Using Different Methods in Measuring Customer Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

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The thesis was commissioned by VALIT, a joint research and development project between Tekes the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK), Tampere University of Technology (TUT), University of Vaasa (UVA) and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. The thesis aimed to find different methods for measuring customer satisfaction, with emphasis on qualitative methods used in different events and methods related to emotions.

The empirical data that was researched in this thesis consisted of two face-to-face interviews with business people from Finnish companies, one with a company providing feedback collecting services, and one with an event & fair organizing company. In short, the interviews were to provide data on qualitative and quantitative methods the companies (or their client companies) use for information on their customer satisfaction and customer journey, as well as their differences in B2B and B2C, methods related to emotions, if any, and if the methods can be used in a longer run to map customer journey, or if they are meant for just individual events and happenings.

According to the research done for this thesis, Finnish companies tend to prioritize quantitative methods over qualitative ones. Furthermore, albeit acknowledging the importance of qualitative data especially if it is received timely and reacted to instantly, companies often feel that collecting qualitative data can be too much work compared to the benefit. Companies also feel, that customers’ emotions in the background are important, but they are not measured directly; they rather affect people’s answers in surveys more or less.

Overall, while the author is pleased with the amount of information received, plenty of things that came up in the interviews would warrant their own study. While companies have certain, more advanced methods and tools to use (as discovered in interview 1) for obtaining better customer understanding, they abstain from using those, instead resorting to simple surveys, which – although providing useful data – are far from the only useful methods of researching.

Key words: customer satisfaction, customer journey, qualitative, quantitative, emotions
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1 INTRODUCTION

The thesis topic is using different methods in measuring customer satisfaction, with special emphasis on qualitative methods utilized in data collection for different events. In essence, the thesis sets out to find out, what types of both qualitative methods and quantitative metrics are used to evaluate the aforementioned things, how they are utilized, if they are adequate as they are or if there is need for supplementary measures and how people’s emotions are being observed through these methods, if they even are.

The thesis was commissioned by VALIT (=Value Indicator Tool) project. It is a joint research and development project between Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK), Tampere University of Technology (TUT), University of Vaasa (UVA) and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. The project itself is about developing a tool for measuring value creation and management for businesses. It also covers emotional experience and management leadership.

The primary reason for the topic is, that VALIT project wants to find out, what kind of situation Finnish companies are in right now in terms of gathering data about their customers and the companies’ means for collecting that data, whether qualitative or quantitative, and overall gain some insight into what Finnish companies think about such methods.

The project consists of four segments, Tampere University of Applied Sciences being a part of the customer experience and customer journey segment, thus being the area of choice for this thesis as well. Assessing customers’ emotions is a major part of the segment, and it is also a pivotal part of the thesis in terms of trying to find the ways that companies use to get information on their customers’ emotions, if they use any.

To be more precise regarding the actual research part of the thesis, while it covers different quantitative methods, such as scale 1-5 and the A-B test, qualitative methods, i.e. ways to map customer journey and measure customer satisfaction when interacted with them, or through observing them, are of higher importance.
1.1 The objectives, purpose, meaning and topical validity

The underlying purpose of the research is to discover what ways Finnish companies use to measure customer satisfaction as well as map customer journey with focus on qualitative methods with emphasis on qualitative testing in events. Furthermore, it is to be discovered, whether there is need for further qualitative testing from companies’ point of view. What makes it more important is, that such qualitative methods are not very much known at this stage.

The scope of the thesis aims to cover psychological measures, such as emotions, actual ways of using both quantitative and qualitative methods in business and differences in terms of their accuracy and benefit depending on their use.

The research aspect will be limited to two companies operating in Finland, one operating with customer feedback collecting (i.e. a company providing services for their client companies for them to use the services to gain information from their own customers), and another one in the field of event and fair organizing.

The main thesis question is “What kind of qualitative and quantitative methods do companies use for customer journey and customer satisfaction purposes, if any?” It is the key question in the thesis, because those methods are not proven initially. In addition to the main thesis question, there are two sub-questions that relate to the main question.

Sub-question number one is “Do the methods used relate to people’s emotions?” As emotions oftentimes guide people’s purchase decision and overall the customer journey, getting insight into how much emphasis companies put on customers’ emotions is impactful.

Sub-question number two is “Is there need for more qualitative testing methods in Finnish businesses?” The hypothesis is, that because the author has filled more quantitative questionnaires and qualitative ones, and getting data about for instance customers’ emotions is still rather limited in Finland, qualitative testing leaves some to be desired.
1.2 Methodology and data utilized

This thesis’ primary data consists of two specialist interviews conducted in September 2017.

Both interviews were conducted using semi-structured method, having a set list of interview questions, but enabling interviewees to engage in the discussion more openly and thus opening the discussion for other related topics that arose during the interview. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with two different companies and their representatives based on questions about their customer data collection methods, both quantitative and qualitative, as well as their relation to people’s emotions.

Furthermore, the interviewees were asked about how business-to-business and business-to-customer environments differ from each other in terms of mapping customer journey and measuring customer satisfaction, and acquiring data on the spot in different events. The two companies differ from each other, because company 1 provides services for their client companies for their further use on their own clientele, whereas company 2 uses services to gather data from their own customers, whether they are exhibitors or visitors.

The interviews were recorded on the spot, then transcribed in Finnish as that was the interview language, and then further translated to English. The interview findings were analysed in textual form. The interviewees and their companies will remain anonymous in the thesis due to the nature of the interview questions and topics.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The first chapter of the thesis is an introductory part. It will very shortly explain the thesis topic and the thesis commissioner. The first chapter will also answer a question regarding the background of the thesis problem. The part also explains what the purpose of the thesis is, why the topic is valid, what the research questions (and sub-questions) are and the working methods for the thesis. Furthermore, it will explain the thesis structure in further detail and why the thesis data is needed and/or used.
The second part of the thesis consists of theoretical framework which the rest of the thesis is built upon. The chapter then goes to customer satisfaction, and satisfaction in general. It will go in-depth about customer satisfaction by defining satisfaction in the first place. Then, it will discuss the benefits of measuring customer satisfaction, as well as the reliability of the data received through such feedback.

As qualitative methods provide little in the way of actual measurements tools, the thesis discusses and explains customer experience; the whole journey of becoming a customer and customer value. This way, the thesis has more perspective related to the customer experience and shifts the actual thesis more in that direction overall. The following part will cover both qualitative and quantitative methods, explain them through and also compare them in terms of data collection, information value and reliability.

After the methods segment comes definitions of B2B and B2C. This segment will cover both B2B and B2C marketing. Furthermore, the differences between B2B and B2C are discussed.

As the terms B2B and B2C have been discussed, the following segment will talk about services marketing. It will explain what services marketing is and what are the characteristics that relate to that. The segment will also briefly compare the differences between marketing services and marketing products.

After the concepts and theories, the thesis will shift to empirical research for part three. The findings in terms of different methods are explained and further analysed. The research will be divided into different segments based on the interview. First the interviewees are introduced in short detail and the interview process is explained. Then the two interviews are separated for each other in order to make the segments a more easy-to-read entity. Overall, part four will cover the interviewees, the interview process and the interview data itself.

Part four will finally conclude the entire thesis based on the theoretical framework, the empirical research and topics and questions stemming from the research. The conclusion and discussion will present the results of the research and as the thesis is done qualitatively its purpose is also to raise more questions regarding the results, whether positive or negative.
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Qualitative and quantitative data

2.1.1 What is qualitative data?

Qualitative data is the kind of data, that cannot be measured using numbers or metrics, such as analysing a person’s opinion from a select number between one to five, but rather it deals with words, characteristics or concepts and is more descriptive by nature. Most often, qualitative data occurs in a narrative form. (Martz 2017.)

