The Impact of App Experience, Livestream and Personal Coach on Customer Satisfaction: A Case Study from an English Centre

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Abstract. This paper aims to study the impact of the study app, livestream class and personal coach on customer satisfaction in learning basic English language at an English centre.

A sample of 138 customers who bought English learning books from an English education company was surveyed to study the impact of the book, study app, livestream class and personal coach on customer satisfaction. A structural equation model was applied to explore the interaction among the four input variables and the influence of these inputs to customer satisfaction.

Among the four factors of the book the study app, livestream class and personal coach, the empirical evidence showed that there are three variables having a significant effect on learner satisfaction. They are the book, study app and personal coach.

The study has useful implication for the companies who operate in English education and training. Learners who are customers, need more than a physical book, but also a total solution for their problems. Such companies should invest in designing and implementing not only the attractive books, but also useful study app and helpful personal coach services to their customers.

Keywords: customer experience · livestream · customer satisfaction

1 Introduction

There is a huge need for many groups of people in learning basic English language. Some groups could be described as (1) upper secondary school students who want to have higher scores in the national school graduation exam; (2) university students who want to upgrade their TOEIC scores so that they could be eligible to graduate; (3) graduates who need to improve their vocabulary, reading, writing and daily communication in English; (4) old people or the persons who used to study English but forget or lose English background.

Grasping these needs, Step Up, an English book and training company (https://ste pup.edu.vn) has designed and published *Brain Hack 1500* aiming at 1500 basic words and phrases (https://hacknao1500.stepup.edu.vn). The books are published and sold physically in accompanying with a mobile app and the company services consisting of livestream classes and personal coach.

The interesting and useful points in the company's way to do business are (1) the books have special features (high quality, many pictures, supportive short stories, Vietnamese similarity simulation to pronounce English); (2) buyers should study by yourselves, but if they are more active, they could be refunded their money; (3) the company does not only sell physical books, but also a total service pack including a study app, livestream learning, learning with the coach (personal coach) and social media contents; (4) flexibility in learning time and place because the learner could study with the app and in an online environment; and (5) active learners could get B1-level Certificate of European Frame (CEFR) in a half time compared to the traditional method.

With the study app, learners could learn by themselves units day by day, do exercises and listen and practice their pronunciation with native voice. Livestream classes are opened at a scheduled time frame and are closely connected with 50 units in the physical book. In addition, each learner could register and interact with his or her personal coach who will instruct that person with a specific and appropriate roadmap.

2   Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

2.1   Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a classic concept in marketing science. A person's satisfaction with a product could be defined as the feeling status coming from the comparison between what that person experienced and what he or she expected from the product (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). When a person buys an education product (a book) from a company, he or she is a customer.

In short, customer satisfaction is equal to customer experience minus customer expectation. If a person's experience equals his or her expectation, that person will feel "satisfied" or "pleased". If a person's experience exceeds his or her expectation, the person will feel "very satisfied" or "delighted". If a person's experience is worse than his or her expectation, the person's psychological status will be "dissatisfied" or "disappointed".

There are a lot of factors that influence customer expectation and experience, then influence customer satisfaction. Marketing-mix is a set of marketing tools used by marketers to effect customers. According to a classical model, the tool set consists of 4P: Product (P1), Price (P2), Place (P3) and Promotion (P4) (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). In this paper, we will focus on the impact of P1 and P4 on customer satisfaction.

In the case study of Step Up Education Company, at first, the company will sell a physical book (Brain Hack 1500, for example). After buying books, the person will receive a code to active his or her mobile study account. The customer will download the company app and install, then he or she could study mostly online with the app. Besides, the customer also receives a set of livestream learning class on Facebook and personal coach.

2.2 The Printed Book

Brain Hack 1500 is the printed book mentioned on this research. The book was designed and published by Step Up Education Limited Company. The book contains 1500 commonly used words that are sufficient for a basic learner to get B1-CEFR or TOEIC 500 certificates.

The book methodology is to use a pronunciation bridging association technique to English via Vietnamese words and pictured illustrative stories. The method could help learners to guess easily the meaning of English words and build learners' vocabulary. The illustrative stories were designed interestingly and humorously, so that the book could appeal learners much better than in the traditional way. There are 50 stories corresponding to 50 units that cover common topics in life. The design helps learners to get sufficient vocabulary for English daily communication.

