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The role of brand experience on customer experience: An analysis of business success in the mobile gaming industry

A study of the relevance of brand experience in the customer experience for the business success of a product/service in the mobile gaming industry

Research submitted by

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"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." — Dr. Wayne Dyer

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1. Introduction / Current Situation

1.1. Background

As stated by Pine and Gilmore in their 1998 book, "The Experience Economy" (Pine and Gilmore, 1998), the value developed and offered to society has evolved and progressed during history in four different phases (commodity economy, manufacturing economy, service economy, experience economy). This evolution has always come with an increase in economic value and price, and with different periods of time between them (first with a really long period and later one with really fast changes in less than 100 years). After three of these phases, we have arrived at the current economic offering, the experience economy, the last, but probably not the least. This current phase has also been called by other authors the intangible economy (Vargo and Lush, 2004; Morris and Crane, 2007; Cleff et al, 2018; and Ong et al, 2018).

The experience economy consists of moving the offerings from products or services, to experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Lasalle and Britton, 2002; Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentile et al, 2007; Siri, 2012; Keller, 2016; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Kotler, 2017; Havir, 2017; Cleff et al, 2018; Ong et al, 2018; and Kennada, 2020). Consumers feel this experience not only through the use of the product or service but also through the brand, customer care, advertising, packaging… (Meyer and Schwager, 2007) during the whole customer journey (Schau et al, 2013; and Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). This idea has two implications: firstly the value lies in the experience, not in the product or the service itself (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Lasalle and Britton, 2002; Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentile et al, 2007; Siri, 2012; Keller, 2016; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Kotler, 2017; Havir, 2017; Cleff et al, 2018; Ong et al, 2018; Kennada, 2020; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). Secondly, value is created and accumulated over time, as the individual develops his or her journey as a

consumer (Schau et al, 2013; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

As Coleman (2018) wrote in his book "Building brand experiences" stating the Chief Design Officer of Pepsico, "*consumers don't buy, actually, products anymore, they buy experiences that are meaningful to them, they buy solutions that are real, that transcend the product, that goes beyond the product, and mostly they buy stories that need to be authentic*".

In this new context, the user that became a client during the service phase now has become *a guest* (Pine and Gilmore, 1998), and instead of focusing on features or benefits, they see value in memorable experiences through sensations (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Lasalle and Britton, 2002; Brakus et al, 2009; Cleff et al, 2018; and Ong et al, 2018). Therefore, the unique way of building a successful business is to differentiate it from its competitors through turning routine interactions into memorable experiences along the time (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Lasalle and Britton, 2002; Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentile et al, 2007; Siri, 2012; Keller, 2016; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Kotler, 2017; Havir, 2017; Cleff et al, 2018; Ong et al, 2018; Coleman, 2018; and Kennada, 2020).

However, this is not all, a new economic offering is on the making, the so-called transformation economy, that is based on experiences as raw material, but not any experiences, only **customized experiences** (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Riivits-arkonsuo, 2014; Duncan et al, 2017, Agius, 2018). The transformation economy means that the customer becomes the product, and the goal of the experience is to transform the customer itself (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). That is to say, the customer after having gone through a customized experience suffers a change in their way of thinking, acting, or being (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). Therefore, in the transformation era where the goal won't be the use of a product or service or the experience, but a change in the mind of the customer, that is to say, the customer will become the product (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Riivits-arkonsuo, 2014; Duncan et al, 2017; and Agius, 2018).

To sum up, based on the line of work started by Pine and Gilmore (1998), and that continued with multiple authors (Lasalle and Britton, 2002; Shaw and

Ivens, 2002; Gentile et al, 2007; Siri, 2012; Keller, 2016; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Kotler, 2017; Havir, 2017; Cleff et al, 2018; Ong et al, 2018; Coleman, 2018; Kennada, 2020; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), the economic offering has moved from a situation where it was undifferentiated and the customer's needs were irrelevant, to another context where the needs of the customer are relevant, not to say required, for the business success of a company, and they are key to differentiate companies in the competitive landscape.

1.2. Current situation

The evolution of the economic offering, and concretely the arrival of the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) or the intangibles economy (Vargo and Lush, 2004; Morris and Crane, 2007; Cleff et al, 2018; and Ong et al, 2018), has not come alone and has not happened from one day to another. In order to understand its implications, and understand why the experience economy has emerged and which consequences it has had in the business world, it is important to identify and explain the big changes that have happened at the end of the XX century and the beginning of the XXIst century, and its implications for the competitive landscape.

1.2.1. The arrival of turbulent times

The first big change has been the arrival of volatility and uncertainty into previous stable and certain markets, thereby transforming the overall economy and the majority of its industries from stable and predictable markets to "turbulent" ones (Pine, 1993; Fader, 2013; Sabol, 2013; and Duncan, 2017). In this direction, some authors speak about our times with the acronym VUCA that means volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (Leach, 2018; and Kennada, 2020). In the VUCA context, turbulences are the norm and not the exception, and as Duncan said (2017) the boundaries between what is happening in the environment and the products and services have blurred and companies need to integrate end-to-end experience design in their processes to really offer valuable experiences to the customer in order to be successful.

1.2.2. The technological revolution

The arrival of turbulent times has happened at the same time as two other big changes: the technological revolution and the Internet (and, with it, social media development).

On the one hand, the technological revolution has reduced the cost and time of production and has increased the quality of the offering (Sabol et al, 2013). On the other hand, the arrival of the internet, the so-called digital world, that according to Keller (2011) and Kotler (2017) has changed how businesses and customers interact and communicate between them (e.g. social media, worth of mouth, co-creation, peer-to-peer connectivity), but especially as Shaun and Milligan (2015) show, changing the way that consumers experience the brand promise, thereby making the modern marketplace much more interactive and competitive (Keller, 2011). Currently, companies have less and less control of the touchpoints of interaction (Maechler et al, 2016; and Witell et al, 2020), understood as the part of the company that the customer interacts with (they can be brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social-owned) as explained by Lemon and Verhoef (2016), between the company and its audience. As a result, consumers have been empowered, which means that the relationship's control has moved from the businesses side to the customer side (Lattemann et al, 2017; Kotler, 2017; and Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

These two big changes have generated some dramatic consequences. Firstly, new technologies are created and copied at a dramatic speed (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; and Fader, 2012). Secondly, customers want omnichannel experiences and are 24/7 connected to their digital devices, using many devices and instinctively (digital devices such as laptops, smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, video game consoles…), even sometimes at the same time (Wamock et al, 2017). Thirdly, the main points of contact between customers and business companies have changed and new ones are continuously being added, especially in the digital space, thereby reinforcing the role of the customer and increasing its power (Parise et al, 2016), and handing more

power to customers to dictate the rules in the business-customer relationship (Duncan et al, 2017; and Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

As a result of these changes, companies such as Google and Amazon have understood this new context and they are offering products and services in a much more immediate, personalized, and convenient way, which has made customers expect the same from the rest of the market players, thereby increasing customer expectations (Experience, Customer, and Maturity Monitor, 2009; and Duncan et al, 2017).

However, not everything that has happened has moved power from the business side to the customer side. Businesses have also been reinforced with the additional capacity to implement customer-centric strategies based on building relationships (Fader, 2012; Nasution et al, 2014; and Duncan et al, 2017), which means that companies have much more tools and capacity to offer to each customer what they want and need, and make them feel unique, opening the doors to mass customization (Pine, 1993; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; and Kotler, 2017).

To sum to, the arrival of the digital world through the technological revolution has changed the rules of the game for both sides, giving the power to businesses to mass customize their products and services, and treating each customer differently without increasing the cost of doing so because anything that can be digitized can also be customized (Peppers and Rogers, 2017). Additionally, digitalization has also eliminated the entrance barriers to reach customers (Nasution et al, 2014) what has made the context much more competitive, and the need of knowing the customer and serving them well a competitive requirement (Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Fader, 2012; Sabol, 2013; and Duncan et al, 2017).

1.2.3. The Customer Empowerment

Together with the arrival of technology and digitalization, also arrived social media, reinforcing the shift in the balance of power between customers and business companies offering products and services, thereby launching another revolution, the customer revolution (Fader, 2012; Newman and

Blanchard, 2016; Duncan et al, 2017; and Kennada, 2020) and creating the soc-called digitally empowered customers (Kennada, 2020).

The digitally empowered customers know what they want, they are much more active in the search of information, and they are also more vocal and involved in the decision-making process and in the pre and post-purchase phases; they create their own content about the company and their product and services, and they share their voice online and in social media on a continuous basis, not always in the benefit of the business (Kotler, 2017; and Kennada, 2020).

The customer revolution has changed the way that the business and its customer's relationships work.

On the one hand, the customer revolution has dramatically increased the power of the customer, and their ability to "*get what they want, whenever they want, from whomever they want*" (Fader, 2012). The digital technology that customers use every day has made possible that they are used to be in control: they decide when and which information they share, when and which information they get, and, as a result, they have got the habit and they love to have immediate responses to their needs and desires (Lattemann and Robra-Bissantz, 2017; and Kennada, 2020). They have the feeling of being in control, they are technologically wise, and they want immediate answers and solutions, something that dramatically affects their expectations and interactions with businesses (Lattemann and Robra-Bissantz, 2017; and Kennada, 2020).

On the other hand, companies have realized that they do not know much, not to say anything, about their customers, and they have begun to invest in the capture of data and information to understand each customer's needs better with the aim of satisfying them better (Peppers and Rogers, 2017). Customers have limitless choices that give them the power to walk away, that is to say, they are in control, and if business companies do not want to fail, they need to adapt to this next competitive battleground and build everything around the customer (Colin and Ivens, 2002; and Fader, 2012). Nevertheless, companies need to understand that customers, being consumers (B2C) or

businesses (B2B), do not want more choices, what they want is the desired value when, where, and how they want it (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

As a result of this new context, customers more and more take their purchase decisions around ideas and experiences instead of just products or services (Duncan et al, 2017; and Kotler, 2017).

1.2.4. The traditional and new media saturation, and the arrival of Social Media

In today's society, an average customer will probably receive thousands of marketing messages a day (Milligan and Shaun, 2008; and Leach, 2018), which means that they are flooded with advertising and promotion messages, trying to sell them something that probably they do not want or that they are not interested in (Cleff et al, 2018; and Leach, 2018). Additionally, their attention span has dropped from 12 seconds to 8 seconds (Kotler, 2017). Humans are not programmed to screen as much data, which means that all this information becomes, what is called, background noise (Milligan and Shaun, 2008).

In addition to that, social media has appeared, giving the capacity to consumers to create online communities where they can talk to each other and share their opinion, positive or negative, and feedback about a product, service, or experience without the intervention, participation, control or mediation of businesses (Nasution et al, 2014; and Kotler, 2017). As a result of that, peer-to-peer product and service reviews have become a key channel between customers to decide which products to buy or not and has allowed them to be much more informed and become more demanding (Ernst and Young, 2013). According to recent research (Kotler, 2017; and Fetcherin, 2020), customers believe much more in the word of mouth of family and friends or even social media followers and influencers, than in marketing communications.

1.2.5. The arrival of the so-called 'intangible economy'

As Virginia Postrel (American political and cultural writer) said "*we are in fact, living more and more in an intangible economy, in which the greatest*

sources of wealth are not physical" (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) and elements such as "*beauty, amusement, attention, learning, pleasure, even spiritual fulfillment are as real and economically valuable as steel and semiconductors*" (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). In 2018, 20 years after this statement, John Mellor VP of Strategy in Adobe, said in the book *Building Brand Experiences* (Coleman, 2018) "*emotion is the new currency of experience*".

Customers are not only looking for tangible benefits when they make a purchase but also intangible benefits (where the real value is) such as experiences (Vargo and Lush, 2004; Morrison and Crane, 2007; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; and Ong et al, 2018). Every day, customers interact with hundreds of brands, and customers only remember the feel and perception of an organization that is delivered through the customer experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Shaw and Ivens, 2002). This means that in order to build a competitive advantage, companies need to offer great customer experiences and foster a strong, close and emotional relationship between the customer and the brand (Andreini et al, 2018).

Consequently, the competitive battleground has moved from the functional value of a product or service delivered through quality and/or price, to the symbolic value (Ong et al, 2018). This means according to Schmitt (1999, and 2003) that differentiating through functional elements instead of intangible ones is not sustainable over time and does not give a competitive advantage anymore. To give actual numbers, research of Kantar Millward Brown outlined that "*56 percent of consumers make a decision based purely on brand whilst just 10 percent make a decision on price*" (Coleman, 2018).

1.3. The Experience economy

In front of these big changes in the way that the market operates and in what customers want and how, "*marketing practitioners have come to realize that understanding how consumers experience brands is critical for developing marketing strategies for goods and services*" (Brakus et al, 2009). Consequently, companies have begun to focus on collecting insights about what

their customers want, how they expect the brand to help them, and in promising and delivering what customers really need and want in the best possible way (Shaun and Milligan, 2015). This means that companies are becoming customer-centric, a business model where the expertise and knowledge are not in product development, but in understanding what customers want and desire, when and how they want it, and what they are willing to pay in exchange (Fader, 2012). In addition to that, according to Harvard Business Review, "*the cost of acquiring a new customer is anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one*" (Kennada, 2020). This new context means that business companies to stay relevant need to focus on building relationships with their customers (Adlard and Bausor, 2019), and the only way of reaching that is through deep engagement conveyed through experiences (Adlard and Bausor, 2019).

In this sense, the customer experience has become a key strategic objective for companies to effectively interact with customers, and differentiate from their competitors (Klaus, 2015), and build relationships with their customers (Fetcherin, 2020).

To sum up, the economic offering has evolved from an industrial age where business companies tried to win market share and new customers as their key goal, to their current focus on growing their business through increasing the value of each existing customer relationship (Peppers and Rogers, 2017). That is to say, the focus of these companies is on the one hand on customer retention, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction and, on the other hand, on customer experience management, and on increasing customer value over time (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

Therefore, the customer experience has become the next competitive battleground (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentile et al, 2007; Klaus, 2015; Smith and Milligan, 2015; Duncan et al, 2017; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Havir, 2017; and Kotler, 2017).

1.3.1. The role of customer experiences

As mentioned in the previous section, experiences have become the new competitive battleground for the differentiation and consequent success of an economic offering (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentile et al, 2007; Klaus, 2015; Smith and Milligan, 2015; Duncan et al, 2017; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Havir, 2017; Kotler, 2017). Customers instead of buying products or services, buy, for example, freedom, adventure, and wellbeing. They buy the intangible aspect of what companies are offering, things that cannot be measured, touched, quantified, or reduced to features or benefits (Lasalle and Britton, 2002). In the end, these things can only be lived through experiences, and it is there where the high value rests (Lasalle and Britton, 2002). However, these experiences cannot be mere experiences, they need to be "*engaging, robust, compelling and memorable*" in order to *firstly* engage, then convince and finally retain customers (Gilmore and Pine, 2002).

Experiences happen during the whole *customer journey*, understood as all the steps that the customer follows when interacting with a company over time (Richardson, 2019; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), and the customer experience is the output or performance of the business in all the moments and interactions of the customer journey (Jones, 2014; Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). The customer experience has multiple components, one of them is the product and service, and another one is the brand.

On the one hand, the product and service is the tangible part of the offering, the one that the customer and/or consumer uses to solve their functional needs, and the product experience happens when consumers interact with the product (Brakus et al, 2009). Every product has features that connect the product with the actual goal that the customer wants to solve, but customers do not care about features, they care about what these features can do for them (Dunford, 2019). However, the best product by itself does not matter if consumers and customers do not know about it and why it should matter to them (Soley, 2019).

On the other hand, brands do not only fulfill the traditional role of being guarantees of quality, giving reputation, reducing uncertainty, and saving customers time, risk, and cost (Schmitt, 2009; and Keller, 2016), but they have also become a key element for differentiation and distinction in the customer mind, and to build an emotional connection with the end customer (Wanick et al, 2017; Coleman, 2018). According to Keller (2016), brands have even overcome price as a key decision lever: 56% of consumers say that they decide to buy a product purely on the brand.

1.3.2. The role of brands "as experience creators"

In this context, brands also have an important role in communicating experiences, guaranteeing a certain level of quality and the proper understanding from the customer. As Schmitt (1999) pointed out, companies with strong brands got stronger results than companies without them, and brands have become an important part of the offering highlighting and facilitating as much as possible the customer experience. Consequently, businesses and brands need to "*stay true to its purpose as it grows so that it remains differentiated in the eyes of consumers from the competition it creates*" (Shaun and Milligan, 2015). Additionally, in a context where products and services are becoming more commoditized than ever, "*customers have more choice than ever before and will elect to do business with companies they respect and admire*" (Kennada, 2020). Therefore, the only way to move far from commoditization is the power of a brand, that allows businesses to build an emotional connection with their customers (Coleman, 2018). It can also be built through the brand experience, understood as "*sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments*" (Brakus et al, 2009).

1.3.3. The role of the product and industry life-cycle on the value of experiences

Despite the fact that the previous sections have highlighted the key role of experiences and the customer experience in the current economic offering and in the needs and desires of customers, it is important to keep in mind that not everything is a linear equation. Every industry has its own life-cycle, which means that depending on the phase of the cycle, products, services or experiences can have a different role and value in the economic offering.

As Sabol et al (2013) pointed out, "*the structure of the industry affects the rules of competition, and thus the necessary strategy for survival and development*" and each phase of the product life-cycle requires different business strategies (Sabol et al, 2013). Therefore, it is really important for companies to understand the concept of life-cycle and in which phase of the life-cycle they are competing in (Introduction, growth, maturity, decline), because depending on which one they are in, they will need to take different strategic decisions to be able to compete and be successful, and they will require a different innovation business (Sabol et al, 2013; and Bjoerm et al, 2020).

1.3.4. The Mobile Gaming Industry and the product life-cycle on the value of experiences and brands

One of the industries that has appeared thanks to the arrival of the tech revolution and the digital world is the mobile gaming industry. It was born in 2007-2008 and it has already become the most successful and biggest category in the entertainment industry, as the articles of Newzoo, BBC, and Theesa point out.

This industry is moving towards the maturing face of its product life-cycle as can be seen in the articles from GameIndustry (2018), Ap-Annie (2018), and NewZoo (2018), which means that brand-related stimuli are based on intangibles and the role of the customer experiences are becoming a key element for success. This is even more true in the mobile gaming industry because mobile games are more similar to services than products (Nysveen et

al, 2013), which means that gaming companies have to continuously engage with players and offer them the proper experience.

1.4. The Mobile Gaming Industry

The mobile gaming industry was born in 2007-2008 and has become the most relevant and fast-growing segment of the entertainment industry (NewZoo, 2018), and represents, in key western markets such as the UK, half of the entertainment market/industry as a whole (based on data coming from Entertainment Retailers Association (ERA), the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) and the NPD Group that can be found in the BBC and Theesa articles).

Inside the mobile gaming industry, understood as all the games that can be downloaded from the app store (concretely, the Google Play and Apple Store) to a smart device (tablet or Smartphone), the free-to-play area is the one that concentrates the majority of downloads and revenues of the industry, and it is the one with the highest long-term business potential, according to App-Annie (2018). In this market, core Gamers Generate 66% of Spend, 55% of Time Spent on Mobile Games, and overall it represents $143B in Consumer Spend, +20% YoY, 3.5T Hours played, and 218B Downloads, +7% YoY (App-Annie, 2021). The most well-known games in this industry, according to industry experts, are: Candy Crash (King), Clash of Clans (Supercell), Fortnite (Epic Games), Subway Surfers (Kiloo), and Monster Strike (Mixi) (App-Annie, 2020).

Regarding global footprint, the US market is the biggest market in the west (NewZoo, 2018; and App-Annie, 2018), and China and Japan in the East. It is important to highlight that there are strong market differences between the Asian markets and the Western ones, which make them too different to understand both at the same time. For that reason, the focus of this thesis will be on the US market, the biggest market in the west.

Thinking about demographics, in the US, Baby Boomers Spend More Time on Mobile (App-Annie, 2021). However, according to Statista, 32.7% of US mobile gamers are 25 to 34 years old (being the largest age group)

(Financesonline, 2022), and 57.7% of mobile gamers are men, and 42.3% are women (Financesonline, 2022). Additionally, 34.1% of mobile gamers in the US belong to the high-income group (Financesonline, 2022).

The overall market, after more than 10 years of fast-growing revenue and downloads, is moving towards the maturing face of its product life-cycle, mainly in the western markets (specifically in the US and Canada, a market that represents 25% of the overall business), as can be seen in the articles from GameIndustry (2018), Ap-Annie (2018) and NewZoo (2018), what means that brand-related stimuli based on intangibles, aligned with the so-called intangible economy, are going to have a much relevant role for business companies to reach and maintain a competitive advantage in this lucrative market. As stated in Shaun and Milligan (2015), "*the digital world and the internet of things have transformed how we experience the promise that brands make*" and in order to be able to satisfy the user's needs, business companies need to understand what customers want, offer them a purpose embedded on a brand that helps them, and be transparent about what the brand promise and deliver everything in the best possible way (Shaun and Milligan, 2015). In this context, the connection between customers and brand is more constant than ever (Wanick et al, 2017).

Currently, gaming companies are mainly used to competing on tangibles, that is to say, on product features, but with the maturation of the market, gaming companies will have to learn to compete in this new context based on brand-related stimuli (mainly at the game level), with an important focus on the customer (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), what will open a transition process that companies will have to follow to be competitive.

In addition to that, due to the nature of the mobile gaming industry and the free-to-play model (players do not pay for downloading or playing the game, they can pay to get meaningful content faster and in an easier way in the game), mobile games are more similar to services than products, what means that gaming companies have to continuously engage with players, and launch new and meaningful value propositions and content in order to maintain the

desired level of engagement of their players (user base), reach their business goals (net revenues) and maintain their competitive advantage in front of their competitors (ranking position). As stated in the literature, "*services require a higher level of interpersonal complexity and relationship quality*" (Nysveen et al, 2013), and "*the emotional experience with the service brand is, at least, equally important as the service itself*" (Morrison and Crane, 2007), what reinforces, even more, the importance of brand experience in the mobile gaming industry.

Finally, considering the characteristics of the industry and all the elements aforementioned, it is important to highlight that this research will focus on the games themselves, the brands in the mobile gaming industry, and not on the corporate brands behind them, because every game is a product and a brand by itself and what customers recognize, until now, are the games and not the corporate company.

1.5. Problem identification

As mentioned previously, the business competitive battleground has changed dramatically with the arrival of the technological revolution, the internet, and the digital world (Pine, 1993; Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Keller, 2011; Facer, 2012; Sabol et al, 2013; Shaun and Milligan, 2015; Duncan et al, 2017; and Kennada, 2020). It has changed the rules of the game in the customer-business relationship and has opened the door to the arrival of the so-called intangible economy (Vargo and Lush, 2004; Morrison and Crane, 2007; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; and Ong et al, 2018). In this new economy, experiences are the new competitive battleground for the differentiation and consequent success of an economic offering (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentile et al, 2007; Klaus, 2015; Smith and Milligan, 2015; Duncan et al, 2017; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Havir, 2017; and Kotler, 2017). However, each industry has its own life-cycle with different strategic and business requirements to compete, which means that this conclusion can not be applied in the same way to all industries as an immutable fact (Sabol et al, 2013).

The role of brand experience and customer experience has been analyzed in many different industries: retail (Brakus et al, 2009; and Puccinelli, 2009), distribution (Brakus et al, 2009), fashion (Brakus et al, 2009; and Iglesias et al, 2010), automobile (Brakus et al, 2009; Iglesias et al, 2010; and Nagasawa, 2008), laptops and tech devices (Brakus et al, 2009; and Iglesias et al, 2010), research engines (Brakus et al, 2009), attraction parks (Brakus et al, 2009), coffee shops (Brakus et al, 2009), hotel (Brakus et al, 2009), insurances (Brakus et al, 2009), service (Nysveen et al, 2012), moving consumer goods (Rajumesh, 2014), travel website (Cleff et al, 2018), B2B and B2C (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020), tourism (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020) and many more. Nevertheless, there is an industry that has not been analyzed yet and has an increasing strategic importance in the entertainment industry and, concretely, in the new "app" industry: the mobile gaming industry. Additionally, the mobile gaming industry is a highly intensive technological and knowledge industry, 100% digital, which makes the experience a key element of the offering (Shaun and Milligan, 2015; and Wanick et al, 2017), and a key player of the new digital economy (in 10 years it has become the most important category in the entertainment industry according to NewZoo, BBC and Theesa), where the digital experience is the most important aspect. It is also an industry where the difference between the product and the service is really thin (making the experience even more relevant) (Nysveen et al, 2013) and it is moving from the growing to the maturity phase of the product life cycle, which makes it a perfect candidate to analyze the increasing role and impact of brands in the customer experience (Sabol et al, 2013; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

1.6. Research Objectives

Consequently, the aim of this research is to explore how thanks to the correct management of brand-related stimuli (at the game level) through the brand experience, companies can align with or improve the customer experience during the customer journey in order to consolidate or improve their competitive position in the mobile gaming industry. This research has three

main objectives:

- To understand what determines the customer experience in the mobile gaming industry.
- To understand what defines the brand experience in the mobile gaming industry, as a part of the customer experience. Brand experience is defined as part of the customer experience and it is composed of brand-related stimuli at the game level (that can happen before any previous experience with the product, during or after any experience) that set the brand reputation and the customer expectations.
- To identify and measure how the brand experience can impact the customer experience and the business results of a product or service.

For that reason, the title of this research is the following one: **the role of brand experience on customer experience: An analysis of business success in the mobile gaming industry,** a study of the relevance of brand experience in the customer experience for the business success of a product/service in the mobile gaming industry.

1.7. Research Question

This study seeks to answer the following research question:

- **How** does the **brand experience impact** the **customer experience** and the **business results** of a **product/service** in the **mobile gaming industry**?

In order to answer this global question, the following concrete questions will be analyzed and answered:

- What is the customer experience?
- What is the brand experience?
- Which role has the brand experience in the customer experience?
- Which is the role of the brand experience in the mobile gaming industry?

- Which dimension of the brand experience (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural) has the most important role in the mobile gaming industry?

- Which is the impact of brand experience on the customer experience in the mobile game sector?

- Which is the impact of brand experience on the level of downloads and/or revenues in the mobile game sector?

- Which is the impact of brand experience on customer satisfaction in the mobile game sector?

- Which is the role of the brand experience in the value proposition and competitive position of a product?

To summarize, this research project wants to understand the role of the brand experience in the customer experience in the mobile gaming industry because it has the goal to find out how brand experience impacts the customer experience, and, consequently, the business results of a product or service, in the mobile gaming industry. Business results of a product or service are understood in the mobile gaming industry as the number of revenues and downloads that a mobile game achieves.
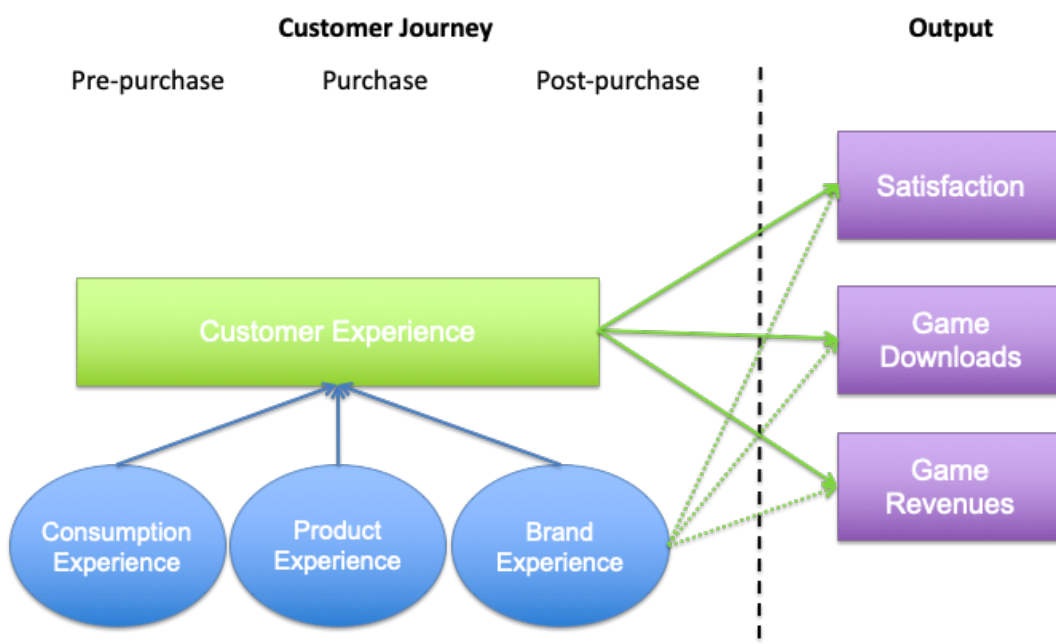
1.8. Research Question Significance

This research is relevant in our days because customer experience, defined as "*a function of a set of interactions between customers and some part of an organization*" (Nysveen et al, 2013) during the whole customer journey, and "*a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social components*" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), is a challenge for companies because offering services or goods alone in order to survive is not enough in today's economy (Klaus, 2015).

For that reason, companies seek, as a strategic goal, to create "*compelling customer experiences through all stages of the customer's engagement, to manage the customer's expectations and assess it, before, during and after the buying process*" (Klaus, 2015). As pointed out by Lemon and Verhoef (2016) "*creating a strong customer experience is now a leading management objective*", and this is because "*benefits are not in the products, benefits are in the consumer experience*" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), and the consumer experience is the base of customer engagement (Poorrezaei, 2016; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; and Wanick et al, 2017) and the emotional connection between the customer and the business (Morrison and Craine, 2007; Coleman, 2018). These two factors are key to building a long-term sustainable competitive advantage (Morrison and Craine, 2007; and Coleman, 2018). Customers want the benefits, both the tangible and functional ones, and the intangible and emotional ones, that goods provide, and not only the goods themselves (LaSalle et Britton, 2003). Currently, trying to differentiate on the physical is not a sustainable strategy (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Schmitt, 2003; Morrison and Craine, 2007; Sabol et al, 2013; Havir, 2017; Coleman, 2018; and Adlard and Bausor, 2020).

In addition to that, it is important to keep in mind that any company that has an interaction with a customer through any part of the company (brand,

employees, sales, support,...) or a product or service, provides a customer experience independently of doing it consciously or unconsciously (Richardson, 2014). Therefore, it is in the hands of business companies, and a responsibility, to provide a better or worse customer experience. However, it is relevant to keep in mind too that the customer experience also includes "*components of the customers' social environment, such as their reference groups, peers, and other sources of information (e.g., social media and reviews)*" (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020) and customer-owned touchpoints based on customer actions that the business does not influence or control (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

In this sense, marketing practitioners have realized that in order to develop a strategy for a product or a service, understanding how customers experience brands is critical (Brakus et al, 2009) because it helps to differentiate these products in the competitive marketplace (Schmitt, 2010), in a context where customer's expectations are increasing and competitors are becoming more sophisticated and oriented towards meeting them.

Real life examples, such as the role of new and creative ways of marketing successful products like the iPhone or the iPad appealing at emotional elements (senses, feelings, intellect, curiosity, and self-image), instead of rational ones (Schmitt, 2010), or the fact that 85% of senior business managers believe that differentiating products with traditional elements (price, product or quality) does not give a sustainable competitive advantage (Gentile et al, 2007), reinforce these claims.

However, as stated before, it is important to keep in mind that business strategy may vary depending on the industry life cycle because each phase requires a different business strategy (Sabol et al, 2013), and customer and brand experience are context and life cycle-specific experiences (Nysveen et al, 2013).

These claims are relevant in the mobile gaming industry because of two reasons. First of all, "*the player experience is at the core of video-game play*" (Wyeth, 2012) and as Sheng and Teo (2012) found out in their research. entertainment is positively and significantly related to customer experience.

Secondly, because this sector is moving towards the maturity phase of the product life cycle, accordion to GameIndustry and App-Annie, where businesses should focus on a customer-centric approach, where building strong brand experiences is a key facilitator, in order to maximize revenues (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Additionally, games in the mobile gaming industry are understood as services because of the free-to-play model (users do not pay for downloading or playing the game, but for the exclusive content that they can buy inside the game) what requires companies to create continuous, meaningful, desirable and valuable content to maintain player's engagement and monetization in the medium and long term, what has become a key goal for business success in this sector. As stated by Morrison and Crane (2007), "*modern consumers no longer simply buy products and services, instead they buy the wonderful and emotional experiences around what is being sold*", what is really relevant for services because of two reasons:

- For customers "*the emotional experience with the service brand is, at least, equally important as the service itself*" (Morrison and Crane, 2007)
- In services, customers have the opportunity to experience the brand while interacting during the whole service encounter and its consequent repetitions (Palmer, 2010).

Going deep into experiential marketing, it focuses on the consumption moments, in the different types of experiences, and in integrating the entire stimulus (brand-related or product-related) that impact the customer during the customer journey and each of the touchpoints (Schmitt, 2003). Inside experiential Marketing, emotions play a key role because emotions help to forge a "*deep, lasting, intimate emotional connection to the brand that transcends material satisfaction*" (Morrison and Crane, 2007) through the creation of "*a special bond with and unique trust in the brand*" (Morrison and Crane, 2007).

Finally, and focusing on the key contributions of this research into the customer and brand experience literature, this research is relevant because:

- It analyses an industry that hasn't been analysed before in the Customer Experience and Brand Experience literature: the mobile

gaming industry (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

- It analyzes how customer experience and brand experience constructs interact and impact each other, something highly neglected in the literature (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).
- It considers and takes into account the role of the product and industry life-cycle into customer and brand experience (Sabol, 2013).

1.9. Scope of the research

The topic of this research is the role that brand experience, understood as "*sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments*" (Brakus et al, 2009), has in the customer experience during the whole customer journey, including the pre-purchase (brand experience does not require direct contact or experience with the product), purchase, and post-purchase stages (setting the brand reputation and the customer expectations), and, as a result, the impact that it has in the business results (understood as economic results and value market share) of a product or service. The customer journey includes all the stages of the purchasing cycle and the points of contact between the customer and the product or service that define the customer experience, the so-called touchpoints that can be directly or indirectly connected with the offering (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). The focus of this research is on the brand-owned touch-points, that is to say, the touchpoints that connect the customer with the brand, and that conform to the branding part of the whole customer experience. Brands are the part of the product composed by the brand's design and identity (name, logo, slogan, description…), packaging, communications, and environments (Brakus et al, 2009), "*involving complex and subjective variables such as emotions, experiences, and beliefs that are interrelated and integrated with the brand's mission, value, and strategy*" (Wanick et al, 2017), and the

brand experience is the interaction of the customer with all of them during the customer experience.

The issue of analysis is the brand experience and not the brand image because they differ in their meaning. While brand experiences are actual "*sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses*" (Brakus et al, 2009), brand image is merely a projection of traits or perceptions onto brands. Therefore, brand experience is an antecedent of brand image. This is an important contribution in regards to the literature because previous academic research has focused on the concept of brand image or has treated both as the same thing.

