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STRUCTURING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IN B2B SERVICES

Simonas Juozapas RAIŠYS

Institute of Management and Political Science, Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania

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Abstract. Research on customer experience in B2B services remains fragmented, with existing studies typically examining isolated elements and offering limited insight into how customer experience is structured as a whole. The present study addresses this gap through a systematic literature review conducted under PRISMA guidelines. A comprehensive review of 21 peer-reviewed studies was conducted to identify constructs of customer experience in business-to-business (B2B) services. Through rigorous analytical organization, these constructs have been categorized into five interconnected groupings: antecedents, components, consequences, mediators, and moderators. The study's principal contribution is the development of an evidence-based integrative map that synthesises these categories and visualizes their interdependencies, conceptualizing B2B customer experience as an interconnected phenomenon rather than a set of independent factors. The findings are presented through an explicit integrative map and a simplified structural representation, offering fidelity to existing research and analytical clarity. By revealing conceptual overlaps, missing links, and inconsistent use of constructs across prior research, the study clarifies internal structure and boundaries of the B2B customer experience construct. The findings provide a structured foundation for future empirical research and support a more coherent approach to managing customer experience in B2B service contexts.

Keywords: customer experience, B2B services, moderators, mediators, systematic review, construct mapping.

JEL Classification: M31, L84.

✉Corresponding author. E-mail: ***simonas.raisys@mruni.eu***

1. Introduction

For businesses, generation of positive customer responses to their services drives the development of positive customer experience which is vital for business success, since it plays a significant role in attracting new customers, fosters repeat purchases (Sharma & Singh, 2023), increases customer satisfaction and leads to customer loyalty (Wiguna & Wang, 2021). However, in the business-to-business (B2B) context, the area of customer experience faces a knowledge deficit, with some important aspects being understudied. For instance, the evaluation of customer experience in a B2B context is not analogous to that in a business-to-consumer (B2C) context due to the presence of additional actors involved in the B2B buying process, and the reduced impact of external factors when compared to a B2C situation (Gao et al., 2021).

Despite the considerable impact of the recent global pandemic on service and manufacturing sectors, there has been an observed consistent growth trajectory in demand for B2B services, accompanied by the emergence of new business ventures. As a result, research on B2B services has been reinforced (see, e.g., Johnston & Cortez, 2024; Kumar et al., 2022; Terpoorten et al., 2024; Wirtz & Kowalkowski, 2022). Nevertheless, Cepeda-Carrión et al. (2023) and Wirtz et al. (2025) posit that there is still significant room for advancement in customer experience research to address the knowledge shortage in B2B services. The comparatively limited scope of B2B research is also noteworthy. The extant literature on customer experience in B2B contexts remains significantly less extensive than its B2C counterpart (e.g., Hasler et al., 2022; Shankar et al., 2022). According to Bamberger et al. (2025), B2B-focused studies account for less than 10 percent of articles in leading marketing journals.

While research indicates that a positive customer experience provides competitive advantage for companies (e.g., Böttcher et al., 2023; Srivastava & Kaul, 2016), there is a scarcity of research on the nature and composition of customer experience in B2B context, as well as the mechanisms through which it contributes to business success. Theory developing studies often focus on specific, narrow aspects of customer experience within the service context (see, e.g., Barbu et al., 2021). Moreover, very few extant

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systematic literature reviews on B2B customer experience actively develop the construct. Instead, they often focus on a snapshot of the research field (see, e.g., Gerea et al., 2021; Waqas et al., 2021). Prior research suggests that B2B marketing research exhibits fragmentation and lacks a field-level lens (Ojansivu, 2023). Building on this, the present study interprets that this fragmentation is reflected in inconsistent terminology (e.g., customer vs service experience), unclear construct boundaries (antecedents vs components), and reliance on B2C-derived measurement approaches with limited B2B-specific conceptualization. The present study aims to address this gap by proposing a construct-enriching systematic literature review that captures the current knowledge of the B2B customer experience construct and visually outlines its structure to support further research and practical application.

Systematic literature review is a structured method for synthesizing research, providing foundation for guiding further studies on more specific practical problems. For academics, they are valuable resource for determining the direction of their research and for identifying the existing studies that may be similar to their own (Lame, 2019). Consequently, systematic literature reviews continue to serve as a valuable instrument in the pursuit of developing theories within a broad spectrum of organization research domains (see, e.g. Gardner et al., 2024; Lisi et al., 2024).

This paper presents a systematic literature review that examines the factors that comprise and influence customer experience in B2B services. The review is based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021) and examines research articles published between 1990 and 2025.

From theoretical standpoint, the research findings have resulted in the development of an integrative map that sets the stage for understanding customer experience in the B2B context. The paper systematically explicates the complex interplay of factors influencing customer experience, as evidenced by scientific literature in the field.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study offer valuable insights for professionals seeking to improve their business processes. By providing a map for understanding customer experience in B2B services, the study enables organizations to make improvements to their business processes and enhance customer experience.

The paper is organized into three sections: methodology, results, and conclusions, while the results section is further divided into subsections that present the antecedents, components, consequences, mediators, and moderators that comprise the integrative map of customer experience in B2B services.