The printed book plays the role of P1 (Product) in marketing-mix. In the marketing literature, P1 is the first and an important element that impacts customer satisfaction (Kotler & Keller 2016). Therefore, we have the following hypothesis.

H1: The Book Experience Has a Positive Impact on Customer Satisfaction.

2.3 The Study Mobile App

In 2021, there were 230 billion mobile app downloads worldwide and the global consumer spending on mobile apps was about USD 170 billion. On Google Play Store, there are 3.5 million apps available and the gross app revenue of Google Play worldwide is about USD 48 billion. On Apple App Store, there are 2.2 million apps available and the Apple App Store earnings of mobile app developers are about USD 60 billion (Ceci, Statista.com, May 2022).

The study app is designed to run on the mobile phone platform. Once bought the printed book from Step Up, the customer may sign up to get an account with his or her name and mobile phone number, then can do all the learning activities on this app (learn the theory, doing exercises, practicing and checking his/her pronunciation). The customer account is unlimited in terms of usage time and is free of charge.

The *Pronunciation* function is one of the special features of this app. A learner's pronunciation could be marked accurately and identified incorrect syllables so that the

Fig. 1. The company's study mobile app

learner could easily detect what the wrong pronunciation syllable is and adjust by themselves. Up to the first half of 2022, it is recorded that there were 18 million times to check learners' pronunciation per month (hacknao1500.stepup.edu.vn). With the study app, a learner could practice pronunciation every time, everywhere on his or her smart phones (Fig. 1).

Kotler and Keller (2016) wrote that among the 4Ps in marketing-mix, the most important P is P1 (Product Policy). The product policy in marketing includes the product assortment, product attributes, brands, packages and services. In the digital age, an study mobile app could be viewed as the major part of a product policy for an English centre. Then, we could have the following hypothesis:

H2: The Learner Experience with the Study App Has a Positive Effect on Learner Satisfaction.

2.4 Livestream

Social media have become an essential part of a modern life and an useful online marketing tool for organizations. The social media platforms mainly used at Step Up Company are Facebook, YouTube and TikTok. Multimedia contents and videos were published on these platforms so that the company could increase the attractiveness of its books, services and gets more interaction with its customers. The company's YouTube channel has got about 33 million views, 390,000 subscribers and 260 videos relating to English learning stories, songs and music (https://www.youtube.com/c/StepUpEnglishChannel).

The effect of social media on customer evaluation and satisfaction was proved in many papers. Hamid, Chang & Kurnia (2009) identified the positive role of online social media in education and recommended educators should use online social media to enhance student interaction and satisfaction. Kear (2010) agreed that social networking communities could enhance student engagement and performance. Eke et al. (2014). in Nigeria argued that using social networking sites could bring both positive and negative effects on student emotion and performance. AL-Rahmi and Othman (2013) surveyed

134 students, from 18 to over 30 ages, and concluded that social media can have a positive impact on student satisfaction in higher education.

Uzir et al. (2020) proved that social media and livestream usage have a moderating effect in the relationship between product quality, customer perceived value and customer satisfaction.

Livestream activities are a part of social media marketing. Livestream could be very impressive to potential buyers and attractive livestream is able to urge sales performance. Similar to other tools in social media marketing, livestream helps to form a close connection and interaction between the seller and potential buyers, the lecturer and the learners (Qian et al., 2022).

At Step Up, livestream is organized in terms of online classes. A teacher instructs learners all the 50 units with the fixed schedule (three times per week) on Facebook. The livestream activity could be regarded as a tool belonging to the P1 (product policy) and P4 (promotion policy) in marketing-mix (Kotler & Armstrong 2017).

H3: The Livestream Class Has a Positive Effect on Learner Satisfaction

2.5   Personal Coach

In addition to the physical, mobile app and livestream classes, the company offers another service for each learner individual. The service is personal coach. Each learner could register to meet with his or personal coach who will instruct the learner one-to-one, help the learner understand more about his/her strengths, weaknesses and problems. The coach will support the learner to build a suitable roadmap. If the learner has a high determination and is able to complete *Brain Hack 1500* within 30 days and Grammar Brain Hack within 50 days, the learner will be refunded 100% the amount of money he or she spent for books.

