below the flight details, it says 'Calcul d'un bagage en soute: 30€' and 'Non remboursable Échangeable moyennant des frais'.

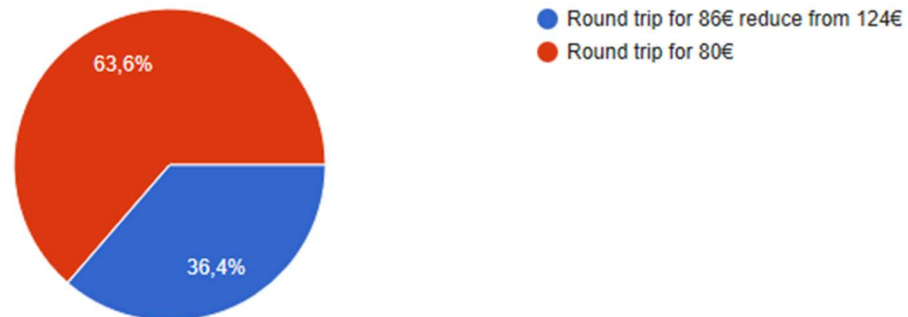
Round trip for 80€

It's important to highlight that in the questions regarding the purchase method, 63% of the population indicated to use price comparators, implying that price is a decision factor in their purchase process. Further on, when questioned about their purchase criteria, 60,6% of the population chose "the price is low" as main criteria and it was amongst the most important criteria for the overall population. So, it is safe to affirm that the price is a rather important criterion of a large majority of the population.

The result of the test where the following:

Between these two offers, which appears to you as being the most advantageous?

33 réponses



At first sight the results don't seem to be conclusive since the 63% of the population who chose the 80€ round trip could coincide with the 63% who chose price as the most important criteria. However, the excel analysis prove in fact that among the 36,4% of the population who have chosen the round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€, 7 of them usually book their flights on price comparators and 5 have chosen "price is low" as the main criteria of their purchase decision. Implying that 15,15% of the population at least and 21,21% at best, chose the more expensive option even though they had decided that price was a determining criteria in their purchase decision. The results are explainable by the fact that the crossed number gave the interviewees the impression that the "Roundtrip for 86€ reduced from 124€" was a better option because of the potential loss they have avoided. The price difference gave the impression that they would save 38€ when in fact they are spending 6€ more. This hack isn't ground-breaking, it has been used for decades by retailers offline.

The point here was to demonstrate that although there is more information available when purchasing online and even know the cognitive senses are more solicited, user experience can still act on the emotion triggers, in the benefit of retailers who can use it to develop their turnover or with further develop user experience, can hope to trigger purchases.

You are:	Between these two offers, which appears to you as being the most advantageous?	How do you book your tickets?	Main purchase criteria
Female	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online via a price-comparison website	4
Male	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online on the airline companies' website	3
Female	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online via a price-comparison website	1
Female	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online on the airline companies' website	2
Male	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online via a price-comparison website	4
Male	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online via a price-comparison website	1
Male	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online via a price-comparison website	3
Male	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online on the airline companies' website	2
Male	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online on the airline companies' website	3
Male	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online on the airline companies' website	2
Female	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online via a price-comparison website	2
Female	Round trip for 86€ reduced from 124€	Online via a price-comparison website	2

The results of this test imply that details in the website layout and therefore, the user experience, can go as far as pushing a customer to take a decision despite his pre-set values and need hierarchies. If a small detail in the user experience can trigger a change of heart in 15% of online users, the potential of an entire user experience strategy is much stronger.

4.2. User experience potential for the E-tourism industry and Easyvoyage

This last subpart will be used to develop the hypothesis disclosed in the past subpart with the help of the qualitative data gathered during the individual interviews.