2. Methodology of research

PRISMA guidelines are an aid to the preparation of systematic literature reviews (Moher et al., 2010; Page et al., 2021). Although these guidelines were developed for systematic reviews in medical sciences, they are also used as a guide in social sciences (e.g., Dabees et al., 2023; Xie & Lau, 2023). This systematic literature review applies the four phases of literature selection for review based on the PRISMA (Page et al., 2021) guidelines: identification, screening, eligibility, and included. Screening and eligibility assessment were conducted by the author.

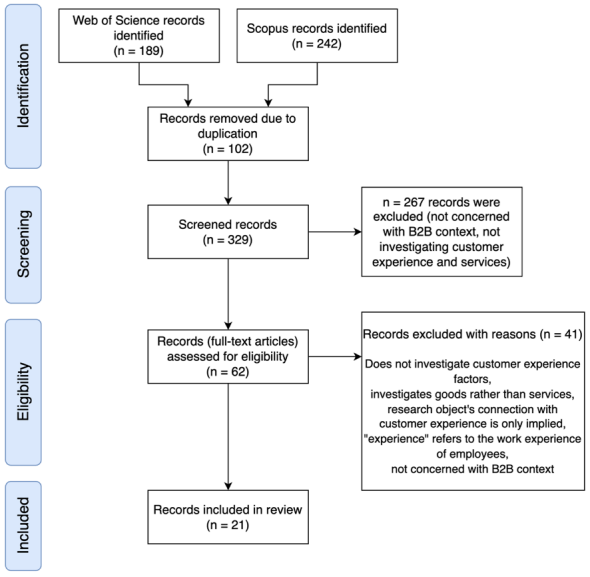


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of building study pool

Identification. For the identification of articles, the two most reputable databases were selected, namely Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. The combination of these databases provides comprehensive coverage of major high-quality journals, facilitating the collection of reliable data for the review. The search strings for both databases are presented in Table 1.

The queries were set to identify articles published in journals, written in English. Also, publication year ranges of 1990–2025 in WoS and 2000–2025 in Scopus were applied to ensure coverage of the most recent literature available at the time of the search (November 19, 2025). The queries included "customer experience", "CX", and variations of "business to business" in the title, abstract, and keywords sections, with variations of "service" in all available search fields.

As a result, 431 articles were identified among WoS and Scopus. The records retrieved were deduplicated. Overall, 102 articles were removed due to duplication, leaving 329 articles for the further phase of screening.

Screening. Abstracts and keywords were screened to assess study context. Articles were retained if they examined customer experience in B2B services. Where relevance was unclear, full texts were provisionally retained to prevent exclusion errors. In this phase, 267 articles were removed as off-topic (non-B2B, unrelated to services, or not addressing customer experience), leaving 62 for eligibility assessment.

Table 1. Database search strings that were used to identify publications in WoS and Scopus.

Web of Science (WoS)	Scopus
customer AND experience OR CX (Topic) and B2B OR business-to-business OR "business to business" (Topic) and servic* (All Fields) and 1990–2025 (Year Published) and English (Language) and Article (Document Type)	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (customer AND experience OR CX) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (b2b OR "business-to-business" OR "business to business") AND ALL (servic*) AND LANGUAGE (english)) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar"))

Eligibility. Full texts of the 62 studies were evaluated. Following detailed review, 41 were excluded: 31 did not investigate customer experience factors, 3 only implied a connection to customer experience, and 3 used "experience" to denote employee work experience. Additionally, 3 focused on goods rather than services and 1 was not B2B. Consequently, 21 articles progressed to final analysis (see Figure 1).

3. Theoretical background

The analysis of publication years shows a fluctuating trend of research activity on the topic of customer experience factors in B2B services (see Figure 2). Although the analyzed years reach as far back as 1990, articles on the particular topic are only found from 2007 onwards. The yearly publication of the articles is observed from 2016 to 2024 with no relevant articles identified from 2025, which indicates a cyclical pattern of scholarly attention to the factors of customer experience in B2B services.

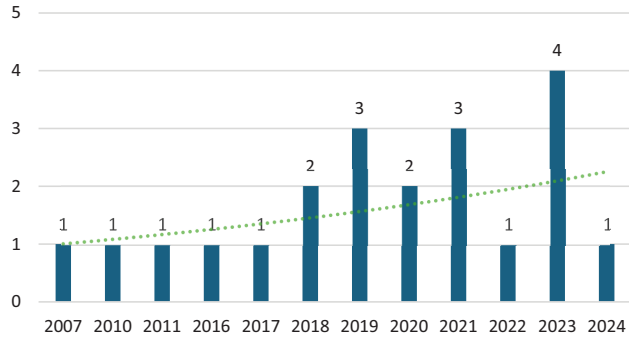


Figure 2. Number of publications per year

Overall, the evidence base remains relatively small and discontinuous over time, suggesting that B2B service customer experience is still an emerging stream rather than a mature and cumulative research domain. Out of the 21 articles included in the analysis, there are 2 conceptual studies, 4 qualitative studies, 11 quantitative studies, and 4 studies that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Table 2 describes focus, context, and output of the analyzed studies.