Qualitative data can give out plenty of information, but the downside is, that more often than not, it requires a substantial amount of work both in the collection phase as well as in the analysis phase. Furthermore, due to the amount of work, qualitative data is often collected from a smaller number of informants, which can then lead to inconsistencies or simply blatant errors if the data is generalized to measure that of a much larger group (Children, Youth, and Families at Risk).

In comparison, qualitative data can provide a more detailed perspective on things compared to quantitative data, as well as shed light on topics, that do not arise from quantitative data. For example, if a person is asked what they thought about a certain event and they are given a scale of 1-5 (very poor-excellent) as a means of reply, it will not give data on the reasons why the person selected the option they did, but rather only describes their experience as a numeral figure. If the question is asked as an open question giving the person more freedom to express their opinion, the underlying reasons behind their reply may be exposed, thus giving more data for the company.
2.1.2 What is quantitative data?

Quantitative data consists of numbers and different metrics used for statistical analysis. An example of quantitative metrics can be for example “Net Promoter Score”, which measures the probability of a person recommending something to others on a scale from 0 to 10, ranging from “not at all likely” to “extremely likely”, or “Happy or Not index”, which presents people with a specific number of emoticons ranging from sad to happy face and the person then chooses which one resembles their experience the most. Furthermore, an “A-B test”, where the person selects the more enticing option out of the two, either option A or B, also provides quantitative data.

Quantitative methods are very popular due to the collection being relatively easy compared to qualitative methods. Quantitative data is also extremely specific and it can be more objective than qualitative data, because it does not require subjective analysis, and it can be compiled into charts or graphs that are easy to interpret and thus convey information quickly. Quantitative data can also be collected from a larger number of people with less effort compared to qualitative data, which is often the reason that it is prioritized.

However, as explained in a paragraph on the previous page, qualitative data tends to offer a broader view of the topic in question compared to quantitative data. Furthermore, quantitative data may not give away the underlying reasons behind people’s replies.

2.2 Defining satisfaction

Ultimately, what is satisfaction? Satisfaction itself is a relatively vague concept. The core idea of satisfaction can be defined as a person’s needs, wants or hopes, that when satisfaction is achieved, is fulfilled (Merriam-Webster). When brought into the world of business, one could think of satisfaction as for instance a product or a service that fulfils the customer’s desires or a company’s satisfaction over the launch of a service that has met the expectations of both the company and the customers.
Often, customer satisfaction is measured quantitatively using certain endpoints, for instance figures. The lowest figure represents strong, if not complete dissatisfaction, while the highest figure represents strong, if not, complete satisfaction. A figure in the middle of the scale represents neither dissatisfaction nor satisfaction (Cassel 2006, 8).

However, this quantitative way of evaluating customer satisfaction can sometimes lead astray, as numerical figures may not represent the true opinion of the customer. Furthermore, it may conceal the true emotions of the opinion giver as the only thing representing their opinion is a figure. There are no ways of measuring good and/or bad experiences at once in a method like that.

The previous paragraph is not to say, that there should not be measurable parameters, because with all of the results – despite the method – it is preferable to have a way to collect all of the data, whether qualitative or quantitative, into a certain, easily understandable form.

### 2.2.1 Business-to-business

In a B2B (business-to-business) context, customer satisfaction can be defined as a mutual, appreciative relationship between two (or more) companies and the appraisal of the aspects related to that (Geyskens, Steenkamp & Kumar 1999).

B2B literally refers to, as the name entails, interaction between two or more businesses. In measuring customer satisfaction related to B2B, it would be preferable to refer to the customer as an entity instead of a single person, because the entity is often the one making the decisions for the entity, not individual persons for themselves inside the entity. (Grigoroudis & Siskos 2010, 8)

A good example of business-to-business interaction can be the manufacturing of a mobile phone. Different pieces of the phone often come from different companies, such as the battery, the processor, the cover and the screen. Those companies then sell the products to the manufacturing company, that later sells them forward. In essence, all of the companies involved are working for the same product in business-to-business meaning.
2.2.2 Business-to-consumer

B2C refers to business-to-consumer interaction. For instance, if one buys clothes from a store, or online, the interaction is direct between the business and the consumer. The concept itself was developed in 1979 by an English inventor, Michael Aldrich. (Hom 2013.)

Through measuring customer satisfaction, companies gain a more thorough understanding of their customers and their behavior, and it enables them to identify and further analyze their customer base, their expectations, needs and wants.

The definition of customer satisfaction is easy to explain in B2C (business-to-consumer) by the customer assuming the position of the other company, while the variables still remain the same. (Lam, Shankar, Erramilli & Murthy 2004.)

2.2.3 Why is customer satisfaction measured?

For businesses, customer satisfaction has become an increasingly important form of information. The information is considered reliable, since it becomes from an objective source and provides the company with direct feedback on how their customer feel about the company and what the customers’ preferences are. (Grigoroudis & Siskos 2010, 1)

Not only that, but customer satisfaction is considered – more often than not – a major factor in sustaining long-term customer relationships. Several studies have pointed out, that customer loyalty and the and long-term customer relationships are related to customer satisfaction. (Ganesan 1994; Mittal & Kamakura 2001; Mittal, Ross & Baldasare 1998.)

If the customer is satisfied with the product or service they have received, they are more likely to continue as the company’s customer in the long run, and possibly even endorse them by recommending the company to others. Satisfaction drives loyalty, and from a company’s perspective, it also brings in revenue. (Lam et al. 2004.)
According to Carson Research Consulting’s study of likelihood of a repeat purchase after different situations of customer service, 12 percent of the people would likely purchase from a company again if the service they received was “beyond expectations”, meaning stellar customer service. 22 percent of the people would do that in case they did not receive any unpleasant surprises, and 25 percent of the people studied would re-purchase if they interacted with an employee in a friendly manner. Customer satisfaction process can be measured in a way portrayed by Figure 1:

![Customer Satisfaction Measurement Process](Pokalsky 2016.)

The biggest boost to the likelihood of repeat purchase comes from people that received good service, as 32 percent of those studied would likely purchase again. Despite the fact, that the biggest boost did not come from the over-the-top serviced group, it is evident, that people that were more satisfied with the service they received, are more likely to be a returned customer. (Carson Research, Inc.)

Generally speaking, customer satisfaction is one of the most reliable source of information for the company. Whether it is related to B2B or B2C, customer feedback is extremely precious also due to the principles of continuous improvement, that require customer satisfaction measurement processes.
2.3 Customer journey and its different models

The customer journey adds all the contacts, called touchpoints, that the customer has with the company, together. The touchpoints can range from contacting the customer service to visiting the company’s website or their store. Each of these touchpoints create a more complex, and thus more important, relationship with the customer.

A customer journey can focus on certain points of the customer lifecycle, such as the buying phase, or the entirety of it. Furthermore, it is vital from the company’s point of view to identify the customer journeys that matter the most for the situation, for instance, if the company wants to improve their customer service or engage their customers via better marketing. (Wright 2012.)

An example of a complete customer journey could be as follows; first engagement with the company (e.g. via advertisements), buying the company’s product or service, using it, sharing the information about it with other people and wrapping it up with getting a new product from the company to replace the old one, or perhaps choosing the competitor’s similar product. (Richardson 2010.)

According to Temkin (2010), companies continue to “operate with an internal focus”, rather than putting emphasis on their customers and seeing the company’s operations from their end. Temkin continues, that even though the customer experience and its value is widely recognized, the results often do not realize in the form companies would like. Therefor the use of customer journey maps is heavily encouraged. The definition of a customer journey map by Forrester Research is

*Documents that visually illustrate customers’ processes, needs, and perceptions throughout their relationships with a company.* (Temkin 2010.)

The customer journey can be explicitly explained by utilizing the customer journey map. It portrays the points where the customer interacts or engages with the company, regardless of the product or service the company has put out. In short, it views the interaction process from the customer’s side. It is worth noting, that customer journeys are often different from each other, as not every customer wants or engages with the company the same way. For instance, sometimes a person may skip the initial get-to-know phase and
buy the product or service without much information to back their decision up, or the customer buys the company’s offerings and does not share the information regarding it with anyone and chooses not to buy any similar products or services in the future altogether.