Concretely, this research focuses on the brand experience in the mobile gaming industry, a sector born in 2007-2008 that has become the most relevant and fast-growing segment of the entertainment industry (according to New Zoo). Inside of the mobile gaming industry, understood as all the games that can be downloaded from the app store to a smart device (tablet or Smartphone), the focus of this research is on the free-to-play games (they can be downloaded and played without paying) of the Google Play and Apple Stores because these games are the ones that concentrate the majority of downloads and revenues of the industry (App-Annie), and are the ones with the highest long-term business potential (App-Annie). Additionally, the focus is on the US market, the biggest market in the west (according to New Zoo), as a reference of the maturing western world because of the strong market differences between the Asian markets and the western ones, which make them too different to tackle both at the same time.

The research focuses on the games themselves, the brands in the mobile gaming industry, and not on the corporate brands behind them, because every game is a product and a brand by itself and what customers recognize, until now, are the games and not the corporate company. Another characteristic of this market is, as aforementioned, that games are treated as services (game as a service) and instead of launching new versions of successful games, what companies do is to add new features for free by updating the current version

and continuously add meaningful content in the format of events (some of it exclusive to monetize) to them because of the high costs of user acquisition and the high level of competition.

1.10.   Structure of the dissertation

In order to answer the research question and to cover the whole scope of the study, this thesis is organized into six chapters.

The first chapter introduces the topic and the background and deals with the main elements of the research: Research Question, Research Objectives, Research Question Significance, and Scope of the study.

The second chapter covers the literature review and the state of the art. Concretely, this section goes through the following points: what experiences are and why they are relevant; the different types of experiences and how they interact between them; the definition of customer journey and customer experience, the key concepts and the most relevant theories that have tried to define it, and the impact of experiences in customer behaviour and desires; the concept of brand and brand experience and its key items, definitions, theories and impacts and the impact of experiences in the customer behaviour and desires; finally, the role of the customer experience in the mobile gaming industry.

The third chapter goes straight into the research design and methodology trying to answer the main question of the thesis based on a group of hypotheses. A survey-based quantitative approach will be used to measure the effects of brand experience in the customer experience and on downloads, revenues, and customer satisfaction on the mobile gaming industry (as a measure of business results), using mobile games as units of research.

The fourth chapter presents the results of the research, and puts together the findings of the research, connects them with the hypothesis and tries to make a comprehensive discussion on the key findings of the thesis.

The fifth chapter states the main conclusions of the research and the recommendations based on answering the main research question and confirming or rejecting the hypothesis.

The sixth chapter shows the main limitations of the research findings and proposes possibilities for future research on the customer experience and brand experience relationship.

Finally, the last two sections include all the references used in the thesis and the annex.

1.11.   Principal findings

As a preview of what will come at the end of this thesis, these are the main findings that have been discovered by this research.

Firstly, the Customer Experience has a key role in the differentiation and consequent success of an economic offering in the mobile gaming industry, following the example of other industries identified in the literature.

Secondly, Brand Experience has a key role in defining the Customer Experience.

Thirdly, in addition to the Brand Experience (measured through senses, feelings, behaviour, think and belong), Consumption Experience (measured through Peace of mind and Moments of Truth) and the Product Experience (measured through Outcome Focus and Product Experience) are components of the Customer Experience.

Fourthly, The EXQ scale (Klaus et Maklan, 2012) and the Brakus et al 12-item scale (2009) are good ways of measuring Customer Experience and Brand Experience.

Fifthly, Customer Experience (input) has a high explanatory power of Customer Satisfaction (output), while Brand Experience has an indirect positive effect on Customer Satisfaction through Customer Experience.

Sixthly, Customer Satisfaction impacts the business results of mobile games through the Game Revenues and Game Downloads with high predictive accuracy.

Seventhly, Customer Satisfaction impacts Game Revenues directly or through Game Downloads, thereby demonstrating the importance of word of mouth on reaching revenue goals.

Finally, answering the research question of this thesis ("**How** does the **brand experience impact** the **customer experience** and the **business results** of a **product/service** in the **mobile gaming industry**?"), Brand Experience is a key driver of Customer Experience, impacts positively Customer Satisfaction through the Customer Experience, and thanks to this positive impact on Customer Satisfaction, the business results are impacted positively (Game Revenues and Game Downloads).

2. Literature Review and theoretical framework

2.1. Introduction

This section reviews the literature around five key concepts: experiences, customer journey, brands, customer experience, and brand experience. The main goal is to have a deeper understanding of the concepts, and the research was done until today for each of them.

2.2. Experiences

2.2.1. Literature evolution

The concept of experiences appeared in the literature with the studies of Abbott (1955) and Alderson (1957) who focused on investigating the desire of customers for feeling, living, and enjoying experiences and not for products (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). In their research, particularly, they discovered that customers want products because of the experience that they think that the product will offer them (Abbott, 1955).

After these initial steps, the research about experiences continued, and in the 80s of the last century experiential theorists, such as Holbrook and Hirschman, recognized the important role of emotional aspects in defining and influencing the decision-making process and the experience of customers (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). They discovered the relevance of the experiential aspects of consumer behaviour and hedonic consumption (Same, 2012), looking for fantasies, feelings, and fun in their consumption experiences (Riivits-Arkonsuo, 2014). As a result of their research, Holbrook and Hirschaman (1982; and Same, 2012) identify three consumption motives:

A. Cognition seeking (thinking).

B. Sensation seeking (senses).

C. Novelty-seeking experience (desire for novelty).

One of the postulates of Holbrook and Hirschman researches, that later on has been supported by other authors such as Same (2012) or Kranzb (2018), was that customers are not purely rational problem solvers, consequently, the cognitive weight of price and the expected value that a product or service can provide only can explain a small portion of the overall customer behaviour (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Same, 2012; and Kranzb et al, 2018). For that reason, they proposed to substitute *"the earlier information-processing theory with an experiential approach emphasizing emotions, feelings and sub-consciousness"* (Kranzb et al, 2018) with the aim of looking at the experience of customers from a holistic view including not only cognitive elements but also hedonic, symbolic and aesthetic (Kranzb et al, 2018).

Since this initial research, the experience literature has evolved and has focused on the concept of customer experience, which has broadened, and multiple definitions of what customer experience have appeared in the literature (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016, and Godovykha and TAsci, 2020)).

2.2.2. Definition of the concept

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998) the current economic offering is based on the principles of the experience economy and the so-called intangible economy (Vargo and Lush, 2004; Morrison and Crane, 2007; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; and Ong et al, 2018). That means that experiences are the key concept for businesses to understand consumer behaviour and for marketing management because it is in the origin, among many other things, of customer and brand satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, according to Schmitt (2010), the value does not reside in the object of consumption or in the process of looking for these products, value lies in the experience of consumption itself or in the benefits provided (Colema, 2018).

In the literature, experiences have often been defined as *"private events that occur in response to some stimulation"* (Schmitt, 1999; Nagasawa, 2008;

and Schmitt, 2010), usually induced and not self-generated (Schmitt, 2010), and the majority of times experiences are intangible events that result from direct observation or participation (Nagasawa, 2008; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). In this direction, Lasalle and Britton (2002) define experiences as reactions generated in the customer after their interaction with a product, service, company, or representative.

Even if experience has been defined in multiple ways, capturing it is a difficult task because it can have many different meanings, which means many different definitions (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). Currently, there is a consensus in the literature about conceptualizing experiences along with different experience dimensions such as sensations-emotions, cognitive, intellectual, and behavioural (Schmitt, 2010; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

According to Lasalle and Britton, (2002), every experience is unique because "*each individual brings his own values, beliefs, preferences, and history to an experience*". Businesses are aware that experiences include all the perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of customers, consumers, and clients when they encounter products, services, and/or brands in the marketplace (Schmitt, 2010). It is also relevant to keep in mind that customers engage with experiences at any time that they interact with the offering or who is offering it (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). Concretely, from the brand management standpoint, an experience "*is a takeaway impression that is formed in the mind of the consumers as a result of the encounter with the holistic offer of a brand*" (Iglesias et al, 2011).

These impressions and judgments about the products, services, and/or brands include specific sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses triggered by a concrete stimulus (Schmitt, 2010; Same, 2012; Kranzb et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), that can happen before, during, or after the consumption experience (Schmitt, 2010; Klaus, 2015; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Kranzb et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). In line with that, there is a consensus between authors and researchers that experiences have multiple dimensions such as sensory-affective, cognitive,

intellectual, and behaviour and action-oriented components (Brakus et al, 2009; Schmitt, 2010; Same, 2012; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Kranzb et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

Therefore, "*experience can be gained on the physical, emotional, intellectual and/or spiritual level*" (Same, 2012), and they connect the business, the brand, and the product or service with the way of living of the customer, in a wider social context than only the purchasing action and in a much more personal way (Schmitt, 1999).

2.2.3. Characteristics of the concept

According to Meyer and Schwager (2007), and Sayed (2015), among others, experiences have the following characteristics:

- Subjective and internal nature, understood as that they are different for each individual that goes through them (Meyer and Schwager, 2007; and Sayed, 2015).
- The result of the interaction with multiple touchpoints between the brand and the consumer, and can be direct or indirect, and controlled or non-controlled (Sayed, 2015).
- The result of the interaction between multiple agents (the customer and the brand, the customer and the products, multiple customers…) (Sayed, 2015).
- Experiences are a multidimensional construct (which means having two or more underlying dimensions) that generates different consumer responses (Sayed, 2015).
- Experiences are conditioned and affected by previous experiences of the same customer with the product or service, brand, company or representatives (Meyer and Schwager, 2007).

In relation to the first element of the list, the subjective and internal nature of the experience, it means that the results that experiences produce are uncertain (Same, 2012) because they reach the customer in a format that affects them in a personal way, increasing or decreasing the value offered (Pine

and Gilmore, 1998). However, the elements or settings that define the experience can be created and defined in an objective way (Same, 2012). Moreover, as experiences happen inside the customer, consumer, or client, as a reaction to what is staged in front of them, they are co-created based on the customer perceptions, feelings, and thoughts in reaction to what is staged outside (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). In this direction, Andreini et al (2018) also speak about how brands, and experiences, are also the result of co-creation through interaction between multiple marketplace actors, being the customer the most important one.

2.2.4. When Experiences happen

Another important element of experiences, introduced by Schmitt (2010), but not mentioned by Meyer and Schwager (2007), and Sayed (2015), is that experience can happen without intent, which means that they can even happen when customers, consumers, or clients do not show any specific interest in a product, service or brand. Experiences are always induced, generated by the interaction with something or somebody (Schmitt, 1999), and they happen when there is any interaction between an offering (through a product, service, brand, company, or representative) and a customer (Lasalle and Britton, 2002; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), with or without intent (understood as the intention to buy, consume or get any value). They can happen in any of the phases of the customer (pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase) (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020) and in any of the four types of touchpoints, understood as the points of interaction where the experience happen: brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/external/ independent (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

2.2.5. The difference with other concepts

It is also important to state that experience is different from customer satisfaction, understood as the difference between what a customer expects to get and what customer perceives to get (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) because experiences are process-oriented and can be managed, while satisfaction is

outcome-oriented and it is the result of customer experience (Schmitt, 2003). According to multiple authors such as Klaus (2015) and Brakus (2009), there is a positive correlation between experiences and satisfaction.

Additionally, as Schmitt (2003) stated, the customer satisfaction framework only includes the expectations and performance from a functional and product perspective, while experiences consider both the functional and emotional dimensions of the product and service consumption. In this direction, Same (2012) defines experiences as "*personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual or even spiritual level*".

To sum up, the difference between experiences and customer satisfaction is that while satisfaction is a result, an outcome, experiences are what businesses have to, first, understand and, then, manage (Schmitt, 2003).

2.2.6. Consequences of experiences

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), and later on reinforced by other authors (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentille et al, 2007; Sabot et al, 2013; Klaus, 2015; and Adlard and Bausor, 2020), experiences are the foundation for the whole economy, which means that they have a key role in understanding the consumer behaviour and defining the field of competition where companies satisfy customer needs.

As, Experience, Customer, and Maturity Monitor (2009) shows, experiences are the new competitive battleground and despite that some companies may be providing good experiences, there is space for improvement because as explained in the background section of this document, the customers' expectations are increasing and "*competitors are becoming savvier and more sophisticated in meeting or exceeding those expectations*", what means that to be competitive, companies need to improve continuously.

Experiences also create an emotional connection between the offering (what the business offers that not only includes the product or service, but also the customer service, the brand, the shopping experience, the interactions with

employees,...) and the customer (Morrison and Crain, 2007; and Brakus et al, 2009). This is really relevant because humans are both rational and emotional when talking decisions (Hwang and Seo, 2016) so that emotions represent at least half of their decision making criteria (Shaw and Ivens, 2002) and according to authors such as Iglesias et al (2011) and Morrison and Crane (2007), it means that until the arrival of the experience economy, companies were only trying to satisfy consciously half of the customer requirements, and only considering one of the two ways that customer feel, perceive, think and decide about things.

Based on those ideas, consumer behaviour researchers have identified two main types of goods: hedonic and utilitarian (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2002; and Motoki et al, 2019). As stated by Van Boven and Gilovich (2002) "*hedonic goods, those acquired with the primary intention of fostering enjoyment, and utilitarian goods, those acquired with the primary intention of achieving practical aims*", that is to say, hedonic goods look to offer hedonic or emotional benefits, while utilitarian goods focus on offering functional value. Thinking about experiences that can offer both hedonic and functional value, experiences provide a significantly higher hedonic value, that is to say, enjoyment and emotions, "*because they contribute so much more to the construction of the self than material possessions*" (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2002). According to Van Boven and Gilovich (2002), experiences make customers and/or consumers happier than normal material purchases because they are more open to positive reinterpretation, they are more central to one's identity, and they have greater social value (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2002). In this direction, Vargo and Lush (2004) speak about the idea that adding additional services, like experiences, to products allows businesses to combine the hedonic and utilitarian benefits.

Additionally, as stated by Peppers and Rogers (2017) "*the most successful customer relationships are those grounded in an emotional attachment*" and long-lasting relationships between a company and a customer are "*characterized by deep positive emotions that are regularly referred to by loyal customers, including love, pride, and respect*". This means that

experiences can build, facilitate and foster longer-term relationships between business companies and customers.

Therefore, experiences are a key strategic differentiator between companies and a key element to build and to have long-lasting successful customer relationships (Shaw, 2007; and Coleman, 2018). Additionally, emotions also impact consumer purchases (Coleman, 2018; and Fetcherin, 2020), willingness to pay a premium (Coleman, 2018), brand image and reputation (Schmitt, 2010), and brand loyalty (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

For that reason, discovering, understanding, and knowing what makes customers happy is key (Shaw, 2007).

2.3. The different types of Experiences

According to Sayed (2015), the term experiences has appeared in the business literature through multiple concepts such as customer experience (Schmitt, 1993; Shaw and Ivens, 2002, Gentile et al, 2007; Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Schmitt, 2010; and Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), consumer experience (Lasalle and Britton, 2002; and Sirii, 2012), service experience (Klaus and Maklan, 2012; and Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020), product experience (Klaus and Maklan, 2012), consumption experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Ishida and Taylor, 2012; Riivits-arkonsuo et al, 2014; and Klaus, 2015), shopping experience (Schmitt, 2003; and Sayed, 2015), and brand experience (Brakus et al, 2009; Iglesias et al, 2011; and Nysveen et al, 2013). Despite the fact that they have different names, many times they refer to the same things and may be used as synonyms.

Author	Definition
Holbrook and Hirschman (1982)	"a steady flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun" (p.132)
Csikszentmihalyi (1990)	"the best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile. Optimal experience is thus something we make happen." (p.3)

Carbone and Haeckel (1994)	"the aggregate and cumulative customer perception created during the process of learning about, acquiring, using, maintaining, and (sometimes) disposing of a product or service" (p. 18)
Pine and Gilmore (1998)	"experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level" (p.99)
O'Sullivan and Spangler (1998)	"events or feelings that occur prior, during, and after participation" (p. 23)
Schmitt (1999)	experiences ". . . provide sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and relational values that replace functional values" (p. 26)
Gupta and Vajic (2000)	"an experience occurs when a customer has any sensation or knowledge acquisition resulting from some level of interaction with different elements of a context created by the service provider" (p. 34)
Terblanche and Boshoff (2001)	"all the elements that encourage or inhibit customers during their contact with a retailer" (p.35)
Shaw and Ivens (2002)	"a blend of an organization's physical performance, the senses stimulated and emotions evoked, each intuitively measured against customer experience across all moments of contact" (p.6).
Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004)	"creating an experience environment in which consumers can have active dialogue and co-construct personalized experiences" (p. 8)
Mascarenhas et al (2006)	"a totally positive, engaging, enduring, and socially fulfilling physical and emotional customer experience across all major levels of one's consumption chain and one that is brought about by a distinct market offering that calls for active interaction between consumers and providers" (p. 399).
Berry and Carbone (2007)	"customers consciously and unconsciously filter a barrage of clues, in the form of experiences, and organize them into sets of impressions-some rational and others more emotional" (p.27)
Caru and Cova (2007)	"subjective occurrence that people go through pursuing a process of being immersed in an experiential context" (p.35)
Meyer and Schwager (2007)	"the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company" (p.2)
Getz (2007)	"How people describe experiences as they occur, and talk about them afterwards, remains in large part a mystery and therefore must be considerable interest to event researchers and producers" (p. 171)
Gentile et al (2007)	"The customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction" (p. 397)
Larsen (2007)	"A tourist experience is a past personal travel-related event strong enough to have entered long-term memory" (p. 15)
Brakus et al (2009)	"subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli

	that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments" (p.53)
Palmer (2010)	"on the one hand, experience is a learned outcome that is associated with predictable behaviours, whereas on the other it has come to be associated with processes whose novelty may result in unpredictable response by consumers" (p.197)
Bagdare and Jain (2013)	"the sum total of cognitive, emotional, sensorial, and behavioural responses produced during the entire buying process, involving an integrated series of interaction with people, objects, processes and environment in retailing" (p.792)
Bonaiuto et al (2016)	"optimal experience... depicts the psychological mental state of a person who is immersed in an activity with energized concentration, optimal enjoyment, full involvement, and intrinsic interests, and who is usually focused, motivated, positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand" (p.2)
Godovykh and Tasci (2020)	"the totality of cognitive, affective, sensory, and conative responses, on a spectrum of negative to positive, evoked by all stimuli encountered in pre, during, and post phases of consumption affected by situational and brand-related factors filtered through personal differences of consumers, eventually resulting in differential outcomes related to consumers and brands" (p.5).

Table 1. From Godovykh and Tasci (2020).

Thus, Brakus et al, (2009) and Lemon and Verhoef, (2016) show that even if there are some nuances between them, they are not always clear or important enough to separate them into two concepts.

Among these concepts, the first and most common one and the point of reference in the literature is the customer experience. The customer experience concept was introduced in the 80s of the last century by Holbrook and Hirschman, and can be defined as "*a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social components*" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). According to Gentile et al (2007), the customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product/service or different parts of a company which "*implies the customer's involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual)*".

The customer experience is the result of the consumer interaction with different company elements: brand, product, or service (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Also, the experience can be produced at different moments of the consumer journey: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase (Lemon and

Verhoef, 2016). Finally, it can be the result of any of the different touchpoints that consumer has with the company's elements: brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/ external/ independent) of the offering (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

The second concept to speak about is the consumer experience. It refers to the same definition and elements as the customer experience, but instead of putting the focus on the customer, who buys the product, service, or experience and may or may not be who consumes it, focuses on the consumer, who consumes the product, service or experience. That is to say, the customer experience speaks about the whole experience, of the client, who experiences the shopping process, and the consumer, who only experiences the use of the product or service, and the consumer experience only speaks about the latter. As defined by Lasalle and Britton (2002), the consumer experience consists of the interaction or series of interactions between the consumer and the product, company, or representative that leads to a reaction (Lasalle and Brotton, 2002).

In the same direction as the consumer experience, there is the consumption experience and the shopping experience, two more ways to speak about the customer experience. On the one hand, the consumption experience "*takes place over a period of time and comprises all experiences across all touchpoints between consumer, business, and product, such as the product itself, the store in which the product is bought; engineer work, salespeople, and after-sale service*" (Riivits-arkonsuo et al, 2014). On the other hand, the shopping experience covers much more than getting what customers want (Schmitt, 2003), which means that it also includes all the stages of the shopping process (pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase).

Another concept to take into account is the service experience and the product experience differ from the concept of customer experience in the sense that they focus on different types of offers: one in the product and the other in the service. While the product experience happens when the consumer interacts directly with the product (Barkus et al, 2009), the service experience arrives when the consumer interacts directly with the service and can be defined as "*the customer's cognitive and affective assessment of all direct and*

indirect encounters with the firm relating to their behavioural loyalty" (Klaus et Maklan, 2012). It is worth mentioning that when looking at products and services from an experiential point of view, features and benefits cannot look as specific functions delivered in an isolated way. Completely the opposite, they need to be seen as part of a whole offering that together impacts the customer and the product or service experience (Lasalle and Britton, 2002).

Finally, it is worth noting that the concept that differs more from the customer experience is the brand experience because while the customer experience includes all aspects, stages, and touchpoints of the offering, the brand experience only happens when customers interact with the brand-owned touchpoints (a specific aspect of the business offering), before or after any direct experience with the product features.

Brand experience can be defined as "*subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments*" (Brakus et al, 2009; Iglesias et al, 2011; Ishida and Taylor, 2012; Sayed, 2015; Wanick et al, 2017; Kumar et al, 2018; and Coleman, 2018). Therefore, the brand experience differs from the other types of experiences because it is a "*unique construct that captures subjective, and internal consumer responses to brand-specific stimuli*" (Ishida and Taylor, 2012).

In the following figure, all these concepts are presented going from the broader one to the most specific one.
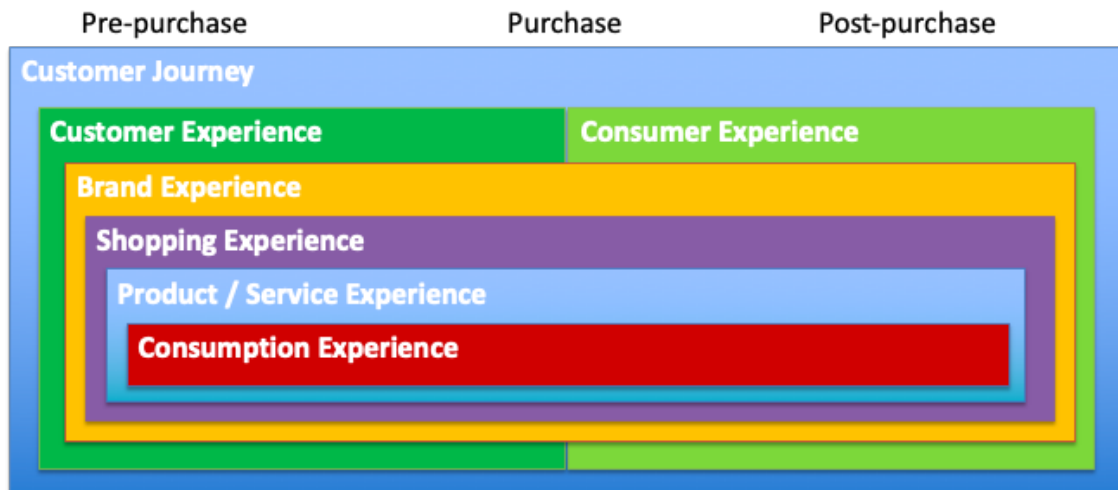
Figure 2. Connection between Customer Experience and Brand Experience.

The research conducted in this document focuses on the concepts of customer experience and brand experience because they are the ones more commonly used in the literature and the ones that cover a wider perspective about the experience economy. However, before focusing on them, it is important to define what the customer journey is and why it is the broadest level of all, and then, the concept of a brand and its role in the business offering.

2.4. The Customer Journey

The customer journey has been defined in the literature as "*the process a customer goes through, across all stages and touchpoints, that makes up the customer experience*" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), that is to say, defining the customer journey is about identifying all the events surrounding the product or service and understanding how each of them impacts the experiences as a whole (Lasalle and Britton, 2002).

Based on the model presented by Lemon and Verhoef (2016), the customer journey differs from the customer experience in the sense that the customer journey includes all the experiences that have happened before or after a specific customer experience, that is to say, the customer journey does not only takes into account what the customer is experiencing right now (in

t-time), but also what the customer experience has been before and what it will be in the future. The following figure describes it perfectly:
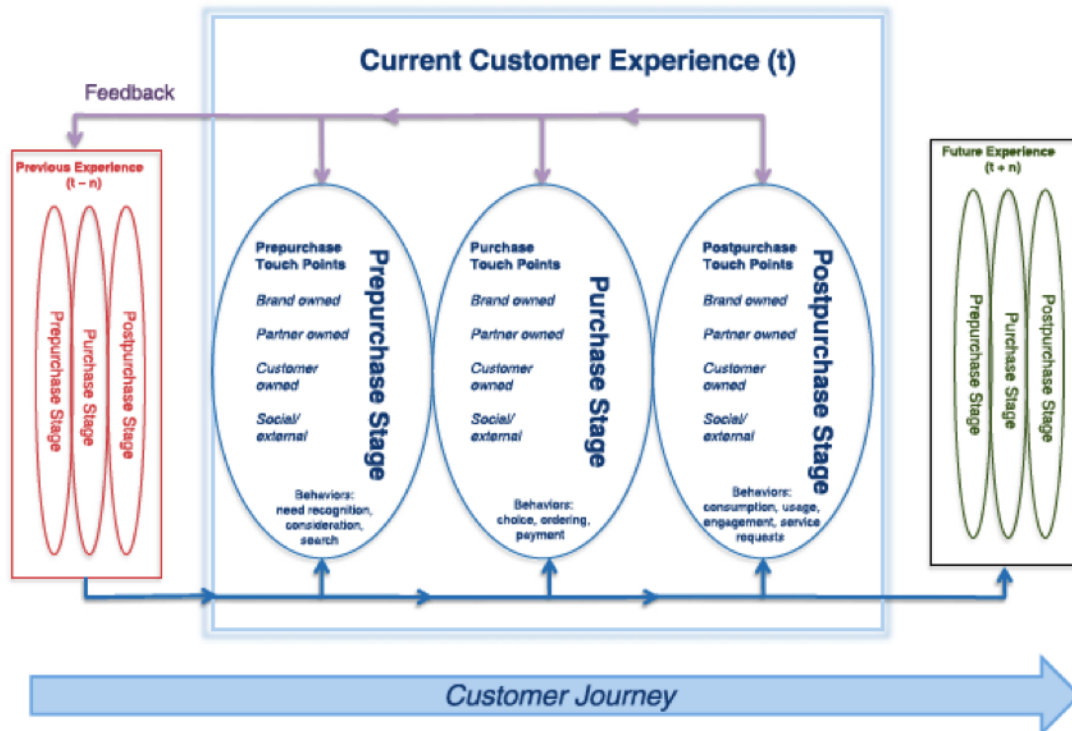
Figure 3. Process model of customer journey and experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

As shown in the previous figure, the customer journey is formed by the current experience, the previous experience (as a sum of different previous experiences), and the future experiences (as a sum of different future experiences), and each of them have three stages: the prepurchase, the purchase and the postpurchase (Richardson, 2010; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Wanick et al, 2017; Kranz et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

- The prepurchase stage includes all the interactions of the customer with the "brand, category, and environment before a purchase transaction" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016) and involves "*searching for, planning, daydreaming about, foreseeing, or imagining the experience*" (Riivits-arkonsuo and Kaljund, 2014).
- The purchase experience includes all the interactions of the customer with the offering or the brand during the transaction (Lemon and Verhoef,

2016) deriving from "*choice, payment, packaging, and encounters with service and environment*" (Riivits-arkonsuo and Kaljund, 2014).

- Finally, the final stage is the postpurchase experience that includes all the interactions after the purchase and it includes "*behaviours such as usage and consumption, post-purchase engagement, and service requests*" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016) or as Riivits-arkonsuo and Kaljund (2014) noted, "*the sensation, the satiety, the satisfaction or dissatisfaction, the irritation or now, and the transformation*".

It is reasonable to think that despite that these three phases happen one after the other in a linear way, the customer journey is often non-linear (Richardson, 2010). In this sense, Richardson (2010) recognizes that "*someone may jump straight from awareness to purchase if they are not inclined to do research and have a strong recommendation from a friend*". In addition to these three stages stated by Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Riivits-arkonsuo and Kaljund (2014) also speak about, as a final stage, the memory of the customer experience and its nostalgia. However, even if this concept is interesting, it has not been deeply analyzed by other authors.

Otherwise, it is important to keep in mind that during the customer journey and in each of the aforementioned stages, the customer interacts with the offering, the company, and the brand, through multiple touchpoints that have a direct or indirect impact on the customer behaviour (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

According to authors such as Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Kotler (2017), and Cotler (2018), a touchpoint can be defined as a point of interaction between the company, the product, or the brand with the customer. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) speak about four different categories of them:

- The first type is the brand-owned touchpoints that are the ones where the customer interacts with the brand-owned elements of the marketing mix or the media designed, managed, and controlled by the company (Baxendale et al, 2015; and Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

- The second type are the partner-owned touchpoints that are the ones under the control of the brand partners such as retailers, distributors, or joint venturers (Baxendale et al, 2015; and Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

- The third type are the customer-owned touchpoints that are not controlled or influenced by the brand, but by the customer (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). These touchpoints include all the customer actions outside the company control, that is to say, what happens for example in the mind of the customer, such as thinking about their needs or desire, or when customers make decisions by themselves, like choosing the method of payment. They have a key role during the postpurchase stage when the consumption and the usage are more relevant (Baxendale et al, 2015; and Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

- Finally, the last category of touchpoints is the social or external ones that cover the role of others in the customer journey (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Customers interact with all these touchpoints during the whole customer journey and in a different order (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Moreover, the importance of each type of touchpoint depends on the type of product or service and on the stage of the customer journey, and their importance can be measured through attribution models (Baxendale et al, 2015; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Additionally, these touchpoints can be direct or indirect. On the one hand, direct interactions are the ones that happen during the purchase and use phases and are usually initiated by the customer (Verhoef et al, 2009). As Meyer and Schwager (2007) show, they include direct contact among the consumer and the product or service itself or with representations of it by the company or some third party. On the other hand, indirect interactions are unplanned ones between the customer and the product, the service, or the brand and do not happen directly with the product or the brand, but through other channels (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Of all the previous types and categories of touchpoints defined, it is really important for business companies to identify the ones called "moments of truth",

that is to say, the critical touchpoints that have the most significant influence in the customer experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). "Moments of truth" are really important because they are the ones who create a unique memory in the mind of the customer, thereby building an emotional connection (Keller, 2016).

In order to plan, organize and identify the "moments of truth", business companies use customer journey mappings. According to Richardson (2010) customer journey mappings are "*a diagram that illustrates the steps your customer(s) go through in engaging with your company, whether it be a product, an online experience, retail experience, or a service, or any combination*".

2.5. Brands

2.5.1. History of Brand

Brands identify, classify and give content to the offer, products, and services (Aaker, 1994, 1996). Traditionally speaking, brands are labels that are used to give meaning and a guarantee of quality to things (Schmitt, 1999). They were created to replace the face-to-face interactions between customers and craftspeople (Keller, 2016), that is to say, they were guarantees of the quality and trustworthiness of the person that was selling a product or offering a service. Brands are also used as containers of a lot of information about the product or service, its origin, the context of use, and consumption… which gives it a great value during the buying process (Keller, 1998). Additionally, brands do not only have the role to identify and contain information, but also the role to differentiate from the rest of the offer (Wanick et al, 2017; Fetcherin, 2020).

Therefore, brands were created as identifiers, containers of trust, and differentiators when the interactions between customers and businesses moved to situations where the risk was two to one bigger than the reward (Keller, 2016). They increase the trust of the customer in the organization and in the capacity of the organization to provide the desired value, at the desired quality, and adapt to the customer needs (Keller, 2016). Then, it is reasonable to think that the brand also has a key role in the relationship-building between

customers and businesses, becoming a key element in keeping and making the relationship evolve (Aaker, 1996).

Lambin (1991) distinguished seven different functions for brands, five in the side of the demand (identification, reference, guarantee, personalization and playful), and two in the side of the offer (positioning and capitalization).

To sum up, brands act as a spokesman of the business and a source of trust for the customer, thereby getting the role of mediator between the business and the customer in their process to build a relationship. Consequently, brands have become a key element in the strategy of organizations to consolidate, differentiate and be successful. According to relevant authors such as Aaker (1994, 1996) and Keller (1998, 2016), through building and managing a brand, businesses can build a key asset in the mind of their customers and potential customers, thereby making the brand a key competitive advantage to generate value and keep a long-term advantage.

2.5.2. Brand and the Experience Economy

However, that is not all. The concept of brand has evolved, has connected with the experience economy, and, as a result, trust is only one of the three elements of a brand, according to Schmitt (1999):

- Reputation in the market.
- Promise to the customer.
- Experience of the customer.

Currently, the concept of the brand goes further than trust and can be defined as a "mu*ltifaceted approach to imprinting and distinguishing a particular product or service in the mind of the consumer*" (Wanick et al, 2017). Brands have moved from "*simple stamps to sophisticated logo design and different communication strategies*" (Wanick et al, 2017). Brands are composed of many aspects including the brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments (Brakus et al, 2009), "*involving complex and subjective variables such as emotions, experiences, and beliefs that are interrelated and integrated with the brand's mission, value, and strategy*" (Wanick et al, 2017).

According to Sergio Zyman quoted in The Physics of brands (Keller, 2016), brands are the container of all the experiences that a customer has with the product, the company, and the brand. Brands live in memory, like experiences and they create strong emotional connections with the customer (Keller, 2016). Stating Seth Godin, a well-known brand expert, brands are "*a set of expectations, memories, stories, and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another*" (Kennada, 2020).

2.6. The Customer Experience

2.6.1. Literature evolution

As stated at the beginning of the literature review, after more than fifty years of research in the experience field, the experience literature evolved and focused on the concept of customer experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Kranzb et al, 2018; and Coleman, 2018). The concept of customer experience was introduced for the first time by Holbrook and Hirschman in 1982, stating that customers were not only rational individuals but also emotional ones, thereby proposing "*an experiential approach emphasizing emotions, feelings and sub-consciousness*" (Kranzb et al, 2018). Their aim was to capture the whole experience (including both the emotional and functional sides, and their impact on the customer), including the cognitive, hedonic, symbolic, and aesthetic parts (Kranzb et al, 2018).

After all these years and a lot of research, one thing is clear, defining what customer experience is, is not easy (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). There have been multiple definitions of what customer experience is.