Table 2. Characteristics of the studies in the study pool

Study type	Publication	Study focus	Context	Output
Quantitative	Madaleno et al., 2007	Impact of customer experience on customer satisfaction	Cross-industry	Determinants of B2B customer satisfaction
	Biedenbach and Marell, 2010	Impact of customer experience on brand equity	Services	Conceptual model of customer experience impact on brand equity dimensions
	Zhang et al., 2016	Relationship between brand orientation and brand equity	Services	Conceptual model of brand orientation impact on overall brand equity
	McLean, 2017	Website quality influence on customer experience	Services	Website characteristics influencing customer experience
	Woo et al., 2019	Service innovation influence on long-term relationships with business customers	Services	Service innovation impact on long-term relationship with business customers
	Roy et al., 2019	Consequences of customer experience	Services	Conceptual model of service experience impact on service outcomes
	Zeeshan et al., 2019	Value co-creation influence on customer experience	Services	Theoretical framework of value co-creation facets influencing experience value
	Human et al., 2020	Consequences of customer experience	Cross-industry	Conceptual model of customer experience impact on loyalty
	Jang et al., 2022	Service experience influence on repeat purchase intentions	Cross-industry	Conceptual model of customer experience impact on repurchase intention
	Weiger, 2023	Influence of cultural differences to online customer experience	Cross-industry	Moderating role of cultural factors on the relationship between customer experiences (cognitive and social) and psychological customer engagement
	Cepeda-Carrión et al., 2023	Customer experience dimensions	Services	Model of customer experience dimensions as antecedents of customer satisfaction

End of Table 2

Study type	Publication	Study focus	Context	Output
Qualitative & quantitative	Hsieh & Yuan, 2021	Formation of service experience	Services	Theoretical framework of service experience interpretation
	Kushwaha et al., 2021	Customer experience in computer-mediated environment	Services	Model of customer experience with chatbots
	Homburg and Tischer, 2023	Customer journey management	Cross-industry	B2B customer journey management capability (CJMC) measurement scale
	Gounaris and Almoraish, 2024	Measurement of customer experience dimensions	Services	Multidimensional customer experience scale
Qualitative	Lemke et al., 2011	Components of customer experience	Cross-industry	Conceptual model of customer experience quality
	Pandey and Mookerjee, 2018	Impact of emotions on decision-making in services	Cross-industry	B2B customer experience model
	Lecoeuvre et al., 2021	Age related prejudice influence on customer experience	Services	Age-related impressions that influence customer experience
	Tuunanen et al., 2023	Value co-creation mechanisms to improve service experience	Services	Model of service value co-creation mechanisms
Conceptual	Still et al., 2018	Layers of service experience	Services	Conceptual framework of service experience contextual layers
	Witell et al., 2020	Characterization of customer experience management	Cross-industry	B2B customer experience management framework

As shown in Table 2, over half of the studies examine B2B customer experience in service contexts, while around one-third adopt a cross-industry perspective, addressing both goods and services. Most output takes the form of models, frameworks, or measurement scales.

To map the B2B customer experience construct, identified factors were analyzed and classified by their role within the experience process. Factors are grouped as antecedents, components, consequences, mediators, and moderators based on how they are described in the literature and modeled within the reviewed studies. This classification is consistent with the stimulus–organism–response framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974, pp. xii, 266), which underlies many customer experience models, while also reflecting the mediating and moderating mechanisms specified in the reviewed B2B studies.

Conceptualization of customer experience. On the surface, studies in the pool investigate different concepts of experience, yet they are conceptualized similarly. The studies investigate concepts such as customer experience, service experience, experience value, and interaction experience. However, the definitions of such concepts found in the studies hardly differ (see Table 3). Most of the studies adopt definitions provided by Klaus and Maklan (2013), Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Meyer and Schwager (2007), and Verhoef et al. (2009), regardless of the investigated concept. For example, McLean (2017) investigates customer experience, and Jang et al. (2022) investigate service experience. However, both studies refer to the definition of customer experience offered by Meyer and Schwager (2007), defining it as a subjective and internal response of the customer to direct and indirect contacts with a company.

It is observed that the two definitions differ in terms of where the emphasis is placed regarding the triggers of customer's responses (cognitive, emotional, behavioral, etc.). One definition emphasizes interactions with a brand or a company, while the other highlights the same responses to the company's offerings including during their purchase and use. It can be argued that the definitions have the same meaning with different wording. The purchase or use of a company's offerings is indeed an interaction with a company or a brand, thus closing the gap between the definitions.

Interestingly, both definitions are not only used in the studies investigating the same concepts, but the concepts themselves are observed to be used interchangeably. For example, Jang et al. (2022), Woo et al. (2019), and Zhang et al. (2016) use the terms "customer experience" and "service experience" throughout their studies interchangeably as well. As Still et al. (2018) suggest, customer experience refers to the perspective of a service beneficiary, while the concept of service experience refers to a broader perspective, which also includes the experience of other actors. However, apart from the study by Still et al. (2018), such differentiation of concepts is not observed in the study pool, demonstrating that the concepts of "customer experience" in services and "service experience" are used interchangeably by scholars.