Such a coach is playing the role of after-sale services (P1) and personal selling in marketing communications (P4) in marketing-mix. A good personal coach will increase customer satisfaction, the company's sales and brand equity (Kotler & Keller 2016).

Gupta and Raman (2022) studied on 400 automobile customers in India about after-sale service experiences and concluded that after-sales service experiences and personal interaction are the key points to get customer satisfaction. Therefore, we have the fourth hypothesis as follows:

H4: Personal Coach Has a Positive Impact on Customer Satisfaction.

In overall, the book, the study app, livestream class and personal coach could be regarded as parts in the product policy of marketing-mix. In classic marketing theory, the better product policy, the higher customer satisfaction. Hence, a conceptual model of the paper could be set as follows (Fig. 2).
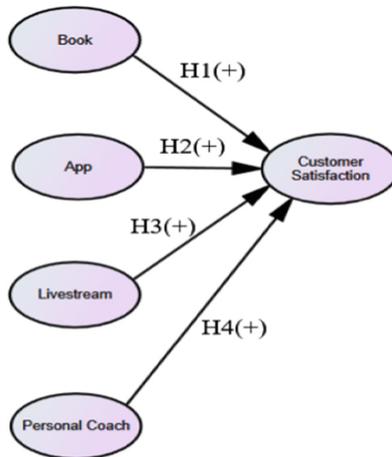
Fig. 2. The conceptual model

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire Design

Based on the marketing theory and the specific features of the book, app, livestream and personal coach, the measurement scales for each research variable were designed using the Likert's scale (Table 2). Each latent variable will be measured by using three observed variables. The questions in the questionnaire will be designed with the scale from 1 to 10, of which 10 is "totally agree" and 1 is 'totally disagree".

3.2 Sampling Plan

The target population is defined as the persons (1) who bought the physical book in February 2022 (enough time for them to study and get experiences; (2) who downloaded and used the app in their English study; (3) who completed at least 15 units in the book; (4) who participated the livestream classes and had interactions with customer care clerks of Step Up.

There are 15 observed variables in the research model. From one viewpoint based on the number of observed variables, there should be at least 5 observations per observed variable. Hence, the smallest sample size is estimated as 15 x 5 = 75. If we do not sure about the distribution normality of variables, the sample size should be larger, such as 10 observations per observed variable (Hair et al., 2019, p.632). If so, the sample size should be 15 x 10 = 150.

In another viewpoint, the sample size is also dependent on the number of constructs in the conceptual model. According to Hair et al. (2019, p. 633), the larger sample size may produce more reliable results, and the minimum sample size with a structural model of seven constructs or less, should be 150. Therefore, the sample size chosen for this study was 150.

The sample will be drawn randomly from the target population that are in the company's database. The questionnaires will be sent to the respondents who were and are the company's learners via email through a Google form link.

4   Research Results and Discussion

The sampling activity was conducted in June 2022. There were 144 questionnaires collected. Of which, there were 6 of many missing answers. These questionnaires were discarded, then the qualified collected sample contains 138 observations. The sample contains 45% males and 55% females. The largest age group is 25–34 (40.6%), the second largest is 18–24 (28.3%), the 35 + group accounts for 19.6% and the smallest group is under 18 (11.6%).

A Cronbach's Alpha test was carried out to check the scale reliability for the research variables. All the four input variables and the output variable (customer satisfaction) have the alpha values are more than 0.85, and the corrected item-total correlation coefficients of these variables are greater than 0.7. This means a good reliability of the measurement scales (Table 1).

After that, the conceptual model was tested by AMOS 23.0. The model fit indicators are as follows: CMIN/df = 6.720; GFI = 0.641; CFI = 0.747; and RMSEA = 0.204 (Fig. 3). These indicators showed that the suggested model did not fit with the empirical data (Hair et al., 2019).

One possible reason is that there are correlations among the input variables, but we did not mention about the correlation relationship in the conceptual model. A structural equation model with correlations among constructs may reflect the nature of relationships better than traditional regression models (Anderson & Garbing 1988, Hair et al. 2019).

Hence, a revised model is as follows (Fig. 4).