Currently, there is an agreement between scholars and practitioners that "*customer experience is a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social components*" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Recently, Godovykh and Tasci (2020) have brought this definition a step further: "*Experience is the totality of cognitive, affective, sensory, and conative responses, on a spectrum of negative to positive, evoked by all stimuli*

encountered in pre, during, and post phases of consumption affected by situational and brand-related factors filtered through personal differences of consumers, eventually resulting in differential outcomes related to consumers and brands."
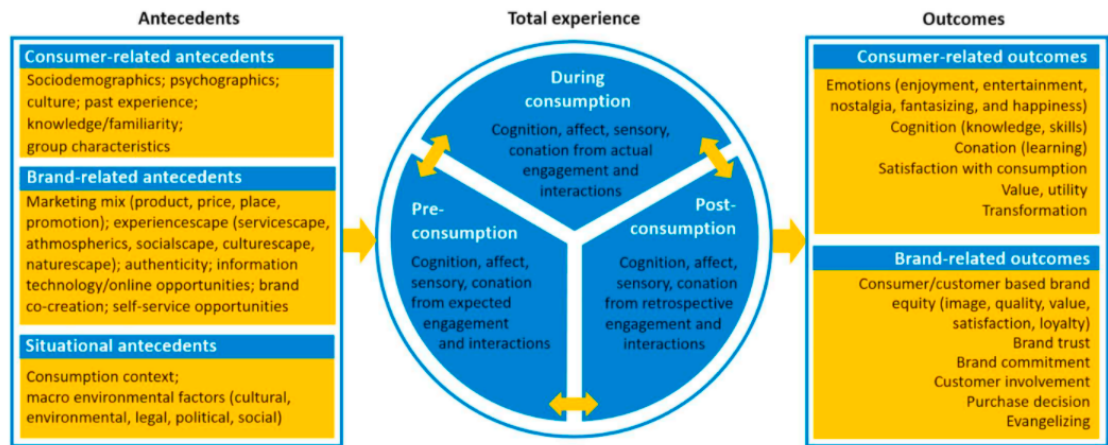
Figure 4. The sequential nature of pre-visit, onsite, and post-visit experiences, antecedents and outcomes (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

As one can see in this most recent definition, the customer journey is a fundamental concept to understand the customer experience. There are two ways of looking at the customer experience through the customer journey based on the concept of time: 1) single encounter or; 2) as a group of encounters over time. On the one hand, the first perspective is the static one where the customer experience is "*an individual's cognitive, affective and sensory evaluation of one or multiple touchpoints with a firm at one specific point in time*" (Kranzb et al, 2018). On the other hand, the second one is the dynamic perspective where the customer experience is "*an individual's evolving cognitive, affective and sensory evaluation of a series of any direct or indirect touchpoints with a firm within the entire course of the customer journey*" (Kranzb et al, 2018).

Regarding the approaches towards understanding customer experiences, according to Kranzb et al (2018), there are two main theoretical angles: the organizational (Pullman and Gross, 2004; Srivastava et al; 1999, Kranzb et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020) and the consumer perspective (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; and Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

The organizational perspective focuses on the creation and building of customer experiences and on the factors that usually are on the company control (Kranzb et al, 2018). On the other hand, the consumer perspective focuses on the factors that are beyond the company's control and how they affect the customer experience (Kranzb et al, 2018). In relation to these two perspectives to analyze and understand the customer experience, "*there is extensive research on the consumer perspective, while the organizational perspective appears rather limited*" (Kranzb et al, 2018).

In this direction, according to Sirii (2012), there have been three main schools of experience marketing:

- The American school focuses on marketing management and the experience economy.
- The Nordic school analyzes the design of experience products and services.
- Finally, the Central European school focuses its research on experience-based learning and personal development.

2.6.2. Customer Experience Literature Limitations

The academic research has built a corpus of literature relative to customer experience and its relation with the customer journey after fifty years of investigating it (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello 2009; Grewal, Levy, and Kumar 2009; Pucinelli et al 2009; Verhoef et al 2009; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016, and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

However, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) also point out that research has focused on specific facets of the customer experience and that "*there is limited empirical work directly related to customer experience and the customer journey*". Something that has also been validated recently by Godovykh and Tasci (2020). This claim is also supported by Nysveen et al (2013) and Kranzb et al (2018) who stated that the definition of the customer experience is circular, differs between researches and lacks consensus on "*the underlying dimensions of the experience construct*" (Nysveen et al, 2013) because it is still expanding

in scope and depth (Kranzb et al, 2018). Additionally, as reported by Nausito et al (2014) and Kranzb et al (2018) "*the diversity in how customer experience is understood in the literature leads to a lack of clarity, typical of umbrella constructs*" what has made the concept of customer experience malleable in the practitioner and theoretical field. Finally, Godovykh and Tasci (2020) pointed out that research in customer experience, as a result of the multiple components and relationships of customer experience *"with potential antecedents and consequences, has not provided a holistic definition for the complex experience phenomenon, nor provided innovative methodologies to capture the elusive nature of consumer experience that changes at different points in time"*.

In this direction, there are four main weaknesses that should be highlighted.

The first one is the lack of research in the connection, interaction, and impact between brand experience and customer experience. They are treated as independent or substitute concepts that are not related to each other. Based on the understanding of this document: brand experience is a part of the overall customer experience, therefore, analyzing the role of the brand in the overall customer experience is relevant and necessary in the experience economic offering and in the intangible economy where the brand has a central role in the success of a product or service.

The second one is the lack of academic research connecting the role of customer experience and the product life cycle. Research has failed to point out the relative importance of customer experience in each phase of the industry and/or product life cycle, probably because there is still limited empirical work, and research efforts have focused on conceptualizing and measuring customer experience (Lemon, Verhoef, 2016). As stated in Sabol (2013) "*business strategies of firms vary depending on the corresponding stage of the industry life cycle*". Consequently, the importance of customer experience in the customer journey may vary depending on the phase of the industry life cycle (introduction, growth, maturity, and decline).

The third weakness is the lack of analysis of the interaction between

customer desires, product life-cycle, and company strategy. Business companies offer products and services to different audiences in different phases of the industry life cycle, depending on the market situation, the competitive framework, and the customer needs, which at the end defines their business strategy and product portfolio. Customers may be willing to have a deeper customer experience, but in a context where the demand (number of customers willing to buy) is higher than the offer (the number of products offered in the market) and there is a low competitive pressure, for example in the mobile gaming industry between 2012 and 2016, businesses may think that improving the customer experience is not necessary to increase their return on investment. Therefore, the role of customer experience in the customer journey is directly conditioned by the competitive situation of the industry.

The fourth weakness identified in the current literature is the analysis of the customer experience as a general concept and not as something directly related to each type of industry or customer need. For example, it is not the same going to a restaurant to eat something fast during a working day (need to be fed) as going to a restaurant with your wife to celebrate your anniversary (need of leisure). Consequently, the role of the customer experience may be directly connected with the customer need that is being solved and the industry that is providing the solution.

As a result, a deeper understanding and analysis of the role of the industry and the type of need being solved in the customer experience is required.

2.6.3. Customer Experience Literature Definition

Academic and professionals define Customer experience as "*a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social components*" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Schmitt, 1999, 2003; Verhoef, 2009; Sayed, 2015; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

In line with this definition, according to authors such as Godovykh and Tasci (2020), the experience starts with the arousal of a need for a product or

service, and the customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product/service or different parts of a company (Gentile et al, 2007; and Schmitt, 2010). As a result of these interactions, consumers are involved at different levels: rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual (Gentile et al, 2007), thereby provoking an internal, subjective, and personal reaction in the customer. (Verhoef et al, 2009; and Sayed, 2015). Additionally, it is worth noticing that despite the complexity and multidimensionality of the experiences, customers perceive them as a complex but unitary feeling (Lasalle and Britton, 2002; Schmitt, 2003).

The evaluation of this interaction, which can happen at any moment and compares expectations with reality, depends on what the customer was expecting to get and the stimuli that the customer had from the interaction with the company and the product or service (Gentile et al, 2007). As it was previously shown, these interactions happen during the three stages of the customer journey (pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase) and in the four types of touchpoints (brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/ external/ independent) (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that according to who starts the contact, there are two types of interaction: direct and indirect. Direct interactions are the ones that happen during the purchase and use phases, and are usually initiated by the customer (Verhoef et al, 2009; Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Sayed, 2015; and Kranzb et al, 2018). Indirect interactions are unplanned ones between the customer and the product, the service or the brand, and they take include examples such as word-of-mouth, social media posts, recommendations, reviews, advertising, news, and others (Verhoef et al, 2009; Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Sayed, 2015; and Kranzb et al, 2018).

The customer experience always creates a reaction in the customer, positive or negative, and when this reaction is positive it brings recognition and value to the customer (LaSalle and Britton, 2003).

In general, the customer experience can bring two different types of value to the customer: the utilitarian or functional value and the hedonic or

experiential value (Gentile et al, 2007). The utilitarian value is directly connected with the physical parts of the marketing mix, that is to say, elements such as price, product, location, schedule, distribution, and communication (Shaw, 2007). The emotional value refers to how a customer feels and based on Shaw's research (2007), 50% of a Customer Experience is about emotions.

Finally, the customer experience definition can change depending on the sector or industry that one is analyzing, affecting the components that it has (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

2.6.4. Customer Experience Elements

The customer experience is a broad concept, with many elements in place and for that reason, it is important to highlight some of its most important and characteristic elements:

- The customer experience has an interactional nature, which means that an experience always comes from an interaction. Therefore, an interaction is the prerequisite to have a customer experience (Hoffman and Novak, 2018).

- It cannot happen without customer involvement (Lasalle and Britton, 2002).

- It is about how customers engage in a personal way with product or services, what reinforces the subjective nature of the customer experience (Hwang and Seo, 2016; Schmitt, 1999; Shaw and Ivens, 2002; and LaSalle and Britton, 2003), that is to say, the customer experience is individual and is based on the individual perception of the experience. Then, the important thing is not what companies want to provide, but what customers perceive that they receive (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

- The customer experience "*applies to all of a company's marketing, selling, and servicing entities*" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017), which means that it does not only includes the company and its products or services but also partners, dealers, distributors, marketing and advertising

(Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

- The customer experience is about delivering in a consistent way the "*brand-driven customer promise and resulting customer expectations through the physical experience*" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

- Customer experiences are not isolated over time, they accumulate, thereby building the customer journey (Peppers and Rogers, 2017), that is to say, the customer experience "*is about the end-to-end experience that customers have over their lifetime engagement with a company, product, or service*" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017). Consequently, the customer experience is iterative which means that every time that the customer experiences the product, service, or brand "*his intention or likelihood of buying from that business in the future is liable to change*" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

- The customer experience is time and touch-point agnostic, that is to say, that it is not only based on one encounter but on the whole life-cycle or collective encounters that the customer has had with the company (Plessis and De Vries, 2016). As a result, a company to be successful needs to think about the customer experience as a continuum on time and think about all the steps and phases of becoming and being a customer (Richardson, 2014).

- The customer experience begins with advertising, public relations policy, or the word of mouth comments anywhere (Shaw and Ivens, 2002), continuous with the use of the product or services, and ends with the post-purchase services, including "*every aspect of a company's offering—the quality of customer care, of course, but also advertising, packaging, product and service features, ease of use, and reliability*" (Meyer and Schwager, 2007).

- The customer experience is a holistic entity that includes the total experience of the customer through the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phases involving multiple channels and touchpoints (Plessis and De Vries, 2016; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), which means that in order to define and improve it, all the possible interaction

touchpoints that can impact it have to be analyzed and integrated (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

- Customer Experience by itself is a neutral concept that can move from positive to negative directions. Positive situations can result in peak positive experiences while negative situations might end in peak negative experiences (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

As a result of all these points, it is reasonable to think that in order to craft a great customer experience, a large collaborative effort between multiple teams and departments in the company is required (Richardson, 2014). These teams usually work independently, in different stages of the product or service chain, and isolate the ones from the other, which makes the challenge even more difficult (Richardson, 2014). Therefore, to have a great customer experience there is a huge managerial challenge: make internally, the marketing, the product design, the customer service, and the sales departments, and externally, the advertising agencies, retailers, and partners, work together to create not only a single touchpoint, but all of them, making them consistent and coordinated (Richardson, 2014).

2.6.5. Customer Experience conditioning

Based on what has been said about the customer experience, it is reasonable to think that the customer experience is not an isolated experience, independent and self-contained. As with any interaction, the customer experience is affected by internal and external elements that can already be defined before the experience, happen during the experience, or after it (Nysveen et al, 2013; Klaus, 2015; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; and Gododvykh and Tasci, 2020).

On the one hand, internal factors of the customer include elements such as sociodemographics, past/cumulative experiences, familiarity, and customer engagement (Hwang and Seo, 2016; and Gododvykh and Tasci, 2020). On the other hand, external elements include service/product quality, physical characteristics, social and online environment, employee characteristics,

economic factors, and self-service technologies (Hwang and Seo, 2016; and Gododvykh and Tasci, 2020).

In relation to the internal factors, Verhoef et al (2009) suggested that cultural factors are a key element shaping the customer experience and influencing how customers or individuals perceive the experience in various situations. They are independent and antecedent to any customer experience. Other authors such as Schmitt (1999) also speak about the role of culture in the customer experience, and how the cultural changes between countries can affect the customer experience and force companies to adapt the customer experience to cultural specificities.

Previous research has also found that the level of income or the educational level can affect how customers endorse material possessions, thus affecting their perception of the importance of the customer experience (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). For example, "*respondents with at least a high school degree were more likely to indicate that experiences made them happier*" than material possessions (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). In addition to that, Meyer and Schwager (2007) highlighted the importance of customer expectations that can be highly affected by previous experiences with the offering. In the end, customers always and instinctively compare their current experience with previous ones and judge it in accordance with that (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). These expectations cannot only be defined by previous experiences with the offering, but also by previous experience with the competitors offering, market conditions, competition, and the customer's personal situation (Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

Regarding the external elements and specifically the social context, previous research has found that "*customer experience is dependent on customer, other customers, and service providers alike*" (Klaus, 2015), reinforcing the role of word of mouth in the customer experience.

2.6.6. Customer Experience components

As mentioned before, customer experience has been defined as "*a*

multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social components" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Therefore, the customer experience has different components and it varies between researchers and context.

The literature has identified the following components of customer experience:

Author	Context	Components
Cohen (1979) General tourism	General tourism	Recreational mode, diversionary mode, experiential mode, experimental mode, existential mode
Unger and Kernan (1983)	Leisure	Intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, involvement, arousal, mastery, spontaneity
Hirschman (1984)	General consumer behaviour	Cognitive, sensation, novelty
Mannell and Kleiber (1997)	Leisure	Moods, emotions, feelings, involvement, sense of control, sense of freedom
Pine and Gilmore (1999)	General Business	Educational, escapist, esthetic, entertainment
Schmitt (1999)	General marketing	Sense, feel, think, act, relate
Holbrook (2000)	General consumer behaviour	Entertainment, experience, exhibition, evangelizing
Aho (2001)	General tourism	Emotional, informative, practice, transformation
Lasalle and Britton (2002)	General consumer behaviour	Discover, evaluate, acquire, integrate and extend
Jennings and Nickerson (2006)	General tourism	Traveler, product or destination, local population
Getz (2007)	Planned events	Conative, cognitive, affective
Gentile et al (2007)	Product brands	Rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, spiritual
Meyer and Schwager (2007)	General business	Cognitive, affective, emotional, social, physical
Brakus et al (2009)	Brands	Sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioural

Verhoef et al (2009)	General management	Social, physical, emotional
Cutler and Carmichael (2010)	General tourism	Influential realm: physical aspects and product/service aspects Personal realm: knowledge, memories, perceptions, emotions, and self-identity
Palmer (2010)	General consumer behaviour	Involvement, emotions, interpersonal relationships
Kim et al (2012)	Tourist memories	Hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, novelty
Hosany, Prayag, Deesilatham, Causevic, and Odeh (2015)	Destination	Joy, love, positive surprise

Table 2. From Godovykh and Tasci (2020).

Of the previous table (2), I would like to highlight the work of:

- Schmitt (1999), who defines five types of experiences (sensory (sense), affective (feel), cognitive (think), physical (act), and social-identity (relate) experiences).

- Pine and Gilmore (1998), who present the four realms of an experience (Aesthetic, Escapist, Entertaining, and Education).

- Gentile et al (2007), who distinguish six experiential components (sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational).

- Lasalle and Britton (2002), who develop an experience engagement model consisting of five stages (discover, evaluate, acquire, integrate and extend).

Despite different authors presenting and defending different components for the customer experience, 4 key dimensions are consistently mentioned (Hoffman et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020):

- Sensorial, sensory or sensations (Schmitt, 1999; Schmitt, 2003; Gentile et al, 2007; Brakus et al, 2009; Verhoef et al, 2009; Schmitt, 2010; Klaus et al, 2012; Klaus, 2015; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

- Emotional, Affective or feelings (emotions) (Schmitt, 1999; Schmitt, 2003; Gentile et al, 2007; Brakus et al, 2009; Verhoef et al, 2009; Schmitt,

2010; Klaus et al, 2012; Klaus, 2015; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

- Cognitive or cognitive (rational) (Schmitt, 1999; Schmitt, 2003; Gentile et al, 2007; Brakus et al, 2009; Verhoef et al, 2009; Schmitt, 2010; Klaus et al, 2012; Klaus, 2015; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

- Conative, behavioural or physical (Schmitt, 1999; Schmitt, 2003; Gentile et al, 2007; Brakus et al, 2009; Verhoef et al, 2009; Schmitt, 2010; Klaus et al, 2012; Klaus, 2015; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

Additionally, some authors also speak about a fifth one: social or relational (Schmitt, 1999; and Brakus et al, 2009).

The first dimension is sensory that tries to create experiences by appealing to customer senses such as sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell (Schmitt, 2010), and wants to raise pleasure, excitement, satisfaction, and a sense of beauty through sensory stimulation (Schmitt, 2010). When sensory experiences are managed properly, they can differentiate products, services, and companies, motivate consumption and convey values and emotions (Milligan and Shaun, 2008).

The second one is affective or emotions that focus on targeting customers' inner feelings and emotions (Schmitt, 2010), with the aim of creating affective experiences that can move from an average positive feeling to strong emotions (Schmitt, 2010). There are two types of emotions: the basic ones where there is only one emotion, positive or negative; the complex ones, where there are 2 or more emotions (Schmitt, 1999). Feelings are stronger when they generate during the consumption experience, which means that the consumption situation is key. They generate over time and feeling experiences work better with complex products with emotional connection (Schmitt, 1999). The strongest emotions are generated in face-to-face interactions, and usually with services (Schmitt, 1999). To sum up, the end goal of feeling experiences is to "*encourage customers to engage in elaborative and creative thinking that may result in a revaluation of the company and products*" (Schmitt, 1999).

The third one is cognitive or intellectual that appeals to the intellect of customers to offer problem-solving experiences to engage them in a creative

way to gain assumptions about the product (Schmitt, 2010). There are two main ways of appealing to the intellect of customers: the rational or convergent thinking where customers solve rational problems well defined, and the heuristic, understood as simple general rules or understandings that bring customers to a conclusion (Schmitt, 1999). The second method, heuristic or divergent, tends to generate a more fluid way of perception, feeling, and originality (Schmitt, 1999). Cognitive experiences require concentration and attention (Schmitt, 1999).

The fourth one is behavioural or acts that focuses on "*physical behaviours, lifestyles, and interactions*" (Schmitt, 2010) and wants to create customer experiences related to the body, long term behavioural patterns, and lifestyle (Schmitt, 1999) through showing to customers alternatives ways of doing things, living and interacting (Schmitt, 1999). There are two main strategies to make it happen: induce action without thinking and use models that can be imitated (Schmitt, 1999).

The last component is social or relational that has the goal of building experiences "*taking into account individuals' desires to be part of a social context (e.g., to their self-esteem, being part of a subculture, or a brand community)*" (Schmitt, 2010) that involve not only the customer but also their social context and relationships with other customers. They emerge from the social contexts and relationships that "*occur during common consumption as part of a real or imagined community or to affirm social identity*" (Schmitt, 2010). In the end, relation implies a connection with other customers, social groups or a social entity (Schmitt, 1999), that can mean identification or differentiation, and the aim of this type of experience is to encourage the use of a product or service together with other customers or as a common passion of a community (Gentile et al, 2007). It is worth mentioning that according to Schmitt, relational experiences include aspects of all the previous types going "*beyond the individual's personal, private feelings, thus adding to "individual experiences" and relating the individual to his and her ideal self, other people, or cultures*" (Schmitt, 1999).

To sum up, there is a consensus in the literature that the customer experience is composed of five different dimensions: sensations, feelings, cognitive, actions, and relations. However, not every author looks at them in the same way.

2.6.7. Customer Experience Impact

The customer experience goal is "*to ensure better delivery of compelling brand's promises, thereby enhancing both emotional attachment to the brand and service quality, a combination that, in the managers' opinion, generates loyalty and recommendation*" (Klaus, 2015). Therefore, a great customer experience is about how it makes customers feel (Shaw and Ivens 2002; Siebert et al, 2020) and about stimulating customers' emotions (Shaw and Ivens 2002; and Bustamante and Rubio, 2017).

Customer experience can impact multiple areas and key performance indicators. Jones (2014), based on his research, stated that companies that manage their customer experience properly, on the one hand, enhance customer satisfaction, reduce churn, increase revenue, and generate higher employee satisfaction, and, on the other hand, create more efficient ways to collaborate between functions and levels in the organization. These findings were also corroborated by Kranzb et al (2018) which defend that there is an agreement between academics and practitioners that customer experience positively affects customer satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth behaviour.

Based on the research aforementioned, the most relevant key performance indicators that the customer experience impacts are the following ones: emotional connection, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, word of mouth, customer engagement, purchase, stock performance, and competitive advantage.

2.6.7.1. Emotional connection

As stated by Pine and Gilmore (1998), "*companies that create such happiness-generating experiences not only earn a place in the hearts of consumers but also capture their hand-earned dollars- and harder-earned time*", that is to say, by building compelling experiences for customers companies can

create an emotional tie between their brand and customers, thereby having an impact not only on purchase behaviour but also customer loyalty (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentille et al, 2007; and Johnston and Kong, X, 2011).

Why is creating an emotional connection with customers really important for companies? As Peppers and Rogers (2017) discovered in their research, the strongest and long-lasting relationships between customers and companies happen when there is a deep positive emotional connection between them. Therefore, according to them, "*the most successful customer relationships are those grounded in an emotional attachment*" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017). This point was also supported by Shaw (2007), defining emotions as the key differentiator.

2.6.7.2. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty understood as purchase repetition (Wanick et al, 2017) is one of the key effects of building an emotional connection with customers (Gentille et al, 2007). According to Klaus (2015), the impact of customer experience on customer loyalty is higher than customer satisfaction on customer loyalty, thereby reinforcing the idea that customer experience is a better predictor of customer loyalty.

In addition to that, customer loyalty is also related to a higher level of promotion or recommendation which means that customers will not only stick with the brand and make more purchases, but they will also recommend it to their family and friends through word of mouth of social media (Schmitt and Van Zutphen, 2012).

2.6.7.3. Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction "*is defined as meeting or exceeding the customer's requirements for product and service features, price, timeliness and performance*" (Westcott and Duffy, 2015).

The customer experience also has an important impact on customer satisfaction. Klaus (2015) demonstrated in his research that there is a positive and substantial relationship between customer satisfaction and behaviour with the customer experience. As pointed out by Kranzb et al (2018) and Jones

(2014), the majority of scholars and practitioners agree on this point.

2.6.7.4. Word of mouth

Word of mouth speaks about "the customers' willingness to refer a product or service to others (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

In his research about customer experience, Klaus (2015) found out that "*customer experience is not only one of the possible precursors but also the most significant driver of word of mouth*". The impact of customer experience over word of mouth has been found by multiple research and it is commonly agreed between scholars and practitioners (Schmitt and Van Zutphen, 2012; Kranzb et al, 2018; Jones, 2014; and Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

2.6.7.5. Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is understood as "*the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiates*" (Calder et al, 2016), and it is another of the most relevant outputs of customer experience, and a key one in the digital world. As stated by Peppers and Rogers (2017), customer engagement is a result and a logical step of a positive customer experience.

2.6.7.6. Purchase behaviour

Positive or great customer experiences also have a positive impact on purchase behaviour, increasing the number of customers and the number of sales to these customers (Borowski, 2015; and Clarke and Kinghorn, 2018). According to Lattemann and Robra-Bissantz (2017) based on Harvard Business Review, customers with good experiences spend 140% more than the ones with poor experiences.

2.6.7.7. Stock performance

Customer experience has also a positive impact on stock performance. As explained by Peppers and Rogers (2017), recent studies show that a higher rated customer experience is correlated with higher stock performance, and vice versa (Fetcherin, 2020). According to them, this connection continues to grow every day (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

2.6.7.8. Competitive advantage

As stated by many different authors (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Laus, 2015; and Duncan, 2017), customer experience provides a competitive advantage. Peppers and Rogers (2017) show how there is a direct connection between "*the maturity of a company's customer experience management capabilities and its relative competitiveness*", which means that higher maturity brings higher competitive advantage. For example, Peppers and Rogers (2017) found out that "*seventy-seven percent of companies with above average customer experience maturity levels reported that their financial results in 2014 were better than their competitors, compared with only 55 percent of those with below average customer experience maturity*". Additionally, in this same research, these authors found that "*executives estimate that their potential revenue loss for not offering a positive, consistent, and brand-relevant customer experience is 20 percent of their annual revenue*" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017) and that "*27 percent of customers are lost forever*" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017). In this same direction, Klaus (2015) identified that companies that are ahead in customer experience have an annual average growth rate of +12% than the rest, and American Express found out that customers tell an average 11 people about a good experience with a brand (Fetcherin, 2020).

2.6.7.9. Summary

To sum up, customer experience positively affects multiple KPIs such as customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, customer engagement, and financial performance. Therefore, great customer experiences are in the words of Shaw and Ivens (2002), supported by other authors such as Peppers and Rogers (2017), Havir (2017), Coleman (2018), and Fetcherin (2020):

- "*A source of long-term competitive advantage*".
- "*Consistently exceeding customers' physical and emotional expectations*".
- "*Differentiated by focusing on stimulating planned emotions*".
- "*Enabled through inspirational leadership, an empowering culture*

and empathetic people who are happy and fulfilled".

- "*Revenue generating and can significantly reduce costs*".
- "*The embodiment of the brand*".

2.6.8. Customer Experience Measurement

Measuring the customer experience is not an easy task. As Palmer pointed out (Bhandari, 2016), there are major challenges when measuring the customer experience:

- The complexity of context-specific variables.
- "*Experience is conditioned by differences between individuals, differences over time in an individual's emotional state, and a variety of situation specific factors. A measure of experience must take account of these moderating influences*" (Bhandari, 2016).
- The customer experience is not linear.
- Identifying the optimal level of customer experience is difficult to find because it is not clear if customers always look for the maximum level of it, because in some cases more experience could mean more negative benefits.
- There are many practical obstacles in developing and implementing strong measurement systems because of the nonlinearity, the sequence of events, the lack of control of many aspects of the customer experience and its context, the repetition of it, and the memory of customers of previous encounters.

Therefore, there are no easy ways of measuring the customer experience, and as Lemon and Verhoef pointed out (2016) there has not been developed until now a strong customer experience scale, except for the Brakus et al (2009) brand experience scale that measures four aspects of the customer brand experience. As Godovykh and Tasci (2020), expressed in their last research, "*the existing experience scales seem to fail to capture the totality of customer experience with its different components*". The most prominent measurements for defining a scale to measure the customer experience are the

ones done by Parasuraman et al (1988), Wolfinbarger & Gilly (2003), Parasuraman et al (2005), Fornerino (2006), Gentile et al (2007), Verhoef et al (2009), Maklan and Klaus (2011), Klaus and Maklan (2012, 2013), and Klaus (2015) (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Havir, 2017). Additionally, several scales have been inspired by Pine and Gilmore (1999) four realms of experience (educational, escapist, esthetic, and entertainment), by Parasuman et al (1998) SERVQUAL scale (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility), and by Klaus and Maklan (2013) EXQ scale (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). In the digital world, the main scales to measure customer experience are, on the one hand, the four-item scale (website design, Fulfillment/reliability, customer service, security/privacy) created by Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003) (Havir, 2017) and, on the other hand, the SERVQUAL scale evolution into the four dimension scale (efficiency, Fulfillment, System availability, privacy) called E-S-QUAL created by Parasuraman et al (2005) (Havir, 2017).

All these measurements tend to be self-reported scales and that poses several limitations because of the possible biases of the respondents related to social desirability, overestimation of past, reorganization of knowledge and beliefs, or their mood when answering questions (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

In this context, recently, Kuppelwieser and Klaus (2020), reviewed their own scale and did an overview of customer experience scales. These are the main ones highlighted by these authors:

Authors	Name	Items
Ali et al (2014)	Customer Experience Scale (Hotel and Resort)	• Education (4) • Entertainment (4) • Aesthetics (4) • Escapism (4)
Bagdare and Jain (2013)	Retail Customer Experience Scale	• Leisure (3) • Joy (3) • Distinctive (3) • Mood (3)
Biedenbach and Marell (2010)	Customer Experience (B2B context)	• Unidimensional 5 items scale reflecting the customer experience
Brakus et al (2009)	Brand Experience	• Sensory (3) • Affective (3) • behavioural (3) • Intellectual (3)
Brocato, Voorhees, and Baker (20-12)	Other Customer Perception Scale (OCP)	• Similarity (5) • Physical Appearance (4) • Suitable behaviour (4)
Browne et al (2010)	Patient Experience	• Ease of scheduling appointments (2–4) • Availability of information (1–5) • Communication with clinicians (1–6) • Responsiveness of clinic staff (1–4) • Coordination between care providers (1)

		• Supplemental question sets can be added to the core survey to assess how the • provider engages a patient as a whole person and in decision making, disease • management, and health promotion.
Chang and Horng (2010)	Experience Quality	• Physical surroundings (17) • Customer (themselves) (8) • Other Customers (4) • Service Provider (5) • Customer's Companions (4)
Durrande-Moreau and Usunier (1999)	Waiting Experience Scale	• Active impatience (3) • Passive impatience (3) •
Ferguson, Paulin, and Bergeron (2010)	Total Service Experience	• Information adequacy (5) • Pain and discomfort (1) • Patient-to-patient interaction (2) • Patient-to-personnel interaction (8) • Recovery outcomes (2)
Froehle and Roth (2004)	Technology-mediated Customer Service Experience	• Information richness belief (3) • Learning belief (4) • Usefulness belief (4) • Duration appropriateness belief (2) • Intimacy appropriateness belief (3)
Garg et al (2014)	Customer Experience in Bank Scale	• Convenience (3) • Servicescape (3) • Employees (3) • Online functional elements (3) • Presence of other customer (3) • Online aesthetics (4) • Customization (3) • Value addition (3) • Speed (3) • Core Service (3) • Marketing Mix (3) • Service Process (3) • Online hedonic elements (2) • Customer Interaction (2)
Geus, Richards, and Toepoel (2016)	Event Experience Scale	• Affective engagement (6) • Cognitive engagement (6) • Physical engagement (3) • Experiencing newness (3)
Gilboa, Vilnai-Yavetz, and Chebat (2015)	Shopping Mall Experience	• Seductive (4) • Functional (4) • Social recreation (4) • Social scene (4)
Greenwell, Fink, and Pastore (2002)	Service Experience Perceptions	• Physical Facility • Core Product • Service Personnel
Kim et al (2010)	Memorable Tourism Experience	• Hedonism • Refreshment • Local culture • Meaningfulness • Knowledge • Involvement • Novelty
Klaus (2014)	Customer Experience Quality EXQ	• Brand Experience (7) • Service Provider Experience (11) • Post-Purchase Experience (7)
Maklan and Klaus (2011), Klaus and Maklan (2012), Klaus and Maklan (2013)	Service Experience Quality EXQ	• Outcome Focus (4) • Moments-of-Truth (5) • Peace of Mind (6)
Knutson and Beck (2004)	Consumer Experience	• Service Quality (5) • Value (2) • Satisfaction (3)
Kumar and Anjaly (2017)	Online post-purchase customer experience (OPPCE)	• Delivery (6) • Product-in-hand (5) • Return and exchange (6) • Customer support (6)

		• Benefits (6)
		• Feel-good factors (6)
Novak et al (2000)	Online customer experience	• Speed (3)
		• Importance (5)
		• Focused attention (4)
		• Skill/control (6/4)
		• Challenge/arousal (6/4)
		• Telepresence/time distortion (7/2)
		• Flow (3)
		• Exploratory behaviour (7)
Olsson, Friman, Pareigis, and Edvardsson (2012)	Satisfaction with Travel Scale (STS)	• Positive Deactivation (5)
		• Positive Activation (3)
		• Cognitive Evaluation (3)
Otto and Ritchie (1996)	Tourism service experience	• Hedonics (11)
		• Peace-of-mind (5)
		• Involvement (5)
		• Recognition (2)
Rose et al (2012)	Online Customer Experience OCE	• Skill (4)
		• Challenge (4)
		• Telepresence (4)
		• Interactive (4)
		• Connectedness (3)
		• Customization (4)
		• Control (4)
		• Ease-of-Use (3)
		• Aesthetic (3)
		• Beneficial (4)
		• Cognitive Experiential (1)
		• Affective Experiential (4)
Schouten et al (2007)	Transcendent Customer Experience (TCE)	• Unidimensional scale of transcendent customer experience with 14 items.
Underwood and Teresi (2002)	Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (Dses)	• 16-item unidimensional scale measuring everyday spiritual experience perceptions
		•
Verleye (2015)	Customer co-creation experience scale	• Hedonic (3)
		• Cognitive (5)
		• Social/personal (5)
		• Pragmatic/economic (6)
Vuolle et al (2008)	Mobile Business User Service Experience (MoBiS-Q)	• Usability (15)
		• Mobile working context (10)
		• Mobile work productivity (21)
Wolf, Niederhauser, Marshburn, and LaVela (2014)	Review of existing measures	• Proposing human interactions and care environment as new dimensions (conceptual
		• development).

Table 3. Overview customer experience scales from Kuppelwieser and Klaus (2020).

Of these scales, one of the most promising ones is the one defined by Klaus and Maklan (2012) called EXQ, which was updated by the same author in 2014 (Klaus, 2015).

The initial EXQ includes four main dimensions: product experience, outcome focus, moments of truth, and peace of mind. Product experience speaks about the importance of customer perceptions when making choices in the product (Klaus and Maklan, 2013). Outcome focus reflects the key role of goal-oriented experiences in consumer behaviour (Klaus and Maklan, 2013). Moments-of-truth focuses on the importance of service recovery and flexibility

(Klaus and Maklan, 2013). Finally, Peace-of-mind reflects the assessment of all the interactions with the service provider (Klaus and Maklan, 2013). These four dimensions can be grouped into two big areas: Consumption Experience (Peace of mind and Moments of Truth) and Product Experience (Product Experience and Outcome focus). It is reasonable to highlight an important element of these dimensions and it is that they include the direct and indirect interactions between the customer and other actors of the business (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020).

The evolution of the EXQ scale (2012 vs 2014) increased the number of items from 19 to 25 in three different areas (the brand or pre-purchase, the service provider or during purchase, and post-purchase experience), and based its new theorization on three customer service-intensive contexts: fuel and service stations, retail banking, and lifestyle luxury goods (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020).

The EXQ scale is the most promising one because it seems to capture the totality of customer experience with its different components (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020) and it has been tested in multiple industries: it has been used in multiple numerous B2C industries such as financial services, tourism, retail, travel, hedonic services, and sports events (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020). Based on Kuppelwieser and Klaus (2020), it is the most applied for measuring Customer Experience and probably B2C Customer Experience.

The main value of this scale is that it has demonstrated its applicability and impact of customer experience in multiple business outcomes (Klaus and Maklan, 2013), and concretely in the B2C area (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020) and that it can be applied to multiple different types of products and services. Additionally, the EXQ scale has also a practical usage: it can be used by managers to determine which strategies and practices they should use to positively influence customers' perceptions and behaviour (Klaus and Maklan, 2013).