Based on these observations, further sections use customer experience interchangeably with service experience and interaction experience. The customer experience is

Table 3. Experience concepts and their definitions observed in the study pool

Publications	Concepts investigated	Originating sources of definition	Definition
Biedenbach and Marell, 2010; Cepeda-Carrión et al., 2023; Gounaris and Almoraish, 2024; Homburg and Tischer, 2023; Lemke et al., 2011; Madaleno et al., 2007; McLean, 2017	Customer experience	Biedenbach and Marell, 2010; Frow and Payne, 2007; Klaus and Maklan, 2012; Kranzbühler et al., 2018; Lipkin, 2016; Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Roy et al., 2019; Sousa and Voss, 2006; Verhoef et al., 2009	Subjective, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to interactions with a brand or a company across the touchpoints in the customer's journey.
Jang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2016	Customer experience/ service experience		
Human et al., 2020	Sales interaction experience/customer experience		
Roy et al., 2019; Still et al., 2018	Service experience		
Kushwaha et al., 2021; Lecoeuvre et al., 2021; Pandey and Mookerjee, 2018; Witell et al., 2020	Customer experience	Edvardsson et al., 2005; Jaakkola et al., 2015; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Prentice and Nguyen, 2020; Schmitt, 1999	Cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to company's offerings, encompassing the perceptions, feelings, thoughts and relational experiences during the purchase or use of a service.
Woo et al., 2019	Customer experience/ service experience		
Hsieh and Yuan, 2021	Service experience		
Weiger, 2023	Online customer experience/customer experience		

further defined as "customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses" (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p. 71) to "any direct or indirect interactions with a company" (Meyer & Schwager, 2007, p. 4) or a service during its purchase or use (Jaakkola et al., 2015).

Antecedents of customer experience in B2B services. Antecedents of customer experience are interpreted differently across the literature. Some studies treat proxies or constituent elements as antecedents, suggesting that meeting these conditions leads to positive experience (e.g., Biedenbach & Marell, 2010; Jang et al., 2022; Tuunanen et al., 2023). Others conceptualize customer experience as built through components or scale items that are influenced by external antecedent factors (see Table 4). Overall, only a limited number of studies explicitly address antecedents in the B2B context. A key gap is the limited and inconsistent theorization of antecedents in explicitly B2B terms, as studies often conflate antecedents with proxies or measurement components, which makes it difficult to distinguish drivers of experience formation from indicators of positive experience. In addition, antecedents are predominantly framed as positive drivers, with limited attention to negative influencers in B2B service interactions.

Studies distinguish between customer experience as a phenomenon and positive customer experience as an outcome of service interaction. Yet research predominantly focuses on factors that drive positive experience, with limited attention to negative drivers. As a result, antecedents of experience as a process and as an outcome become intertwined, used either as external influencing factors or as proxies depending on study context and purpose.

Components of customer experience in B2B services. Components represent the factors that make up customer experience and are used to examine how it influences or interacts with other constructs. Similar to proxies, measurement scale items are sometimes used to define components, such as adapted EXQ scale items – Product Experience, Outcome Focus, Moments-of-Truth, and Peace-of-Mind (Cepeda-Carrión et al., 2023; Human et al.,

Table 4. Antecedents of B2B service customer experience

Sources	Antecedents of Customer Experience	Type of antecedents
Woo et al. (2019)	Service innovation (technology innovation, value co-creation)	External factors
Lecoeuvre et al. (2021)	Risk related Trust	
Hsieh and Yuan (2021)	Customer expectations	
	Customer emotions	
Zhang et al. (2016)	Internal branding	
McLean (2017)	Website credibility (accuracy, completeness)	
	Information quality (accuracy, relevance, usefulness)	
Gounaris and Almoraish, 2024	Exchange climate	
	Bonding	
	Past experience	
	Technical quality	Proxies
	Delivery performance	
	Price	
Tuunanen et al. (2023)	Access to information	
Biedenbach and Marell (2010)	Value co-creation	
	Interactions between customer and brand	
Jang et al., 2022	Customer journey (customer relations, personalization, service brand, post-sale engagement)	

2020; Jang et al., 2022; Klaus & Maklan, 2012, 2013; Roy et al., 2019).

As shown in Table 5, some components are also derived from service quality literature via SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), using dimensions such as Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy (Zhang et al., 2016). While service quality contributes to customer experience, equating the two constructs contradicts their definitions: experience reflects subjective responses to interactions, whereas service quality reflects expectation–performance alignment. Accordingly, SERVQUAL items require modification when used to measure experience, as seen in Lemke et al. (2011), who adapt items such as Accessibility, Caring (attitude/procedures), Reliability, Value for Time, Atmosphere, Personalization, and Application of Knowledge. The strong reliance on adapted scales which