The revised model has a better fitness indicators: CMIN/df = 2.701; CFI = 0.930; GFI = 0.818; RMSEA = 0.111. According to Hair et al. (2019), the revised model could be considered "good", except that RMSEA > 0.05 (not good).

The testing results for the beta coefficients showed that Livestream did not effect significantly on Customer Satisfaction (Table 2).

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Testing for the research variables

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Customer Satisfaction (Alpha = 0.902)				
CSAT1. I am satisfied with the company's products and services	16.86	2.869	.814	.857
CSAT2. The company's products and services meet my expectation.	17.04	2.590	.788	.879
CSAT3. I will introduce the company and the company's products to others.	16.83	2.665	.823	.845
Book (Alpha = 0.861)				
BK1. The book units are designed very well.	16.17	4.203	.751	.810
BK2. The supportive stories in the book are very interesting.	16.60	3.176	.736	.821
BK3. The pictures in the book are very vivid.	16.33	3.594	.758	.785
App (Alpha = 0.887)				
APP1. It is easy to search, download and install the study app.	17.62	2.501	.782	.872
APP2. The app contents are close to the book and easy to use	16.80	3.258	.831	.803

Table 1. (*continued*)

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
APP3. The pronunciation function in the app is very good.	16.64	3.501	.782	.849
Livestream (Alpha = 0.891)				
LS1. The livestream contents are appropriate with the book	15.62	5.112	.754	.892
LS2. The livestream lecturers are very enticing	16.22	3.825	.811	.824
LS3. The livestream time is appropriate	16.40	3.512	.844	.798
Personal Coach (Alpha = 0.881)				
PC1. The coach instructs me enthusiastically and in details	17.54	2.586	.808	.809
PC2. It is easy and convenient to contact with the coach	17.89	2.098	.748	.873
PC3. The coach has an expertise in English	17.47	2.514	.786	.821

The possible reasons for the weak and insignificant impacts of Livestream are: (1) the class size was often very large, normally 100 or more participants; (2) personal care for the learners is difficult to implement; (3) different levels of English exist in one livestream class, so that it is not easy for a teacher to meet various wants and expectations. Therefore, the Livestream variable will be removed from the model.

The final model with three input variables (Book, App and Personal Coach) is presented in Fig. 5.

All the model fit indicators are good: CMIN/df = 2.389 (<3), CFI = 0.95 (>0.9), GFI = 0.87 (≈ 0.9), RMSEA = 0.101 (a little bit > 0.08). According the Hair et al. (2019), the final model fits well with the data.

Table 3 shows the results for testing the hypotheses using AMOS 23.0. All the beta coefficients are greater than 0 significantly.
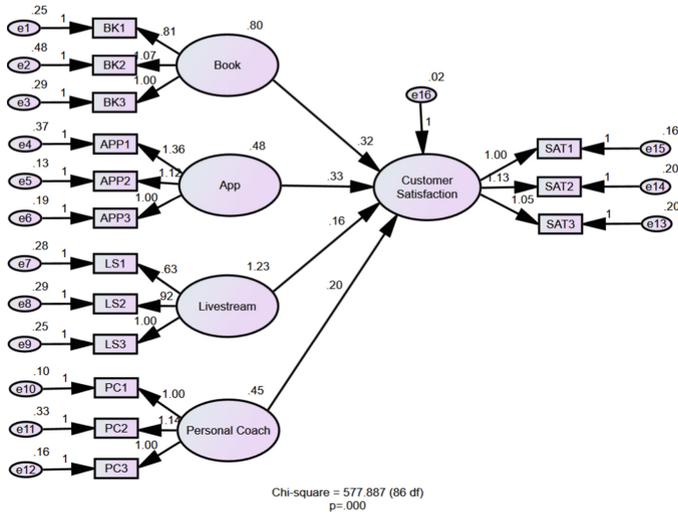
**Fig. 3.** The testing results for the conceptual model
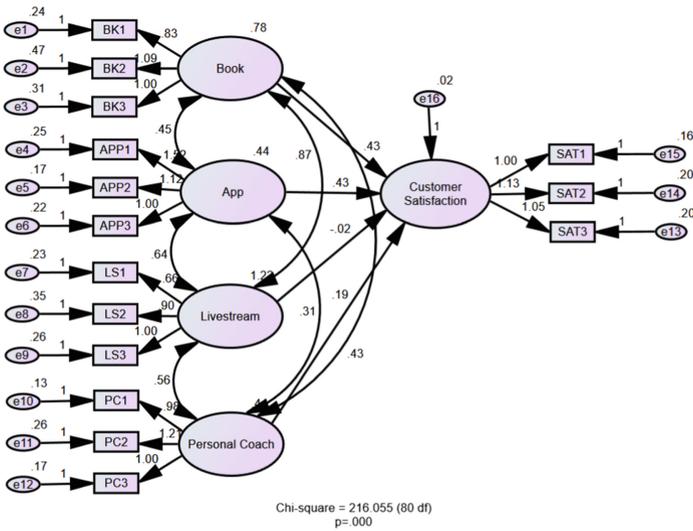
Fig. 4. The revised model with all correlation relations