However, comparing the original EXQ (2012) and the revised one (2014), the revisited EXQ is more useful to analyze customer service-intensive products

(such as retail banking, and lifestyle luxury goods), while the original one is more convenient in industries with lower focus on the customer service and more in the self-served arena, such as the mobile gaming industry. Additionally, the revisited EXQ measures retail facilities, tangible products, face to face service, and the purchase of brands (brand equal to product), which makes it less relevant for the mobile gaming industry where the product or service is digital, there is no direct or face to face contact with sales or customer service agents, 100% self-served (without support or direct guidance) and where customer purchase products inside of the overall brand (the game), not the brand itself. For these reasons, the original EXQ scale is the most useful and adaptable to the mobile gaming industry.

Regarding the results obtained through the original EXQ scale, on the one hand, the scale was assessed through validity and reliability analysis of two-scale data collections, which assured the proper conceptualization of the Customer Experience in the scale (Klaus and Maklan, 2012), and, on the other hand, through its empirical application, it was demonstrated that customers evaluate the customer experience "*at an overall level, a dimensional level and at attribute level and that each level drives perception on the level above*" (Klaus and Maklan, 2012). As a result of the research conducted by Klaus and Maklan with the EXQ scale (2012), it was confirmed that this scale can be used to monitor and improve the quality of the customer experience mainly in the service arena, even if it was developed in the context of mortgage services. The findings also support the conclusion that the customer experience has a significant impact on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth intentions (Klaus and Maklan, 2012). Additionally, the same study demonstrated the role of customer experience as a determinant of customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction as an antecedent of repurchase behaviour and other financial KPIs (Klaus and Maklan, 2012).

2.6.9. The Experience GAP

Despite that the customer experience has become a key topic not only for scholars but also for practitioners, the GAP between the expectations and

the importance of the customer experience for customers and what they receive in the offering is still really big. It is what is called the experience GAP (Meyer and Schwager, 2007), and it varies between industries, moving from a maximum difference of 33pp in the airline industry to a minimum of 8pp in the media industry (Clarke and Kinghorn, 2018). In the mobile/internet industry, the GAP is 19pp (Clarke and Kinghorn, 2018).

In addition to that, there is not only the GAP between what customers expect and what they get, there is also the GAP between what business companies think that offer and what they really offer. For example, "*three-quarters (75%) of organizations believe themselves to be customer-centric, only 30% of consumers believe this to be the case*" (Capgemini, 2017).

2.7. The Brand Experience

Brand is the first word of the brand experience concept and the one of the two that has not been defined yet, and it can be defined as "*a multifaceted approach to imprinting and distinguishing a particular product or service in the mind of the consumer*" (Wanick et al, 2017). The brand is composed of many aspects including the brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments (Brakus et al, 2009). Additionally, as stated by Shaw and Ivens (2002), brands are mere perceptions, they are what one thinks and feels about a company, that is to say, an expectation.

As mentioned before, the customer experience includes all the aspects, stages, and touchpoints of the offering. However, when the customer interacts directly or indirectly, expectedly or unexpectedly, with the brand-owned touchpoints (a specific aspect of the business offering), before or after any direct experience with the product features, they live the so-called brand experience (Brakus et al, 2009). On the one hand, brand-owned touch points include elements such as brand-identifying colours, shapes, typefaces, background design elements, slogans, mascots, brand characters, brand's design and identity (name, logo, signage), packaging, marketing

communications (advertisements, brochures, Web sites), the retailer environment (stores, events), webpages,... (Brakus et al, 2009).

Academic literature defines brand experience as "*a specific evaluation triggered by specific brand-related stimuli that occur when a connection – direct or indirect – exists with the brand*" (Hamzah et al, 2014; Brakus et al, 2009; and Schmitt, 2009) and it can be defined as "*subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environme*nts" (Brakus et al, 2009).

In this direction, similarly to the customer experience, Brakus et al (2009) identified that "*that brand experience consists of four separate, though related, dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural*". It is important to add that as stated by Klaus (2015), "*brand experience includes the customers' brand perceptions that influence their customer experience and their decision process before and after any contact with the product*", and that brand experience is about delivering the brand promise through consistent actions (Iglesias et al, 2011).

To sum up, from a management point of view, a brand experience "*is a takeaway impression that is formed in the mind of the consumers as a result of the encounter with the holistic offer of a brand*" (Iglesias et al, 2011) and brand experiences may have an impact on customer expectations and decision making before, during and after the experience (Klaus, 2015) and in customer satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty (Iglesias et al, 2011). Additionally, a branded experience "*means making sure that the valuable experience you give to customers is so distinctive and unique to you that your customer associates it with you and no one else*" (Shaun and Milligan, 2015).

2.7.1. Why Brand Experience

In the era of the internet, continuous and disruptive technological advances, and smart connections, customers' interactions with companies have

moved from being passive to being active and engaging, which means that customers are more involved in a personal way in their business experiences (Wanick et al, 2017). In this context, the real and digital world are merging and melting, and the connection between customers and brands are more continuous than in any other moment of history, thereby making the brand experience more relevant than ever (Wanick et al, 2017). In addition to that, current customers do not only choose brands as a way of consuming products or services, they also choose brands as a way of becoming or updating their authentic self, that is to say, as a way of expressing their way of being and understanding the world (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003; Gilmore and Pine, 2007; and Fetcherin, 2020). For that reason, brand experience has more influence on the customer than any other product attribute or benefit, it creates an emotional connection with the customer, thereby building greater trust between the company and the customer in the decision-making process (Rajumesh, 2014).

Building on this last sentence, several studies have analyzed this context and have proved the assumption that brand experience helps to build trust and an emotional connection between businesses and customers. On the one hand, studies such as Kranzb et al (2018) have shown that customers like more same-brand products when consuming several products at the same time. On the other side, the work of Kranzb et al (2018) revealed that "*59% of the nearly 1000 Chief Marketing Officers surveyed valued brand experience as a way to create ongoing relationships, and over one-third expected brand experiences to make up 21–50% of their marketing budgets within the next five years*".

2.7.2. Brand Experience Literature

Research on brand experience began to appear during the 2000s thanks to the arrival of concepts such as the experience economy, Pine and Gilmore (1998), and research on marketing and consumer behaviour (Andreini et al, 2018). In this period, authors such as Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) built on previous works on the experiential value of consumption (e.g.,

Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; and Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) and on the emerging approach of experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999) to provide a definition and an empirical operationalization of brand experience (Andreini et al, 2018). The most common definition of brand experience in the literature is that "*brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments*" (Brakus et al, 2009; Sayed, 2015; Wanick et al, 2017; and Coleman, 2018).

All the changes that are happening in today's economic offering underwrite the importance of the research conducted until today and point out towards a broader and more detailed view of brand experience (Andreini et al, 2018). In this sense, according to Andreini et al (2018), "*scholars are becoming increasingly keen to view brands as socially-constructed phenomena created and co-created through interaction between marketplace actors*".

The brand experience differs from many other concepts such as brand image, brand attitudes, brand attachment, brand personality, customer delight, and brand promise, for example (Brakus et al, 2009; and Kumar et al, 2018) because:

- Brand attitudes refer to the attitudes that a customer reveals towards a brand (Rejumsh, 2014) and the "*overall evaluations of the brand in terms of its quality and the satisfaction it generates*" (Kevin et a, 2003). Brand attachments speak about how loyal the customer is towards the brand (Kevin et al, 2003).
- Brand personality is the human set of characteristics that customers or associate with a brand (Brakus et al, 2009) and consists of five key dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997).
- Customer delight talks about unexpected high levels of service that overcome the customer expectations (Palmer, 2010).
- The brand promise is about what customers can expect to get frp the brand (Shaun and Milligan, 2015).

Finally, despite the importance of the last concepts, traditionally, academic research has worked with the concept of the brand image instead of brand experience. However, each concept refers to a different thing. While the brand image is defined as "*consumer perceptions of and preferences for a brand, as reflected by the various types of brand associations held in consumers' memory*" (Keller, 2001), brand experience "*is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments*" (Brakus et al, 2009). That is to say, brand experience is actual "*sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses*" (Brakus et al, 2009), while the brand image is merely a projection of traits or perceptions onto brands.

2.7.3. Brand Experience for Practitioners

Brand experience has also become a key concept for practitioners who have realized that "*understanding how consumers experience brands and, in turn, how to provide appealing brand experiences for them, is critical for differentiating their offerings in a competitive marketplace*" (Schmitt, 2010).

From a practitioner's standpoint, the brand experience could be defined as "*how the razor looks and feels in your hands when you are shaving*" (Schmitt, 2003).

2.7.3.1.   Brand Experience Elements

Brand experience is really similar in many ways to the customer experience, but always focusing on the brand part of the offering. One of the key elements of brand experience is that it has two components, the emotional and the rational, and both of them need to be managed properly in order to create a strong emotional response (Iglesias et al, 2011).

Additionally, according to Palmer (2010), brand experience is more relevant to service-based brands because of the deeper link between brand

emotions and personal relationships. In service-based brands, customers interact much more, on a continuous basis and directñy with employees during the service encounters (Palmer, 2010).

The brand experience can be divided into the following elements:

- Experiential features and product aesthetics (Schmitt, 2003).
- Appealing look and feel through logo, signage, packaging, and retail spaces (Schmitt, 2003).
- Experiential messages and imagery in advertising, in traditional media, or online (Schmitt, 2003).
- Employees who represent or sell the brand (Shaun and Milligan, 2015).
- The connection between the purpose (what the company stands for) and the brand (how customers experience it) (Shaun and Milligan, 2015).
- Storytelling is a successful way of conveying the brand message (Lundqvist et al, 2013).
- Brand experience is not only about getting the attention of customers but also about customer engagement, participation, collaboration, and involvement (Wannick et al, 2017).

2.7.4. Brand Experience Conditioning

Brand experience is conditioned by three key elements. Firstly, brands and brand experience are the results of a co-creation or co-construction between the customer and the business company (Andreini et al, 2018). According to multiple authors (Black and Veloutsou, 2017; Cova and Dalli, 2009; Brodie, 2017; Brodie et al, 2006; Fyrberg and Jüriado, 2009; and Merzet al, 2009), the brand is no longer in the hands of marketers, it is increasingly co-created with the customers and other stakeholders, and the best way of building their meaning is through experiences (Andreini et al, 2018; Black and Veloutsou, 2017; Brodie et al, 2013; Carù and Cova, 2015; Payneet al, 2009;

and Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2016).

Secondly, brand experience does not need any motivational state to happen, it can happen when the customer has or has no interest in the brand or any connection with it (Shieh and Lai, 2017). Finally, brand experience and its value is directly affected by competitors, the ones with whom the customer has had a direct or indirect interaction in the past (Klaus, 2015).

2.7.5. Brand Experience Context and Life Specific

As happened with the customer experience, brand experience is context and product life cycle-specific (Nysveen et al, 2013; Leach, 2018; and Coleman, 2018). In addition to that, it is important to keep in mind that the brand experience can influence both customers and non-customers, which reinforces that broadest experience construct of brand experience (Nysveen et al, 2013).

Another important element that affects brand experience is the competitive context and the maturity of a market. Highly developed economies with fierce competition and in mature markets, require brands to differentiate companies from one another and to engage customers in long-term relationships (Iglesias et al, 2011).

2.7.6. Brand Experience Components

According to Lemon and Verhoef, (2016) brand experience consists of 4 main dimensions: sensory or sensations, affective or feelings, intellectual or cognitive, and behavioural. However, other authors also include a fifth dimension, the social one (Brakus et al, 2009; Iglesias et al, 2011; and Sayed, 2015).

- Sensory or feelings focus on the senses (Sayed, 2015).
- The affective or emotional dimension focuses on the evoked passions and sensations of the brand (Sayed, 2015).
- The intellectual or cognitive dimension speaks about the thoughts

and intellectual processes that the brand generates (Sayed, 2015).

- The behavioural dimension describes the tangible experience (Sayed, 2015).
- The social dimension focuses on the collective engagement of customers in social groups (Sayed, 2015).

Brands' strategy focuses on one or some of these dimensions, however, the more dimensions and experiences they evoke, the higher is the impact that it has on the customer and the more satisfied they are (Brakus et al, 2009). That is because the experience provides value, and the more complete the experience is, the higher is the value obtained by the customer (Brakus et al, 2009).

2.7.7. Brand Experience Impact

Literature evidence that brands experience, similarly to customer experience, according to the literature, impacts positively multiple important key performance indicators such as customer acquisition, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, word of mouth, and purchase behaviour (Brakus et al, 2009; Morrison and Crane, 2007; Iglesias et al, 2011; Nysveen et al, 2013; Klaus; 2015; Sayed, 2015; Andreini et al, 2018; Kumar et al, 2018; and Fetcherin, 2020). One of the most important ways of impacting these KPIs is through building an emotional connection between the customer and the brand (Brakus et al, 2009; Coleman, 2018; and Fetcherin, 2020). In this sense, some real examples can view how many industries such as Cooper Mini, Apple, and Harley Davidson have achieved a real and strong relationship between the brand and their consumers (Morrison and Crane, 2007).

Brands and concretely the experiences that customers have with them can result in an emotional bond (Brakus et al, 2009; Coleman, 2018; and Fetcherin, 2020) between them, but that only can happen when brands manage successfully both the emotional and functional part of the product or service, thereby ensuring consistency through all the touchpoints of the customer

journey (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Meyer and Schwager, and 2007; Iglesias et al, 2011). When it happens, brand experience builds loyalty, evangelism, satisfaction, commitment, and/or identification (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Iglesias et al, 2011; Kumar et al, 2018; and Fetcherin, 2020). The reason behind this fact is that for customers the brand is equally important as the service itself (Morrison and Crane, 2007). For example, it has been demonstrated that "*when brands create an emotional connection to customers, as opposed to a purely functional one, cross-sell ratios increase from 16% to 82% and retention raises from 30% to 84%*" (Smith and Milligan, 2015).

2.7.7.1. Customer Acquisition

Different from customer experience, brand experience has an impact on customer acquisition. Schmitt's (2003) pieces of evidence show that brand experience represents the customer's perceptions of experiential product attributes, particularly *"the look and feel and the experiential communications, which together amount to a perception of a brand's attractiveness"*. According to Christensen et al (2007), the main reason behind responding is that brands and brand experiences guide customers towards the right products and services.

2.7.7.2. Customer Satisfaction, Customer loyalty, Word of mouth, and Purchase behaviour

Brand experience also impacts customer satisfaction through personality associations (Brakus et al 2009; Klaus, 2015; and Sayed, 2015) and emotional and intangible value (Brakus et al, 2009; Nysveen et a, 2013; Coleman, 2018; and Fetcherin, 2020).

Literature shares evidence of how brand experience also affects customer loyalty (Brakus et al 2009; Nysveen et a, 2013; Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Meyer and Schwager, 2007, Schmitt, 2003; Iglesias et al, 2011, Sayed, 2015; Morrison and Crane, 2007; Rajumesh, 2014; and Fetcherin, 2020) thanks to generating preference over other brands and differentiation. In order for that to happen, brands need to work well in the affective dimension (Iglesias et al, 2011) and create an emotional connection (Morrison and Crane, 2007).

Another area that brand experience affects positively is word of mouth, increasing the discoverability of a product or service and keeping them at the top of mind, and at the end impacting customer lifetime value, higher profits, and shareholder returns (Klaus, 2015; Fetcherin, 2020).

Finally, brand experience also drives customer purchase behaviour and encourages re-purchase (Morrison and Crane, 2007; Klaus, 2015).

2.7.7.3. Brand Evangelism and other effects

In addition to all these elements, brand experience also drives elements such as brand salience, consumer-brand identification, brand trust, and opinion leadership (Riivits-arkonsuo and Kaljund, 2014).

Focusing on brand evangelism, according to Riivits-arkonsuo and Kaljund (2014), is understood as "*committed consumers who have a strong emotional connection to a brand and spread the message about their preferred brands*", personal, relevant, and meaningful experiences can generate, as a consequence, brand evangelism. This is important because brand evangelism is a predictor of strong customer-brand relationships (Riivits-arkonsuo and Kaljund, 2014).

2.7.8. Brand Experience Measurement

As mentioned in the section Customer Experience measurement, measuring customer experience has been a challenge, and measuring Brand experience is not an exception (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). In this sense, there are many scales trying to measure Customer Experience, but not too many regarding Brand Experience (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020). The most cited brand experience scale study is the one done by Brakus et al (2009) that describes the four components of brand experience (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural) and suggests a 12 item scale to measure it (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). Brakus et al (2009) developed "*a brand experience scale that measures four aspects of the customer brand experience—sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural— identifying*

relationships between brand experience and brand personality, satisfaction, and loyalty" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). After this initial scale other authors such as Maklan and Klaus (2011), Klaus and Maklan (2012), and Klaus (2015) (evolving their EXQ scale and adding elements of brand experience) proposed different alternative measures (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), and later on Fetcherin (2020), but none of them was as specific, used and recognized to measure brand experience as Brakul et al (2009) one. Brakus et al's (2009) Brand experience scale is the first scale to formally, rigorously, and systematically create a unified model to capture the overall brand experience (Barnes, Mattsson, and Sorensen, 2014).

In their study, Brakus et al (2009) demonstrated that brand experience can be broken into four dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural) and that their scale was consistent, reliable and valid between multiple studies. Additionally, they found that "*brand experience scale displays discriminant validity from some of the most widely used branding measures and scales, including brand evaluations, brand involvement, brand attachment, customer delight, and brand personality*" (Brakus et al, 2009). Finally, they also discovered the direct impact of brand experience on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, and the indirect impact on brand personality (Brakus et al, 2009). The same scale was used later by Iglesias et al (2011), Nysveen et al (2013), and Barnes, Mattsson, and Sorensen (2014) reinforcing the validity of the scale and its conclusions. These authors also found two key elements. On the one hand, Igleasias et al (2011) demonstrated that "*affective commitment completely mediates the suggested relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty*". On the other hand, Nysveen et al (2013), found out that the relational dimension discarded by Brakus et al (2009) is a key dimension to add to the other four and that it is an important predictor of customer satisfaction and loyalty. The relational dimension built by Nysveen et al (2013) was based on the measurement of the feelings of belonging to a community conducted by Gentile et al (2007).

2.8. The Mobile gaming market

After having described the key concepts and foundations of this thesis, it is reasonable to speak about the sector that this research will focus on, the mobile gaming industry.

As stated in the introduction, the mobile gaming market has become the most relevant segment of the gaming industry according to NewZoo (NewZoo, 2018), and, therefore, of the entertainment industry as a whole (based on data coming from the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) and the NPD Group) (Theesa, 2018).

The mobile gaming industry is a young sector (2007-2008) but it has grown really fast. Currently, it represents around 43% of the global gaming sector according to Newzoo (NewZoo, 2018) and it is moving towards the maturing face of the product life-cycle, mainly in the western markets. This maturing of the market is happening concretely in the US and Canada, an overall market that represents 25% of the overall business according to GameIndustry and App-Annie (Game Industry, 2018; and App-Annie, 2018).

The gaming industry is an experience-driven industry because as Wyeth (2012) said, "*the player experience is at the core of video gameplay*". Additionally, Sheng and Teo (2012) found out in their research that entertainment is positively and significantly related to customer experience.

Currently, gaming companies are mainly used to compete on on product features, but with the maturation of the market, gaming companies will have to learn to compete in this new context based on brand-related stimuli (mainly at the game level), with an important focus on the customer (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), what will open a transition process that companies will have to follow to be competitive. In this changing context, mobile gaming companies will have to move to a qualitative differentiation strategy (intangibles) to be competitive, which means that to reach and maintain a competitive advantage in this lucrative market, business companies will have to focus more and more on brand-related stimuli based on intangibles.

As stated in Smith and Milligan (2015), "*the digital world and the internet of things have transformed how we experience the promise that brands make*" and in order to be able to satisfy the user's needs, business companies need to understand what customers want, offer them a purpose embedded on a brand that helps them, and be transparent about what the brand promise and deliver everything in the best possible way (Smith and Milligan, 2015; and Fetcherin, 2020). In this context, the connection between customers and brand is more constant than ever (Wanick et al, 2017), and the mobile gaming industry is not going to be an exception.

Another characteristic of this market is that games are treated as services (game as a service) and instead of launching new versions of successful games, what companies do is to add new features for free by updating the current version and continuously add meaningful content in the format of events (some of it exclusive to monetize) to them because of the high costs of user acquisition and the high level of competition. This situation requires companies to create continuous, meaningful, desirable, and valuable content to maintain player's engagement and monetization in the medium and long term, which has become a key goal for business success in this sector. Therefore, mobile games are more similar to services than products, which means that gaming companies have to continuously engage with players, and launch new and meaningful value propositions and content in order to maintain the desired level of engagement of their players (user base), reach their business goals (net revenues) and maintain their competitive advantage in front of their competitors (ranking position). As stated by Morrison and Crane (2007), "*modern consumers no longer simply buy products and services, instead, they buy the wonderful and emotional experiences around what is being sold*", which is really relevant for services because "*services require a higher level of interpersonal complexity and relationship quality*" (Nysveen et al, 2013) and for customers "*the emotional experience with the service brand is, at least, equally important as the service itself*" (Morrison and Crane, 2007) and because in services customers have the opportunity to experience the brand while interacting during the whole service encounter and its consequent repetitions

(Palmer, 2010).

To conclude, this research is relevant in our days because customer experience and brand experience have become key concepts in the academic and business world, and the mobile gaming market is an idoneous industry to analyze them because of the size of the market (the biggest segment of the entertainment industry), the nature of the product (a product that is more a service), the phase of the product life-cycle (entering the maturity phase where brand-related stimuli are the key for a business competitive advantage), its intrinsic connection with experiences as a core part of the product (Wyeth, 2012) and also because nobody has done it before.

2.9. Hypothesis Development

Taking into account the aforementioned literature and the goal of this research, there are some working hypotheses that can be deduced from it and that this research would like to analyze.

As mentioned in the previous sections, brand experience is the part of the customer experience that includes all the contacts with the brand and brand-specific stimuli, through the brand-owned touch points during the whole customer journey, what differentiates brand experience from product experience, shopping experience, and consumption experience (Ishida et al, 2012). The brand experience can happen before, during or/and after the consumption experience (the direct contact with the product or service), and both customers and non-customers can experience it, which makes it more comprehensive and broader than the customer experience (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; Palmer, 2010; Nysveen et al, 2013; Kumar et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). In this direction, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) stated that the brand is one of the key customer's iterations during the pre-purchase phase of the customer journey, and Klaus (2015) divided his reviewed customer experience measurement scale into three parts (brand experience, service experience and post-purchase/consumption experience), calling the first one brand experience as the pre-encounter dimension with a significant influence in

the customer behaviour. In addition to that, the customer experience begins to be built up through advertisement, public relation, word of mouth, and the brand itself, guiding the customer towards the right product (Christensen et al, 2007) and setting the expectations that will define the posterior customer experience (Shaw and Ivens, 2005). Consequently, when products or services have brands, the brand is usually the first interaction of the overall customer experience.

Customer experiences can include interactions with the brand or not, depending on the offering. However, based on multiple authors (Keller, 2001; Morrison and Crane, 2007; Christensen et al, 2007; Brakus et al, 2009; Iglesias et al, 2011; Nysveen, 2013; Shaun and Milligan, 2015; Klaus, 2015; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020) brand experience is key in the overall customer experience. Based on the literature, in a fierce, competitive, and mature marketplace, like the one where mobile gaming is going, the brand is key to differentiate the customer experience from one of the competitors (Schmitt, 2010; Iglesias et al, 2011) and has a direct impact on cross-selling and retentions (Shaun and Milligan, 2015; Godovykh and Tasci, 2020)

In accordance with the literature, this research expects that brand experience, understood as the brand-stimuli part in the brand-owned touchpoints of the whole customer experience, is the first point of contact between the customer and the offering and has a direct influence on customer experience.

- **Hypothesis 1:** The brand has a direct impact on the customer experience in the mobile gaming industry.

The relationship between customer experience and brand experience with customer satisfaction has been deeply analyzed in the literature. Authors such as Sharon and Crane (2007), Brakus et al (2009), Zarantenello and Schmitt (2010), Iglesias et al (2011), Nysveen et al (2013), Klaus (2015), Sayed (2015), Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Kranzb et al (2018), and Godovykh and Tasci (2020) have analyzed this relationship and have come to the conclusion that customer experience and brand experience have an impact (positive or

negative depending on the component of the experience) on customer satisfaction in direct and indirect ways. Concretely, Sharon and Crane (2007), Brakus et al (2009), Zarantenello and Schmitt (2010), Iglesias et al (2011), Klaus (2015), Sayed (2015), Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Sayed (2015), Kranzb et al (2018) and Godovykh and Tasci (2020) find a positive relationship between them.

Accordingly, this research expects to find a relationship, and in this case a positive one, between customer experience and customer satisfaction.

- **Hypothesis 2:** The customer experience has a direct impact on customer satisfaction.

Additionally, the majority of work done around brand experience (Brakus et al, 2009; Iglesias et al, 2011; Nysveen et al, 2013; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), treat Brand Experience as an independent construct, and all of them have identified a positive direct impact of Brand Experience on Customer Satisfaction. In this research, Brand Experience is part of the Customer Experience as it happens in Klaus work (2015). Therefore, it is assumed that there will be an indirect impact between brand Experience and Customer Satisfaction, mediated by Customer Experience.

- **Hypothesis 3:** The brand experience has an indirect impact on customer satisfaction through customer experience.

Some authors in the literature have found that "*when consuming several products simultaneously, consumers enjoy the experience more with same-brand products*" (Kranzb et al, 2018, based on Rahinel and Redden, 2013) and that improving the brand experience associated with purchases "*positively affected all cognitive and emotional factors of the customer experience*" (Sayed, 2015), what means that customer experiences that leverage on strong brand-stimulus and well-defined and implemented branding experiences, have a higher impact on the customer satisfaction and enjoyment, and on the customer purchase behaviour (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

Therefore, based on these results and the points aforementioned in the previous hypotheses, this research assumes that brand experience can directly influence customer satisfaction:

- **Hypothesis 4:** The brand experience has a direct impact on customer satisfaction.

According to Schmitt (2003), satisfaction is the result, and experience, including both customer experience and brand experience, is what has to be managed to impact the result. In this direction, Calder et al (2016) speak about the significant indirect effect of satisfaction on consumption, thus summarizing that customer engagement leads to satisfaction, which leads to consumption. This argument was later on developed by Lattermann et al (2016), demonstrating that customers rating the customer experience as very good spend much more than customers rating the experience as poor (understood as a measurement of satisfaction).

Based on that, and the fact that multiple authors have shown that customer experience impacts word of mouth (Klaus, 2015), consumption (Calder et al, 2016; and Clarke et al, 2018), loyalty (Schmitt et al, 2012; Borowski; 2015; Peppers and Rogers, 2017) and financial performance (Peppers and Rogers, 2017) and that brand experience impacts word of mouth (Lundqvist et al, 2013; Kotler, 2017; Kranzb et al, 2018; Fetcherin, 2020), consumption (Smith and Milligan, 2013; Lundqvist et al, 2013; Klaus, 2015; Peppers and Rogers, 2017), loyalty (Brakus et al, 2009; Riivits-arkonsuo et al, 2014; Ong et al, 2018; Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), cross-sell and retentions (Shaun and Milligan, 2015; Godovykh and Tasci, 2020) and financial performance (Peppers and Rogers, 2017), this research assumes that both customer experience and brand experience influence the mobile game downloads and revenue through customer satisfaction:

- **Hypothesis 5:** Customer satisfaction has a direct effect on game revenues.

- **Hypothesis 6:** Customer satisfaction has a direct effect on game downloads.

According to Experience, Customer, and Maturity Monitor (2009), "*word of mouth is now perceived as twice as important as traditional media by consumers, with 91 percent of consumers stating that they are likely to use a product or service based upon a recommendation*". This claim was reinforced by Fetcherin (2020) when he crowned word of mouth as the most important and effective channel of communication. Consistently with these previous claims, Kotler (2017), highlighted that loyal customers tend to endorse and recommend brands to their family and friends (making word of mouth the new definition of customer loyalty), thereby bringing higher quality customers, and impacting profitability and revenue. In this direction, Shaw (2007), highlighted that "*word of mouth and referrals are the cheapest and most effective form of advertising*", bringing lower cost and higher revenue to customers.

It is important to keep in mind that word of mouth is highly predicted and driven by positive customer experiences (LaSalle et al, 2003; Meyer and Schwager 2007; Klaus, 2015; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Kranzb et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), and Brand Experience (Schmitt, 2003; Morrison and Crane, 2007; and Fetcherin, 2020), which makes even more important their role in the competitive marketplace.

Consequently, this research expects to find a positive relationship between the number of downloads that a game has (understood as the combination between customer acquisition and word of mouth) with the number of revenues that a game generates.

- **Hypothesis 7:** Game downloads have a direct effect on game revenues.

2.10.   Proposed Theoretical Framework

Based on the one hand literature review and the hypothesis identification, and, on the other hand, the research question and the goal of this

research, the following empirical study is proposed.

The model wants to measure the effects of brand experience in the customer experience and on downloads, revenues, and customer satisfaction in the mobile gaming industry (as a measure of business results), using mobile games as units of research.

As mentioned in the description of the "experience" concept, customer experience is the broader concept, and building on Klaus and Maklan EXQ model (2012) and Brakus et al (2009) brand experience model, we consider that customer experience is composed of three elements;

- Brand Experience.
- Product Experience, measured through Outcome Focus and Product Experience.
- Consumption Experiences, measured through Peace of Mind and Moments of Truth.
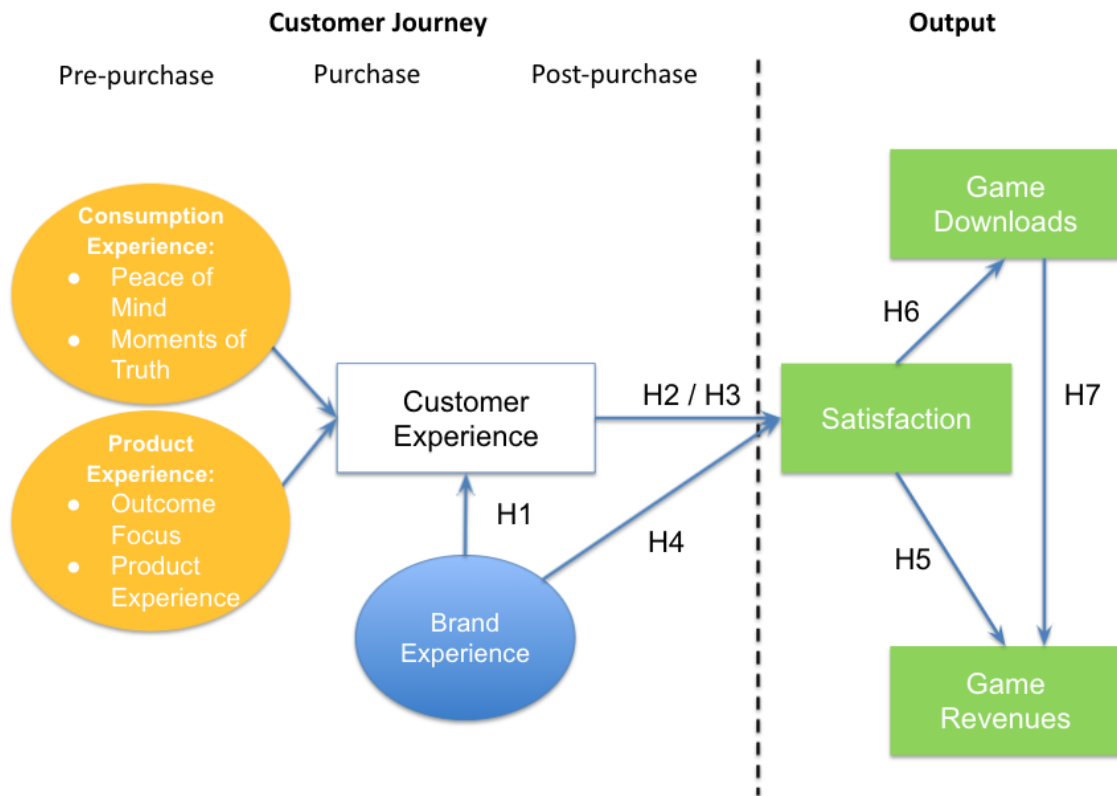
Figure 5. Theoretical framework of the empirical case based on the literature review. Source: Own elaboration.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This section reviews the research model to carry out to answer the research question and fulfil the research objective defined in section 1.

3.1. Empirical Framework

As proposed in section 2, an empirical study to measure the effects of brand experience in the customer experience and on downloads, revenues, and customer satisfaction on the mobile gaming industry (as a measure of business results) was conducted, using mobile games as units of research.

A survey-based quantitative approach is applied to test seven different hypotheses based on a proposed theoretical model that states the relationship between brand experience, customer experience, and, on the one hand, mobile gaming downloads and mobile gaming revenues, and, on the other hand, customer satisfaction. That is to say, the goal of the survey is to test the relationship between brand experience, customer experience, customer satisfaction, mobile game revenues, and/or mobile game downloads (understood as indicators of business results), summarized in seven main hypotheses based on what has been stated in the conceptual framework (for example, if the higher the brand experience an individual has, the better the customer experience they will have towards that product or services) following the example of Klaus and Maklan (2012), Brakus et al (2009), Iglesias et al (2011) and Nysveen et al (2013).
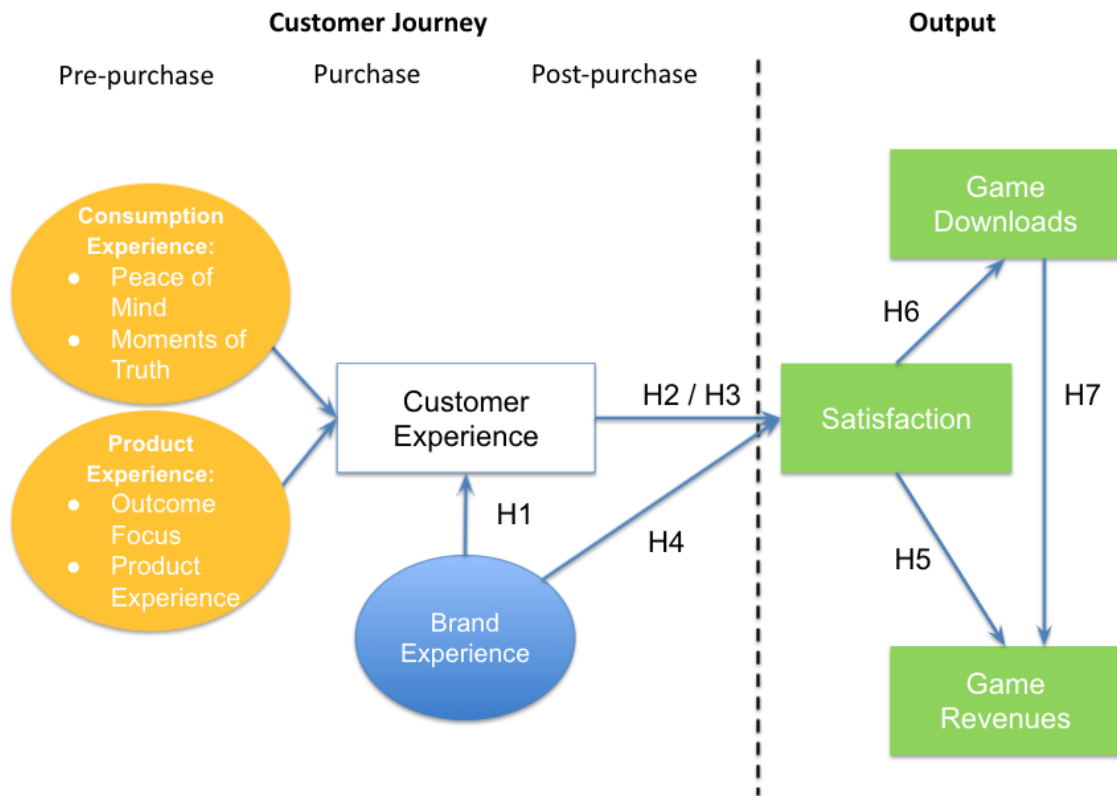
Figure 6. Theoretical framework of the empirical case based on the literature review. Source: Own elaboration.