Table 5. Components of B2B service customer experience

Sources	Components of Customer Experience	Type of components	Originating external source of components
Cepeda-Carrión et al., 2023; Human et al., 2020; Jang et al., 2022; Roy et al., 2019	Peace of mind Focus on results Moments of truth Basic/core service experience	Scale-based	Service experience quality (EXQ) scale (Klaus & Maklan, 2013)
Zhang et al. (2016)	Tangibility Reliability Responsiveness Assurance Empathy	Model-based	SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988)
Lemke et al. (2011)	Accessibility Caring – attitude Caring – procedures Reliability Value for time Atmosphere Personalization Application of knowledge		
	Communication Relationship with company Relationship with other customers Variety/choice Value for money Network quality Social impact	Standalone	–
Woo et al. (2019)	Memorability Customer's stimulation of abilities to solve problems Opportunities for customer to improve the process through experimentation		–
Zeeshan et al. (2019)	Accessibility Connectivity		Rashid (2015)
Weiger (2023)	Cognitive dimension – usefulness, helpfulness, knowledge benefit Social dimension – human contact, human warmth, human sensitivity	Dimension-based	Bleier et al. (2019)
Witell et al. (2020)	Cognitive Emotional Behavioral Sensory Social		Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Lecoeuvre et al. (2021)	Emotional dimension – empathy		
Pandey and Mookerjee (2018)	Sensorial, Relational, Emotional, Behavioral, Intellectual		
Gounaris and Almoraish, 2024	Cognitive – factual, sagacious Affective – emotional, social		–
Homburg and Tischer (2023)	Customer journey dimensions – Value anchoring of touchpoints, Consistency of touchpoints, Internal integration of touchpoints, and Individual control of touchpoints		–
Still et al. (2018)	Individual Dyadic relationship Institutional environment	Layer-based	–

originate from B2C indicates a measurement gap. B2B-specific experiential components (e.g., technical complexity, inter-organizational coordination, decision making units' alignment) remain weakly operationalized. This limits the ability to compare findings across studies and build a cumulative measurement foundation for B2B customer experience.

The distinction between scale-based, model-based and standalone components mainly reflects the origin of their factors rather than substantive differences. Dimension-based components represent broader experiential categories such as Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Behavioral and Sensorial (see Table 5), within which specific factors are placed. Scale-based, model-based and standalone factors could also be located within these dimensions. Layer-based components may reflect the highest level of customer experience, where layers such as Individual, Dyadic Relationship and Institutional Environment may encompass both dimensions and factors. However, this type of hierarchical structure was not identified in the reviewed literature and represents a clear direction for future research.

Consequences of customer experience in B2B services. Operationalization of customer experience components results in consequential factors. The dominating findings suggest that a positive customer experience influences customer satisfaction, engagement and relationship, value, and loyalty.

When comparing the customer experience's consequential factors found in the pool of studies, there is little overlap in terms of wording, but it is nevertheless possible to identify the key areas covering these factors. Consequences are reported with limited conceptual harmonization, which suggests a gap in establishing a coherent nomological network of B2B customer experience outcomes.

Table 6. Consequential factors of B2B service customer experience

Key areas	Consequences of positive Customer Experience	Sources
Engagement and Relationships	Customer relationship Brand awareness Brand associations Psychological customer engagement Behavioral customer engagement Purchase intention Purchase Repurchase intention Trust Customer retention	Biedenbach and Marell, 2010; Gounaris and Almoraish, 2024; Homburg and Tischer, 2023; Jang et al., 2022; Lecoeuvre et al., 2021; Lemke et al., 2011; Madaleno et al., 2007; Pandey and Mookerjee, 2018; Weiger, 2023; Zhang et al., 2016
Satisfaction and Value	Customer satisfaction Perceived quality Perceived value Experience value (symbolic, functional, cost, emotional) Utilitarian, hedonic, relational, cost/sacrifice values and goals	Biedenbach and Marell, 2010; Cepeda-Carrión et al., 2023; Gounaris and Almoraish, 2024; Human et al., 2020; Lemke et al., 2011; Madaleno et al., 2007; Roy et al., 2019; Tuunanen et al., 2023
Loyalty	Customer loyalty Brand loyalty Word-of-mouth Willingness to recommend Commitment	Biedenbach and Marell, 2010; Gounaris and Almoraish, 2024; Human et al., 2020; Lemke et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2016
Organizational Benefits	Customer-related coordination costs Financial firm performance (ROS) Firm's organizational agility	Homburg and Tischer, 2023; Jang et al., 2022

Table 7. Mediating factors of B2B service customer experience

Sources	Independent factors	Mediators	Mediation impact	Dependent factors
Lemke et al. (2011)	Customer experience quality	Value-in-use	Unspecified	Relationship outcomes
Zhang et al. (2016)	Customer experience quality	Brand association	Unspecified	Brand equity
		Word-of-mouth		Brand association
Pandey and Mookerjee (2018)	Customer experience	Experience value	Unspecified	Purchase intention
Roy et al. (2019)	Service experience	Satisfaction	Unspecified	Loyalty
		Perceived value		Positive word-of-mouth
		Loyalty		
		Hedonic value perceptions		Satisfaction
Human et al. (2020)	Sales interaction experience	Satisfaction	Positive	Willingness to recommend
Hsieh and Yuan (2021)	Customer expectations	Positive customer emotions	Positive	Service experience
Jang et al. (2022)	Customer experience	Firm's organizational agility	Positive	Repurchase intention
Homburg and Tischer (2023)	Customer journey management capability (CJMC)	Loyalty	Unspecified	Financial firm performance (ROS)
		Customer-related coordination costs		
Cepeda-Carrión et al. (2023)	Basic service experience	Moments of truth	Unspecified	Focus on results
		Focus on results		Peace of mind
		Peace of mind		Customer satisfaction

Moreover, the literature prioritizes customer-level relational and attitudinal outcomes, while organizational-level outcomes are less frequently examined and rarely linked to clearly specified causal pathways. Specifically, the key areas are Engagement and Relationships, Satisfaction and Value, Loyalty, and Organizational Benefits. Table 6 lists consequences of positive customer experience, grouped into key areas.

