

Service Marketing Mix and Customer Engagement: A Meta-analysis

Customer engagement (CE) has emerged as a key differentiator for sustainable advantage in services. Successful firms excel in using the elements of service marketing mix (SMMs) to engage with their customers, develop strong bonds and intensify loyalty. However, the role of different mix elements in driving customer engagement is not clear. We conduct a meta-analytic synthesis of prior studies to provide a unified relationship between the SMMs with different types of CEs. Our review first identifies and conceptualizes 17 attributes of the seven SMMs and four dimensions of CE. We then use 1,147 specific effect sizes, from 145 research papers, using a total sample of 71,968 respondents to test the effect of different SMM facets on one or more of the CE dimensions. We also identify several conceptual moderators (industry type, firm size, geographic location, and business context) and study-related moderators (data collection approach and sample type) and test if and how the direct effects are altered within different levels of these moderators. Product and people elements exhibit the strongest effects on most CE dimensions, whereas price and promotion elements impact the least. Physical evidence, place and process mix exhibit mixed effects on different CE dimensions. Significant differences are observed among firm size, industry type, study entity, business context and location. We discuss theoretical contributions, and also provide managerial guidance on whether and when to invest in SMMs.