3.2. Research design

3.2.1. Research Approach

This research follows the deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2009), that is to say, it tries to test hypotheses based on the available knowledge of a particular domain, in this case, brand experience and customer experience, presented in the previous sections of this thesis. The main goal of the deductive theory is to translate the concepts of analysis into research variables through hypotheses that can be operationalized and tested. Therefore, this process has two key parts: collect the data to make the hypothesis (already done in the previous section) and collect empirical data to test them.

3.2.2. Research Strategy

The deductive research strategy adopted in this study is a research survey-based quantitative approach that will be used to test seven different

hypotheses. It is a survey-based quantitative approach because it will be based on quantitative measurement scale of customer experience and brand experience (Brakus et al, 2009; and Klaus and Maklan,2012).

Thanks to the use of this methodology, a large amount of data of a targeted sample will be collected in an economic way. A quantitative survey-approach is the simplest and easiest way to gather the necessary data to do the required analysis to understand, explain and describe the phenomena, following the examples of Brakus et al (2009) and Klaus and Maklan (2012). This methodology has the following advantages (SurveyMonkey, 2021):

- It allows the researcher to collect the required data that later on can be analyzed using statistics and explain in that way the possible relationships between the different operationalized variables.
- It ensures control over the research process.
- It ensures access to the targeted sample, in type and also size.
- It is the most efficient and effective way to collect this type of data.
- It helps collect data of representativeness of individual views and experiences.

To sum up, the research methodology used is a survey to collect data from the targeted respondents, to later on statistically test the hypotheses, analyze the results and report the findings.

3.2.3. Type of questions

The aforementioned survey will be composed of a set of questions following the seven-point Likert scale (anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (7)). This is the most common methodology used in the previous analysis in the literature, following the example of Brakus et al (2009), Iglesias et al (2011), and Nysveen et al (2013).

There is an exception to this norm: the NPS question. The Net Promoter Score questions are measured on a scale of 0 to 10, following the best practice of the industry.

The goal of this survey is to gather quantitative data and test the data

using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique.

3.2.4. Time Horizon

The survey data was collected at a specific time, following the example of cross-sectional studies. The period of time was April 2021.

3.2.5. Method of data collection

With the main purpose of measuring the impact of brand experience in the customer experience and on downloads, revenues, and customer satisfaction in the mobile gaming industry, this study has combined the measurement and approaches of different prominent research papers.

This survey was implemented as an online survey and was conducted through SurveyMonkey Platform that allowed the researcher to create a self-served survey and have direct access to the desired sample at an affordable price (SurveyMonkey Audiences). The sample was accessed through SurveyMonkey digital panel and thanks to their segmentation capabilities it was made sure that the audience had enough knowledge about the mobile gaming market.

The study was restricted to US players playing mobile and free-to-play games. As mentioned in section 1, this research focused on the games themselves because the brand in the mobile gaming industry is in the game and not in the corporate brands behind them, because every game is a product and a brand by itself and what customers recognize, until now, are the games and not the corporate company. Additionally, keeping in mind a large number of free-to-play games available in the Apple Store and Google Play Store, the research focused on a particular number of mobile gaming brands, twelve well-known mobile games. The criteria to include them was based on the following elements:

- A large number of downloads.
- A large amount of revenue.
- Different genres and categories.
- Different types of players.

Game	Genre	Type of Player	External IP
Candy Crush	Puzzle	Casual	No
Clash of Clans	Strategy	Mid-Core	No
Clash Royale	Strategy	Mid-Core	No
Gardenscapes / Homescapes	Puzzle+Resource Management	Casual	No
Pokémon Go	RPG+Collection	Mid-Core	Yes
Marvel Strike Force	RPG	Mid-Core	Yes
Roblox	RPG Sandbox	Casual	No
Coin Master	Resource Management	Casual	No
Rise of Kingdoms	Strategy	Hard-Core	No
Fortnite	Real-time Action	Casual	No
PUBG Mobile	Real-time Action	Casual	No
Call of Duty: Mobile	Real-time Action	Casual	Yes

Table 4: Mobile Games as part of the analysis. Source: Own elaboration.

An "other" option will be added to gather other possible games that the audience is playing.

The survey follows the following process:

● Thanks to the segmentation capabilities of Survey Monkey, only users that own a smartphone for gaming and that spend more than 1-3 hours per week playing mobile games will be added to the sample.

● Once they have overcome the screening questions each respondent will answer some demographics questions.

● Then, each respondent will be asked to consider the relationship that they have had with twelve well-known mobile games (table 1). In the case that they select only one brand name, the questions in the survey will focus on this brand. If they choose two or more games, the respondent will have to choose which one the survey will focus on. If they do not know any of these games, they will be asked to write the name of the game that they have previously played, and the survey will focus on this game. Then, respondents will evaluate their customer experience, their brand experience, and customer satisfaction for that brand.

- At the end of the survey, they will answer questions related to the amount of time playing the game and the amount of money spent per month.

In relation to the business results, amount of downloads and amount of revenues, the data was obtained through access to secondary sources (market data providers such as App-Annie and NewZoo). Access to these sources was provided through previous employment.

3.2.6. Sampling

The sampling of this study was gathered through the SurveyMonkey Digital Panel. You can find the sampling conditions of this panel in the following LINK (SurveyMonkey, 2020).

The sample was focused on the US, which is the main representative market of the western world and it represents 25% of the overall business together with Canada (GameIndustry, 2018; NewZoo, 2018; and App-Annie, 2018). Therefore, it was considered as a perfect proxy for this analysis.

In relation to genre, age, or income level, there were no specific conditions, considering that the mobile gaming industry is an affordable activity that all types of genres, ages, and income levels enjoy. However, we tried to obtain a sample with balanced demographics and age.

The focus of this research was on respondents that play free-to-play games (they can be downloaded and played without paying) of the Google Play and Apple Stores because these games, as mentioned in section 1, are the ones that concentrate the majority of downloads and revenues of the industry (App-Annie, 2018), and are the ones with the highest long-term business potential (App-Annie, 2018).

The main objective of the sampling was to identify users that were active free-to-play gaming players and that were using mobile devices to play.

As a result, and considering the available options in the SurveyMonkey Audiences Digital Panel to create a sample, the following conditions were chosen:

- US population.

- Users that own a SmartPhone as a gaming device.
- Users that spent Playing Video Games at least 1 hour Per Week: 1 to 3 hours, 4 to 6 hours, 7 to 9 hours, 10 hours or more.

3.2.7. Sample size

After identifying the population to be surveyed through SurveyMonkey Audiences, which allows the researcher to create a self-served survey and have direct access to the desired sample at an affordable price, the key question is the size of the required sample to obtain meaningful and representative results. The statistical methodology to be applied is structural equation modelling, which means that the samples must be taken to fulfil the requirements of this methodology.

According to Pui-Wa Lei and Qiong Wu (2007), "*SEM is a large sample technique (usually N > 200) and the sample size required is somewhat dependent on model complexity, the estimation method used, and the distributional characteristics of observed variables*". They state that "*a general rule of thumb is that the minimum sample size should be no less than 200 (preferably no less than 400 especially when observed variables are not multivariate normally distributed) or 5–20 times the number of parameters to be estimated, whichever is larger*". In this direction, Hair et al (2014) provided the following guidelines on the issue:

- A minimum sample of 100 is enough when the model has 5 or fewer dimensions and for each dimension, there are more than three observed variables
- A minimum sample of 150 is enough when the model has 7 or fewer dimensions and no dimensions need to be under-identified.
- A minimum sample of 300 is enough when the model has 7 or fewer dimensions and lower communalities (below 0.45) and multiple under-identified (fewer than 3) constructs.
- A minimum sample of 500 is enough when the model has many dimensions (at least more than 7) and some with lower communalities

and less than 3 items to measure each dimension.

Additionally, Cohen (1992) stated the requirements of sample size on the basis of different minimum values of R2 in endogenous variables at different significance levels. He assumed that 80% of the statistical power and complexity of the model is required.

Similarly, based on Westland (2010) work, Daniel Soper created a sample size calculation tool that calculates the recommended size of the sample based on the anticipated effect size, the desired statistical power level, the number of latent variables, the number of observed variables and the probability level (Statistics Solution, 2020; and Free Statistics Calculator, 2020). The required sample size for the desired research is 545, according to this calculator and considering the following criteria:

- Anticipated effect size: 0.15
- Desired statistical power level: 0.8
- Number of latent variables: 3 (Customer Satisfaction, Customer Experience, Brand Experience)
- Number of observed variables: 10
- Probability level: 0.05

On the basis of all the criteria discussed above, the acquired sample was of 748 respondents, considering that several cleaning data techniques would be applied. These techniques include deletion of missing values responses, removal of cases with invalid responses, detection of anomalies, and the deletion of responses having normality issues.

3.2.8. Sampling technique

Respondents were recruited from a random sample of a representative population using SurveyMonkey Digital Panel. Even if the panel uses a random sampling technique to get the required answers, not all the people of the population have the same chances to be selected, or even any chance (therefore, it is a non-probability sampling method) (SurveyMonkey, 2020). After collecting the responses following the desired criteria, the panel carefully adjusts the data so that it's representative of the sample population.

3.2.9. Instrument of the research

This research was conceptualized based on Brakus et al (2009), Iglesias et al (2011), Nysveen et al (2013), Gentil et al (2007), Klaus and Maklan (2012), Klaus (2015), and Kuppelwieser and Klaus (2020) research projects.

Of the five different variables that this research wants to measure, three of them were measured through the quantitative survey-approach (Customer Satisfaction, Brand Experience and Customer Experience) and two of them, revenues and downloads, were obtained through access to secondary sources (market data providers such as App-Annie and NewZoo). Access to these sources was provided through previous employment.
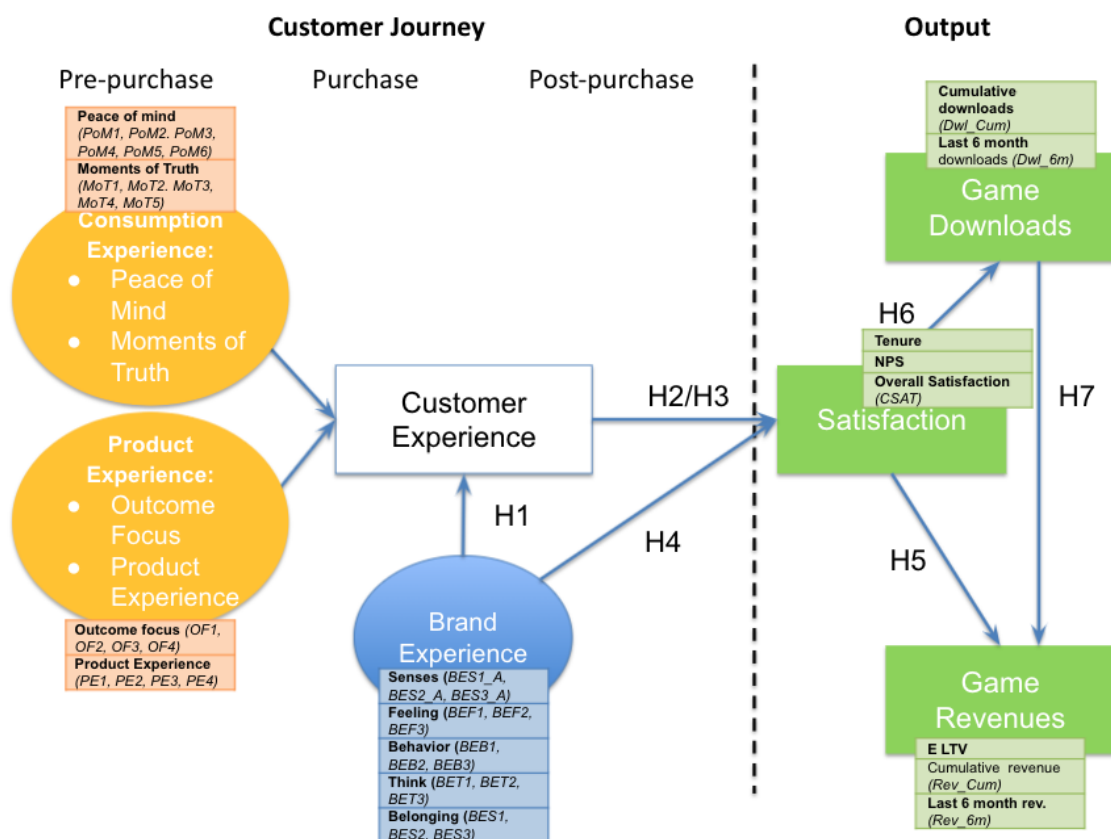
Figure 7. Theoretical framework of the empirical case based on the literature review, including the dimensions to measure the different parameters. Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the data collection survey, it was divided into nine parts, with a total of 43 questions, appearing in random order in the questionnaire.

In the first part, respondents answer some demographic questions such

as age, level of education, and income.

In the second part, respondents choose which mobile games they have experienced before and they assess one of them. In their assessment for the chosen game, they answer 3 groups of questions: Customer Satisfaction questions, Customer Experience questions, and Brand Experience questions.

Customer satisfaction was measured through two questions, one of them being the market benchmark NPS and the other question being the Customer Satisfaction Score question (CSAT). According to Shaw (2007), "*Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a measure that is based on customers' willingness to recommend a business and it has been shown to correlate with revenue growth*". NPS is measured through a 10-point scale where "0 is "not at all likely to recommend" and 10 is "very likely to recommend" (Shaw, 2007). The NPS is the difference between the promoters (percentage respondents that chose 9 and 10) and detractors (percentage respondents that chose 0 and 6). Regarding the Customer Satisfaction Score question, it comes from the "EXQ: A Multiple-item Scale for Assessing Service Experience" research conducted by Klaus and Maklan (2012). It has been chosen from the total list of five questions based on the relevance for the product analyzed, mobile games. This question was measured through a seven-point Likert scale, anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (7), or as do not know/Not applicable.

In relation to the Customer Experience, it was measured through Klaus and Maklan EXQ methodology (2012). As stated in the literature review, the EXQ scale created by Klaus (2012) is the most useful and adaptable to the mobile gaming industry and allows us to measure the overall CX, including the direct and indirect interactions between the customer and other actors of the business. Four different groups of variables (Peace of mind, Moments of Truth, Product Experience and Outcome focus) are measured through multiple questions using a seven-point Likert scale, anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (7), or as Do not know/Not applicable.

Regarding Brand Experience, it was measured following Brakus et al 12-item scale (2009), which has four dimensions – sensory, affective,

behavioural, and intellectual (each dimension measured by three questions), later on, used by Iglesias et al (2011) and Nysveen et al (2013). It is the most well-known and commonly used scale to measure brand experience. Additionally, following Nysveen et al (2013) and even in Brakus et al (2009) this dimension was not significant, the relational dimension was also included and measured through three items, capturing the role of community and belonging in the brand experience (Gentile et al, 2007). In Nysveen et al study (2013), they identified that "*the relationship dimension of brand experience is particularly useful for service brands*". Even if mobile gaming is not exactly the type of service brand analysed in Nysveen et al study (2013), mobile gaming is based on strong social communities and in players playing against each other in groups or individually through social features to drive engagement, which could mean that this dimension plays a strong role in this industry.

Finally, the respondents finish the survey by answering about the amount of money that they spend per week in the game and the amount of time that they have been playing the game.

Numb.	Text	Type	Variable	Type	Author
Q1	How old are you?	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice	-
Q2	What's your highest level of education	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice	-
Q3	Can you tell us your household income?	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice	-
Q4	Which of the following games do you usually play?	Game	-	Multiple-choice	-
Q5	Of the games that you selected on the previous question, please choose the game that you play the most and you would like this survey to focus on	Game	-	Multiple-choice	-
Q6	How likely is it that you would recommend [Q5] to a friend or colleague?	Satisfaction	NPS	NPS - 0 - 10	Shaw, 2007
Q7	Overall I am satisfied with [Q5] and the service they provide	Satisfaction	CSAT	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q8	I am confident in [Q5]'s developers expertise	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012

Q9	The whole process of downloading and using [Q5] was easy	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q10	I think that I may use [Q5] for a long time	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q11	I continue to play [Q5] because of my past experience with [Q5]	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q12	I have used [Q5] before so getting what I needed was really easy	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q13	[P5] guides me well when using the game	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q14	[P5] offering is flexible and solves my needs	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q15	[P5] keeps me up-to-date	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q16	[P5] is a safe and reputable game	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q17	[P5] deal(t) with me correctly when I contacted them	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q18	[P5] solved my problem properly when I contacted them	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q19	I can choose between different options at [Q5]	Product Experience	Product Experience	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q20	I can easily compare (inside the game and with other games) the different transactions/promotions that [Q5] offers	Product Experience	Product Experience	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q21	I need to compare different offers or promotions from [Q5]	Product Experience	Product Experience	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q22	I have the necessary tools and information to contact [Q5]	Product Experience	Product Experience	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q23	Staying with [Q5] makes my life better / happier / easier	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q24	[P5] gives me what I need swiftly	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q25	I prefer [Q5] over an alternative game	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q26	The people at [Q5] can relate to my situation	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Klaus and Maklan, 2012
Q27	[P5] makes a strong impression on my visual	Brand Experience	Senses	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009

	sense or other senses				
Q28	I find [Q5] interesting in a sensory way	Brand Experience	Senses	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q29	[P5] does not appeal to my senses	Brand Experience	Senses	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q30	[P5] induces feelings and sentiments	Brand Experience	Feelings	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q31	I do have strong emotions for [Q5]	Brand Experience	Feelings	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q32	[P5] is an emotional brand	Brand Experience	Feelings	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q33	I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use [Q5]	Brand Experience	behaviour	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q34	[P5] results in bodily experiences	Brand Experience	behaviour	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q35	This [Q5] is not action oriented	Brand Experience	behaviour	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q36	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter [Q5]	Brand Experience	Think	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q37	[P5] makes me think	Brand Experience	Think	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q38	[P5] stimulates my curiosity and problem solving	Brand Experience	Think	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q39	As customer of [Q5] I feel like I am part of a community	Brand Experience	Belonging	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q40	I feel like I am part of the [Q5] family	Brand Experience	Belonging	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q41	When I use [Q5] I do not feel left alone	Brand Experience	Belonging	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brakus et al, 2009
Q42	On average, how much money ($) do you spend per week on [Q5]?	-	ARPA	Multiple-choice	-
Q43	On average, how long have you been playing [Q5]?	Satisfaction	Tenure	Multiple-choice	-

Table 5: Questionnaire Developed. Source: Own elaboration.
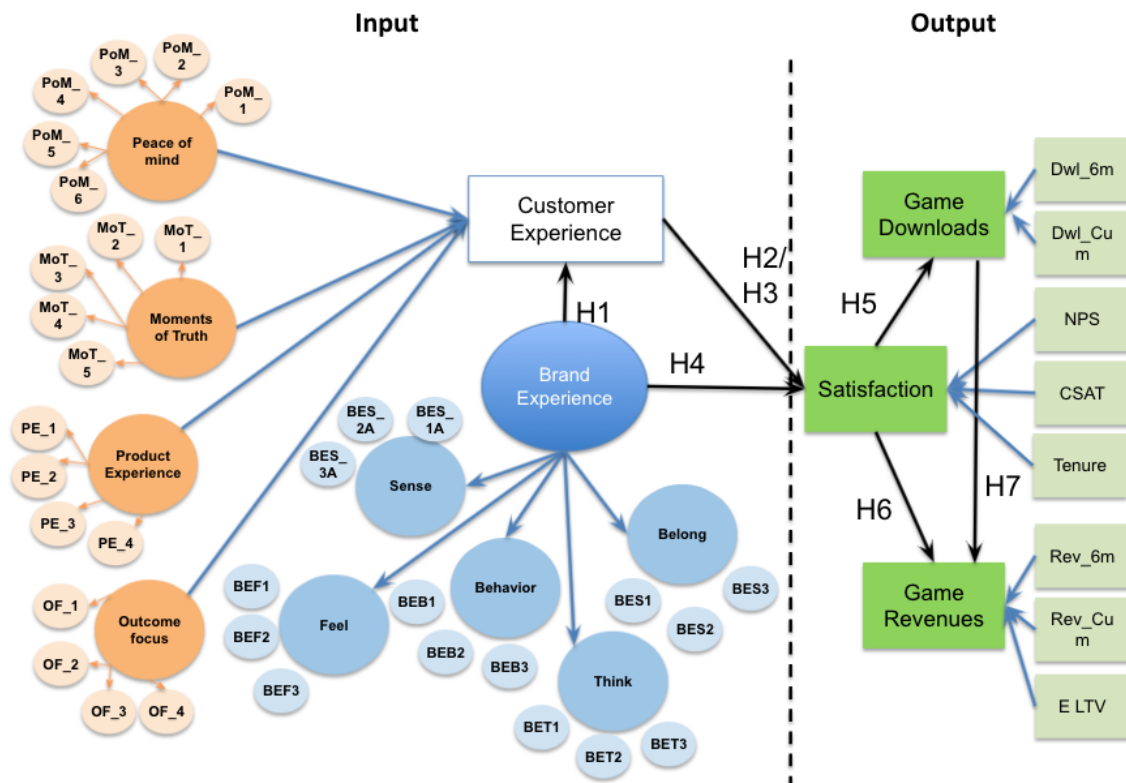
Figure 8. Measuring Scales and Theoretical framework of the empirical case based on the literature review. Source: Own elaboration.

3.3. Data analysis method

The survey and the secondary data were analyzed using Structural Equations Modelling, among the most useful advanced statistical analysis techniques that have emerged in the social sciences in recent decades (Hair et al, 2014: xi), or in case of no significant results, through its alternative, the Partial Least Squares (Hair et al, 2014: xii).

Once the data was collected, it was processed and prepared through Google sheets. Later on, it was added into SPSS in Mac, to analyze it, process it further, and do the codification and storage of the data.

Type of Analysis	Goal	Statistic technic	Software
Previous analysis	Have a clean dataset	Verification of the survey data, addition of data other data sources(downloads and revenue) and	Google Sheets

		preparation of the database	
Descriptive Analysis	Sample characteristics and understanding of the sample results	Frequency analysis and descriptive analysis	SPSS for Mac (64-bit) Build 1.0.0.1508
Explorative analysis	Confirm the reliability of the scales	Correlation analysis	SPSS for Mac (64-bit) Build 1.0.0.1508
Explicative Analysis	Understand the model and model fit	Structural Equations Modelling	SmartPLS 3.0

Table 6. Characteristics of the sample. Source: Own elaboration.

3.4. Summary of the Section

In this previous chapter, the research method applied to answer the research question was presented.

The chapter focused on explaining the research design stating that a quantitative online survey is used to gather data, and the sample size and sampling technique used in this study. Additionally, the statistical methodology used to analyze the data is also presented: Structural Equations Modelling. Finally, the chapter includes a description of the instrument of data collection that is adopted and more details of the data analysis method. All these elements are provided with the required justification.

After defining the research design, the data gathering methodology, and the data analysis method, chapter four is about the results and analysis.

4. Results

In the following section, the results and findings of the research will be presented, with the aim of offering a comprehensive description and discussion on the key findings of the thesis.

4.1. Sample collected

The collection of data was conducted between April 25th and April 30th of 2021 following the expected process through the SurveyMonkey panel: respondents in the US that had a mobile device to play games and that played games at least 1-3 hours per week.

A total of 784 responses were collected and 666 of them were complete and valid responses. With this number of responses, the margin of error is less than 5% as desired, and this amount is larger than the desired research goal of 545, following Westland (2010) and Daniel Soper conditions to be able to do a SEM:

- Anticipated effect size: 0.15
- Desired statistical power level: 0.8
- Number of latent variables: 3 (Customer Satisfaction, Customer Experience, Brand Experience)
- Number of observed variables: 10
- Probability level: 0.05

The sample has the following characteristics:

- Balanced sample in gender (51% female)
- The sample collected has a similar representation in the groups of age above 40 years old, and it is a bit shorter in the groups of age under 40 years old
- The majority of the sample has a college degree (19%) or a professional

degree (52%)

- 86% of the sample has an income of $60k or more
- 100% of the sample comes from the US
- The majority of the respondents do not spend money on mobile gaming (79%)
- 61% of players have been playing their game for more than 24 months

4.2. Data treatment

Once the data was collected it was processed and analyzed through Google sheets. Later on, it was added into SPSS in Mac, to process it further and proceed to do the codification and storage of the data. Finally, it was added in PLS 3 in July 2021 where the Structural Equations Modelling was conducted.

PLS-SEM was used because of the following reasons (Hair et al, 2017b):

- PLS-SEM is more appropriate in the exploratory stage for theory building and prediction as it is this case.
- PLS-SEM has the objective of maximizing the variance explained in the dependent variables.
- PLS-SEM considers the model's predictive capabilities, through the coefficient of determination.
- PLS-SEM works better when the Measurement philosophy is total variance.
- PLS-SEM is preferable when the proposal has higher order models and formative measure constructs.

It is worth comparing PLS with other models such as MBC (Model-Based Calibration Toolbox) and techniques based on covariance adjustments.

According to Chin (1998b), there are three basic distinctions for choosing between MBC and PLS:

- Whether the underlying constructs are modeled as indeterminate or determinate.
- The degree of confidence the researcher has in the theoretical model

and the auxiliary theory that links the measures (observable variables) with the constructs.

- Whether the researcher is oriented towards the calculation of the parameters or towards prediction.

If the researcher's answers lean towards determinate underlying constructs, a low degree of confidence of the researcher in the theoretical model and the auxiliary theory, and the researcher is oriented towards prediction, then PLS becomes the most appropriate approach. This is the case of this thesis.

In fact, PLS is the most powerful method of analysis (Chin et al., 2003) due to its minimal requirements related to measurement scales of the variables, sample size, and residual distributions.

Regarding techniques based on covariance adjustments (represented by software such as LISREL, EQS, COSAN, AMOS, and SEPATH), PLS avoids two serious problems that they can cause: improper or inadmissible solutions, and indeterminacy of factors (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982). As a result of the use of an iterative algorithm consistent with a series of ordinary least squares (OLS), identification is not a problem for recursive models, nor does it require any ddddspecific distribution for the measured variables (Chin, 1998b). Considering the nature of the epistemological relations, it is worth noticing that the MBC (Model-Based Calibration Toolbox) is originally designed to work with reflective indicators, which means that from the unobserved construct one can obtain the observed indicators. However, along with these are the formative indicators, which are measures that give rise to the latent theoretical construct. In this case, PLS allows operating with both types of measurements while the MBC is mainly designed to operate with the reflective ones.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that the covariance adjustment procedures (for example, ML and GLS estimates) and the PLS approach, rather than being considered as competitive methods, should be understood as complementary in nature (Chin et al., 2003). As stated by Jöreskog and Wold, fathers of LISREL and PLS respectively, *"the ML estimation procedure is*

oriented towards theory, emphasizing the transition from exploratory to confirmatory analysis. PLS is mainly oriented towards causal-predictive analysis in situations of high complexity but low theoretical information" (1982). Building on this argument of complementarity, it seems appropriate to us to collect the words of Wold (1985), who underlines the following idea: "*There is a division of labor between LISREL and PLS. LISREL is highly sought after in small models where each parameter has operational significance and where accurate parameter estimation is important. PLS begins to stand out in large models, where the importance shifts from individual variables and parameters to blocks of aggregate variables and parameters*".

In conclusion, PLS is an appropriate alternative to develop MEE in the Business Organization and Marketing knowledge areas, since many of the previously mentioned conditions can be verified in them:

- The data sets are usually small (for example LISREL or EQS approaches require bigger samples).
- The measures are not very developed.
- Theories are not solidly developed.
- The data usually show non-normal distributions.
- There is abundant ordinal data, when not categorical.
- Presence of formative and reflective indicators.
- Interest in predicting the dependent variable.

4.3. Sample Characteristics

The sample obtained is a balanced sample in gender and in age, the two most important variables in the mobile gaming industry.

The sample has the following characteristics (total of 666):

- The sample obtained is a balanced sample in gender. However, looking at the details, there are three groups of age with more women than men (18-20 years, 41-50 years, 51-60 years), and four with more men than women (21-30 years, 31-40 years, 61-70 years, >70). Comparing that with the actual distribution of the market, the sample is a bit over indexed

in females, as only 42.3% of women are gamers (Financesonline, 2022).

Variable	Types	Percentage
Gender	Female	51%
	Male	49%

Table 7. Gender. Source: Own elaboration.

● Regarding age, the sample collected has a similar representation in the groups of age above 40 years old, and it is a bit shorter in the groups of age under 40 years old. The group with the highest sample is the one of 61-70 years old, and the group with the lowest sample is the one with 18-20 years old. Comparing that with the actual demographic distribution of mobile gaming players in the US, the sample is over indexed in older ages, as 32.7% of US-based mobile gamers are 25 to 34 years old (Financesonline, 2022).

Variable	Types	Percentage
Age	18-20 years old	2%
	21-30 years old	9%
	31-40 years old	11%
	41-50 years old	19%
	51-60 years old	15%
	61-70 years old	24%
	More than 70 years old	20%

Table 8. Age groups. Source: Own elaboration.

● The majority of the sample has a college degree (19%) or a professional degree (52%). The following group is the High School diploma level of education (85%).

Variable	Types	Percentage
Level of education	College degree	19%
	High school diploma	8%
	Master's degree	0%

	Bachelor's degree	4%
	Vocational training	1%
	No formal education	3%
	Other	0%
	Professional degree	52%
	Doctorate degree	0%

Table 9. Level of Education. Source: Own elaboration.

- 86% of the sample has an income of $60k or more, with the groups of $80k-$100k and more than $100k being the two groups with the highest sample (29% each).

Variable	Types	Percentage
Level of income	I do not work	0%
	I am a student	3%
	Under $20,000	0%
	$20,001 – $40,000	1%
	$40,001 – $60,000	4%
	$60,001 – $80,000	27%
	$80,001 – $100,000	29%
	$100,001 or over	29%

Table 10. Level of Income. Source: Own elaboration.

- 100% of the sample comes from the US, and regarding US regions the most represented ones are the South Atlantic, East North Central, Middle Atlantic, and Pacific, in order of importance.

Variable	Types	Percentage
Country	US	100%
US region	East North Central	16%
	East South Central	5%
	Middle Atlantic	16%
	Mountain	9%

	New England	6%
	Pacific	13%
	South Atlantic	19%
	West North Central	7%
	West South Central	9%

Table 11. Country and Region. Source: Own elaboration.

● The majority of the respondents do not spend money on mobile gaming (79%). A 12% of the sample spend between $1-5 per week and a 6% between $6-25 dollars. The age group with more spenders are 21-30 years old, 31-40 years old, and 41-50 years old. The group with higher spenders is the 21-30 years old (4% of players that spent between $51-100 per week).

Variable	Types	Percentage
Weekly Spending in the game	$0	79%
	$1-5	12%
	$6-25	6%
	$26-50	2%
	$51-100	1%
	$101-500	0%
	+$501	0%

Table 12. Weekly sending in gaming. Source: Own elaboration.

● It is a sample with high tenures, 61% of players have been playing their game for more than 24 months. This is mainly explained by the age groups of more than 61 years old. The age groups with lower tenure are the 18-20 years old, followed by the group of 21 to 50 years old.

Variable	Types	Percentage
Time Playing the game	1-3 months	6%
	4-6 months	9%

	7-12 months	8%
	13-18 months	7%
	19-24 months	7%
	+24 months	61%

Table 13. Time Playing the game. Source: Own elaboration.

To sum up, the obtained sample is a relevant representation of US mobile gamers that have been playing games for a long period of time and that in general, they are free players. Regarding demographics, it is a balanced sample in age and gender, and it has a significantly high level of income and education.

4.4. Data Operationalisation

Once the data was obtained and ready, it was operationalized to make the analysis possible.

The first thing that was done was to analyze the "Other" option of the "usually played games", Q4 to make sure that the list of games was updated. A large part of the games obtained was not identifiable or was only played by one individual, and for that reason they were added in a common group called "other", representing around 48% of the total sample. The other 52% of the games were identifiable:

Code	Name	Percentage	Amount
1	Candy Crush Saga	13%	87
6	Marvel Strike Force	0%	3
9	Fortnite	1%	7
7	Coin Master	2%	10
4	Gardenscapes / Homescapes	4%	25
10	PUBG Mobile	0%	3
5	Pokémon Go	3%	21
12	Call of Duty: Mobile	2%	11
11	Roblox	1%	6
3	Clash Royale	1%	5
2	Clash of Clans	2%	11
8	Rise of Kingdoms	0%	2
13-1	Other	48%	317

13-2	Angry birds	0%	3
13-3	Assassins Creed	0%	2
13-4	Backgammon – Lord of the Board	1%	5
13-5	Bejeweled Blitz	1%	4
13-6	Best Friends	1%	4
13-7	Boom beach	0%	3
13-8	Brawl Stars	0%	1
13-9	Bubble Shooter Classic Match	0%	2
13-10	Candy Crush Saga	0%	2
13-12	Clash of Clans	0%	1
13-13	Codycross	0%	2
13-14	Crossword Jam	0%	3
13-15	Fallout Shelter	0%	3
13-16	Fishdom: Deep Dive	1%	4
13-17	Forge of Empires	1%	4
13-19	Genshin Impact	0%	2
13-21	Jigsaw Puzzle	1%	4
13-22	June's Journey	0%	2
13-23	Mahjong City Tours	1%	9
13-24	Matchington Mansion	0%	2
13-25	Minecraft Pocket Edition	1%	6
13-26	Scrabble GO	1%	5
13-27	Seekers notes	0%	3
13-28	Slotomania	0%	3
13-30	Spider Solitaire by MobilityWare	1%	8
13-31	Star Wars: Galaxy of Heroes	0%	3
13-34	Toon blast	0%	3
13-35	Township	1%	6
13-36	Toy blast	1%	4
13-37	Two Dots	0%	2
13-38	WGT Golf	0%	2
13-39	Wheel of Fortune Play	0%	2
13-40	Word Cookies!	0%	2
13-42	Words With Friends	4%	26
13-43	Wordscapes	2%	13
13-44	WGT Golf	0%	2
13-32	Sudoku	1%	6

Table 14. Games obtained in the sample. Source: Own elaboration.

Secondly, the groups of age were grouped to create 4 differentiable segments:

Age	Age group	Percentage	Amount
18-40	Group 1	21%	141

41-50	Group 2	19%	124
51-60	Group 3	15%	103
>60	Group 4	45%	298

Table 15. Group of Age. Source: Own elaboration.

Thirdly, the 12 months life Time value of each game was estimated by multiplying the average of the range of the weekly spending on the game (Q42) by 4 (amount of weeks per month) and by the average of the range of the time playing the game (Q43).