The customer journey map often varies from company to company, depending on the company’s needs. Even though the timeline of the journey tends to follow a certain pattern built around awareness, research and purchase, the framework behind analyzing the journey is an important part of the process.

In addition to the three steps provided above, Richardson (2010) suggests, that another step, OOBE (out-of-box experience) has become an increasingly important part of the cycle. Out-of-box experience means the experience of using a product or service for the first time. This can be applied to basically any product or service. For instance, giving the customer an impeccable out-of-box experience with as little hassle as possible can amount to major advantages from the company’s perspective in the long run.

While ‘customer journey’ as a term reminds solely of business-to-consumer interaction, it can be used interchangeably with either B2B or B2C, as there are customers there at both ends of the spectrum.

Furthermore, despite customer journey being a somewhat intact entity, it can be used for different purposes in the form of different models. In 2009, McKinsey & Company employees David Court, Dave Elzinga, Susan Mulder and Ole Jørgen Vetvik introduced an alternate customer journey model, decision journey, in an article based on their empiric research with 20 000 businesses around the world. Compared to the more ordinary purchase funnel customer journey map that follows a path moving forward in a very linear format from awareness to purchase to loyalty, McKinsey’s developed a loop model to meet the demands of our non-linear world.

The original model works around the idea, that the consumers start their journey by having certain brands in mind. Along the way, the consumers start narrowing down the potential brands and they are exposed to marketing as they move closer to their buying decision. At the end of the funnel, they emerge with their brand of choice. (Court, Elzinga, Mulder, Vetvik)
According to Court et al., the customer decision process is more of a circular journey than anything. Due to the fact, that there are more purchase options, more purchase and marketing channels and partially because of that, consumers are more knowledgeable of products as information regarding them is found in abundance. The two models are seen in comparison below.

FIGURE 2. A typical customer journey map used in business-to-business (Morgan)


As seen in the figures 2 and 3, McKinsey’s model does not follow a directly straight pattern, but rather circles around and has four distinct phases: initial consideration, active
evaluation/researching potential purchases, closure (buying the product or service) and postpurchase, the phase where the consumer experiences purchase they did. In McKinsey’s model, opposing the typical model, the number of potential brands can actually expand in the evaluation phase, instead of narrowing down. However, the number of potential brands that come into picture tends to vary between industries according to McKinsey’s research. Another thing discovered by the company was that instead of the traditional way of marketers pushing information to consumers, consumers pull (in other words, find) more and more information about brands themselves, thus decreasing the need for pushed marketing toward them.

The model also puts emphasis on postpurchase experiences. It defines two types of loyalists; active loyalists, the consumers that on top of purchasing the brand also recommend it to others, and passive loyalists, who keep holding on to the brand, but do not commit to it, making them more susceptible to changing brand.

Apart from these two journeys, there are also other models. The most valuable to this thesis would be customer experience journey, which connects emotions of the experience with the actual journey itself. Due to this link with emotions and feelings, it works for this purpose as it the experience in particular the thesis focuses on.

Experience map illustrates the consumers’ needs, wants and desires in detail from their perspective. It focuses more in-depth on what is going on inside the consumer’s head during the pre-, purchase and postpurchase process. For example, let us look at the Rail Europe’s experience map (Fig. 4).
While it basically covers the same points as a customer journey or a customer decision journey map, it looks at the research problem from a different angle putting onus on how the customer reacts on different things along the journey instead of just mapping the phases. In this thesis’ case, we are looking at how the interviewed companies’ customers’ journeys can be mapped and satisfaction increased. Hence it is important to discover how those customers emote along the journey.

As seen in the figure 4, the map adds the element of how the customer thinks, feels and experiences the journey. The way it is implemented in the map can vary, but essentially that is the root of experience maps. It covers different stages and touchpoints as well, but also gives additional information on how the customer experiences the journey throughout.

Either a more linear timeline method or a wheel layout may be used for experience maps, and experience maps can also vary depending on whether they focus more on for instance the customers’ emotions or the overall interaction between the company and the customer.
2.4 Customer value in its core

If one looks at the word ‘value’ alone, it screams a wide array of different explanations and meanings. It can range from Zeithaml’s (1988) suggestion, that “value is the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of the product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given”, to Butz and Goodstein’s (1996) suggestion of customer value as “the emotional bond established between the customer and a producer”, referring to the connection between the aforementioned parties once the customer has discovered, that the product provides added value. Regardless of the myriad of different meanings interpreting customer value, there are certain areas of consensus.

Customer value is connected to use of a product (or a service). This feature differentiates customer value from any values on a personal or organizational level. Furthermore, customer value seems to be something defined by the customer themselves, not by the organizational providing the product or service. The perception of customer value also often includes a trade-off between what the customer gets and gives in return for the product or service. (Woodruff 1997.)

Going further into the different views of customer value, a look into them reveals, that terms and definitions, that are often relied on in this kind of research, prove to be very broad if not difficult to determine. According to Woodruff (1997), terms such as utility, worth, benefits and quality are often used, and due to their nature of being hard to define properly, comparing concepts becomes increasingly difficult. Woodruff (1997) gives an example of this by asking “is customer value as quality the same thing as customer value as worth or as benefits?” He concludes, that without having an adequate definition for concepts like these, it is impossible to answer such question from an objective standpoint.

Even classifications of types of customer value vary. For instance, Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) laid out five categories of value provided by a product: conditional, emotional, epistemic, functional and social value. However, that does not mean that the product would give the customer all of the values, it is a mere interpretation of what it can possibly offer. Holbrook (1994) on the other hand divides types of customer value into two different categories, self-oriented (intristic) or other-oriented (extrinsic). There are also other classifications, such as Burns’ (1993) suggestion of four different types of
value; overall value, possession value, product value and value in use. This classification goes deeper into determining relationships between these types.

The customer value hierarchy (Fig. 5) portrays, that customers comprehend desired value of means-end way. The steps are all in correlation to each other, and thus strongly related. The bottom of the hierarchy reflects the customer’s thoughts of products as tools that have certain attributes that the customer desires, also desiring the attributes performing the way the customer perceives. Upon the purchase of a product, customers have certain desires and expectations (middle-tier) toward the product, that would help them have consequences of their choice while in use. Furthermore, customers desire the type of consequences, that help the achieve their goals and purposes (top-tier).

Observing the hierarchy from top to bottom, the goals and purposes of the product or service are used by customers to “attach importance to consequences” (Clemons and Woodruff 1992). In the same way, desired consequences are attached to the attributes and attribute performances of the product. However, despite the hierarchy’s usefulness, it can become flawed if the customer’s use situation changes, as the connection between different tiers changes more or less as well.
Delving into the relationship between customer value and customer satisfaction, it can be
determined that they intertwine to a certain extent. In service management, Heskett (et al.
1997) suggests, that customer satisfaction equals customer’s perception of the value that
they get, either in the form of a transaction or relationship, e.g. a marketing agency provid-
ing quality product and customer service for a competitive price, satisfying the customer
both from the transaction – as well as – the relationship aspects. According to Oliver’s
(1993) theory, customer value is a trade-off based (benefit-sacrifice) cognitional concept,
while customer satisfaction deals more with the emotional side of the topic, demonstrat-
ing more affection and evaluation (Lam et al. 2004).

2.5 Emotions

Emotions convey a large amount of information about people in terms of their behavior.
In 1960s, Paul Ekman pioneered in recognizing emotions and came up with six basic
emotions; joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust and fear. Later in the 1990s, Ekman in-
cluded contempt in the basic emotions. These emotions were considered universal and
each of them were symbolized by certain facial expressions. However, this theory is not
universally accepted. (Calista 2015.)