It is also observed that some studies explore not only the immediate consequences of positive customer experience, but also the subsequent outcomes of these consequences. Notably, the factors that stand between positive customer experience and further consequences may also be considered as mediating factors, which will be discussed in the next section.

Mediators of customer experience in B2B services. As discussed in earlier section, some authors identify mediating factors. Mediators are influenced by independent factors and explain the relationship between independent and dependent factors. In the context of customer experience and its surrounding factors, mediators are influenced by antecedents, components, or consequent factors of customer experience. Mediators can have a positive or negative impact on their relationship with other subsequent factors.

As illustrated in Table 7, mediators have been identified in almost half of the studies. However, not all mediators found in the pool of studies had their type of impact specified, i.e., whether they positively or negatively impact the relationship between the causal and subsequent factors. Only several mediators were discovered with positive mediation and no mediators with negative impact were identified.

Moderators of customer experience in B2B services. Moderating factors, or moderators, unlike mediators, are not influenced by an independent factor. Also, if mediators act as vehicles of the relationship between two factors, a moderator is an external variable that influences an already existing (positive or negative) relationship between two factors by strengthening or weakening the effect of one on the other.

As shown in Table 8, only 6 studies have identified factors with moderating effects. Furthermore, only half of the studies that list moderators specify what moderating effects they have. To identify moderators, selected factors are tested to see if they have a moderating effect on the existing relationship between certain factors. Since moderators are not triggered by the factors whose relationship they moderate, that may be a reason for the limited number of moderators identified.

4. Results

Of the 21 studies reviewed, 11 are quantitative, 4 qualitative, 4 mixed-method and 2 conceptual. A total of 15 studies present a model, framework or measurement scale, and 13 examine services exclusively, while 8 adopt a cross-industry scope.

Antecedents are examined in 9 studies, either as external precursors to experience formation or as proxies that facilitate positive outcomes. Components are identified in 15 studies, based on dimensions, layers or scales. Four studies use the EXQ scale (Klaus & Maklan, 2012, 2013), while 2 apply SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Because SERVQUAL measures service quality rather than experience, only modified items were included in the map.

Consequences are discussed in 14 studies and cluster into 4 areas: engagement and relationships, satisfaction and value, loyalty and organizational benefits. All consequences stem from positive experience, and several studies imply downstream effects, although these are not explicitly conceptualized as mediating links.

Table 8. Moderating factors of B2B service customer experience

Source	Moderator	Moderating effect	Moderated relationship
Lemke et al. (2011)	Experience context (Hedonism of product category, Involvement, Product complexity, Rationality)	Unspecified	Customer experience and Value-in-use
Pandey and Mookerjee (2018)	Primacy, Recency, Individual factors	Unspecified	Customer experience and Experience value
	Group dynamics, Power relationships		Experience value and Purchase intention
Kushwaha et al. (2021)	Risk (performance, functional, financial, physical, social, and psychological)	Unspecified	Customer satisfaction and Loyalty
Jang et al. (2022)	Customer knowledge sharing	Positive	Service experience and Firm's organizational agility
Homburg and Tischer (2023)	Customer's switching costs	Positive	CJMC and Customer loyalty
	Number of provider-controlled touchpoints	Positive	CJMC and Customer-related coordination costs
Weiger (2023)	Masculinity	Positive	Cognitive online customer experience and Psychological customer engagement
	Power distance	Negative	
	Individualism	Positive	Social online customer experience and Psychological customer engagement
	Uncertainty avoidance		

Mediators are reported in 9 studies, most with positive or unspecified direction. Moderators appear least often – only in 6 studies – with positive, negative or unspecified effects. Together, these patterns form the basis of the integrative B2B customer experience map presented in Figure 3.

The map in Figure 3 is based solely on the reviewed studies and includes only the factors and relationships explicitly reported. Synthesis is limited to grouping factors into sub-categories such as proxies, layers and outcome types.