Age	Age group	12 months LTV
Total	Total	$421.7 / year
18-40	Group 1	$231.64 / year
41-50	Group 2	$819.69 / year
51-60	Group 3	$152.77 / year
>60	Group 4	$438.97 / year

Table 16. LTV. Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, the revenue and downloads data was added in two formats: the revenue/downloads of the last 6 months (from November 2020 until April 2021) and the historic cumulative revenue/downloads of the game since its launch.

This is the final dataset obtained:

Question	Code name	Type	Variable	Input / Output
Of the games that you selected on the previous question, please choose the game that you play the most and you would like this survey to focus on	Game	-	-	-
How likely is it that you would recommend [Q5] to a friend or colleague?	NPS	Satisfaction	NPS	Output
Overall I am satisfied with [Q5] and the service they provide	CSAT	Satisfaction	CSAT	Output
I am confident in [Q5]'s developers expertise	PoM1	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	Input
The whole process of downloading and using [Q5]	PoM2	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	Input

was easy				
I think that I may use [Q5] for a long time	PoM3	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	Input
I continue to play [Q5] because of my past experience with [Q5]	PoM4	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	Input
I have used [Q5] before so getting what I needed was really easy	PoM5	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	Input
[P5] guides me well when using the game	PoM6	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	Input
[P5] offering is flexible and solves my needs	MoT1	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	Input
[P5] keeps me up-to-date	MoT2	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	Input
[P5] is a safe and reputable game	MoT3	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	Input
[P5] deal(t) with me correctly when I contacted them	MoT4	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	Input
[P5] solved my problem properly when I contacted them	MoT5	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	Input
I can choose between different options at [Q5]	PE1	Product Experience	Product Experience	Input
I can easily compare (inside the game and with other games) the different transactions/promotions that [Q5] offers	PE2	Product Experience	Product Experience	Input
I need to compare different offers or promotions from [Q5]	PE3	Product Experience	Product Experience	Input
I have the necessary tools and information to contact [Q5]	PE4	Product Experience	Product Experience	Input
Staying with [Q5] makes my life better / happier / easier	OF1	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	Input
[P5] gives me what I need swiftly	OF2	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	Input
I prefer [Q5] over an alternative game	OF3	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	Input
The people at [Q5] can relate to my situation	OF4	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	Input
[P5] makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses	BES1	Brand Experience	Senses	Input
I find [Q5] interesting in a sensory way	BES2	Brand Experience	Senses	Input
[P5] does not appeal to my senses	BES3	Brand Experience	Senses	Input
[P5] induces feelings and sentiments	BEF1	Brand Experience	Feelings	Input
I do have strong emotions for [Q5]	BEF2	Brand Experience	Feelings	Input

[P5] is an emotional brand	BEF3	Brand Experience	Feelings	Input
I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use [Q5]	BEB1	Brand Experience	behaviour	Input
[P5] results in bodily experiences	BEB2	Brand Experience	behaviour	Input
This [Q5] is not action-oriented	BEB3	Brand Experience	behaviour	Input
I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter [Q5]	BET1	Brand Experience	Think	Input
[P5] makes me think	BET2	Brand Experience	Think	Input
[P5] stimulates my curiosity and problem solving	BET3	Brand Experience	Think	Input
As a customer of [Q5] I feel like I am part of a community	BEB1	Brand Experience	Belonging	Input
I feel like I am part of the [Q5] family	BEB2	Brand Experience	Belonging	Input
When I use [Q5] I do not feel left alone	BEB3	Brand Experience	Belonging	Input
On average, how much money ($) do you spend per week on [Q5]?	ARPA	-	ARPA	Output
On average, how long have you been playing [Q5]?	Tenure	-	Tenure	Output
E_LTV	E_LTV	-	Estimated LTV (multiplying Q42 and Q43 averages)	Output
6 months Revenue	Rev_6m	Game Revenue	6-month Revenues	Output
Cum. Revenue	Rev_Cum	Game Revenue	Cumulative Revenues	Output
6 months Downloads	Dwl_6m	Game Downloads	6-month Downloads	Output
Cum. Downloads	Dwl_Cum	Game Downloads	Cumulative Downloads	Output
Age Group	Age_Group	Age Groups	Demographic	-

Table 17. Final dataset. Source: Own elaboration.

4.5. Data Analysis: Overall Descriptive univariate analysis

With the obtained data, a descriptive univariate analysis of the sample was conducted, after having coded, tabulated, and pre-debugged it.

In this analysis, it was verified whether the continuous quantitative

variables follow (or not) a normal distribution, for which the Kolmogorov and Smirnov and Shapiro and Wilk test have been applied. It was demonstrated that all of them follow a normal distribution.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov–Smirnov[a]			Shapiro–Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
NPS	.193	666	<.001	.808	666	<.001
CSAT	.258	666	<.001	.839	666	<.001
PoM1	.218	666	<.001	.858	666	<.001
PoM2	.281	666	<.001	.720	666	<.001
PoM3	.252	666	<.001	.783	666	<.001
PoM4	.238	666	<.001	.808	666	<.001
PoM5	.196	666	<.001	.846	666	<.001
PoM6	.191	666	<.001	.868	666	<.001
MoT1	.163	666	<.001	.882	666	<.001
MoT2	.178	666	<.001	.885	666	<.001
MoT3	.255	666	<.001	.766	666	<.001
MoT4	.382	666	<.001	.730	666	<.001
MoT5	.389	666	<.001	.722	666	<.001
PE1	.151	666	<.001	.888	666	<.001
PE2	.247	666	<.001	.873	666	<.001
PE3	.279	666	<.001	.866	666	<.001
PE4	.179	666	<.001	.900	666	<.001
OF1	.189	666	<.001	.902	666	<.001
OF2	.184	666	<.001	.897	666	<.001
OF3	.177	666	<.001	.872	666	<.001
OF4	.328	666	<.001	.789	666	<.001
BES1_A	.171	666	<.001	.903	666	<.001
BES2_A	.147	666	<.001	.902	666	<.001
BES3_A	.158	666	<.001	.893	666	<.001
BEF1	.227	666	<.001	.916	666	<.001
BEF2	.203	666	<.001	.919	666	<.001
BEF3	.234	666	<.001	.889	666	<.001
BEB1	.203	666	<.001	.862	666	<.001
BEB2	.243	666	<.001	.830	666	<.001
BEB3	.156	666	<.001	.900	666	<.001
BET1	.154	666	<.001	.914	666	<.001
BET2	.163	666	<.001	.895	666	<.001
BET3	.160	666	<.001	.897	666	<.001
BES1	.212	666	<.001	.907	666	<.001
BES2	.203	666	<.001	.910	666	<.001
BES3	.229	666	<.001	.898	666	<.001
ARPA	.454	666	.000	.495	666	<.001
Tenure	.368	666	<.001	.699	666	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 18. Normality test of the sample. Source: Own elaboration.

4.6. Data Analysis: Latent variables Descriptive univariate analysis

After the overall descriptive univariate analysis, this study focused on discussing the descriptive univariate analysis results for each latent variable of the model, using values such as mean, standard deviation, and the Kruskal-Wallis index. The Kruskal-Wallis index was calculated for the 4 groups of age mentioned in the previous section 4.4 (Group 1: 18-40, Group 2: 41-50, Group 3: 51-60, Group 4: >60).

4.6.1. Customer Satisfaction

Regarding customer satisfaction, both NPS and CSAT are relatively high, 7.83 out of 10 and 5.56 out of 7.

The NPS, which is calculated by subtracting the detractors (0 to 6 score) from the promoters (9 and 10 score), is 29, with the groups above 51 years old having a significantly higher NPS than the ones under this age.

Age	Age group	NPS	Promoter	Detractor
Total	Total	29	52%	23%
18-40	Group 1	26	49%	23%
41-50	Group 2	23	47%	24%
51-60	Group 3	33	56%	24%
>60	Group 4	31	54%	23%

Table 19. NPS score by age group. Source: Own elaboration.

Focusing on CSAT, the group with the lowest satisfaction is Group 2 (41-50), while all the rest have the same level of satisfaction.

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
How likely is it	NPS	7.83	2.501	1.439	0.696

Description		Code		

that you would recommend [Q5] to a friend or colleague?				
Overall I am satisfied with [Q5] and the service they provide	CSAT	5.56	1.442	3.473	0.324

Table 20. Customer Satisfaction and NPS. Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the Kruskal Wallis test, it is worth noticing that none of the variables has enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05).

4.6.2. Consumption Experience: Peace of Mind

Entering the first element of EXQ measurement, Peace of mind (as part of the Consumption Experience metrics), it has six key variables to measure: expertise (confidence), process ease (downloading the game), relationship (long term perspective), convenience retention (satisfaction with previous experiences), familiarity (previous knowledge), and advice (guidance in the game).

In the sample, the highest media goes to process ease in downloading the game (6.09), and the lowest one goes to familiarity based on previous knowledge and experiences (5.34), followed by advice understood as guidance in the game (5.38).

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
I am confident in [Q5]'s developers expertise	PoM1	5.49	1.451	3.987	0.263
The whole process of downloading and using [Q5] was easy	PoM2	6.09	1.290	9.301	0.026
I think that I may use [Q5] for a long time	PoM3	5.83	1.452	14.463	0.002
I continue to play [Q5] because of	PoM4	5.78	1.409	9.560	0.023

my past experience with [Q5]					
I have used [Q5] before so getting what I needed was really easy	PoM5	5.34	1.659	9.818	0.020
[P5] guides me well when using the game	PoM6	5.38	1.554	4.579	0.205

Table 21. Peace of mind. Source: Own elaboration.

Applying the Kruskal Wallis test, process ease, relationship, convenience retention, and familiarity have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05), while expertise and advice are not significant.

4.6.3. Consumption Experience: Moments of Truth

Analyzing the second element of the EXQ scale, moments of truth (as part of the Consumption Experience metrics), it has four key components in order: flexibility of the offering, pro-activity (keep up-date), risk perception (reputation and reliability), interpersonal skills (customer support) and service recovery (reaction when contacted).

The risk perception module, understood as the reputation of the game, is the one with the highest median (5.95), followed by the flexibility of the offering (5.17). All the rest of the values are under 5 out of 7.

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
[P5] offering is flexible and solves my needs	MoT1	5.17	1.545	12.662	0.005
[P5] keeps me up-to-date	MoT2	4.86	1.738	4.187	0.242
[P5] is a safe and reputable game	MoT3	5.95	1.329	7.162	0.067
[P5] deal(t) with me correctly when I contacted them	MoT4	4.47	1.323	15.156	0.002
[P5] solved my problem properly when I contacted them	MoT5	4.41	1.267	19.780	<0.001

Table 22. Moments of truth. Source: Own elaboration.

Thinking about the Kruskal Wallis test, the flexibility of the offering, interpersonal skills (customer support), and service recovery (reaction when contacted) have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05), while pro-activity (keep up-date) and risk perception (reputation and reliability) are not significant.

4.6.4. Product Experience: Product Experience

Moving into the product experience, and the third element of the EXQ scale, product experience, has four key components in order: freedom of choice (possibility to choose between options), cross-product comparison (compare between games), comparison necessity (compare between promotions) and account necessity (contact information).

Of the previous four components, only freedom of choice is about 5 (5.07) and comparison necessity is under 4 (3.72). The other two components move around really similar values.

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
I can choose between different options at [Q5]	PE1	5.07	1.633	13.016	0.005
I can easily compare (inside the game and with other games) the different transactions/promotions that [Q5] offers	PE2	4.64	1.499	15.438	0.001
I need to compare different offers or promotions from [Q5]	PE3	3.72	1.675	8.154	0.043
I have the necessary tools and information to contact [Q5]	PE4	4.70	1.737	19.999	<0.001

Table 22. Product Experience. Source: Own elaboration.

When applying the Kruskal Wallis test, the flexibility of the offering, all components have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to

be significant (P>0.05).

4.6.5. Product Experience: Outcome focus

Analyzing the Outcome focus element of the EXQ scale and of the product experience part, it has four key components: easiness (make life easier), swiftness (offers the desired outcome in a swift way), alternatives (preferred over other solutions), and relativity (producers relate to my situation).

Of the previous four components, the only alternatives are about 5 (5.37). The rest of the components are in the 4 to 5 range, with relativity being the least scored (4.21).

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
Staying with [Q5] makes my life better / happier / easier	OF1	4.78	1.551	7.557	0.056
[P5] gives me what I need swiftly	OF2	4.88	1.531	14.338	0.002
I prefer [Q5] over an alternative game	OF3	5.37	1.487	7.352	0.61
The people at [Q5] can relate to my situation	OF4	4.21	1.378	9.617	0.022

Table 23. Outcome focus. Source: Own elaboration.

When using the Kruskal Wallis test, all components except alternatives have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05).

4.6.6. Brand Experience: Senses

Entering the realm of brand experience, the first element to analyze is the Senses. The results show that in general respondents find the game that they play an interesting sensory experience (5.01), that it makes a strong sensory experience (4.83) and only a small group consider that it does not appeal to their senses (3.14).

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
[P5] makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses	BES1	4.83	1.594	21.361	<0.001
I find [Q5] interesting in a sensory way	BES2	5.01	1.612	10.894	0.012
[P5] does not appeal to my senses	BES3	3.14	1.750	7.740	0.052

Table 23. Brand Experience: Senses. Source: Own elaboration.

The results of the Kruskal Wallis test in the sensitive part of the Brand Experience measurement, all components, except not appealing to sense, have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05).

4.6.7. Brand Experience: Feelings

Moving from Sense to feelings in the brand experience scale, the results show that in general respondents do not have a strong emotion towards the game that they play (3.81), even if it induces some feelings and sentiments (4.02). Finally, they consider at a low level that this game is an emotional brand.

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
[P5] induces feelings and sentiments	BEF1	4.02	1.606	11.271	0.010
I do have strong emotions for [Q5]	BEF2	3.81	1.756	18.073	<0.001
[P5] is an emotional brand	BEF3	3.48	1.731	6.468	0.91

Table 24. Brand Experience: Feelings. Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, the Kruskal Wallis test shows that only the emotional brand component has not enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05).

4.6.8. Brand Experience: behaviour

Regarding the behaviour side of the brand experience, all values are

really low, unveiling the low level of importance of the behavioural variables in the gaming industry. Respondents do not engage in physical actions and behaviours when they use mobile games (3.05) and they do not have body experience (2.79).

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use [Q5]	BEB1	3.05	1.930	27.444	<0.001
[P5] results in bodily experiences	BEB2	2.79	1.887	32.310	<0.001
This [Q5] is not action-oriented	BEB3	4.50	1.987	12.361	0.006

Table 25. Brand Experience: behaviour. Source: Own elaboration.

Moving into the Kruskal Wallis test shows, all components have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05).

4.6.9. Brand Experience: Think

Exploring the "think" element of brand experience, all components have values above 4.5, with the game generating thinking time and stimulating curiosity and problem solving as the highest ones.

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter [Q5]	BET1	4.63	1.784	1.710	0.635
[P5] makes me think	BET2	4.82	1.822	4.473	0.215
[P5] stimulates my curiosity and problem solving	BET3	4.85	1.764	0.704	0.872

Table 26. Brand Experience: Think. Source: Own elaboration.

In relation to the Kruskal Wallis test, none of the components have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05). This result could be connected with the games having the same thinking impact in all the group ages.

4.6.10. Brand Experience: Belonging

To finalize the brand experience scale, regarding the social part of the brand experience, all values are really low, under 4. It looks like, overall, respondents do not feel part of the community or family.

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
As a customer of [Q5] I feel like I am part of a community	BEB1	3.97	1.861	23.945	<0.001
I feel like I am part of the [Q5] family	BEB2	3.83	1.857	11.457	0.009
When I use [Q5] I do not feel left alone	BEB3	3.86	1.764	12.603	0.006

Table 27. Brand Experience: Belonging. Source: Own elaboration.

Analyzing the Kruskal Wallis test results, all components have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05).

4.6.11. WARP, Tenure, and LTV

Leaving aside the Customer Experience and the Brand Experience Scales, it looks like respondents do not spend on mobile gaming (1.37 out of 7, being 1 0 and 7 more than $500), they have been playing for a while (4.84 out of 6, being 1 1 to 3 months and 7 more than 24 months). The estimated LTV of the sample after 12 months is $421.7.

Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
On average, how much money ($) do you spend per week on [Q5]?	BEB1	1.37	0.861	22.189	<0.001
On average, how long have you been playing [Q5]?	BEB2	4.84	1.694	27.918	<0.001
E_LTV	BEB3	421.70	3839.130	20.229	<0.001

Table 28. Monetization and Tenure. Source: Own elaboration.

All the previous variables have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05) when applying the Kruskal Wallis test.

4.6.12. Downloads and Revenue

Finally, analyzing the revenue and downloads data, divided into cumulative revenue/downloads and last 6 months revenue/downloads (between Novembre 2020 and April 2021), both downloads and revenue variables have enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05) when applying the Kruskal Wallis test.

| Description	Code	Median	Standard Deviation	Kruskal Wallis: H	Kruskal Wallis: Assymp. Sig.
6 months Revenue	Rev_6m	64,262,141.36	99654244.103	37.489	<0.001
Cum. Revenue	Rev_Cum	66,259,7745.29	1163345914.455	38.715	<0.001
6 months Downloads	Dwl_6m	1,991,214.93	2999987.628	36.864	<0.001
Cum. Downloads	Dwl_Cum	54,399,160.70	78254607.704	33.804	<0.001

Table 29. Revenue and downloads. Source: Own elaboration.

4.6.13. Conclusions

To sum up, the previous analysis helps understand which of the Customer Experience Scale (EXQ) and Brand Experience Scale components, and also some of the outputs of the model (Customer Satisfaction, Monetization, Tenure and revenue, and downloads) generate enough difference in weight gain between the age groups to be significant (P>0.05). It also helps see how some elements of these scales, such as behaviour in the brand experience scale, have a low impact on the experience, or others such as think in the brand experience scale have a transversal and similar impact between all the age groups and games.

Focusing on the three components of Customer Experience, Consumption Experience, Product Experience and Brand Experience (calculated doing the average proportion of all their components), it looks like

Consumption Experience is the one more valued by respondents (5.3), followed by Product Experience (4.7) and Brand Experience (4.1).
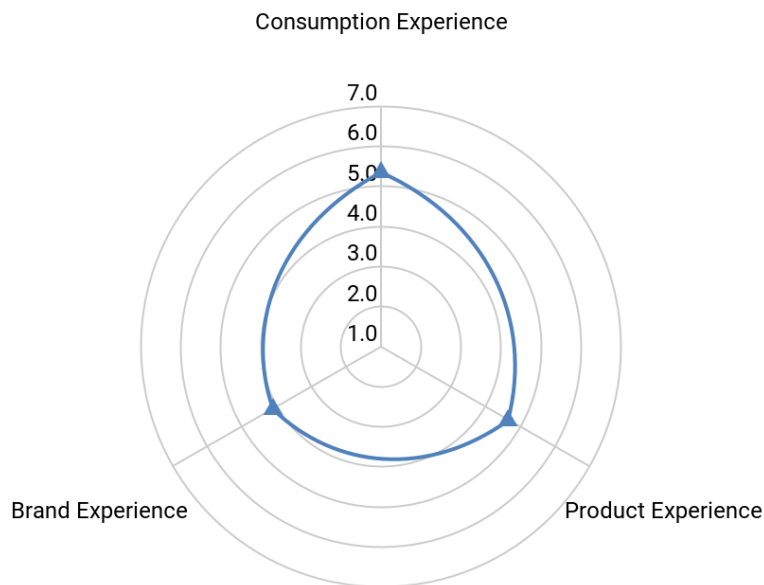
Graph 1. Components of Customer Experience. Source: Own elaboration.

Inside of the Consumption Experience, the element Peace of mind is the one with the highest value (5.7), followed by Moments of Truth (5.0). In the Product Experience, Product Experience and Outcome focus have really similar values (between 4.5 and 4.8).

Peace of Mind

Outcome focus — Moments of Truth

Product Experience
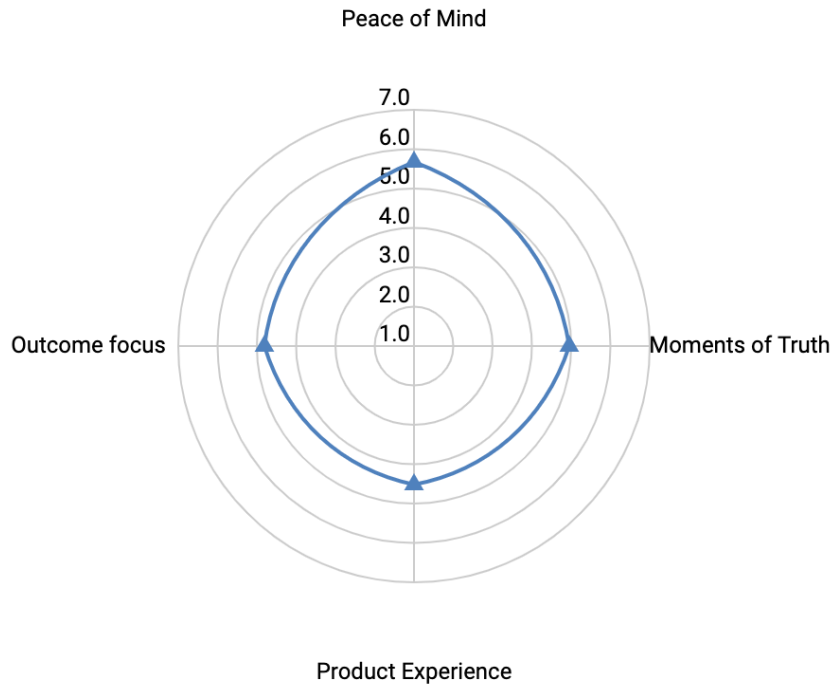
Graph 2. Consumption Experience and Product Experience. Source: Own elaboration.

As part of the Peace of Mind element, respondents strongly agree with the ease of downloading (Process ease: 6.1) and they value a lot having been playing a game for a while and having a previous experience with it (relationship and convenience retention, both 5.8).

Peace of Mind - Expertise

Peace of Mind - Advice — Peace of Mind - Process Ease

Peace of Mind - Familiarity — Peace of Mind - Relationship

Peace of Mind - Convenience Retention
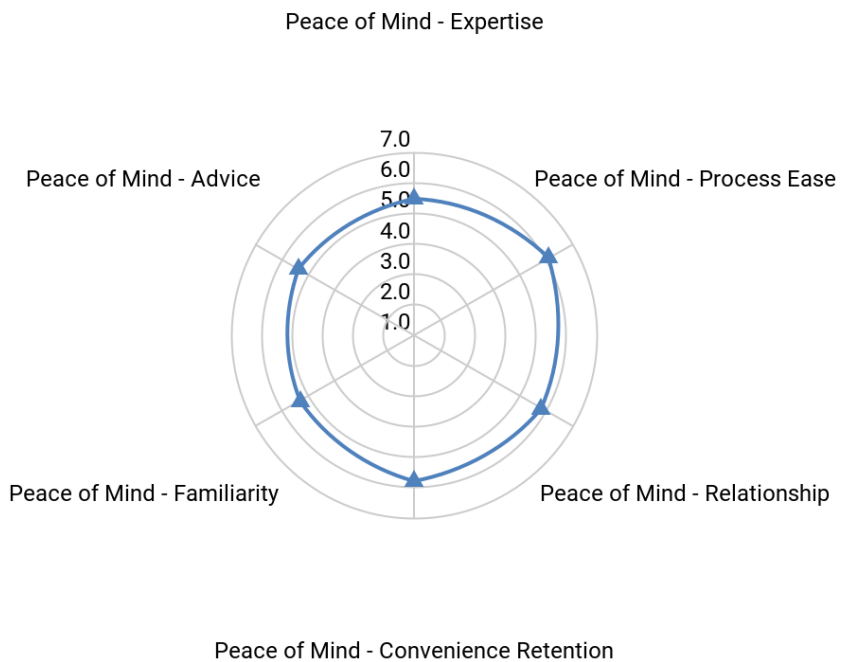
Graph 3. Peace of mind. Source: Own elaboration.

About Moments of Truth, respondents strongly agree on the importance that the games that they play have a strong reputation and are reliable (Risk Perception: 6.0).

Moments of Truth - Flexibility
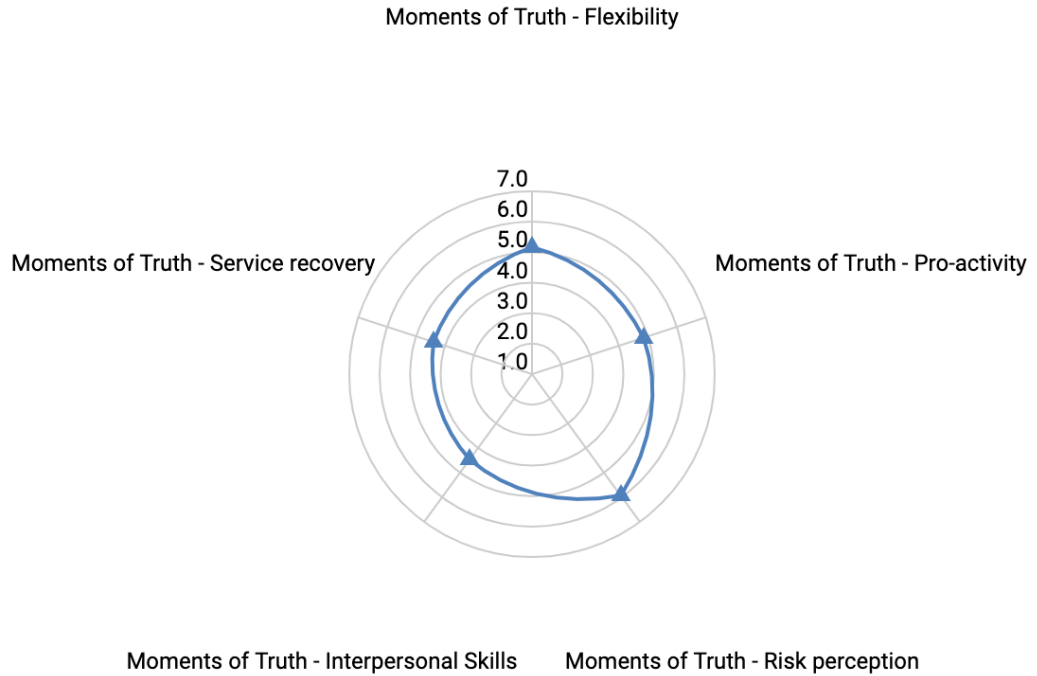
Graph 4. Moments of Truth. Source: Own elaboration.

Moving into the Product Experience element and the Product Experience component, respondents value having multiple options to choose between in the game that they play (Freedom of choice: 6.0). Oppositely, they do not care about the capacity to compare between different promotions inside of the game (Comparison necessity: 3.7).

PE - Freedom of choice
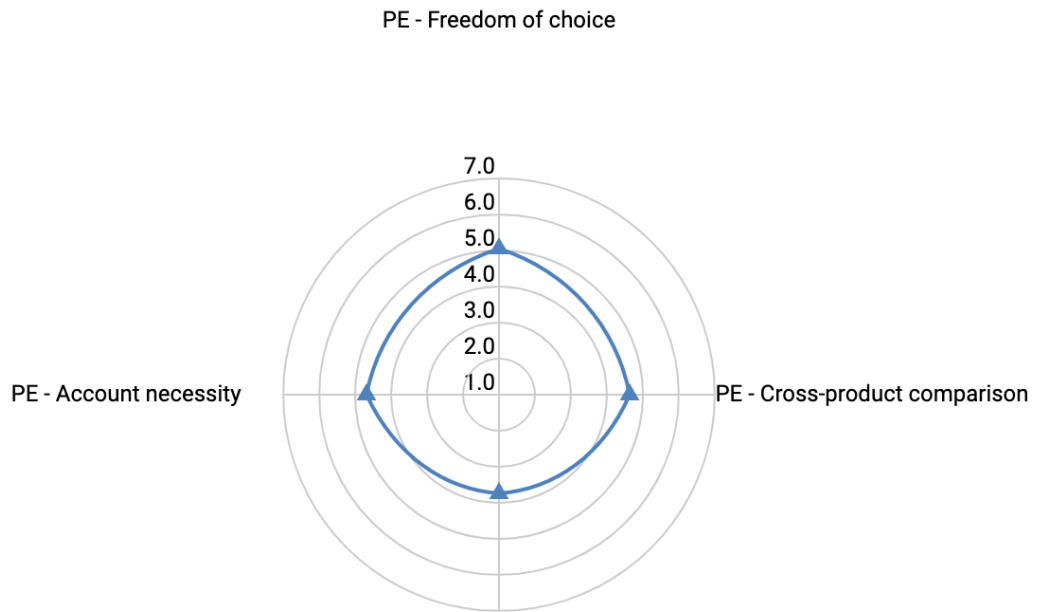
Graph 5. Product Experience. Source: Own elaboration.

In the Outcome Focus component of the Product Experience, respondents say that they significantly prefer this game over other alternatives (5.4).

Outcome focus - Easiness
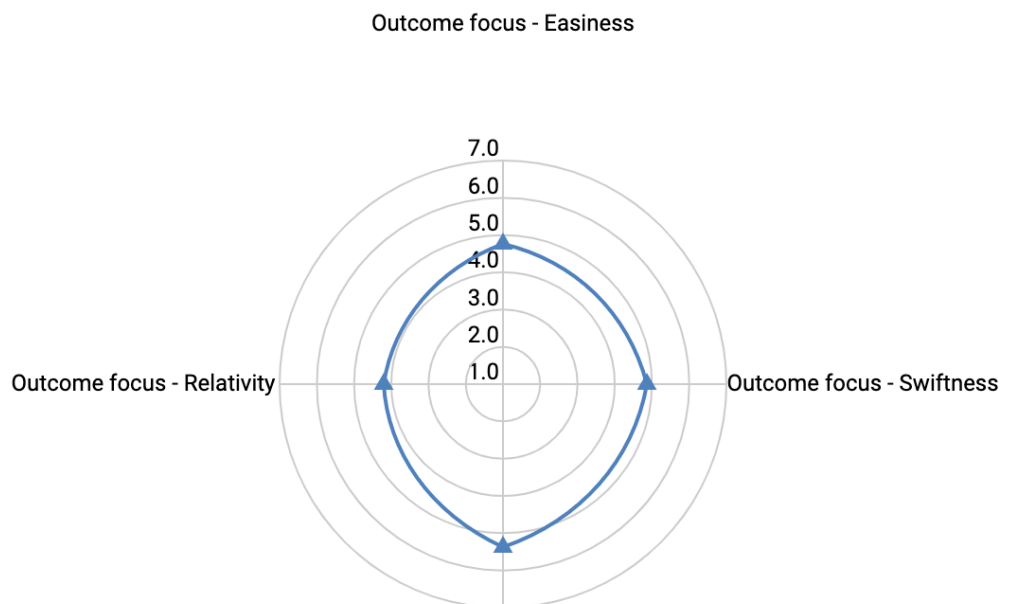
Graph 6. Outcome focus. Source: Own elaboration.

In relation to the Brand Experience, the Think component is the one that more respondents agree on about its importance (4.8), followed by Senses (4.6). The other three have values under 3 (Feelings 3.8 and Belonging 3.9), with behaviour having the lowest value (3.4).
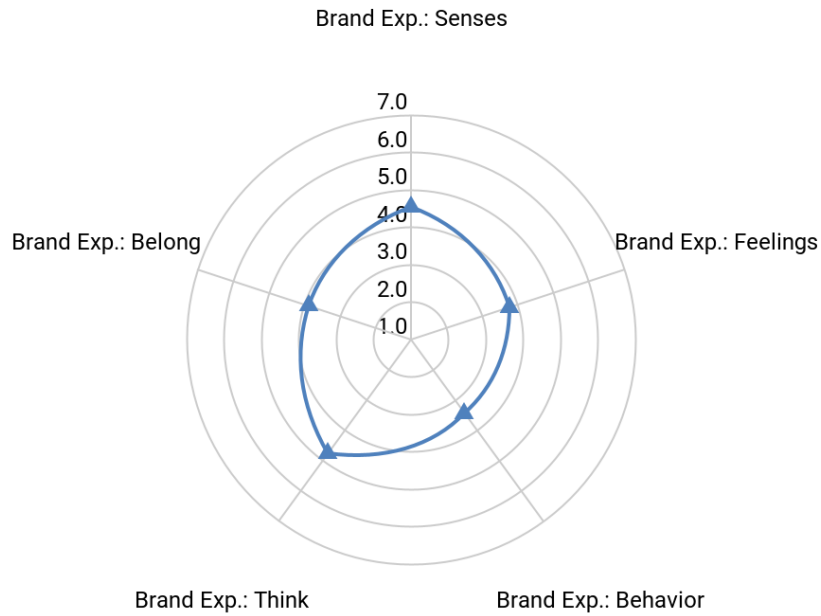
Graph 7. Brand Experience. Source: Own elaboration.

Of the components of Think, all of them have similar values, between 4.6 and 4.8.

Brand Experience: Think - Thinking engagement

Brand Experience: Think - Curiosity

Brand Experience: Think - Thinking
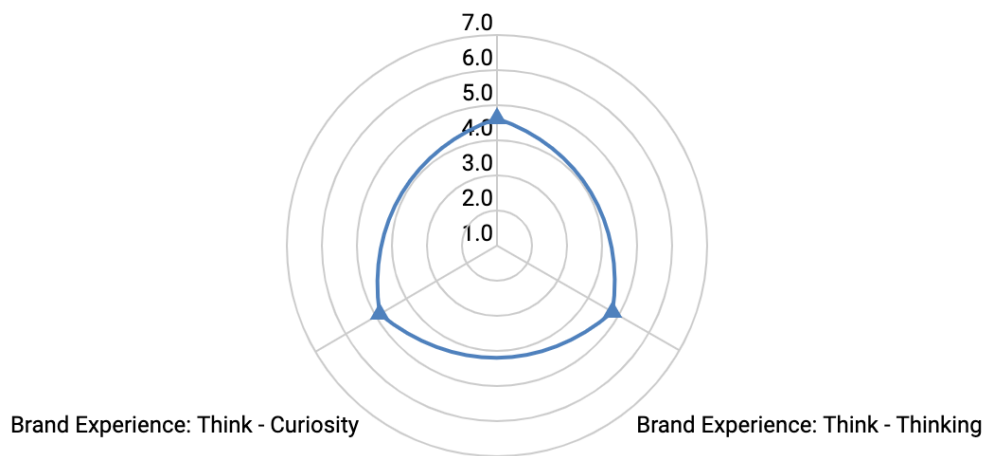
Graph 8. Brand Experience: Think. Source: Own elaboration.

In Brand Experience - Senses, respondents agree that the game that they play creates sensations on them.