4.2.1. Hypothesis 1: The lack of attention to user experience can be a serious drawback for a business development, preventing potential customers to become active customers

This is the first hypothesis that can be drawn from the quantitative data, the concept is that a negative user experience could push a customer away from a purchase decision that had already been taken. In this research the interviewees are put in a purchase decision situation, their mindset is what ticket to choose and not should I purchase a ticket. Given that when questioned about what could prevent them from pursuing the purchase on a particular website, over 39% of them indicated user experience issue as the most important risk. The deductions that can be drawn for this research is that user experience should be considered by companies if not because it's an asset, then at least because the lack thereof is a serious threat to the business sustainability.

4.2.2. Hypothesis 2: In certain circumstances, user experience could push potential customers to neglect the absence of information the doubtfulness of a given information

The present hypothesis ensues from the previous theory. For the 39% of the population who identified poor user experience as a non-purchase criterion. The implication isn't only that bad user experience is a purchase turn off, but that it's reputation potential is above a lack of

information and knowledge or than information identified as doubtful. Suggesting that a positive user experience could have the potential of pushing a potential customer to overlook the lack of viable information. In a purchase context where the decision process is mostly driven by cognitive capacities, the ability to go around them is a powerful asset.

This theory was supported by both the interviews of Jean-Pierre Nadir as well as Lea Gury.

Mr Nadir explained that the E-Tourism market, and specifically the discount online tourism market is so hyper competitive that customer is put in an “abundance effect”, this effect is a state of overwhelm due too much options that often drives individuals to take decision or actions against their better judgment. The idea is that there are so many actors providing so many options that the potential customer is not able to take a rational decision. The overdrive causes the customer to fall back on its emotional senses to make a decision.

In her interview, Lea Gury added that user experience could be used to give the customers the impression that they know the company on a personal level, such strategies can be as simple as a bot chat that welcomes the customer and as complex as a full combination of community management and application development strategy. She agreed with the “abundance effect” argument and stated that therefore user experience is more developed by companies in the travel or fashion industry that are thriving online and are confronted to hyper competitiveness problematics.

4.2.3. Hypothesis 3: User experience can push customer to go against their pre-set priorities in a purchase decision

The last and main hypothesis is drawn from hypothesis one and two as well as from the decision test made in the quantitative questionnaire. Considering the theories in which user experience has the potential of driving a potential customer away from a purchase decision as well as pushing it towards a purchase intention against its better judgement. And given the results of the final question for which at least 15% of the questioned customer sample chose the answer that was in opposition to the likeliness and priorities that they had indicated priorly. It is reasonable to theories that user experience has the potential to push a customer towards a purchase decision regardless of their pre-set priorities or purchase objective, in this case spending as little money as possible.

Moreover, this theory aligns with the opinions expressed in the individual interviews. For instance, Jean-Pierre Nadir stated that the E-tourism market was especially subject to such strategies because of its competitiveness and pricing parameters. The competitiveness has been explained before, but the pricing parameters needs to be explained. As said in the introduction, travel is a particular product to sell, it is a time sensitive and perishable product, it cannot be reused or recycled and therefore is lost for good when the night is passed or once the plane has left the airport. Every on booked ticket or hotel room is a loss, to prevent this loss prices must adapt, they go up or down depending on the time left and the demand for the product. This causes the prices to be very volatile and unpredictable for the customer. This phenomenon puts the customer in a state of tension, which is when one is more drawn to responding instinctively rather than rational, the emotional takes over the cognitive, allowing elements such as user experience to have a stronger leverage on the potential customer.

In this case the simple crossed price hack had the potential to increase benefits by at least 15%, simply by pushing customers to make a slight deviation from the criteria that they had set for themselves.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

In conclusion, the literature review and the empirical research both indicated that it is reasonable to validate the hypotheses regarding the impact of user experience on customer purchase intention in a highly competitive market.

The literature review case studies as well as the quantitative demonstrate that user experience does influence customers behaviour and decision processes. Its potential was demonstrated through its capacity to push the customer away and towards a potential purchase. Furthermore, James Wong and Laws research “Analysing the intention to purchase on hotel websites: a study of travellers to Hong Kong”, together with the questionnaire results, suggest the efficiency of user experience even in a hypercompetitive environment.