According to studies by Interdisciplinary Affective Science Laboratory, the theory of
matching person’s facial expressions with their emotions can be disputed. Lisa Feldman
Barrett, the director of the laboratory has expressed concerns about Ekman’s theory,
claiming that the subjects had been given hints about the emotions as they were provided
with a list of possible emotions in the research. According to Feldman Barrett, her re-
search team carried out tests, that found it difficult to determine emotions based on per-
son’s facial expression. Instead of nailing the emotion in question, they were only able to
distinguish positive emotions from negative ones based on the subjects’ expressions.
(Calista 2015.)

There are also involuntary expressions that may only appear for a fraction of a moment
called micro expressions. Micro expressions are difficult to detect as they are mostly vis-
ible for such a short time. Equipment, such as high speed cameras can be used to analyze
micro expressions. In addition to being hard to notice, they are also hard to conceal.
In 1980, Robert Plutchik, a scientific researcher created what is called the wheel of emotions and added two more basic emotions to Ekman’s theory in anticipation and disgust, pinpointing eight distinct, basic emotions divided into four groups of two opposite emotions. (Burton 2014.)

As shown in the figure above, these emotions are (along with their polar opposites)

- Joy – Sadness
- Fear – Anger
- Anticipation – Surprise
- Disgust – Trust

Despite only portraying eight basic emotions, it becomes clear, that each emotion has their own stages or levels of emotions that either embody the emotion in a reinforced or altered form. The basic emotions are portrayed in the second tier of the wheel. Seen in the wheel, the closer to the center of the wheel one gets, the more intense the emotion gets, and respectively, the closer to the edge of the wheel one gets, the more the intensity of the emotion decreases. The colors in the wheel also depict the intensity of emotions; the darker the color, the more intense the emotion is (Williams).
When talking about emotions, people often confuse how a person feels with what kind of emotions the person has. However, they are two different things. Similarly, it is easy to confuse different emotions a person is showing.

Feelings are most often conscious experiences, for instance pain and hunger. Emotional experiences, as they are conscious, are labelled as feelings. Regardless of that, not all conscious experiences pass as feelings, such as seeing or hearing, likely due to lacking a somatic or a bodily dimension.

Emotions on the other hand are much less detectable by being felt, and they can only be felt through the emotional experiences that the emotion gives rise to, such as love through joy, happiness or longing. Emotions do not have to be conscious, and in many cases, the emotions behind actions and events may only be discovered after a long time, due to the ambiguousness of the emotion on the surface. These unconscious emotions are much harder to detect, as their core may lie under other, more easily visible things.

As the thesis delves into mapping customer’s journey’s mapping and attributes leading to customer satisfaction, emotions play a large role in the background of human behavior. In business context, measuring these emotions is crucial for understanding customers and their viewpoints. Therefore these emotions need to be measured or assessed. This is not an easy task, because in order to map right emotions, they need to be clearly distinguished from each other.

One of the most widely used techniques in measuring emotions is called the PAD emotional state model. It stands for three dimensions, pleasure, arousal and dominance. Developed in 1974 by Albert Mehrabian and James A. Russell, it is used in marketing to evaluate people’s emotions in correlation to marketing-related stimuli. The scale contains emotions from one extreme to another within these dimensions. The first scale, pleasure, can be defined as positive against negative affective states, for instance happy-content against sad-discontent. The arousal scale can be defined as the level of “mental alertness and physical activity”, ranging from for instance sleep-boredom to vivacious-awake. The third scale, dominance focuses on control and influences of emotions, such as powerlessness-frustration against powerful-success. (Mehrabian 1996.)
Overall, the PAD scale is not meant for actually studying human emotions, but rather finding out certain emotions as responses to different environmental stimuli. However, the validity of the method cannot be ultimately proven for instance in correlation between emotional responses and interpersonal aspects of consuming. Furthermore, emotion states, as explained in Plutchik’s wheel of emotions, cannot be simply interpreted based on PAD results. It can be determined, that PAD model is best suited for not measuring the exact emotions the subject is experiencing, but rather discovering the underlying aspects under the layer of emotion states. (Richins 1997.)
3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1 Interview process

The primary data sources for this thesis were two specialist interviews with two different companies. The interviews were held face-to-face. The interviews were conducted in September 2017. Both interviews were conducted using semi-structured method, having a set list of interview questions found in the appendices 1 and 2 respectively, but enabling interviewees to engage in the discussion more openly and thus opening the discussion for other related topics that arose during the interview.

However, the interview questions in both interviews mainly revolved around what kind of quantitative and qualitative metrics the companies utilize with a little more focus on qualitative metrics as it is more of interest for the thesis. Furthermore, if qualitative metrics were not important for the companies, it was vital to try to find out the underlying reasons for thesis purposes.

The purpose of these interviews was to discover what channels the companies use for mapping customer journey and measuring customer satisfaction, what metrics and methods are used for those, both quantitative and qualitative, how they are being used and implemented as well as if they can be used throughout the customer journey instead of just individual events. In addition, the interviewees were asked if they can think of any possible qualitative metrics that are not yet being used, and how collecting data from customers could be improved overall.

Furthermore, a focal point was to discover, if quantitative and qualitative metrics are used for different purposes, and if so, what those different purposes were and if the methods’ accuracy, effectiveness or general use was different when utilized in different situations. Relating to different metrics, it was also asked, whether the companies have any data collection methods, that would directly (or indirectly) reflect people’s feelings.

Also, different channels for gathering information about their customers, customer journey and customer satisfaction, such as social media, were discussed. The interview audio from both interviews was recorded on the spot and textual form transcripts were later
made for the parts that were relevant for the thesis. The interviews were then analyzed using deductive approach and qualitative content analysis methods.

3.2 Interviews 1 and 2

3.2.1 Interview 1

Interview 1 was conducted with a co-owner of a company that provides their client companies with a feedback collecting software for their own customers. The software can be utilized not only for feedback, but also for marketing purposes, social media contests and product development.

In practice, the company handles all its data collected from their customers’ customers, whether quantitative or qualitative, through the software. The software can then be utilized to create detailed reports of the results and it can be updated in real time. The feedback forms themselves can be tailored entirely to fit the brand it is for regardless of the industry.

By chance, the company bumped into a foreign IT company selling a certain cloud service (the software). It was originally a cloud service meant for customer feedback, but over time it has developed into a very large entity that can be utilized for marketing purposes, social media contests, product development and everything related to them. The software is the company’s main product.

The company is trying to turn the feedback collection into marketing, which makes them stand out. For instance, when a person gives certain answer(s) to a certain question, the company can tailor a specific type of a reply page based on what the person replied. An example of this could be, that after a question such as “which one of these products interests you”, the product that interests the customer the most would be brought up as a marketing procedure by giving additional information on the product and collect a marketing list through that.
The company has two major offerings, one being a continuing survey campaign that gathers base feedback, and another being a template that can be used to make more of an entertaining campaign. As an example, there could be a sales campaign built around a customer choosing their preferred product(s) and make it more entertaining for example by creating a quiz around it and that way try to make the customer get closer to the purchase decision.

In spite of the company using the software for all data collection purposes, social media is a major channel for spreading the word and engaging more people in their surveys. Whether it is a feedback form, a quiz, or a contest, all of those spread in social media for moderate to low cost easily and effectively. Facebook would likely be the most common social media tool for their company, but they also use tools such as LinkedIn and Google+, and essentially any social media channel can be integrated into the software. Twitter would be an otherwise viable channel, but the 140-character limitation also limits the company in terms of what they can do.

In terms of other channels, email and JavaScript embedding into websites can be used. There can also be stands on location, that feature a QR code and a link through which the customers can submit their feedback. Overall, companies receive some flak for their relatively minor social media presence, as oftentimes it is good in itself if they have a Facebook page, let alone other social media pages.