Brand Experience: Senses - Strong impression

Brand Experience: Senses - Not Appeal

Brand Experience: Senses - Sensory way
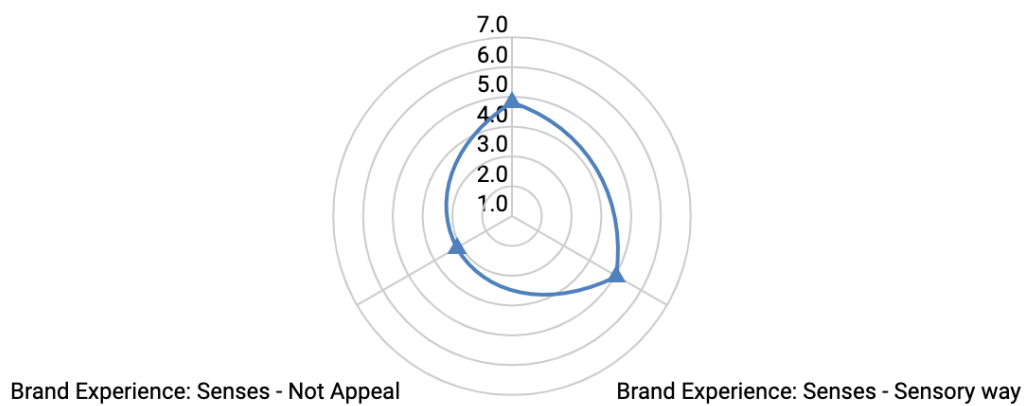
Graph 9. Brand Experience: Senses. Source: Own elaboration.

Speaking about Feelings, respondents do not agree that the game generates strong emotions (3.8) or that the game is an emotional brand (3.5).

Brand Experience: Feelings - Feelings and Sentiments

Brand Experience: Feelings - Emotional Brand   Brand Experience: Feelings - Strong emotions

Graph 10. Brand Experience: Feelings. Source: Own elaboration.

In relation to behaviour, respondents agree that mobile games are not action-oriented (4.5) and make them have physical (3.0) or bodily experiences (2.8).

Brand Experience: Behavior - Physical actions

Brand Experience: Behavior - Action oriented   Brand Experience: Behavior - Bodily experiences

Graph 11. Brand Experience: behaviour. Source: Own elaboration.

Moving into Belong, respondents do not strongly agree with the idea that

games make them feel part of a community (4.0), of a family (3.8), and not being alone (3.9).
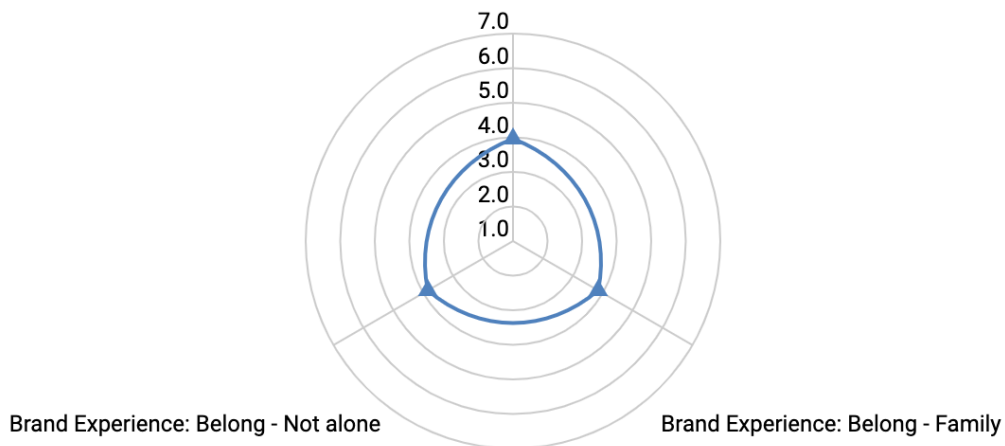
Graph 12. Brand Experience: belong. Source: Own elaboration.

4.7. Assessment of the measurement model: validity and reliability

Before contrasting the hypotheses raised in this research, the proposed model was evaluated with PLS (Barclay et al, 1995). The validity of the Individual item, the scale, convergent, and discriminant was analyzed. In order to do that, the SmartPLS 3.0 software was used and the significance of the parameters was obtained through bootstrapping, which assesses the precision of the PLS estimates. This method is a randomized repeated sampling technique with the replacement of the original sample to create a number of bootstrap samples. For this, 10,000 subsamples were used (Hair, et al, 2014; and Hair et al, 2017a).

4.7.1. Validity of the individual Items

In order to assess the validity and reliability of the individual items, their validity was calculated, the simple correlations of the means with their construct were analyzed and those items that had loadings greater than or equal to 0.7 were checked (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

In a PLS model, as Chin highlighted (1998) the individual validity of the item is assessed and measured through the loadings or simple correlations of the means or indicators with their respective construct. Falk and Miller (1992) proposed a minimum value of 0.55 for the loads between indicators and latent variables, which implies a commonality of the loading of 0.3025, lower value since only 30% of the variance of the manifest variable would be related to the construct.

To guarantee greater reliability of the items, Carmines and Zéller (1979) propose a loading value equal to or greater than 0.707, which implies that the shared variance between the construct and its indicators is greater than the error variance. For an overview of the results obtained, see Annex 8.3.

In the following table, it can be observed that most of the indicators show values above 0.7, which implies that more than 50% of the variance of the observed variable is shared by the construct. Some indicators have been kept below 0.7 (but always above the 0.55 threshold), given the information they provided and that their elimination did not imply a notable improvement in the fit of the global model. This is the case with MoT5 and PE3. This decision is corroborated by Barclay et al (1995) and Chin (1998), who indicated that the empirical rule should not be very rigid in the initial stages of scale development. Finally, some items were discarded in the next phase: MoT4, BES3_A, BES3, BEB3, BET2, Tenure, and LTV. MoT4 was discarded because of collinearity.

LATENT VARIABLE		ITEMS	LOADINGS
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	PEACE OF MIND (Loading =.879)	PoM1	.821
		PoM2	.769
		PoM3	.854
		PoM4	.870
		PoM5	.765
		PoM6	.804

	MOMENTS OF TRUST (Loading =.931)	MoT1	.858
		MoT2	.834
		MoT3	.779
		MoT4	COLINE
		MoT5	.650
	PRODUCT EXPERIENCE (Loading =.816)	PE1	.719
		PE2	.836
		PE3	.638
		PE4	.767
	OUTCOME FOCUS (Loading =.899)	OF1	.891
		OF2	.890
		OF3	.827
		OF4	.778
BRAND EXPERIENCE	SENSE (Loading =.803)	BES1_A	.943
		BES2_A	.942
		BES3_A	ELIMINATE
	FEEL (Loading =.835)	BEF1	.886
		BEF2	.912
		BEF3	.876
	BELONG (Loading =.803)	BES1	.932
		BES2	.952
		BES3	ELIMINATE
	behaviour (Loading =.640)	BEB1	.956
		BEB2	.946
		BEB3	ELIMINATE
	THINK (Loading =.710)	BET1	.932
		BET2	COLINE
		BET3	.940
SATISFACTION		NPS	.837
		CSAT	.886
		TENURE	ELIMINATE
GAME DOWNLOADS		DOWL_6M	.796
		DOWL_CUM	.878
GAME REVENUES		REV_6M	.957
		REV_CUM	.946
		E_LTV	ELIMINATE

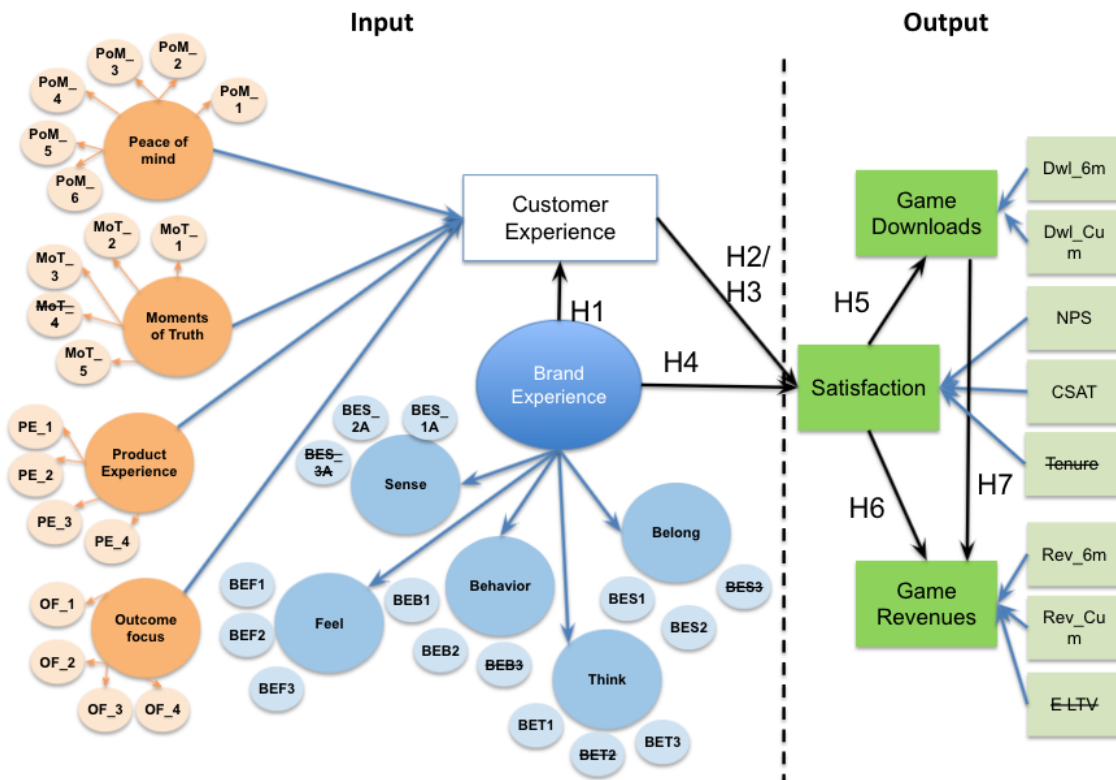*Table 30. Measurement of Individual validity. Source: Own elaboration.*

Figure 9. Measuring Scales and Theoretical framework of the empirical case based on the literature review, and adjusted based on the results. Source: Own elaboration.

4.7.2. Compound Validity

At the same time as measuring the individual validity of the items, it was assessed if the indicators measured satisfactorily the underlying construct to which they are assigned. The validity is acceptable when the values are equal to or greater than 0.7. When the value obtained is greater than 0.8, the validity is strict according to Nunnally (1978). As it can be observed in the following table 31 the majority of constructs have a value higher than 0.8, except Satisfaction and Game Downloads lower than 0.7 in Cronbach's Alpha, but they meet the limit set for composite validity. Therefore, all of them are considered valid as indicators of their respective constructs.

Factor	Alpha Cronbach	Composite Reliability (CR)
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	.904	.933
BRAND EXPERIENCE	.822	.872
SATISFACTION	.657	.853
GAME DOWNLOADS	.580	.824

GAME REVENUES	.896	.950

Table 31. Measurement of Composed validity. Source: Own elaboration.

4.7.3. Convergent Validity and discriminant

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) method was used to measure the convergent validity. According to the indications of Fornell and Larcker (1981), the value should be equal to or greater than 0.5, thereby indicating that each construct explains at least 50% of the variance of the assigned indicators. This is the case in this model.

Factor	AVE
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	.778
BRAND EXPERIENCE	.580
SATISFACTION	.743
GAME DOWNLOADS	.702
GAME REVENUES	.906

Table 32. Measurement of Convergent Validity, AVE. Source: Own elaboration.

Additionally, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio method (Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2015) to test discriminant validity was also included. If the HTMT is significantly smaller than one (threshold of 0.85), it means that the discriminant validity is established. All values except game downloads→ game revenues fullfill this requirement.

Confidence Interval	Original Sample	Average of the Sample	2.5%	97.5
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE → BRAND EXPERIENCE	0.804	0.803	0.760	0.843
GAME REVENUES→ BRAND EXPERIENCE	0.115	0.125	0.088	0.169
GAME REVENUES→ CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	0.080	0.086	0.034	0.158
GAME DOWNLOADS→ BRAND EXPERIENCE	0.123	0.144	0.094	0.210
GAME DOWNLOADS→ CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	0.102	0.109	0.045	0.200
GAME DOWNLOADS→ GAME REVENUES	1.245	1.246	1.177	1.324
SATISFACTION → BRAND EXPERIENCE	0.631	0.632	0.551	0.711

SATISFACTION → CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	0.899	0.900	0.845	0.958
SATISFACTION → GAME REVENUES	0.181	0.181	0.092	0.273
SATISFACTION → GAME DOWNLOADS	0.209	0.210	0.107	0.322

Table 33. Measurement of Convergent Validity, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio method. Source: Own elaboration.

After applying these methods, a second method to test discriminant validity of the model (to show how different a construct is from the rest) was calculated. To demonstrate the discriminant validity, the shared variance between a variable and its indicators must be higher than the variance shared with the other variables of the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The method used to do that was the correlations of the latent variables (AVE). In the following table (34), the value of the square root of the AVE of the corresponding construct can be observed on the diagonal of the matrix (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). It is worth noticing that the correlations between the constructs are lower than the root square of the AVE, which means that the construct of the measurement model shares more variance with its indicators than with the other constructs remaining in the model. Consequently, the discriminant validity can be confirmed

	BRAND EXPERIENCE	CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	GAME REVENUES	GAME DOWNLOADS	SATISFACT.
BRAND EXPERIENCE	0,761				
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	0,726	0,882			
GAME REVENUES	-0,066	-0,074	0,952		
GAME DOWNL	-0,067	-0,075	0,911	0,838	
SATISFACTION	0,504	0,701	-0,139	-0,125	0,862

Table 34. Measurement of discriminant validity. Source: Own elaboration.

Based on all the previous analyses, it can be concluded that all the requirements to have a good model have been tested and demonstrated. Therefore, the model can be assessed.

4.8. Assessment of the proposed model

In this section of this research, the structural proposed model was analyzed. In order to do this analysis, SmartPLS 3 software was used, with the aim of contrasting the hypothesis proposed in the final part of the literature review.

The values of the path coefficients (β) or standard regression coefficients were used to contrast the hypothesis. These coefficients show the relationship estimation in the structural model. Their positive or negative sign, their magnitude, and the statistical significance were analyzed to test the hypothesis. Additionally, the overall fit of the model was analyzed through the T-statistics, the overall significance of the path parameter (β), and the overall R^2 value and for each dependent variable (Chin et al, 2003). A higher R^2 value indicates the higher quality and predictive capacity of the model. Following the guidance of Falk and Miller (1992), the values with an R^2 higher than 0.1 have been accepted. Following this criteria, 3 out of the 4 components have been approved, having a substantial explanatory power in Game Revenue (>0.75), and a moderate explanatory power in Customer Experience and Satisfaction (0.5).

	Factor R^2
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	0,527
GAME REVENUES	0,831
GAME DOWNLOADS	0,016
SATISFACTION	0,491

Table 35. Factor R^2. Source: Own elaboration.

After analyzing the R^2 value, the Stone-Geisser (Q2) test was used to assess the predictive accuracy of the structural model for each construct. According to this test, the predictive capacity is low when it is 0.02; it is medium when the value is 0.15, and it is high when it is 0.35. The results of the test show that in the proposed model Customer Experience, Game Revenues, and

Satisfaction are highly predictive values, while Game Downloads is a low predictive one.

	SSO	SSE	Q² (=1-SSE/SSO)
BRAND EXPERIENCE	3330,000	3330,000	
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	2664,000	1588,670	0,404
GAME REVENUES	1332,000	340,896	0,744
GAME DOWNLOADS	1332,000	1317,944	0,011
SATISFACTION	1332,000	856,381	0,357

Table 36. Relevance Predictive test Q² or Stone-Geisser test. Source: Own elaboration.

After demonstrating that the model has a high predictive accuracy to explain the dependent variables that are part of it, the significance of the structural relationships was checked.
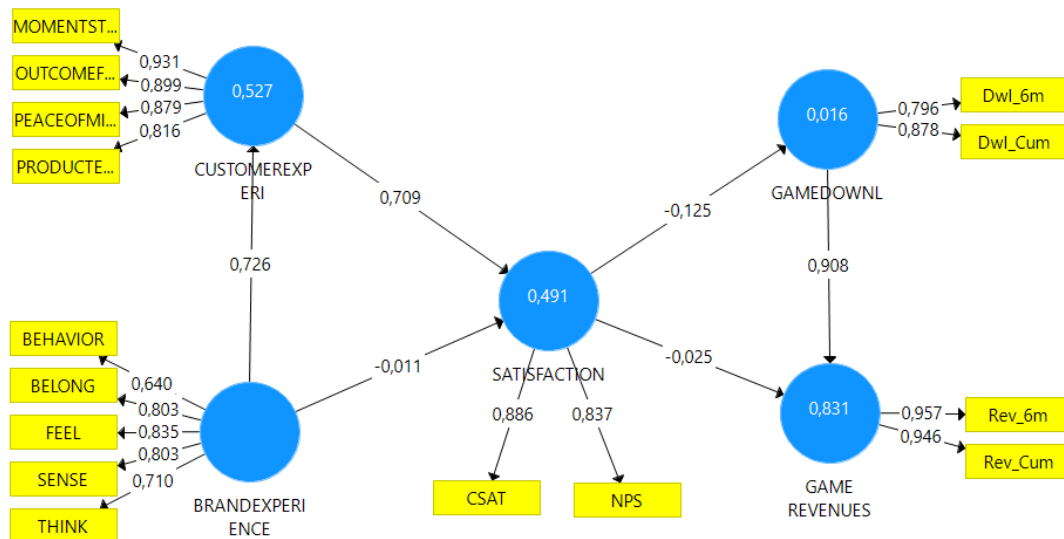
Figure 10. Model of the relevance of brand experience in the customer experience for the business success of a product/service in the mobile gaming industry. Source: Own elaboration.

In the PLS investigation, the path coefficients (β) show the relationship and its significance between the constructs. The bootstrapping technique (Hair, et al, 2014) was used with the aim of assessing the stability and the significance of the estimated parameters, considering 10.000 sub-samples (more information in the annex). Therefore, the hypotheses of the model were tested

through the obtained path coefficients and their significance. The desired significance level was the one of a t-Student because the proposed hypotheses were defined as having a direct influence on one another.

Hypoth.	Structural relationship	Path (β) *** p< 0,001, *p< 0,10	t Value (| O/STDEV|)	P Value	Contrasted Hypotheses
H1	BRAND EXPERIENCE → CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	.726***	39,239	0,000 ***	YES
H2 and H3	CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE → SATISFACTION	.709***	17,279	0,000 ***	YES
H4	BRAND EXPERIENCE → SATISFACTION	-.011 ns	0,242	0,808 ns	NO
H5	SATISFACTION → GAME REVENUES	-.025*	1,788	0,074 0*	YES
H6	SATISFACTION → GAME DOWNLOADS	-.0125***	3,517	0,000 ***	YES
H7	GAME DOWNLOADS → GAME REVENUES	.908***	111,035	0,000 ***	YES

Table 37. Structural analysis to contrast hypotheses. Source: Own elaboration.

The obtained results showed that six of the seven hypotheses were confirmed. Of the confirmed hypothesis, five of them had a level of confidence higher than 99% because they had a T-student value higher than 2,58 with a p-value under 0,01. The other confirmed hypothesis (SATISFACTION → GAME REVENUES) had a T-student value higher than 2,58 with a p-value under 0,1. The last hypothesis that could not be confirmed is the direct influence of Brand Experience on satisfaction.

4.9. Assessment of Hypothesis

Regarding the first hypothesis of this research, *the brand has a direct impact on the customer experience in the mobile gaming industry*, the model confirmed that Brand experience has a direct and positive influence on the Customer experience (β= 0.726; p<0,01; H1).

The second hypothesis of the model, *the customer experience has a direct effect on consumer satisfaction,* and the third, *the brand experience has an indirect impact on customer satisfaction through customer experience,* was

confirmed by the model, showing that Customer experience has a direct and positive, and brand experience an indirect and positive, influence on the Customer Satisfaction (β= 0.709; p<0,01; H2 and H3).

Moving to the fourth hypothesis, *the brand experience has a direct effect on consumer satisfaction,* the model discarded that Brand experience has a direct and positive influence on Satisfaction (β= -0.011; p>0,1; H4).

The fifth hypothesis of the model, *customer satisfaction has a direct positive effect on game revenues, was* confirmed by the model, showing that Customer Satisfaction has a direct and positive influence on the Game Revenues (β= -0.025; p<0,1; H5).

The sixth hypothesis of the model, *customer satisfaction has a direct effect on game downloads, was* confirmed by the model, showing that Customer Satisfaction has a direct influence on the Game Downloads (β= -0.0125; p<0,01; H6).

Finally, the seventh hypothesis of the model, *game downloads have a direct effect on game revenues, was* confirmed by the model, showing that Game Downloads has a direct influence on the Game Revenues (β= 0.908; p<0,01; H7).

4.10.   Assessment of Partial Models

Once the overall goodness of model was analyzed and validated, it was time to assess the Customer Experience Measurement, the Brand Experience Measurement and the consequences of Customer Satisfaction.

4.10.1.   Structural Model of Brand Experience

Focusing first on Brand Experience, as mentioned in previous sections, it was measured following Brakus et al 12-item scale (2009), which has four dimensions – sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual (each dimension measured by three questions), as it is the most well-known and commonly used scale to measure brand experience.
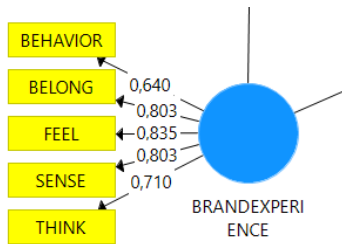
Figure 11. Brand Experience measurement in the Mobile Gaming Industry. Source: Own elaboration.

Dimensions	Obtained Model	Brakus et al (2009)
Sensory (sense)	0.803	0.86
Affective (feel)	0.835	0.81
Intellectual (think)	0.710	0.81
behavioural (behaviour)	0.640	0.6
Belonging (belong)	0.803	-

Table 38. Comparison of the Brand Experience Scale results with Brakus et al (2009). Source: Own elaboration.

4.10.2.   Structural Model of Customer Experience

In relation to the Customer Experience, it was measured through Klaus and Maklan EXQ measurement scale (2012) because it is the most useful and adaptable to the mobile gaming industry, and allows us to measure the overall CX, including the direct and indirect interactions between the customer and other actors of the business. This scale has four different groups of variables (Peace of mind, Moments of Truth, Product Experience, and Outcome focus).
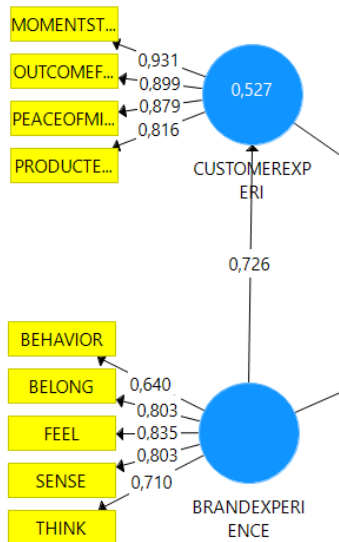
Figure 12. Customer Experience measurement in the Mobile Gaming Industry. Source: Own elaboration.

The results obtained showed that the EXQ scale created by Klaus et Maklan (2012) is a successful scale to measure Customer Experience in the mobile gaming industry and that Peace of mind, Moments of Truth, Product Experience, and Outcome focus dimensions have a high predictive accuracy of Customer Experience.

Dimensions	Obtained Model	Klaus et Maklan (2012)
Peace of mind	0.879	0.69
Moments of Truth	0.931	0.61
Product Experience	0.816	0.71
Outcome focus	0.899	0.66

Table 39. Comparison of the Customer Experience Scale results with Klaus et Maklan (2012). Source: Own elaboration.

Additionally, the analyzed model of this research also demonstrated that Brand Experience has a key role in defining Customer Experience, adding this

dimension into the four previous one already used the EXQ scale, and in line with the EXQ revised version (Klaus, 2014).

Finally, both Klaus et Maklan (2012) and Brakus et al (2009) showed that Customer Experience, the first one, and Brand Experience, the second one, have a high explanatory power of Customer Satisfaction. In the proposed model, the explanatory power of Customer Experience of Customer Satisfaction is in line with the one obtained by Klaus et Maklan (2012), 0.709 vs 0.63. However, this is not the case for the explanatory power of Brand Experience of Customer Satisfaction identified by Brakus et al (2009), 0.15 with a $p < 0.5$, compared with a -0.11 with a $p > 0.8$ of this research.
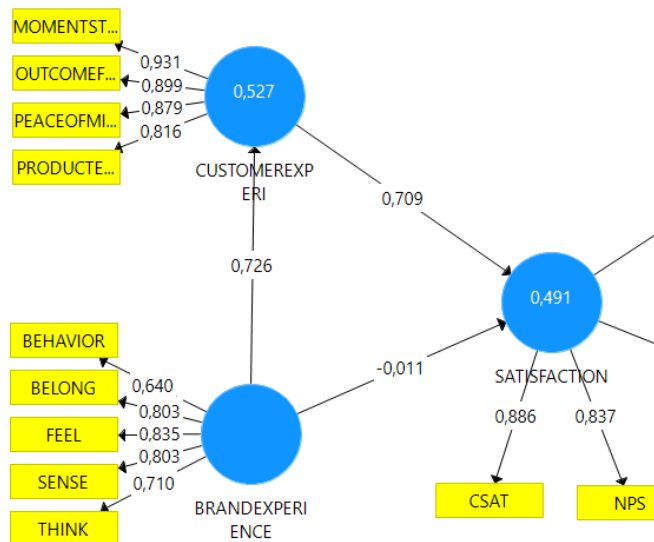
Figure 12. Customer Experience measurement in the Mobile Gaming Industry. Source: Own elaboration.

4.10.3.   Structural Model of the consequences of Satisfaction

Regarding the consequence of Customer Satisfaction into the Game Revenues and Game Downloads, the obtained model demonstrated the high predictive accuracy of Customer Satisfaction into the other two parameters. This is consistent with what was found in the literature: according to authors

such as Schmitt (2003) and Calder et al (2016), satisfaction is the result of Customer Experience, and impacting satisfaction leads to better business results (such as lead consumption).
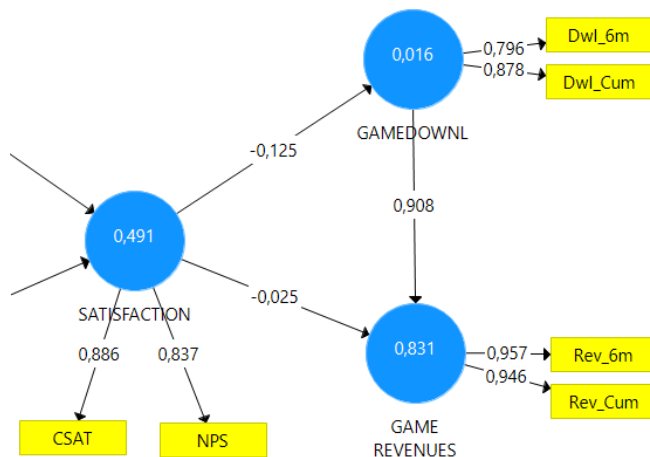

Figure 13. Customer Experience and Brand Experience Impact on Customer Satisfaction in the Mobile Gaming Industry. Source: Own elaboration.

4.11.   Assessment of Mediation Effects

In this section, the mediation role of some variables of the model will be measured.

Mediation is understood as the presence of a variable that transmits the effect of an antecedent variable to a result (Aguinis et al, 2016). There are two types of mediation, simple and multiple. On the one hand, simple mediation is when there is only one mediating variable and its inclusion in the model changes the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. On the other hand, multiple mediation is when there is a simultaneous moderation through multiple variables (Aguinis et al, 2016; and Carrion et al, 2017). There are two types of causal effects: direct, and indirectly done through one or more mediating variables (Carrion et al, 2017). In this research, the methods developed by Zhao et al (2010) and Nitzl et al (2016) were used to assess the mediation effect. Two steps were followed: first, assess the relevance of the indirect effect (done through a 10k subsamples bootstrapping

methodology), and, second, assess the type and magnitude of the indirect effect (calculated through confidence intervals applied into the 10k subsamples bootstrapping). In this process, if the interval for a mediation hypothesis does not contain zero means that the indirect effect is significantly different from zero with 95% confidence. If it is the case then, the Variance Accounted For (VAF) is calculated (Hair et al, 2017a) measuring the relevance of the indirect effect on the overall impact. Depending on the result of the VAF index, the mediation can change (Hair et al, 2017a):

- VAF < 0.2, no mediation
- 0.2 ≤ VAF ≤ 0.8, partial mediation
- VAF > 0.8, full mediation

In this research two mediation effects will be measured:

- Customer Experience as a mediator in the relationship between Brand Experience and Customer Satisfaction.
- Game Downloads as a mediator in the relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Game Revenues.

4.11.1. Customer experience as mediator effect

The study of the effect of Brand Experience in Customer Satisfaction through Customer Experience demonstrated that there is a competitive full mediation because the Indirect Effect is bigger than the Direct Effect + Indirect Effect (Hair et al, 2017a).
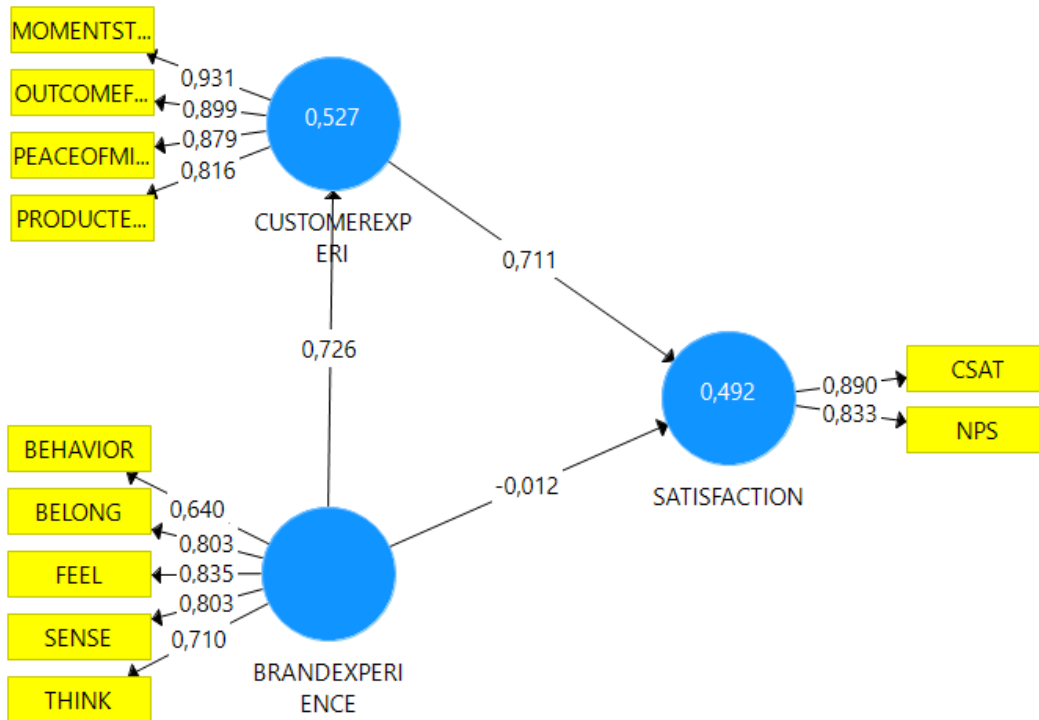
Figure 14. Study of the effect of Brand Experience in Customer Satisfaction through Customer Experience. Source: Own elaboration.

VAF = (Indirect Effect) / (Direct Effect + Indirect Effect)

VAF = (0.726*0.711) / (-0.012 + (0.726*0.711))= 1.024

4.11.2.   Game Downloads as mediator effect

The study of the effect of Customer Satisfaction in Game Revenues through Game Downloads demonstrated that there is a complimentary full mediation because VAF > 0.8 (Hair et al, 2017a).
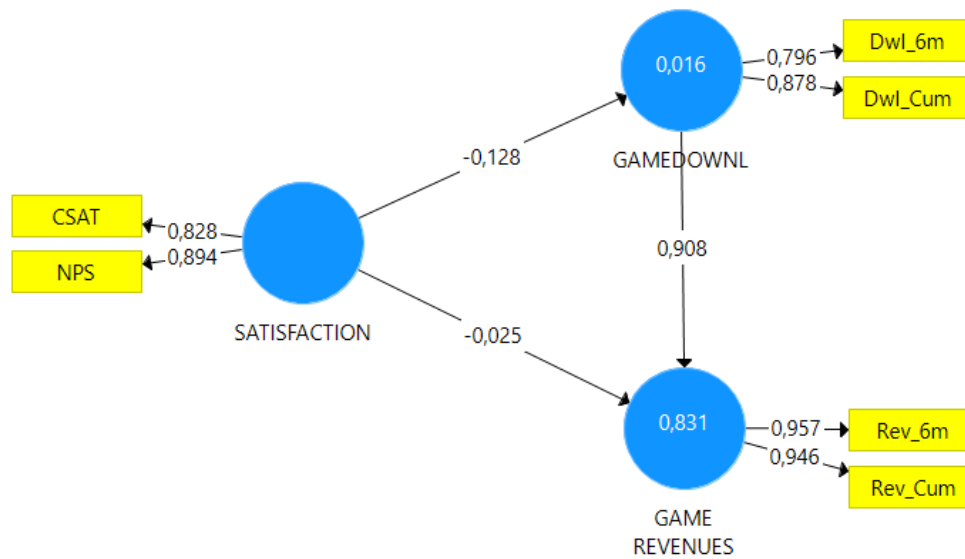
Figure 15. Study of the effect of Customer Satisfaction in Game Revenues through Game Downloads. Source: Own elaboration.

VAF = (Indirect Effect) / (Direct Effect + Indirect Effect)

VAF = (-0.128*0.908) / (-0.025 + (-0.128*0.908))= 0.8229762647

4.12.   Summary of the Section

In the results chapter, the results and findings of the research were presented.

The analyzed sample was collected in April 2021 and was analyzed during June-July 2021. The data were treated with SPSS in Mac and the Structural Equations Modelling was conducted through SmartPLS 3.0.

The obtained sample is a US mobile gamers sample (balanced in age and gender, and with a high level of income and education) that have been playing games for a long period of time and that in general are free players.

In the descriptive univariate analysis, it was demonstrated that the sample continuous quantitative variables follow a normal distribution, and, after that, a descriptive univariate analysis was conducted for each latent variable of

the model.

Regarding the overall model, its validity and reliability were demonstrated, thereby showing the model's goodness and that it has a high predictive accuracy to explain the dependent variables. When applying the model, the obtained results showed that six of the seven hypotheses were confirmed.

The model also demonstrated the goodness of the EXQ scale from Klaus et Maklan (2012) to measure Customer Experience and the Brand Experience Scale from Brakus et al (2009) to measure Brand Experience. Additionally, the analyzed model also unveiled that Brand Experience has a key role in defining Customer Experience. Both Klaus et Maklan (2012) and Brakus et al (2009) showed that Customer Experience and Brand Experience have a high explanatory power of Customer Satisfaction.

Finally, this research also demonstrated the mediation effect of Customer Experience in the relationship between Brand Experience and Customer Satisfaction and of Game Downloads in the relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Game Revenues.

After analyzing the results, chapter five is about the conclusions.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Introduction

The goal of this research was to understand the role of the brand experience in the customer experience in the mobile gaming industry and find out how brand experience impacts the customer experience, and, consequently, the business results of a product or service, in the mobile gaming industry.

In this section, the research question of the thesis is answered and different conclusions are stated based on the results of the model and their comparison with the literature and previous research.