From a theoretical standpoint, the theories exposed in the literature review together with the qualitative researches, support the empirical findings and the hypothesis that user experience can affect a customer’s purchase intention even/especially in a hypercompetitive market.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

5.1.1. Validation of the effect of user experiences influence on a customer decision process and purchase intention

The research brought further demonstration of the influence of user experience on a customer’s perception and decision process as well as purchase intention. The theories that had been implied in some of the literature review case studies were tested and supported by both the qualitative and quantitative data.

There is no doubt that user experience has the capacity of influencing the customer positively as well as negatively, in its information search and classification, during the decision process and until the final purchase decision. Although the case study didn’t allow primary data to support it, the theory according to which the post purchase experience also has a drive in the customers future purchase has been demonstrated in other researches and case studies used in the literature review.

Overall it is reasonable to validate the theory that user experience influences customer behaviour and purchase intentions.

5.1.2. Validation of the notion of user experience as a differentiation factor

The notion of user experience and its potential to differentiate a product, service or company from competitors, was introduced by Andrey Sirotkin & Bronan McCabe in their “The New Experience for Business: Why User Experience Is the Differentiation Strategy in the Cloud Context” research with the Cloud industry case study.

This theory is debatable due to the importance of the industry to which it is applied. In reality this theory would potentially be difficult to prove for offline business. On the other hand, it is undeniable that user experience represents a great potential as a differentiation lever.

It was demonstrated that user experience could influence the customer in how it perceived a product, its usefulness and purpose as well as how it approaches a company and the information delivered by the concerned company. UX gives retailers the opportunity to communicate information to their customers further than advertising or public relations. It allows the customer to develop an impression of closeness and relationship with a company or brand that the customer practically builds himself.

Specifically, in online context and furthermore with mobile shopping, user experience allows companies to build a continuous relationship with the customer. Every time a customer reaches for his phones, goes on social media, on the internet, visits the online store ... etc. All these are periods where a potential customer is within the reach of user experience. The development of apps and the push notification system is when the differentiation potential of user experience reaches its peak.

This, for example, could be true for Easyvoyage, if every time a customer reaches for his phone, it gets a notification from the Easyvoyage app about past travels or the weather from such and such destination, he is bound to go on easyvoyage.com when looking for a plane ticket. If by then the company has improved its user experience, there's a good chance that this time the customer will choose to purchase on easyvoyage.com.

The real limit to user experiences capacity to differentiate a company from another is the consistency. If there is a vacuum at some stage of the purchase process, the customer will lose the relationship and impressions given by prior user experience and there for the entire strategy will lose grip on that individual. But if the strategy is consumer focused and covers

the entire purchase process, there is little doubt in its capacity to differentiate a product or brand in the eyes of the customer and even trigger a purchase decision.

5.1.3. Introduction of user experiences effectiveness in a highly competitive market

The demonstration of user experiences effectiveness when facing a highly competitive context drives from the demonstration of the two previous theories.

Indeed, the ability to influence a customer in its behaviour, decision process and purchase intention is key in hyper competitive situations. One must be able to convince that the offer proposed is not only fitting to the customers' needs but that it is the best fit, having influence on a customer's impression and evaluation process is determining. Even more if the strategy can influence the customer into a purchase decision.

However, this is true in every situation, it is in its differentiation leverage that user experience demonstrated to be an asset even in hyper competitiveness. As mentioned by the interviewee, competitiveness creates overwhelm of the cognitive capacities through an information and possibility flood. This phenomenon named the "abundance effect" paralyses the individual sense of rationality leading the customer to use its emotional related abilities. These unlike the cognitive senses, are influenced by instinct and impressions, they are more sensitive and therefore suggestive to aesthetics, images and impulses. Therefore, in plane tickets purchase tickets or online deals purchases are easily triggered by simple user experience hacks such as crossed number or push notifications, they create an impression of urge and push the customer further into stress purchase decisions.