While the company’s software is primarily meant for companies operating in a business-to-consumer environment, it can also be used for business-to-business interaction. The software is generally meant for instance for companies, that want to strengthen their brand image and improve their business by asking their customers’ opinion. From the company’s viewpoint, B2B field is in general a more challenging one to operate compared to B2C. In terms of mapping customer journey and customer satisfaction, they are quite different, because in B2C, their business is more about attracting customers in large masses with more entertaining means, whereas in B2B, it is even more important to think about the right target group and plan carefully, what the company wants to achieve. Overall, the content needs to be planned more specifically in B2B context.

When asked about what kind of quantitative metrics the company uses for data collection, the 1-5 scale based on emoticons (sad face-happy face), Net Promoter Score, A-B test
(i.e. choosing the preferred option out of two) are the ones mainly used. Additionally, multiple choice questions, a ranking system for ranking products/services to an order, a slider system (the customer uses the slider to place their answer somewhere along the line) as well as the date and time of the feedback.

It was explained, that while quantitative metrics are more common, getting qualitative data is very important.

“Quantitative metrics give you a picture of how things are going, but in our case, because this is something that we will ask ‘in the moment’ and the feedback also reflects that, the actual opinions of the answerers are important. If we have surveys where we only use emoticons to reflect the customers’ thoughts, in the end we will not find out why they gave the kind of feedback they did.”

While quantitative metrics provide plenty of data, it would be important to ask customers “why”. For instance, the company can use a question that can be answered based on emoticon options such as sad face-happy face and have a follow-up question of why the person chose that emoticon. That follow-up question is at least equally important and it is the one that ultimately boosts development. Especially companies that are starting up benefit from knowing why their customer replied the way they did, as quantitative options as a means of reply are often not enough.

The company aims to have a follow-up question of “why” the person replied the way they did in every single survey. Furthermore, depending on the company they work with, they can use qualitative questions such as what the customer is seeking from the company, and why they are not a customer of the company anymore. Overall, it became clear, that there are very few actual qualitative methods they implement; things mostly revolve around open questions that vary depending on the company and occasion.

As for events, the company has had three to four events – one of them being a fair – that they have collaborated in. They have used for example tablet computers on the spot for visitors to fill in forms. The interviewee recollects, that they had a survey on how successful the event was, if the speakers at the event were good, and how the visitors felt
about how the event was organized. These procedures are done to grow companies’ customer register and give them more to work with. Of course, it is always up to the customer companies what they do with the information.

Overall, the collected data is compiled to a report, which provides companies with the data for example in pie charts that are color coded based on the replies, bar charts to compare answers, an average of the questions replied to, by determining which questions had the most answers to, and utilizing word clouds to mine qualitative data, that recognizes the most used words from the data. In terms of specific data, the survey takers’ geographical location can be shown (for example which part of the country the person is from), date and time of the submission, whether a PC, tablet or mobile phone was used to open the survey, and even the operating system, for instance Android or iOS.

The point is, that the data can be provided in a way, that the company can see what the situation is with a single glance. In relation, the goal is to have everything as automated as possible, whether it is quantitative or qualitative data. In general, it was explained, that there are numerous data models that can be used, but the pie chart for instance is a very common one due to it conveying plenty of information easily. All in all, the data received can be portrayed in very much detail.

From the company’s point of view, their client companies have very different levels of understanding in terms of customer feedback and the point of measuring customer satisfaction; some of them do not understand collecting customer feedback at all and think, that collecting it in general is a bad thing. Furthermore, they think that it reflects that their customers do not know what they want and just blame it on the company.

In terms of how to build surveys and measure customer satisfaction, the company strives to get away from having long surveys for their client companies to use.

“Overall our thought process in all of this is, that we get away from having long questionnaires. -- I think of having five questions per survey as a maximum amount. -- It is a different thing to do marketing research as it is, a research. In those, the idea is to research; for us, this is more about “being in the moment”, although having data from a long interval is research of course. What we do is more about embracing the moment and being in it, building and strengthening the brand image, collecting leads and marketing.”
Furthermore, the company has gathered, that the response rate in general is affected by how the survey looks. “Traditional” surveys with less appealing visual presence have a substantially smaller response rate across the board; the interviewee gave an example of a company that they worked with, whose survey they overhauled and they increased the response rate to that manifold compared to that company’s previous surveys by making it short, visual and simple.

The company has noticed, that sometimes their client companies have an entirely different image of what they would like to achieve and what kind of data they would like to collect, and that it can collide with the interviewee’s thoughts on what would be the most beneficial methods in practice. Many companies want to ask too many questions in every single questionnaire, and that the results are gone through only once a year. The problem with this is, that the results portray how the situation was in the past, not the present, thus making it very difficult to react to the results in a fast manner.

It would be more beneficial for companies to have shorter surveys more often than having for instance one large one a year. Having more consistent, short surveys would also make it easier to measure things throughout the customer journey, rather than trying to pinpoint everything between long intervals.

Because companies oftentimes want to carry out a research conveying plenty of data about basically everything, they do not think about how customer friendly their survey is and how much better their survey could be targeted. Furthermore, it would be worth it to target surveys for specific age groups or test different segments with their own surveys, because they may have their own specific needs separate from others. Having a shorter survey that takes a maximum of 10 seconds to complete with content of questions thought of more carefully and the surveys done within shorter intervals would be the way to go.

When asked if there are any concrete differences in results between what quantitative and qualitative methods provide in terms of accuracy, effectiveness or overall use, the interviewee compared the two in terms of how they are being used and implemented and gave a little insight into the importance of using them.
Quantitative metrics help the person in answering the survey questions, for instance by using emoticons or a slider as a means of reply. In terms of qualitative questions, especially really simple ones, such as “why?”, provide so many kinds of feedback, even on things that one may have not thought of themselves. When you are looking for basic feedback, that kind of question works. However, if the company is looking for anything more specific, the question should also be specified accordingly to prevent people answering that one single question with all of the feedback they have. In general, the question should be set up so, that it is easier for the person to answer; ultimately it is important that the customer gives an answer to it.

What comes to accuracy of different methods, it depends on how questions are presented. When the customer feedback is something they want to give and the company asks for it openly, the person will provide them with it. If that is the case, customers will answer both quantitative and qualitative questions regardless.

It became evident in the interview, that qualitative methods are often – if not overlooked by companies – not utilized as much as quantitative ones for data collection purposes. Overall, one of the comments touched the feedback collection in general in Finland and it still being a relatively complicated topic.

“Somehow there is kind of a mentality in Finland, that customer feedback does not really matter. It is collected just for the sake of it being reclamation and companies see the feedback as a bad thing, when, in reality, it should be so, that feedback is being collected and when you get that feedback, it is used to improve your business. We have noticed that it is challenging; it sounds great, but in reality, it is not such a ‘trendy’ topic”.

Furthermore, the company should try to identify the things and topics that appear in the replies the most and react accordingly. It would be beneficial for the company to find the things they want to improve, instead of thinking that something they provide their customers with works very poorly or that the feedback just feels like reclamation, especially in the longer term. Companies often just tend to think, that their events and happenings will be fine regardless. The company emphasizes their customer companies the importance of following the situation on the go through the software and really assessing it; that is when you get the most benefit out of it and you will be much more able to react to things quickly.
Going back to different methods of data collection, qualitative methods are often underestimated in business world and not used very much, because companies think that quantitative metrics they have are good enough. However, quantitative metrics can often create an illusion that everything is fine as it is, when in reality the underlying problems do not come up.

When asked about the client companies’ possible interest in more qualitative testing methods, it became clear, that when companies actually start getting that qualitative feedback, they often do become interested in it. Initially, they may have the kind of mindset, that going through qualitative responses and using qualitative methods are too much work overall. For instance, a client of theirs said, that they do not do anything with the feedback, because it is only negative and just plain criticism.