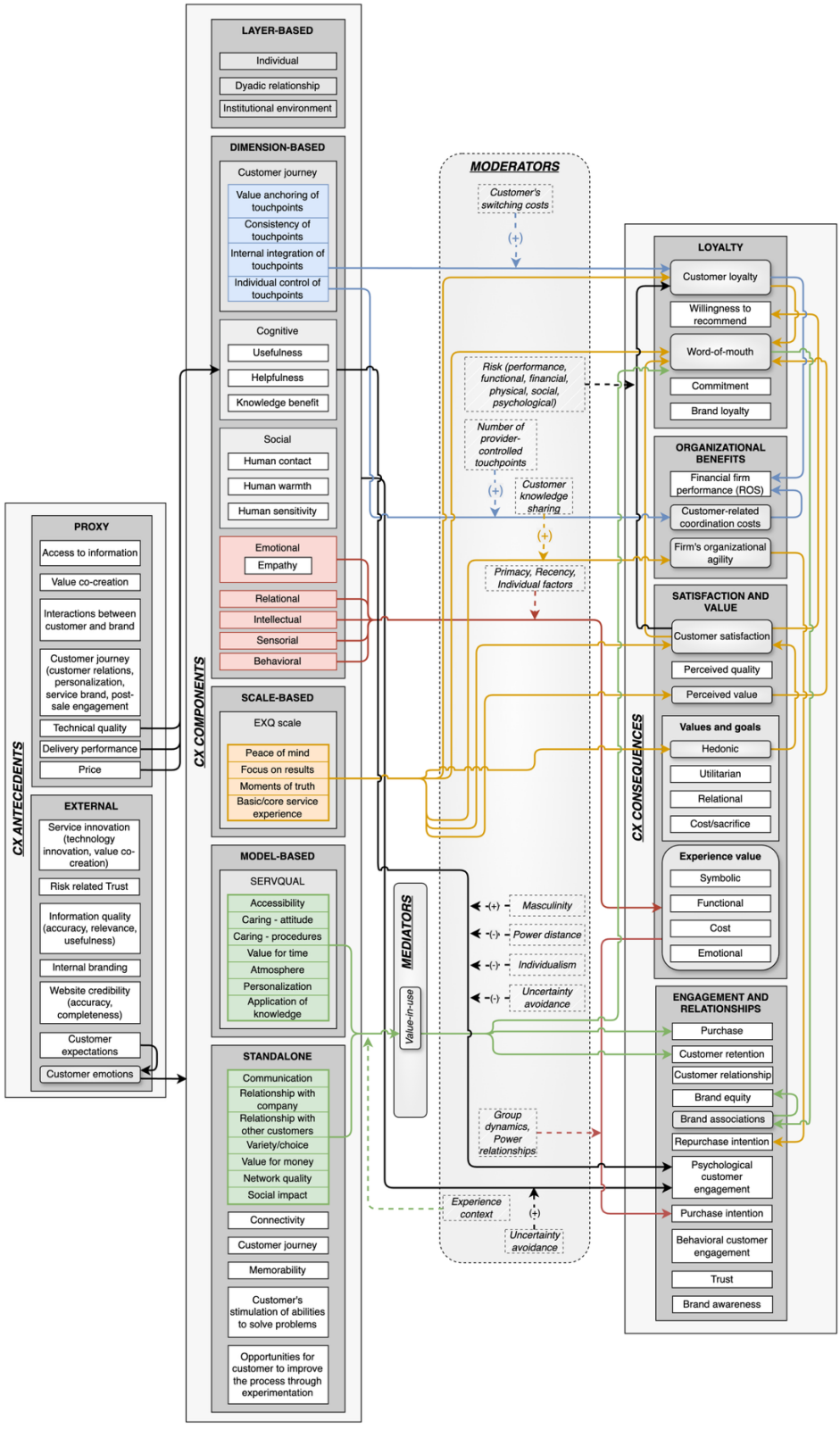


Figure 3. Integrative map of customer experience in B2B services

Antecedents represent preconditions for customer experience formation, while components enable consequences. Although these groups appear sequential, not all factors are linked, and it is often unclear which antecedents lead to which components. Some component–consequence links are visible, but several factors remain unconnected.

Mediators are mostly embedded within antecedents or consequences rather than forming a distinct layer, with Value-in-Use being main exception. A full subgroup of experience-value factors also functions as mediators, adding complexity. Relationships containing mediators are color-marked for clarity. Moderators, the least researched category, are shown with dotted edges and operate externally on relationships rather than within antecedent, component or consequence groups.

Despite being rigorously constructed, the map does not yet offer a fully coherent representation of the phenomenon. It is dense, difficult to interpret and highlights several gaps – for example, absent links between sequential groups and inconsistent precision in inter-group relationships, which range from specific factor connections to broad cluster-to-cluster links.

The observed complexity in delineating customer experience likely arises from the narrow focus of individual studies in the reviewed literature. Integrating these findings reveals overlaps and inconsistencies across constructs, which the proposed map makes visible. It raises the critical question of how to refine this knowledge for not only academic purposes but, more importantly, practical applicability.

A simplified version of the map is thus proposed to complement the complex configuration, building on the identified limitations (see Figure 4).

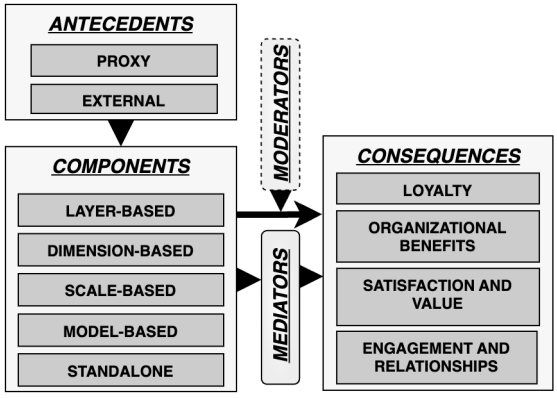


Figure 4. Simplified map of customer experience phenomenon in B2B services

The detailed integrative map (Figure 3) reveals the theoretical heterogeneity in existing research, showing how constructs disperse, overlap and form only partial connections. However, its breadth can obscure macro level structure and reduce interpretability for empirical testing and managerial application. Figure 4 presents the same evidence at a higher level of abstraction by retaining only the highest order groupings: antecedents, components, consequences, mediators and moderators. This preserves the overall logic of experience formation while omitting lower-level links that current evidence does not support. Taken together, they show what is known and highlight areas where conceptual refinement is still required.