5.2. Overall Assessment: Customer Experience

The first element to review is the customer experience and its role to achieve a competitive advantage in the Experience Economy.

5.2.1. Customer Experience: New competitive battleground

As stated by multiple authors in the literature, the customer experience has become the next competitive battleground for the differentiation and consequent success of an economic offering (Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Gentile et al, 2007; Klaus, 2015; Smith and Milligan, 2015; Duncan et al, 2017; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Havir, 2017; and Kotler, 2017).

The results of this research reinforce this point of view and show the high impact of customer experience in customer satisfaction, and the impact that later on customer satisfaction has on the business results of a product or service, therefore underwriting that customer experience is the battleground to achieve a competitive advantage and satisfy customer expectations.

5.2.2. Customer Experience: Role of CX in the Mobile Gaming Industry

Following the previous section point, the mobile gaming industry is not an

exception to this trend. As stated in the literature, Customer Experience should have a key role in the success of a mobile game because "*the player experience is at the core of video-game play*" (Wyeth, 2012).

This research has demonstrated that Customer Experience has a key role in the differentiation and consequent success of an economic offering in the mobile gaming industry, following the example of other industries previously analysed such as retail (Brakus et al, 2009; and Puccinelli, 2009), distribution (Brakus et al, 2009), fashion (Brakus et al, 2009; and Iglesias et al, 2010), automovil (Brakus et al, 2009; Iglesias et al, 2010; and Nagasawa, 2008), laptops and tech devices (Brakus et al, 2009; and Iglesias et al, 2010), research engines (Brakus et al, 2009), attraction parks (Brakus et al, 2009), coffee shops (Brakus et al, 2009), hotel (Brakus et al, 2009), insurances (Brakus et al, 2009), service (Nysveen et al, 2012), moving consumer goods (Rajumesh, 2014), travel website (Cleff et al, 2018), B2B and B2C (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020), and tourism (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

5.2.3. Customer Experience: Components of customer experience

As stated in the literature review, the customer experience is the result of the consumer interaction with different parts of the company's offering: brand, product, or service (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

The results of this research are aligned with this statement and have shown that the Consumption Experience (measured through Peace of mind and Moments of Truth), the Product Experience (measured through Outcome Focus and Product Experience), and the Brand Experience (measured through senses, feelings, behaviour, think and belong) are components of the Customer Experience.

5.2.4. Customer Experience: Customer Experience vs Customer Satisfaction

As pointed out by Schmitt (2003), Customer Experience is different from

Customer Satisfaction. The main difference is that while satisfaction is a result, an outcome, experiences are what businesses have to, first, understand and, then, manage (Schmitt, 2003).

This research supports this claim by showing the key role that Customer Experience (input) has in defining Customer Satisfaction (output): Customer Experience has high explanatory power (positive relationship) of Customer Satisfaction in line with the results obtained by Klaus et Maklan (2012) and other authors (Sharon and Crane (2007), Brakus et al (2009), Zarantenello and Schmitt (2010), Iglesias et al (2011), Klaus (2015), Sayed (2015), Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Sayed (2015), Kranzb et al (2018) and Godovykh and Tasci (2020). Additionally, it has key strategic components to manage and improve the economic offering.

5.2.5. Customer Experience: EXQ Scale

According to the literature review, the EXQ scale was the most promising one because it seems to capture the totality of customer experience with its different components (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2020) and it has been previously tested in multiple industries.

The results obtained have shown that the EXQ scale created by Klaus et Maklan (2012) is also a successful scale to measure Customer Experience in the mobile gaming industry, and that adding a measurement for Brand Experience in the scale, as later on was done by Klaus (2014), is a necessary requirement to cover the holistic view of Customer Experience.

5.3. Overall Assessment: Brand Experience

As stated at the beginning of this research, the aim of this research was to explore how thanks to the correct management of brand-related stimuli (at the game level) through the brand experience, companies can align with or improve the customer experience during the customer journey in order to consolidate or improve their competitive position in the mobile gaming industry.

The obtained results sustain these claims.

5.3.1. Brand Experience: Role in the Customer Experience and source of competitive advantage

In line with multiple authors (Keller, 2001; Morrison and Crane, 2007; Christensen et al, 2007; Brakus et al, 2009; Iglesias et al, 2011; Nysveen, 2013; Shaun and Milligan, 2015; Klaus, 2015; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020) and the results of this research, the analysed model of this research demonstrated that Brand Experience has a key role in defining the Customer Experience, adding this dimension into the four previous one already used the EXQ scale (Klaus and Maklan, 2012), and in line with the EXQ revised version (Klaus, 2014).

Additionally, based on the literature, in a fierce, competitive, and mature marketplace, like the one where mobile gaming is going, the brand is key to differentiate the customer experience from one of the competitors (Schmitt, 2010; and Iglesias et al, 2011). This research has reinforced this statement, highlighting the significant impact of Brand Experience in the overall Customer Experience, and then its impact on Customer Satisfaction and business results.

5.3.2. Brand Experience: Role of Brand Experience in the Mobile Gaming Industry

One of the key assumptions of this thesis is that the Mobile Gaming Industry is moving towards the maturity phase of the product life cycle, which means that mobile gaming companies that are mainly used to compete on product features will have to learn to compete in this new context based on brand-related stimuli (mainly at the game level), with an important focus on the customer (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). In this changing context, mobile gaming companies to reach and maintain a competitive advantage will have to focus more and more on brand-related stimuli based on intangibles.

The results of this thesis reinforce this assumption, showing the key role that Brand Experience already plays in Customer Experience and its indirect impact on customer satisfaction and business results. Brand-related stimuli are

already a source of competitive advantage in the Mobile Gaming Industry.

5.3.3. Brand Experience: Brand Experience Brakus Scale

The Brakus et al 12-item scale (2009) is not only the most well-known and commonly used scale to measure brand experience, it is also a successful scale to measure Brand Experience. As expected, Sense, Feel, Think, behaviour, and Belong dimensions have a high predictive accuracy of Brand Experience.

The obtained model of this thesis compared with the one of Brakus et al (2009) gets really similar results, confirming the goodness of Brakus Brand Experience scale, and its high explanatory power to measure Brand Experience also in the mobile gaming industry.

Additionally, as it happened in Nysveen et al study (2013), and not in Brakus et al (2009), the relationship dimension of brand experience is also important in the mobile gaming industry as it was assumed previously because mobile gaming is based on strong social communities and in players playing against each other in groups or individually through social features to drive engagement.

5.3.4. Brand Experience: Relationship with Customer Satisfaction

Even if some authors in the literature found a strong connection between Brand Experience and Customer Satisfaction (Kranzb et al, 2018, based on Rahinel and Redden, 2013; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), this research has shown that Brand experience has not yet a direct influence on Customer Satisfaction, at least in the Mobile Gaming Industry. According to the study, the effect of Brand Experience in Customer Satisfaction happens through Customer Experience (competitive full mediation).

5.3.5. Brand Experience: Relationship with Business results

As stated in the previous section, Brand Experience impacts Customer Satisfaction through Customer Experience, which then impacts Game

Downloads and, finally, Game Revenues. That means that Brand Experience does not impact the business results directly but through other variables such as customer satisfaction (Lundqvist et al, 2013; Smith and Milligan, 2013; Riivits-arkonsuo et al, 2014; Klaus, 2015; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Kotler, 2017; Kranzb et al, 2018; Ong et al, 2018; Fetcherin, 2020; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

5.4. Overall Assessment: Other Conclusions

5.4.1. Customer Satisfaction: The predictor of business value

In the obtained model of this research, and as expected in the literature, Customer Satisfaction impacts the Game Revenues and Game Downloads with high predictive accuracy.

This is consistent with the literature where both customer experience and brand experience influence word of mouth (Klaus, 2015; Lundqvist et al, 2013; Kotler, 2017; Kranzb et al, 2018; Fetcherin, 2020), consumption (Calder et al, 2016; Clarke et al, 2018; Smith and Milligan, 2013; Lundqvist et al, 2013; Klaus, 2015; Peppers and Rogers, 2017), loyalty (Schmitt et al, 2012; Borowski; 2015; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Brakus et al, 2009; Riivits-arkonsuo et al, 2014; Ong et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020), cross-sell and retentions (Shaun and Milligan, 2015; Godovykh and Tasci, 2020) and financial performance (Peppers and Rogers, 2017), directly or indirectly, mainly through customer satisfaction.

5.4.2. Word of Mouth: Mediation Role

The study also showed the effect of Customer Satisfaction in Game Revenues directly or through Game Downloads, thereby demonstrating the importance of word-of-mouth on reaching revenue goals. Brand and customer experience have a positive impact on word of mouth (LaSalle et al, 2003; Meyer and Schwager 2007; Klaus, 2015; Peppers and Rogers, 2017; Kranzb et al, 2018; and Godovykh and Tasci, 2020) through Customer Satisfaction.

These results reinforce the claim done by Fetcherin (2020) when he crowned word of mouth as the most important and effective channel of communication.

5.4.3. The role of the Product and Industry Life-cycle

As aforementioned, the mobile gaming industry is moving towards the maturing face of its product life-cycle as can be seen in the articles from GameIndustry (2018), Ap-Annie (2018), and NewZoo (2018). The obtained results in this research show how in an industry that is still maturing, brand-related stimuli based on intangibles (Brand Experience) still do not have a direct impact on Customer Satisfaction (it has it through Customer Experience), despite that it is the case in more mature industries such as laptops and tech devices (Brakus et al, 2009; and Iglesias et al, 2010), research engines (Brakus et al, 2009), attraction parks (Brakus et al, 2009), coffee shops (Brakus et al, 2009), hotel (Brakus et al, 2009), insurances (Brakus et al, 2009), thereby reinforcing the idea that the role of Brand Experience is connected with the product and industry life cycle (Sabol, 2013). Therefore, it is reasonable to think that the role of Brand Experience increases at the same time that the market matures, aligned with what Sabol stated in the research (2013).

5.4.4. Competitive Industries

The mobile gaming industry is a highly competitive industry, with fierce competition and a maturing market. According to Iglesis et al (2011), this type of highly developed economy requires brands to differentiate companies from one another and to engage customers in long-term relationships.

The obtained results reinforce this concept, showing the key role that brand experience plays in the customer experience and, then, the impact of customer experience on customer satisfaction.

5.5. Academic Conclusions

Moving on to the academic results of this research based on the initial

objectives, at the beginning of this research some objectives were set up and thanks to the obtained results, it is time to assess their completion and answer the research question.

5.5.1. Objective 1

The first objective that was set was to understand what defines the brand experience in the mobile gaming industry, as a part of the customer experience.

This research has shown that Customer Experience is the combination of 5 different factors:

- Product experience speaks about the importance of customer perceptions when making choices in the product (Klaus and Maklan, 2013).
- Outcome focus reflects the key role of goal-oriented experiences in consumer behaviour (Klaus and Maklan, 2013).
- Moments-of-truth focuses on the importance of service recovery and flexibility (Klaus and Maklan, 2013).
- Peace of mind reflects the assessment of all the interactions with the service provider (Klaus and Maklan, 2013).
- Brand Experience measures the behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments (Brakus et al, 2009).

5.5.2. Objective 2

The second objective was about understanding what defines the brand experience in the mobile gaming industry, as a part of the customer experience.

This research has demonstrated that, as Brakus et al (2009) found out, Brand Experience is composed of sensations, feelings, cognitions, behavioural and belonging responses evoked by brand-related stimuli.

5.5.3. Objective 3

The third objective was about identifying and measuring how the brand experience can impact the customer experience and the business results of a product or service.

The obtained results have shown that Brand Experience has an indirect positive effect on Customer Satisfaction through Customer Experience and that Customer Satisfaction impacts the business results of a mobile game (Game downloads and Game Revenues) thanks to positive Customer Experience.

5.5.4. Research Questions

Finally, the research questions of this research ("**How** does the **brand experience impact** the **customer experience** and the **business results** of a **product/service** in the **mobile gaming industry**?") has the following answer: Brand Experience is a key driver of Customer Experience, impacts positively Customer Satisfaction through the Customer Experience, and thanks to this positive impact on Customer Satisfaction, the business results are impacted positively (Game Revenues and Game Downloads).

5.6. Contributions to the Literature

Based on the Customer Experience literature limitations highlighted at the beginning of this research, the obtained results contribute to reducing the limitations of the Customer Experience and Brand Experience literature in three ways:

- The first limitation identified in the literature was the lack of research in the connection, interaction, and impact between brand experience and customer experience. Based on the results obtained: brand experience is a part and a driver of the overall customer experience, therefore, analysing the role of the brand in the overall customer experience is relevant and necessary in the experience economic offering, following the direction that Klaus has pointed out in his EXQ scale revision (2015).
- The second limitation was the lack of academic research connecting the

role of customer experience and the product life cycle. This research has pointed out the increasing role of Brand Experience depending on the phase of the product and industry life-cycle, with a lower role in a maturing industry such as the mobile gaming industry, and a full role in mature industries such as laptops and tech devices or insurances (Brakus et al, 2009; and Iglesias et al, 2010).

● Additionally, this research has also contributed with an in-depth analysis of customer and brand experience in an industry where it had not been applied before (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).

5.7. Business conclusions

Based on this research there are some key conclusions that both academics and practitioners should consider:

● **Customer Experience:**
   ○ Customer Experience speaks about the whole experience including also the Brand Experience. In order to properly manage the customer experience, business companies need to manage their brand touchpoints because they can positively or negatively affect the overall customer experience.
   ○ In line with what Andrei et al (2018) highlighted, in order to build a competitive advantage, companies need to offer great Customer Experiences, and the mobile gaming market is not an exception. Higher Customer Experience means higher customer satisfaction, and therefore, more downloads and more revenue (higher business results).
   ○ As pointed out by Schmitt (2003), Customer Experience is what businesses have to, first, understand and, then, manage (Schmitt, 2003), because it has high positive explanatory power (positive relationship) of Customer Satisfaction. Customer Experience is the means to achieve Customer Satisfaction and then business results, the outcome.

- **Brand Experience**
  - Brand Experience has an important role in defining Customer Experience, that varies depending on the industry life-cycle.
  - Businesses can improve the Customer Experience through Brand Experience during the customer journey in order to consolidate or improve their competitive position in the mobile gaming industry.
  - As stated in the literature and demonstrated in the model, in the mobile gaming market brands do not only fulfill the traditional role of being guarantees of quality, giving reputation, reducing uncertainty, and saving customers time, risk, and cost (Schmitt, 2009; and Keller, 2016), but they have also become a key element for differentiation and distinction in the customer mind, and to build an emotional connection with the end customer (Wanick et al, 2017; and Coleman, 2018), thereby having an impact on the Customer Experience.
  - As Schmitt (1999) pointed out, companies with strong brands get stronger results than companies without them.
- **Product and industry life cycle**
  - The obtained results in this research show the importance of the product and industry life cycle (Sabol, 2013) in the role of Brand Experience and brand-related stimuli on Customer Experience, Customer Satisfaction, and Business Results of a product or service.
  - Highly competitive industries such as the Mobile gaming Industry, with fierce competition and a maturing market, require brands to differentiate companies from one another and to engage customers in long-term relationships.
- **Mobile Gaming Industry:**
  - For professionals in the mobile gaming industry, the role of Brand Experience is not going to stop growing. In the next few years, companies will have to move to a qualitative differentiation strategy (intangibles) to be competitive, which means that to reach

and maintain a competitive advantage in this lucrative market, business companies will have to focus more and more on brand-related stimuli based on intangibles. Therefore, mobile gaming companies need to begin to manage their brand touchpoints because brand experience already has a direct positive impact on customer experience, and because the role and importance of brand experience will only increase over time with the maturity of the industry (Sabol, 2013), as has happened in other industries such as laptops and tech devices or insurances (Brakus et al, 2009; and Iglesias et al, 2010).

5.8. Summary

In section 5 of this research, the conclusions of the whole research were stated.

Regarding Customer Experience, the obtained model has shown that Customer Experience is the competitive battleground, not only in traditional industries but also in the mobile gaming industry. The components of Customer Experience have been tested and identified and the role of Customer Experience in predicting Customer Satisfaction and Business results have been identified. Moreover, the EXQ scale has been tested and validated.

Moving to Brand Experience, its key role in the Customer Experience has been identified and its importance to reach competitiveness in the mobile gaming industry. Brand Experience Brakus Scale was tested and validated, and the indirect Relationship with Customer Satisfaction and Business resuñts was proved.

In relation to Customer Satisfaction, Word of Mouth, the Product Life-cycle, and Competitive Industries, different conclusions were stated too.

Finally, some academic conclusions were highlighted by reviewing the set goal of the beginning of the research, answering the research question, and

analysing how this research impacts the Literature and the business.

6. Limitations, ethical implications, and Next Steps

After reviewing the conclusions of this research, it is time to assess the implications and next steps of the results obtained.

6.1. Limitations

There are limitations in this research:

- The first one is that this research focused on the Mobile Gaming Industry, which means that its conclusions can only be directly applied to the mobile gaming industry.
- Additionally, this research did not only focus on the Mobile Gaming Industry but also on a specific market, the US. This means that the obtained results are applicable in the US Mobile Gaming Industry, and not in other markets that may be in a different state (less mature).
- Regarding the methodology used, all these measurements used were self-reported scales, which poses several limitations because of the possible biases of the respondents related to social desirability, overestimation of past, reorganisation of knowledge and beliefs, or their mood when answering questions (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020).
- Moreover, all the data comes from a panel, SurveyMonkey panel, which means that the results could be biassed by this source of information.
- As stated in the literature review, the main research conducted until now in the area of customer experience and brand experience focused on a general conceptualization without taking into account the type of industry, the customer needs to be tackled, and the industry life-cycle. Consequently, the theoretical framework analysed and used to conduct this research could be built on conceptual limitations.

- In this same direction, the main research conducted in the literature until now in the area of customer experience and brand experience focused on a general conceptualization without taking into account the type of industry, the customer need to be tackled, and the industry life-cycle. Consequently, this research includes some of these conceptual limitations.

- Finally, due to the lack of resources (monetary and time), any further ambitious research proposals based on primary data and/or quantitative methods were discarded, thereby limiting the scope of this project

6.2. Ethical Implications

Thinking about ethical implications, it is important to keep in mind that this research involved secondary data from books and articles, which means that a proper citation and bibliography were required so as to guarantee the academic quality of this document. Additionally, in the final phase of the research, primary data was collected from individuals and therefore proper management of this information was done. Participants in this research were entirely voluntary and they were informed of the scope and goals of the project, and also of who is conducting it. They were also given guarantees of their anonymity and assured about the confidentiality of the provided information.

Finally, I state that I followed all the indications set by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) in its ethical code, The UOC's Code of Good Practice in Research and Innovation[1].

6.3. Next Steps

Based on the obtained results, there are different next steps to follow-up:

- This research on the role of Brand Experience in the Customer Experience in the mobile gaming industry could be conducted in different

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[1] *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC). (n.d.). The UOC's Code of Good Practice in Research and Innovation (CBPRI). Retrieved May 08, 2018, from https://research.uoc.edu/portal/_resources/CA/documents/recerca/kit_etica/Juliol_2016/kit_angles_20160712/1_Code_ Good_Practices_2014_EN.pdf*

countries outside the US, in order to find out if the results obtained can be generalized to the whole mobile gaming industry and/or that the product or industry life-cycle have a key role on defining the importance of Customer and Brand Experience.

- This same research could also be conducted in other panels around the US or around the world, to avoid the bias of a unique source of information.

- The role of Brand Experience in the Customer Experience in the mobile gaming industry could be assessed in two different countries in completely different stages of the industry life cycle, for example, the US in comparison with China, in order to see how the role of Brand Experience changes depending on the phase of the industry life cycle.

- This research could also be repeated after some years to see the evolution of the role and impact of Brand Experience in the Mobile Gaming Industry. A hypothesis coming out from this research is that over time Brand Experience will become a more important driver of Customer Experience, thereby maybe impacting directly Customer Satisfaction.

- A new Customer Experience Scale applicable to the mobile gaming industry including Brand Experience could be created based on the lack of this dimension in the EXQ scale.

- The identified scales to measure Brand Experience and Customer Experience are not really applicable in the day-to-day of a business practitioner because of the number of questions and complexity of the scale. Therefore, based on the obtained results and the confirmation of the validity of the EXQ Scale to measure Customer Experience and the Brakus Scale to measure Brand Experience, a new simple and targeted measurement for practitioners could be developed.

- Finally, based on the obtained results and conclusions, this research could be replicated in other industries such as the Software as a Service (SaaS) Industry that has many similarities to the Mobile Gaming Industry,

mainly because of the digital nature of the product and its service mentality.

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8. Annex

8.1. Concepts

Experiences, customer experience; brand experience; brand image; brands; customer-centricity; customer journey; customer experience touch-points; customer engagement; brand loyalty; brand personality; customer satisfaction; tangibles; intangibles; users; customers; clients; guests; characteristics; features; benefits; products; services; customization; mass customization; commoditization; customer needs; customer behaviour; share of voice; share of mind; customer retention; customer loyalty; qualitative differentiation; social media; social value.

- **Experiences** are "private events that occur in response to some stimulation. They are often not self-generated (as some thoughts and cognitions) but induced" (Schmitt, 2010), and they create an emotional connection between the offering and the customer (Morrison and Crain, 2007).

- **Customer Experience** is "a function of a set of interactions between customers and some part of an organization" (Nysveen et al, 2013) and "a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social components" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). The customer experience "encompasses the total experience, including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience, and may involve multiple retail channels" (Verhoef et al, 2009).

- **Brand Experience** is an aspect of the customer experience, that does not require direct contact or experience with the product, and focuses on the brand-related stimuli of the offer (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), that is to say, it is "a unique construct that captures subjective, internal consumer responses to brand-specific stimuli" (Aaker, 1997). "Brand

experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments" (Brakus et al, 2009). "Brand experience includes the customers' brand perceptions that influence their customer experience and their decision process" (Klaus, 2015: 90). Brand experience is about delivering the brand promise through consistent actions (Iglesias et al, 2011)

- **Brand image** is defined as "consumer perceptions of and preferences for a brand, as reflected by the various types of brand associations held in consumers' memory" (Keller, 2001). It differs from brand experience because brand experiences are actual "sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses" (Brakus et al, 2009), and brand image is merely a projection of traits or perceptions onto brands. Brand image is a consequence and not a cause of brand experience.

- **Brands** are "a multifaceted approach to imprinting and distinguishing a particular product or service in the mind of the consumer" (Wanick et al, 2017: 164). Brands have moved from "simple stamps to sophisticated logo design and different communication strategies" (Wanick et al, 2017: 164). Brands are composed by many aspects including the brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments (Brakus et al, 2009), "involving complex and subjective variables such as emotions, experiences, and beliefs that are interrelated and integrated with the brand's mission, value, and strategy" (Wanick et al, 2017: 166). In this research, the brand is always the mobile game, not the corporate company behind.

- **Customer centricity** is "a strategy that aligns a company's products and services with the needs of its most valuable customers to maximize the long-term financial value of those customers" (Fader, 2012).

- **Customer Journey** is "the process a customer goes through, across all stages and touchpoints, that makes up the customer experience" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). There are three stages: the pre-purchase, the

purchase and the post-purchase.

- **Customer experience touchpoints** are customer interactions during the experience and there are four types of them: brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/external/independent (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

- **Customer Engagement** is defined as "the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiates" (Calder et al, 2016: 90). "Customer engagement is now seen as a logical extension of and a result of ongoing positive customer experiences" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017: 59).

- **Brand Loyalty** is described by Aaaker "as the bond or deep adherence to a brand when consumers got a positive perception of a brand, loyalty results" (Sayed, 2015: 106).

- **Brand Personality** can be conceptualized as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997: 347).

- **Customer Satisfaction** "is defined as meeting or exceeding the customer's requirements for product and service features, price, timeliness and performance" (Westcott and Duffy, 2015). It can also be defined as "the gap between what individual customers settle for and what each wants exactly" (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). The difference between customer satisfaction and customer experience is that "satisfaction is outcome-oriented" (Schmitt, 2003) while "experience, in contrast, is process-oriented" (Schmitt, 2003).

- **Tangibles** are characterístics and functional advantages (Schmitt, 1999: 3).

- **Intangibles** are symbols and metaphors around the product, promises that need to be tangible that gives psychological satisfaction (Levitt, 1981).

- **Users** are who interact and/or use the product or service[2].

- **Customers** are rational and emotional animals who buy a product or

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[2] *Bright Journey. (n.d.). Web. 02 April. 2019. http://www.brightjourney.com/q/difference-customer-client-user-consumer*

service (Schmitt, 1999), and they have different standards and expectations (Borowski, 2017). Customers are the source of business revenue (Peppers and Rogers, 2017: 44).

- **Clients** are customers that build a meaningful or/and long term relationship with a product or service provider[3].

- **Guest** is a person that is invited to some place to receive or live an experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1998)

- **Characteristics** are the elements that define a product. Examples of characteristics are size, color, quality, shape or weight.

- **Features** are "characteristics that supplement the product's basic function" (Schmitt, 1999: 13-14).

- **Benefits** are "advantages that customers get from using the product" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017: 351) and they are "performance characteristics that customers seek from products" (Schmitt, 1999, 13-14).

- **Products** are things that customers buy to solve a need (Johnston and Kong, 2011, 3).

- **Services** are activities that require the participation of customers (Johnston and Kong, 2011: 3).

- **Customization** refers "to the modularized building of an offering to a customer based on that customer's individual feedback, thus serving as the basis of a Learning Relationship" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017, 352). It is important to keep in mind the differentiation with Personalization "which generally simply means putting someone's name on the product" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017: 352).

- **Mass customization** consists of "developing, producing, marketing and delivering affordable goods and services with enough variety and customization that nearly everyone finds exactly what they want" (Pine, 1993).

- **Commoditization** is the process of erosion of the unique selling propositions and unduplicated product features, making the product or

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[3] IBID.

service each time more similar and undifferentiated in front of the customer (Peppers and Rogers, 2017: 351).

- **Customer needs** are what customers want, prefer or would like (Peppers and Rogers, 2017, 188). Needs are the why behind a customer purchase (Peppers and Rogers, 2017: 189).

- **Customer behaviour** is what customers do in order to satisfy their needs (Peppers and Rogers, 2017: 194).

- **Share of voice** means having a share in the total amount of messages that customers receive.

- **Share of mind** means having a key position when customers think about what they need from what the company offers.

- **Customer retention** can be defined as the amount of customers that have repeated their purchase (Peppers and Rogers, 2017).

- **Customer loyalty** means purchase repetition (Wanick et al, 2017).

- **Qualitative differentiation** is a strategy that "is characterized by the creation of a product/service which will be perceived as unique by the customers" (Sabol et al, 2013: 640).

- **Social media** are "interactive services and Web sites that allow users to create their own content and share their own views for others to consume" (Peppers and Rogers, 2017: 551).

- **Social value** can be defined as the additional value that a product or service has in the social arena (relationships). Experiences are more social than material possessions because " they are more pleasurable to talk about and they more effectively foster successful social relationships" (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003: 1200).

- **Market Category** is a "frame of reference for your target customers, which helps them understand your unique value" (Dunford, 2019). "Market categories serve as a convenient shorthand that customers use to group similar products together" (Dunford, 2019).

- **Word of mouth** speaks about "the customers' willingness to refer a product or service to others (Peppers and Rogers, 2017), and according to Fetcherin (2020), it is the most successful, effective and important

communication channel. A great way of measuring the potential of your word of mouth is the NPS: Net promoter Score.

- **Net promoter Score** is "a measure that is based on customers' willingness to recommend a business and it has been shown to correlate with revenue growth" (Shawn, 2007). It is calculated based on the answer to the following question: "How likely are you to recommend (a company, product or experience) to a friend?" (Shawn, 2007). The respondents answer on a scale from 0 to 10. The NPS is the difference between the promoters (percentage respondents that chose 9 and 10) and detractors (percentage respondents that chose 0 and 6).

- **Lifetime value (LTV)** can be defined as "the present value of the future cash flows (profit) attributed to the customer relationship" (Fader and Toms, 2018).

- **CPI or cost per install**, is the average amount of money that a company needs to pay to acquire a new user.

- **Brand awareness** is "the ability of a consumer to recognize and recall a brand" (Fetcherin, 2020).

- **Brand Knowledge** is "all the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences and so on that become linked to the brand in the minds of consumers" (Keller, 2001).

- **Brand attachment** is " the strength of the affective and cognitive connection between a consumer and a brand" (Fetcherin, 2020).

- **Customer delight** happens when the customer expectations are surpassed by the product or service (Palemer, 2010).

- A **persona** is a marketing technique that does "a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

- **Product experience** happens when the customer interacts with the product or service (Brakus and Zarantonello, 2009).

8.2. Survey

Link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5YXZCHB

Num.	Text	Options	Type	Variable	Type
Q1	How old are you?	18-20 years old 21-30 years old 31-40 years old 41-50 years old 51-60 years old 61-70 years old More than 70 years old	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice
Q2	What's your highest level of education	College degree High school diploma Master's degree Bachelor's degree Vocational training No formal education Other Professional degree Doctorate degree	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice
Q3	Can you tell us your household income?	Under $20,000 $40,001 – $60,000 $20,001 – $40,000 $80,001 – $100,000 $60,001 – $80,000 $100,001 or over I do not work I am a student	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice
Q4	Which of the following games do you usually play?	Candy Crush Saga Clash of Clans Clash Royale Gardenscapes / Homescapes Pokémon Go Marvel Strike Force Coin Master Rise of Kingdoms Fornite PUBG Mobile Roblox Call of Duty: Mobile Other (please write only 1 name, the name of the game that you play the most)	Game	-	Multiple-choice
Q5	Of the games that you selected on the previous question, please choose the game that you play the	Based on Previous Questions	Game	-	Multiple-choice

	most and you would like this survey to focus on				
Q6	How likely is it that you would recommend [Q5] to a friend or colleague?	0 - 10	Satisfaction	NPS	NPS - 0 - 10
Q7	Overall I am satisfied with [Q5] and the service they provide	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Satisfaction	CSAT	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q8	I am confident in [Q5]'s developers expertise	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q9	The whole process of downloading and using [Q5] was easy	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q10	I think that I may use [Q5] for a long time	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q11	I continue to play [Q5] because of my past experience with [Q5]	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q12	I have used [Q5] before so getting what I needed was really easy	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q13	[P5] guides me well when using the game	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Peace of mind	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q14	[P5] offering is flexible and solves my needs	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q15	[P5] keeps me up-to-date	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q16	[P5] is a safe and reputable game	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q17	[P5] deal(t) with me correctly when I contacted them	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q18	[P5] solved my problem properly when I contacted them	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Consumption Experience	Moments of Truth	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q19	I can choose between different options at [Q5]	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Product Experience	Product Experience	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q20	I can easily compare (inside the game and with other games) the different transactions/promotions that [Q5] offers	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Product Experience	Product Experience	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q21	I need to compare different offers or	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Product Experience	Product Experience	1 (low) - 7 (high)

	promotions from [Q5]				
Q22	I have the necessary tools and information to contact [Q5]	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Product Experience	Product Experience	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q23	Staying with [Q5] makes my life better / happier / easier	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q24	[P5] gives me what I need swiftly	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q25	I prefer [Q5] over an alternative game	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q26	The people at [Q5] can relate to my situation	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Product Experience	Outcome Focus	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q27	[P5] makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Senses	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q28	I find [Q5] interesting in a sensory way	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Senses	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q29	[P5] does not appeal to my senses	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Senses	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q30	[P5] induces feelings and sentiments	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Feelings	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q31	I do have strong emotions for [Q5]	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Feelings	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q32	[P5] is an emotional brand	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Feelings	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q33	I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use [Q5]	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	behaviour	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q34	[P5] results in bodily experiences	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	behaviour	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q35	This [Q5] is not action oriented	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	behaviour	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q36	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter [Q5]	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Think	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q37	[P5] makes me think	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Think	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q38	[P5] stimulates my curiosity and problem solving	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Think	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q39	As customer of [Q5] I feel like I am part of a community	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Belonging	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q40	I feel like I am part of the [Q5] family	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Belonging	1 (low) - 7 (high)
Q41	When I use [Q5] I do not feel left alone	1 (low) - 7 (high)	Brand Experience	Belonging	1 (low) - 7 (high)

Q42	On average, how much money ($) do you spend per week on [Q5]?	$0 $1-5 $51-100 $6-25 $26-50 $101-500 +$501	-	ARPA	Multiple-choice
Q43	On average, how long have you been playing [Q5]?	+24 months 7-12 months 1-3 months 13-18 months 4-6 months 19-24 months	Satisfaction	Tenure	Multiple-choice
Q45	Region	Mountain East South Central South Atlantic Middle Atlantic East North Central West South Central Pacific New England West North Central	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice
Q45	Age Group	45-60 30-44 18-29 > 60	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice
Q46	Income	$75,000-$99,999 $50,000-$74,999 $10,000-$24,999 $100,000-$124,999 $150,000-$174,999 $0-$9,999 $200,000+ $25,000-$49,999 Prefer not to answer $175,000-$199,999 $125,000-$149,999	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice
Q47	Genre	Female Male	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice
Q48	Gaming Device	iOS Phone / Tablet Android Phone / Tablet Windows Desktop / Laptop MacOS Desktop / Laptop Other	Demographic	-	Multiple-choice

Table 40. Customer Experience in the Mobile gaming Survey. Source: Own elaboration.

8.3. Reliability and Validity of the model

LATENT VARIABLE		ITEMS	Loading	Alpha Cronbach	Fiabilidad Compuesta (CR)	AVE
C U S T O M E R E X P R E R I E N C E	PEACE OF MIND (Loading =.879)	PoM1	.821	.904	.933	.778
		PoM2	.769			
		PoM3	.854			
		PoM4	.870			
		PoM5	.765			
		PoM6	.804			
	MOMENTS OF TRUST (Loading =.931)	MoT1	.858			
		MoT2	.834			
		MoT3	.779			
		MoT4	COLINE			
		MoT5	.650			
	PRODUCT EXPERIENCE (Loading =.816)	PE1	.719			
		PE2	.836			
		PE3	.638			
		PE4	.767			
	OUTCOME FOCUS (Loading =.899)	OF1	.891			
		OF2	.890			
		OF3	.827			
		OF4	.778			
B R A N D E X P E R I E N C E	SENSE (Loading =.803)	BES1_A	.943	.822	.872	.580
		BES2_A	.942			
		BES3_A	ELIMINATE			
	FEEL (Loading =.835)	BEF1	.886			
		BEF2	.912			
		BEF3	.876			
	BELONG (Loading =.803)	BES1	.932			
		BES2	.952			
		BES3	ELIMINATE			
	behaviour (Loading =.640)	BEB1	.956			
		BEB2	.946			
		BEB3	ELIMINATE			
	THINK (Loading =.710)	BET1	.932			
		BET2	COLINE			
		BET3	.940			
SATISFACTION		NPS	.837	.657	.853	.743
		CSAT	.886			
		TENURE	ELIMINATE			
GAME DOWNLOADS		DOWL_6M	.796	.580	.824	.702
		DOWL_CUM	.878			
GAMER EVENUES		E_LTV	ELIMINATE	.896	.950	.906

| | REV_6M | .957 | | | |
| | REV_CUM | .946 | | | |

Table 41. Reliability and Validity of the model. Source: Own elaboration.