“I am not sure, but I think, that the biggest reason is fear. Fear of looking the truth in the eyes, fear of facing the feedback. However, we have noticed, that once qualitative metrics are being implemented, companies are interested in the end. It starts with a fear that has to be conquered.”

3.2.2 Interview 2 with two informants

Interview 2 was conducted with a company, that organizes different fairs and events. The questions were answered by the company’s Customer Service Manager and Marketing Manager (two different people).

The company organizes events for both consumers (consumer fairs) and professionals (trade fairs). The trade fairs are often targeted for a certain industry, and they have some targeted consumer fairs as well. For the most part, they have stopped organizing traditional “general fairs”, as they stated, that almost no one organizes them anymore. The company purposely tries to have a certain target group for their fairs and not try to appeal to everyone, but rather the ones that are actually interested in the industry. In terms of balancing the amount of consumer events and trade events, they said, that even though they generally go fifty-fifty on an annual basis, the balance itself is not necessarily intentional. Several events they organize are two- or three-day events.
When talking about the channels through which they get information on customers, their satisfaction and experience, the channels vary depending on different factors and events and their purposes. Email and social media in general are the biggest channels for before-the-event and post-event information. However, they said, that they actively measure both customers’ and exhibitors’ satisfaction in every event, whether it is during the event or post-event.

Overall, social media as a major channel was discussed in more detail. As it is a very big channel for the company, they also buy more marketing procedures in social media. However, the company emphasizes, that they have always been active in terms of communication to other media about who they are and what their content is. Social media becomes a really beneficial tool, when one can share videos and other content with the rest of the world.

“We are fighting pretty heavily against other events in the consumer fairs, (although) not with other fairs, because there are plenty of local fairs in pretty much every city, but in terms of events targeted for consumers. In general, the spare time of people is rather scarce at the moment and in relation to that the role of social media will most likely be even bigger and more important than it is now.”

While Facebook reigns supreme in terms of consumer events, LinkedIn and Twitter tend to be the primary channels in trade fairs. Depending on the age group, channels such as Instagram can rise high in importance.

What comes to actual research methods, the company uses a combination of both quantitative and qualitative questions. For quantitative questions, quite many of the questions feature the so-called “1-5 scale”, where the person places their answer on one of the predetermined points on the scale. The scale can range for instance from very poorly to very well or met expectations very poorly to met expectations very well. In addition, more general questions with answer options such as yes-no-maybe are used.

As for qualitative methods, the company utilizes open questions as their sole way to collect qualitative data. The focal point in their qualitative questions is to look for both positive and negative feedback and find out how to improve the events. Although metrics such as the Net Promoter Score are really good especially in terms of recommendations,
open questions are really important supporting blocks in finding more specifically what the company has failed in. Qualitative data becomes increasingly important in trying to pinpoint individual problems.

“We know that for instance we hear that a traffic warden has prevented a driver from going where they should go, it is vital for us to hear about it, because even one feeling such as that as in “this does not work at this fair” might be the reason that the person is not coming the next time.”

Going further into qualitative data, the company does not have pre-existing goals set for qualitative methods in terms of what they would like to achieve with them.

“It is rather the kind of “flow of thoughts” that we get, and then we try to find out if there are similarities between different replies. We are looking for the volume of similar replies and then act accordingly. There is no model behind how the replies are being processed. -- It kind of goes so, that we see what kind of thoughts we get out of them and the volume of them; what we need to react to, what needs to be taken into consideration and if there have been some good ideas, so that we can maybe implement them next time as well or use the same method of operation for another event.”

In terms of questions asked from both visitors and exhibitors in the survey, the company has a very similar frame of questions that is used for everyone. Even though the surveys are thought of separately for every single event, questions have little variation from event to event. However, in events with more focus on the program, questions about the program content, such as asking about the most interesting parts of the program and about the content in general become more important.

If the event is not as program-centered but rather more about the exhibition and exhibitors themselves, the company can have different event-specific questions, such as how people felt about the overall theme of the event and whether it was present or not, as well as ask about certain theme options planned for the following year and what people think about them.

When comparing business-to-business and business-to-consumer events in terms of collecting information on customer experience and customer satisfaction, there is a certain
division in place. However, what comes to actual surveys for the events, the questions in them do not vary much between B2B and B2C, whether they are exhibitor surveys or visitor surveys.

Generally, questions asked from the exhibitors measure things such as the successfulness of the event from their viewpoint, their own success at the event and their thoughts on the quality of visitors, if the visitors were interested in the products and services available and if they were seen as potential customers or not. Visitor surveys – more often than not – have similar questions but in a way, flipped to view the event from their perspective instead of the exhibitors’. The visitor surveys also place more emphasis on the event content. When asked about the variation in the number of quantitative and qualitative questions comparatively in B2B and B2C events, it became clear, that there is no thought of balance between quantitative and qualitative questions.

However, their implementation varies widely between different events and purposes. If the company is trying to measure how they are succeeding right now, quantitative measures work better, because they give a comparable result showing we they are going. Then again, if they want to improve an event or a part of it, there are topics that arise from the qualitative data, that they may have not even thought of, making the range of responses far larger in qualitative data, as expected.

Despite the overall very streamlined, similar processes in all events, there is one thing, that largely separates consumer events from professional trade fairs. In consumer events, there is more a kind of a view, that it is the individual visitor/consumer taking the survey, as opposed to trade fairs, where the professionals taking the survey may not only answer the questions based on their own personal preferences, but there is also the organization in the background that they represent when they go to different events.

What comes to actual customer data collection, the division goes as follows. In consumer events, the visitors themselves will be surveyed during the event. More specifically, there are designated interviewers that take care of it in a designated area within the venue, who then collect the data from the interviewees on computers and send the data forward through them. The visitor interviews in events are all done face-to-face and written on what the person replies. The interviewers look for potential visitors for the survey from the nearby area. The company’s target is to get 100 survey replies per event day, which
would translate to 200 to 300 replies in a two- or three-day event respectively. It was noted specifically, that this is the target for on the spot interviews in events, but they may receive hundreds more via internet.

If there is a question the person is unable to answer right there and then, they may be given some options to guide the interview process forward. As for exhibitors and trade fair attendees, they are sent a similar email survey after the event. The company does not “pay for or bribe” the interviewees for taking the survey in any way, something they refrain from in all of the surveys sent afterwards as well. They do not want to direct people’s answers in a certain direction and thus, they expect to get more truthful answers.

Since the company asks for exhibitor feedback after the event, it was interesting to know why. It is partly because they hope that exhibitors are busy with their own booths. However, the company also emphasized, that another reason for collecting the feedback afterwards is, that because exhibitors view the event as a whole, basically what may happen on the first day of a three-day fair, can feel totally different in their mind on the third day. It all depends a lot on what kind of target group they will have on each of the days and what kind of contacts they get throughout the event. In short, the company wants to know what exhibitors think about the event as an entity, not just on a specific day.

When talking about possible future data collection methods, the company says, that they are possibly subject to change in the future, but for now they have been pleased with the way things are going and they are also getting the kind of answers they are looking for. In a more hypothetical fashion, the company may have for instance tablet computer stations at events in the future, where you fill in the form yourself, but it was noted, that based on their experience, there has been a noticeable difference in response rate between the way they collect data now compared to using tools such as tablet computers for people to “self-direct” themselves to reply to a survey, the latter method getting substantially less replies.

Although the company does not have a certain, predetermined pattern on the number of quantitative and qualitative questions in their surveys, there has to be thought put into constructing the surveys. It should have more or less both quantitative and qualitative questions, because if people are greeted with a survey that only has qualitative questions in it, you have to start thinking about how long there will be people answering the surveys.
As for client feedback for more extensive qualitative testing, the company has not received any. However, there have been some cases, where a company is looking for feedback independently in addition to the organizer’s processes, where a supervisor or the board of a company has agreed on having people to observe their performance at the event and how things are going, trying to control their own quality that way. It is worth noting, that this is the kind of information the organizer does not get to know directly.