The capacity of user experience to be used as a differentiation lever or to trigger stress purchase not only make it an efficient element of a marketing strategy in a hyper competitive market, but until a certain point its efficiency increases with the competitiveness.

5.2. Practical implications

The main theory alongside the previous theories that have led to it, have multiple practical implications. Not all of them have been verified by the research and therefore will not be further developed, this subpart will focus on two practical implication that are identified as crucial from a company development standpoint as well as from an industry stand point.

5.2.1. The challenges of user experience strategy

The mistake made by Easyvoyage was to overall neglect user experience.

The issues with user experience in hyper competitive markets is that although a well-developed user experience strategy is a strategic blessing for the company and a bad user experience is as damaging as a well thought out one is beneficial, the complete lack there off is also a risk.

It was said before that UX can be as profiting as damaging to company, its brands and products. But the absence of user experience development is also a strategic risk, and it is the pitfall that Easyvoyage has fallen into.

The two main challenges of user experience are proper strategy development and competitive upkeep. In an industry where the competition has developed user focused strategies, not developing one to in response will create a market share loss risk. User experience, like many other aspects of marketing can be compared to technology. Even if a company is leader of a market, if it doesn't follow recent technological evolutions it will become obsolete. The same way Nokia loss its position on the mobile market by underestimating the smartphone battle, Easyvoyage lost its position on the French E-Tourism bargain market by underestimating the importance of user experience in a marketing strategy.

Knowing when to develop the user experience and how to adapt it to a customer pool are the two main challenges of business today.

5.2.2. User experience as a low investment development strategy

The last practical implication that must be covered is financial advantage presented by a user experience strategy as well as the stakes that it represents.

Many of the user experience hacks that we have mentioned are low investment improvements, it's a number on a line or two notifications a week. UX improvements are not product or processes development, they require little research and development, they are easy to develop, easy to test (an A/B testing is sufficient to evaluate a UX element effectiveness) and easy to deliver.

This is both beneficial and detrimental for companies. Beneficial because it is an efficient yet economic development element, and it can be afforded by most businesses, detrimental because it can be afforded by most businesses. It is as easy for a company to develop it as it is for its competitors. User experience retains customers and provides the company with an identity, developing a user experience strategy too late can be detrimental to its efficiency.

The best strategy would be to develop a low-profile user experience, if the strategy proves efficient on the customer pool one can let it prosper or develop it further. The company won't have invested much and is ready to respond rapidly if competitors rise to the occasion and develop their own user focused strategy.

5.2.3. User experience is industry sensitive

Like most technologies and strategies, user experience has its limits. The most prominent limit highlighted in this case is industry sensitiveness. As Mr. Nadir has highlighted, user experience is most efficient when confronted to competitiveness, a certain type of risk factor (in this case price change) and when associated to a potentially impulsive or instinctive purchase. Moreover, the limit of user experience is availability, it is only efficient if the customer is given the option.

Therefore it is more efficient in online purchases context or for purchases that require less cognitive intervention. For instance, purchases that involve important financial consequences or that are long term purchases might not prove as responsive to user experience. The exception being the car industry, that capitalizes its entire communication and product developments around user experience.

5.2.4. Easyvoyage has a potential to grow in its markets

The practical implication for Easyvoyage would be to develop its own user experience, its customer base seems responsive to it and is already relatively loyal. The technology used to create the travel offers are up to date with the market and it still has an important place amongst its competitors. The race isn't already lost but it is time for the company to operate this change.

The steps could be simple enough, using benchmarks and customer survey to develop a customer focused website. Provide a better post purchase experience, implement user experience hacks such as crossed comparative priced and push up notification on the app, would fit to their activity and be low investment improvements.