5. Conclusions and discussion

Addressing the increasing fragmentation of B2B marketing research (Ojansivu, 2023), this study advances understanding of B2B customer experience by synthesizing diverse perspectives into an integrative map. Prior to this review, the literature lacked a consolidated B2B customer experience construct structure, consistent theorization of antecedents, and clearly specified boundary conditions (mediators and moderators), which limited cumulative theory building. By visualizing constructs and their connections, the map highlights inconsistencies across existing models and shows where perspectives converge or diverge. The review examined models, frameworks and measurement scales, identifying antecedents, components, consequences, mediators and moderators in B2B services. The findings are consistent with recent research suggesting that B2B customer experience studies still largely rely on B2C insights and remain limited in explaining how experience is formed and aligned across multiple organizational actors and stages of the customer journey (De Keyser et al., 2025; Witell et al., 2020; Zolkiewski et al., 2017). The integrative map presented in this study makes these B2B-specific characteristics more explicit by consolidating factors that reflect multi-actor interaction, organizational alignment, and long-term service relationships.

Two categories of antecedents emerged. External antecedents precede the formation of experience in general, while proxies mirror experience and precede positive outcomes. Components vary across studies and are represented through scales, models, dimensions, layers or individual factors. This diversity reflects a lack of consensus about the structure of customer experience as a construct. Although the component groups imply hierarchy, such as layers containing dimensions and dimensions containing factors, these relationships were not found empirically, indicating a newly revealed conceptual gap.

Consequences were relatively consistent across studies, forming four recurring clusters: loyalty, organizational benefits, satisfaction and value, and engagement and relationships. These represent outcomes of positive experience. Some consequences may also function as mediators, leaving value-in-use as the only mediator not located within the consequence group. Mediators showed positive or unspecified effects. Moderators appeared infrequently but could strengthen or weaken relationships depending on context. Overall, the pre-existing gap was the dispersion of the nomological network of B2B customer experience across studies. Outcomes were labelled inconsistently,

organizational-level consequences were examined less frequently, and mediators and moderators were infrequently reported, often without clearly specified direction of effect. The integrative map addressed this gap by consolidating the reported constructs and their effects (where provided) into a single, coherent relational structure of the field.

The map aligns conceptually with Silva et al. (2021) in B2C contexts and with Veloso and Gomez-Suarez (2023) in hospitality services. However, the present map extends existing work by providing more granular factor detail and focusing explicitly on B2B services. This offers broader theoretical relevance and practical reach than models confined to single industries.

Narrowly scoped studies deepen understanding of specific situations but limit construct development and generalizability. Contexts rarely replicate, meaning highly specific models offer little guidance for broader practice. Although the presented map is not exhaustive, it clarifies the boundaries and developmental stage of B2B customer experience. Further research is needed to test the links between identified factors and refine its structure.

The practical value of the map lies in making the fragmentation of the field visible, which remains difficult to translate into managerial practice. Many studies address only parts of the phenomenon, leaving gaps across contexts and limited understanding of antecedents. Combined with low adoption of academic literature among B2B marketers (Bamberger et al., 2025), this indicates the need for practitioners to evaluate their efforts against the full set of experience dimensions to identify blind spots, avoid simplified assumptions and build coordinated customer experience management. Consequently, future research should present customer experience complexity in more accessible ways and support a shift from reliance on B2C models toward a self-sufficient B2B knowledge base.

Study limitations

This study is not without its limitations. First, the reviewed studies constitute a relatively modest pool. This size complies with standards for systematic reviews and remains within the acceptable range. More importantly, it reflects the study's deliberate focus on B2B services, a specialized segment of the service sector that has received less scholarly attention than B2C services, product-focused research, and public-sector inquiries. However, the evaluation on the inclusion of studies to the pool might be biased as it was carried out by single researcher, with no co-author to compare the inclusion decisions with.

Secondly, a comparison of constructs operationalized in the analyzed studies shows significant conceptual overlap and repetition, indicating that the field may employ several terms for related underlying mechanisms. The true structure of the B2B customer experience phenomenon is only partially understood in the absence of quantitative aggregation of construct frequency and conceptual correspondence. Further research could address this issue through a semantic clarification and construct delineation.

Lastly, the integrative map is necessarily bounded by what the included studies explicitly report, which may understate relationships not modeled in the source literature and preclude stronger causal inferences. Moreover, the contextual sensitivity of B2B customer experience suggests that the findings should be generalized with caution, as factor relevance and interactions may vary across industry settings. Taken together, these limitations highlight the underexplored character of customer experience in B2B services and point to the avenues for future research.

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