In general, the organizer is usually the party that informs everyone on how the event went down. The exhibitors’ opinions on how the event went may sometimes collide with the data that the organization receives and therefore cause some discrepancies, but overall the data is something to be relied on.

“Of course, you need to think about how well the results we get serve the exhibitor, if they feel that the fair did not go according to their expectations and hopes, and then we say, that based on our survey, 90 percent of the people that took the survey were satisfied. So maybe their own measures of success do not meet with ours, but then again in most of the cases we can be sure, that data we get from exhibitors is mostly valid. They may have their own measures of evaluating their performance related to their values.”

After all, from the company’s viewpoint, the survey should be easy to fill in, so that people do not feel it is going to take too long for them to share their opinion. Furthermore, if people are asked to analyse, ponder, think and overly express their opinion, the survey become rather heavy to fill. In some cases, the company has noticed, that it is easier to get quantitative data from people, rather than asking qualitative questions without helping them in the answering process in any way.

In terms of metrics or methods used in relation to customers’ emotions, the company does not directly ask for instance “how did you feel about the event”, but they have plenty of questions where the answerer’s emotions affect their reply indirectly. For further example, they can ask if the event met the person’s expectations instead of how they directly felt. However, the company acknowledges, that many things impact each other, which is also the case with emotions.

Related to the example of a traffic warden on page 36, if a person feels, that something has gone wrong right from the start, the eventual reply to the survey may become more
negative overall. Of course, this works with positive things as well. Because so many small and larger things affect the event experience at large, the emotions of people that take the survey will still be there in the background while taking the survey. For instance, a generally simple qualitative question on what improvements could be made also affects people’s emotions.

“— some people start thinking about all the kind of things that could be arranged, and someone else can for example think about if the restrooms were dirty and they should be taken care of the next time, so the scale in terms of answers is pretty wide regarding those.”
4 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The thesis set out to find different methods that Finnish companies use (both qualitative and quantitative) to measure their customer satisfaction and map their customer journey, with emphasis on qualitative methods and methods related to measuring customers’ emotions. Furthermore, it was meaningful for the thesis to discover, whether companies are interested in more qualitative methods to be used in future testing. In the end, customer journey mapping in general became a lesser objective as it played a relatively trivial part in both of the interviews, so the focus shifted more toward customer satisfaction.

The two interviews done for the research were purposely selected to be from somewhat different perspectives. Interview 1 was done with one informant from a company offering feedback collecting services for companies, that would then use the services to gain information on their own customers. Interview 2 was conducted with two informants from an event organizing company, that collects customer data directly for their own purposes.

There were three research questions that were set for the thesis:

1. What kind of qualitative and quantitative methods do companies use for customer journey and customer satisfaction purposes, if any?
2. Do the methods relate to people’s emotions?
3. Is there more need for qualitative testing methods in Finnish businesses?

In the research, it became evident, that companies indeed do use both qualitative and quantitative methods. According to the interviews, doing surveys is the only way of mapping and measuring customers.

However, the only method of collecting qualitative data the companies is using open questions in surveys. The questions are either used to specify an earlier reply to a quantitative question or to answer a predetermined question. In other words, quantitative methods prevail in many aspects. The most common quantitative method seems to be a scale of 1-5, where the person places there answer on one of the points between the two numbers. It can essentially warrant any type of question, but for instance a question such as
“how pleased were you with the product/service” often serves as the base question. Qualitative data can also be received by asking a follow-up question to a quantitative question, asking the person why they replied the way they did. In interview 1, the informant emphasized its purpose in finding the underlying reasons behind replies.

This scale can be used in more than just a 1-5 format, as company’s can have more or less options for customers to choose from, or instead of numbers, the company can use for instance emoticons (sad face-happy face) to receive feedback. Further methods, such as the Net Promoter Score (asking how likely the person would recommend the company’s products/services to others) or A-B test for finding the more interesting product/service from customers’ point of view.

According to the informants, social media has a major role as a means of communication with customers as well as receiving customer feedback is and it will most likely be even more impactful in the future. The major social media channels in general are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, although for instance Google+ or Instagram can be used. The most important channels depend on what kind of use they are meant for, as well as what the target group is. Especially with trade fairs and in professional use, Twitter and LinkedIn rise to the occasion as the most important social media tools, while Facebook is more prevalent on the consumer side.

The actual channels for the data collection vary. The company in interview 1 provides a feedback collecting software through which all of the surveys they provide are done, as they automatically gather the data. The surveys can then be used in continuation or different events depending on the purpose. However, they are all done virtually, meaning that no face-to-face interaction is present. For interview 2, the company collects customer data from consumers by having brief face-to-face interviews, and exhibitors and everyone participating in trade fairs will receive an email questionnaire after the event.

In terms of relating to people’s emotions, many of the questions can be said to base more or less on people emotions. For example, there can be a question that asks what a certain brand brings to your mind, which can then have either pre-determined answers, which seems the more likely option, or an open answer, which is less common, or not utilized at all. Essentially, in one way or another, almost all of the methods and questions used
relate to people’s emotions, but it does not go deeper than that, as they merely direct the answers to an extent in the background.

Mixed opinions on using more qualitative data in companies were received in the interviews overall. Some companies tend to think that processing qualitative data takes too much effort and time and some think, that they should be somewhat balanced. In interview #1, the informant explained, how they personally think that both qualitative and quantitative data go hand in hand, but that is not always the case with their client companies. In interview 2, the company explained, that they think they have a good balance between qualitative and quantitative questions, and for the time being, they do not want to change that. In both interviews, it was emphasized, that the surveys should not become too heavy and tedious, but rather something customers can fill in quickly with relative ease.

Overall, the interviews raised multiple questions. Interview 1 painted a somewhat dark picture of Finnish companies in terms of customer data collection – and utilizing it to the best of their capabilities. It became known, that while certain methods of collecting data are available, companies are sometimes reluctant to actually make use of them, viewing customer information as a necessary evil, especially what comes to feedback. Why would getting feedback be viewed as a bad thing in the first place? If a company is trying to improve their business, is the customer data about satisfaction and customer journey not one of the key elements in improving its processes?

Moreover, while the software the company in interview 1 is using seems thorough, the thoughts on having everything automated and as fast as possible, as well as companies being able to see everything with just a single glance make the author of this thesis question the overall impact of the data. Furthermore, how well does qualitative data in particular serve the company, if it is compiled in the most automated possible way? Will all of the important bits from the data be noticed? Related to using the software, would companies benefit from having designated interviewees to collect information from the customers, rather than the customers prompting themselves to answer the survey online?

Furthermore, as it became evident, that psychological methods or overall – more advanced methods (such as the PAD scale) for collecting customer data are not used, how much could companies actually benefit from further analyzing their performance through
their customers? For example, as the informants in interview 2 stated, they have gotten the kinds of results they have been looking for, but it seems, that the data the company receives is always the kind of ground-level data instead of getting deeper into the customers' thoughts. In essence, it seems that from both of the interviews, Finnish companies at large tend to think, that quantitative metrics offer enough valid data in the longer run, and while some qualitative questions here and there are in place, no further measures are really needed.

However, interestingly enough, informants in both interviews said, that either companies realize that they greatly benefit from qualitative data once they start receiving it, or that if the information (especially regarding negative things) is not received and reacted to immediately, the situation can already pass and there is nothing that can be done about it at that point. This makes the author question, why are companies not putting more emphasis on qualitative data collection and immediate evaluation, if such negative instances are known to occur?

This also works the other way around; if something is found very positive, would it not be beneficial to enforce that by knowing about it immediately? Especially given that the software that the company in interview 1 provides, can be used in real time evaluation of data, for example for event purposes, why do companies shy away from that even though they would benefit from it? Do companies not think, that the benefit is great enough for the amount of work?