In terms of linear regression, the regression equation could be written as follows:

Satisfaction = 0.42*Book + 0.4*App + 0.18*Coach

This means that the major factors impacting customer satisfaction are the book (42%) and the app (40%). Besides, the role of personal coach is important and statistically significant in influencing learner satisfaction.

Table 2. Testing for the beta coefficients of the revised model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SAT	< ---	BK	.430	.116	3.696	***
SAT	< ---	APP	.426	.127	3.352	***
SAT	**< ---**	**LS**	-.018	.131	-.141	**.888**
SAT	< ---	PC	.191	.078	2.448	.014
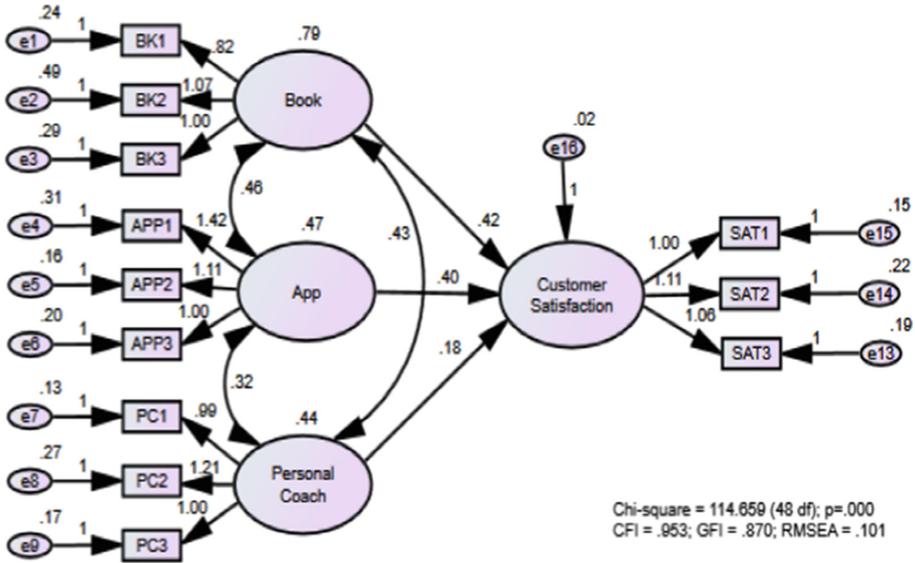
Fig. 5. The final model

Table 3. Testing the beta coefficients of the final model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SAT	< ---	BK	.425	.070	6.031	***
SAT	< ---	APP	.397	.082	4.827	***
SAT	< ---	PC	.184	.078	2.367	.018

5 Conclusion

For English book production companies, the traditional way is to write and sell a physical book only and the learning progress of learners was not cared. A new and more efficient business model is to provide learners with a total solution that mixes between traditional physical products with online services.

In the case study of an English product company, there are three major factors influencing customer satisfaction that are the printed book, the study app and the personal coach. Livestream classes are necessary to inform and educate buyers about the books as well as to create brand awareness, but do not impact significantly on customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is one of the most important indicators in marketing and the target of businesses. A good and attractive physical product is a root and a key factor for success, but just a starting point in the long journey to reach learner satisfaction. Customer satisfaction could be achieved by a total solution that mixes harmoniously physical products, services, communications and people.

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