5.3. Limitations and future research

5.3.1. Limitations

The research process as well as the Easyvoyage case study have been of great interest and fortunately provided much material to study. These elements make for a good research basis; however, some elements could have been handled differently or developed further. This subpart is dedicated to recommendation and comments on how it could have been done differently, followed by advices on how further researches could be handled.

5.3.1.1. The population

The first and main limitation of this research was the size of the population regarding the quantitative research. A larger population would have allowed more precise and more striking results. Plus, it would have allowed an analysis of the responses by generation and by socio-economic statuses that could have been relevant to the research.

The population is viable because representative of the Easyvoyage customer base however it doesn't representation realistic representation of the population in a larger sense which can rise question regarding the validity of the results in another context. Although these contestations can be denied since the demographic characteristics of the population did not seem to have impacted the study. Nonetheless it would have been better to avoid the question in its all with a more representative population.

Lastly the sampling of the population should have had featured another pool of individuals than solely Easyvoyage's customer base. The research was to case study specific which limited the impact of its findings on other contexts. To avoid this issue, it would have been better advised to research both Easyvoyage customer pool and a more random population to confront the result and be able to determine whether they were in fact case specific or not.

5.3.1.2. research a less specific market

As said previously, user experience efficiency is industry and market specific, moreover the travel market has unique parameters and is hard to compare to other industries.

The product as well as the pricing specificities make it a uniquely appropriate industry to develop user experience. This complicates the exploitation of the finding by another industry or company from another industry and it raises the question of the validity of the finding when applied to another context.

Although other industries are similar enough to benefit from the present findings, such as the fashion retail industry and the high-end car industry, many other markets will not experience similar result as demonstrated via this research.

This limit should be taken into consideration when questioning the applicability of user experience to another market or industry. If the parameters are similar to the exposed case study, then there shouldn't be any compatibility issues. However, if the concerned market experiences low competitiveness, low prices evolution, a reduced number of competitors, the user experience efficiency would not be as important as it has been demonstrated through the present study.

In addition to this, the French E-tourism bargain market, is very complex to understand and requires a lot of research prior to the actual research. So, if possible it would be advisable to test a less complex market, and if it must be then rely on market specialist that will be a crucial help in developing and apprehending the problematic.

5.3.2. Further research

For further research the previously stated limitations should be taken into considerations. Beyond this study and demonstrations, many question are of interest regarding user experience.

Firstly, its influence on customer behaviour, decision process and purchase intention could be studied with more precision in association with psychological and sociological studies. A better and more precise understanding could be of great help when developing user experience strategy as well as to unravel competitor's strategies.

Secondly, the potential of user experience as a purchase trigger requires further investigating and could prove to be a great asset for uprising retailers as well as companies looking to improve their profits beyond product development. additionally, this study could help identify whether product and service purchases are identically responsive to user experience or what product categories respond best to user focused strategies.

Lastly, the question of which industries are the most sensitive to user experience would allow a complete research of its potential. This study would require a longer time frame and more important resources, nonetheless it is quite relevant to the current economic context and evolution perspectives, meaning the digitization of retail and most B to C industries.

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Appendices:

Appendices 1: Qualitative questionnaire

Subject	Question example
Tourism market (E-commerce specific)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Could you describe the online travel market context economically and competitively?● Are there differences between the traditional and the online point of sale? And if yes, what are they?
Customer decision making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● How would you describe the customers decision process during the purchase phase?● What are the customer-specific elements that determine the purchase?● What are the external factors that may affect decision-making? (conjuncture, Marketing, branding)
User experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● How would you define UX?● What use do you do of UX?
User experience influence on decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Do you think that UX is a determining factor in the purchase decision? (In particular pre-purchase UX)● Do you think UX can push the potential consumer to buy beyond his priorities?
Importance and impact of UX on customer in the online travel buying process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The online tourism market is a fiercely competitive market, do you think UX can have an impact in this context?● Do you think online UX has as much Crip on the customer as on site UX?