Overall, the author is pleased with the data discovered in the research, but also emphasizes, that the field of customer data about customer satisfaction and customer journey still seems to be more of a minor thing than a major topic that can be relied on. It is apparent, that while companies often say, that customer data is important – which it undoubtedly is – it is not collected using the most beneficial and advanced methods and interpreted as far as it could be.

According to the research done for the thesis, there seem to be more options to gain customer information than companies actually utilize. More qualitative and specific research in general, as well as delving deeper into customers’ emotions behind their satisfaction or dissatisfaction could benefit companies more in the future than they currently do.
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Children, Youth, and Families at Risk. *Qualitative or Quantitative Data?* Read on 29 September 2017. https://cyfar.org/qualitative-or-quantitative-data


APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview questions for interview 1 in original language (Finnish)

1) Kerro hieman yrityksestä, millaisia palveluita yritys tarjoaa ja millaisiin tarkoituksiin

2) Mitä kanavia yritys käyttää kerätäkseen tietoa asiakkaansa asiakkaiden kokemuksesta ja -tyytyväisyydestä?

3) Millainen rooli sosiaalisella medialla on yrityksen tarjoamissa palveluissa/palvelupaketissa (esim. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)?

4) Ovatko yrityksen palvelut tarkoitetut tiettyä tapahtumaa/tapahtumia varten vai voiko niitä käyttää pitkemmällä aikajärjestyksellä asiakkaan palvelupolun varrella? Jos vain tiettyjä tapahtumia varten, miksi? Miksi ei pitkemmällä aikajärjestyksellä?

5) Kuinka paljon tietoa kerätään suoraan esimerkiksi asiakastapahtumissa (B2B tai B2C?) Jos ei kerätä, miksi ei? Jos kerätään, kuinka tärkeää on saada tieto asiakaskokemuksesta tapahtumien aikana verrattuna tapahtuman jälkeen?

6) Kuinka paljon B2B ja B2C eroavat toisistaan (jos eroavat) kun kerätään tietoa asiakaskokemuksesta, asiakastyytyväisyydestä ja niiden kehittelemissä?

7) Käytetään yrityksenseä kvantitatiivisia (määriäisisä) mittareita asiakaskokemuksen ja -tyytyväisyyden mittaamisessa (esim. asteikolla 1-5, asteikolla erittäin huono-erittäin hyvä)? Jos käytetään, millaisia? Jos ei, miksi ei?

8) Käytetään yrityksenseä kvalitatiivisia (laadullisia) mittareita asiakaskokemuksen kartoittamisessa ja asiakastyytyväisyyden mittaamisessa? Jos käytetään, millaisia? Jos ei, miksi ei?

9) Olisiko laadullisille mittareille enemmän tarvetta yrityksen näkökulmasta? Millaisia mahdollisia mittareita siihen voisi olla?

10) Käytetään yritys asiakkaiden tunteisiin/tunneskaalaan liittyvää mittareita?
11) Onko asiakasyrityksillä kiinnostusta enemmän laadullista tutkimusta kohtaan?

12) (Jos käytössä sekä kvalitatiivisia että kvantitatiivisia mittareita) Onko kvalitatiivisten ja kvantitatiivisten mittareiden mitattujen antamissa tuloksissa eroja esimerkiksi tarkkuuden, käyttötarkoituksen tai tehokkuuden suhteen?
Appendix 2. Interview questions for interview 1 translated into English

1) Could you tell me a little about the company, what kind of services it provides and for what kind of purposes?

2) What channels do you (the company) use to collect information on your customers’ customers experience and satisfaction?

3) What kind of role does the social media have in the services the company offers?

4) Can the company’s services be used in a longer term along the customer journey or are they meant for a specific event(s)? If they are meant for specific events, why? Why not in the longer term?

5) How much customer information or data is gathered directly at events (B2B or B2C)? If it is not collected, why not? If yes, how important is it to get data on customer experience during the event compared to after the event?

6) How much do B2B and B2C differ from each other (if they do) in terms of collecting data about customer experience, customer satisfaction and developing them?

7) Does your company use quantitative metrics to map customer experience and measure customer satisfaction (e.g. 1-5 scale from poor-excellent)? If yes, what kind of measures? If no, why not?

8) Does your company use qualitative methods for mapping customer experience and measure customer satisfaction? If yes, what kind of measures? If no, why not?

9) Does the company use measures or methods that relate customers’ emotions?

10) Would there be more need for qualitative methods from the company’s point of view? What kind of possible methods could there be?

11) Have your client companies expressed interest toward more qualitative research?
12) (If the company uses both qualitative and quantitative methods) Are there any differences between results given by qualitative and quantitative methods in terms of for instance accuracy, use or efficiency?
Appendix 3. Interview questions for interview 2 in original language (Finnish)

1) Millaisiin tapahtumiin ja messuihin yritys on erityisesti keskittynyt, ja millaisen tapahtumakokemuksen se haluaa tarjota?

2) Mitä kanavia käyttämällä yritys kerää tietoa asiakaskokemuksesta ja -tyytyväisyydestä?

3) Millainen rooli sosiaalisella medialla on yrityksen tarjoamissa palveluissa?

4) Kuinka paljon tietoa kerätään suorasti tapahtumissa (B2B tai B2C?) Jos ei kerätä, miksi ei? Jos kerätään, kuinka tärkeää on saada tieto asiakaskokemuksesta tapahtuman aikana verrattuna tapahtuman jälkeen?

5) Kuinka paljon B2B ja B2C eroavat toisistaan (jos eroavat) kun kerätään tietoa asiakaskokemuksesta, asiakastyytyväisyydestä ja niiden kehittämisestä?

6) Käyttääkö yrityksenne kvantitatiivisia (määärällisiä) mittareita asiakaskokemuksen ja tyytyväisyyden mitattavissa (esim. asteikolla 1-5, asteikolla erittäin huono-erittäin hyvä)? Jos käyttää, millaisia? Jos ei, miksi ei?

7) Käyttääkö yrityksenne kvalitatiivisia (laadullisia) mittareita asiakaskokemuksen karttoittamisessa ja asiakastyytyväisyyden mitattavissa? Jos käyttää, millaisia? Jos ei, miksi ei?

8) Käyttääkö yritys asiakkaiden tunteisiin/tunneskaalaan liittyvää mittareita?

9) Olisiko laadullisille mittareille enemmän tarvetta yrityksen näkökulmasta? Millaisia mahdollisia mittareita siihen voisi olla?

10) Onko asiakasyrityksillä kiinnostusta enemmän laadullista tutkimusta kohtaan?

12) (Jos käytössä sekä kvalitatiivisia että kvantitatiivisia mittareita) Onko kvantitatiivisten mittareiden ja kvalitatiivisten mittareiden antamissa tuloksissa eroja esimerkiksi tarkkuuden, käyttötarkoituksen tai tehokkuuden suhteen?
Appendix 4. Interview questions for interview 2 translated into English

1) What kind of events and fairs does the company focus on, and what kind of experience does it want to offer?

2) What channels do you (the company) use to collect information on your customers experience and satisfaction?

3) What kind of role does the social media have in the services the company offers?

4) How much customer information or data is gathered directly at events (B2B or B2C)? If it is not collected, why not? If yes, how important is it to get data on customer experience during the event compared to after the event?

5) How much do B2B and B2C differ from each other (if they do) in terms of collecting data about customer experience, customer satisfaction and developing them?

6) Does your company use quantitative metrics to map customer experience and measure customer satisfaction (e.g. 1-5 scale from poor-excellent)? If yes, what kind of measures? If no, why not?

7) Does your company use qualitative methods for mapping customer experience and measure customer satisfaction? If yes, what kind of measures? If no, why not?

8) Does the company use measures or methods that relate customers’ emotions?

9) Would there be more need for qualitative methods from the company’s point of view? What kind of possible methods could there be?

10) Have your exhibitors expressed interest toward more qualitative research?