

**Investigating the Effect of Construction
Companies' Marketing Mix on the Experience of
Customers in the Gulf Region**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of De Montfort University, UK, for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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DEDICATION

To my Family

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DECLARATION

I am Ahmad Al-Fadly declared that proofreader supported was used as an additional correction for the amended thesis.

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ABSTRACT

Customer experience is paramount for companies given their dynamic environment, which focus on the role of processes initiated by firms to help consumers realise and consolidate their expectations for the entire duration of engagement. Hence, it facilitates the company's growth and leads to a further increase in profits. While research pertaining to the field of customer service has long proven fruitful, it has shown to be increasingly complicated in the digital age, thereby meriting even greater consideration. Specifically, a lucid mechanism as to how the 7Ps of the marketing mix directly affect client experience has not yet been determined, as no extant studies have undertaken a detailed investigation of this area.

The need to establish such an investigation becomes more pressing in wake of the fact that practical field observations have indicated a drastic decline in customers' experience in the construction industry of the Gulf region. Against this backdrop, the current study intends to identify key attributes of individual marketing mix elements that affect the customer experience in the Gulf region's construction companies, an area which has not been examined thoroughly in previous researches. In this regard, a positivism approach was adopted for this study whereby primary data collection was obtained through surveying 400 respondents who were managers of construction companies in addition to another 400 who represented customers of construction companies of the following four Gulf region countries: Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia. Then the data was analysed using SmartPLS v.2 software, the results of inferential statistical tests (e.g., t-tests, correlation, and MANOVA) were assessed for statistical significance using p-values. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was implemented to distribute data over a smaller set of factors. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was then used to ensure the identity, discriminant validity, convergent validity, and internal consistency reliability of each factor. At the end of the investigation, it was found that the effect of all factors of marketing mix is significant on the customer experience. However, from the standpoint of the company, physical evidence and process emerged as the most significant factor and least significant factor, respectively in improving customer experience. Besides, the analysis of customers suggested that the effect of all 7Ps was significant on the customer experience. The most significant factor was found to be process along with price and product, whereas the promotion by construction companies emerged as

the least important consideration. The effect of all factors in the case of both customers and companies was found to be positive, which indicated that betterment in any of the 7Ps would lead to betterment of customer experience in the Gulf region's construction industry, which can ultimately help increase customer satisfaction. Based on the analysis and comparison, a difference between company expectations and customers' perceptions was found as both tended to concur on different levels with respect to each factor present in 7Ps. In addition, the difference between actual and expected marketing mix was found using the technique of average differencing. This made it evident that the managers' expectations deviate from customer expectations pertaining to the products offered by construction companies.

Moreover, the research further analysed the differences in terms of demographic variables. The effect of all demographic variables was explored to be significant in terms of customer experience. Additionally, it was observed that age, educational level, and the management level of employees have strong positive effects on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies, whereas, the educational level of customer was found to have a significantly positive effect on customer experience and satisfaction.

Notably, this study has contributed significantly to the academic literature underpinning the topic of marketing mix and customer experience. Hence, the construction companies operating in the Gulf region stand to benefit from the findings, specifically by aligning their marketing strategies in accordance with the ranked significance of the factors of 7Ps of marketing on part of the customers. More precisely, it is possible to narrow down the differences through effective techniques by incorporating customers' stance and variable responses on the basis of demographic variables in the strategies, as opposed to myopically relying on the aspects proposed by internal bodies or authorities of the construction companies.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

An enduring problem of the construction industry is the production and delivery of construction outputs, such as housing and infrastructure in a manner that results in high customer satisfaction (Dainty et al., 2007). There is a history behind this practice, housing and most other critical infrastructure are often of the huge and capital indivisible requiring sophisticated expertise on the one hand, and on the other, such infrastructure are of huge demand where at any particular moment in time, supply falls far short of demands.

As a result, the position largely adopted in the construction industry is the top-down approach where it is accepted that consumers would always accept whatever is offered. This practice has resulted in huge dissatisfaction amongst customers, resulting in huge post-construction litigation and correctional expenditures. Whereas, customers experience management is a common marketing tool in other industries, there is little evidence of this in the construction industry (Al-Sabah et al., 2014). The current study makes a contribution to the existing corpus of pertinent literature by examining the causal effect of construction companies' marketing mix on customers experience in the Gulf region; its target is individual property owners of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.

As to the structure of the study, the current chapter provides the framework, while Section 1.2 provides pertinent research background information. Following is Section 1.3 which posits the research problem and related research questions, after which comes Section 1.4, wherein research hypotheses are discussed. The research objectives are presented in section 1.5. Thereafter, the significance of the study is introduced in section 1.6, and finally, in Section 1.7, the structure of the thesis is presented.

1.2 Research Background

Numerous studies in the discipline of customer experience have emerged, especially in this communication rich digital age; however, because a clear mechanism to determine how the marketing mix (7Ps) directly affect customer experience has yet to be constructed, a gap in the research has emerged (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005 and Hair et al., 2010), and it is one to be addressed through this research.

Although the focus on customer experience is deeply rooted in innovative marketing strategies, it has been only that the full potential of this marketing concept began to gain recognition by academics and practitioners (Pugh & Wood, 2004) due to the competitive edge gained over rivals among firms that focus on customer experience which is manifested in customer retention and loyalty (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Jones & Sasser, 1995; Puccinelli et al., 2009), producing significant economic value for firms (Ippolito, 2009; Novak, et al., 2000; Tseng et al., 1999; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Indeed, Lemke et al. (2011) emphasised the positive effects of customer experience on customer loyalty, position further confirmed by a recent study concluding that customer loyalty is driven by customer experience (IBM, 2013). Thus, the growing focus on improving customer experience as a means of honing an organisation's competitive advantage is well-founded (Palmer, 2010; Seligman & Taylor, 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009). However, while researchers' interest in customer experience is growing, customer experience as a marketing concept remains largely unexamined (Lemke et al., 2011; Novak et al., 2000; Piercy, 2012; Puccinelli et al., 2009). Capturing and analysing customer experience as a means of optimization is not a novel practice, but the digital age has increased one's ability to open communication with customers and field their insights and input on their experiences. Digital platforms, increased communication, and a growing sense of consumer community has carved out new avenues for study and analysis within the field of customer experience and customer service.

Because customer satisfaction predicts loyalty, purchasing intention, and superior long-term financial performance for companies, achieving customer satisfaction is vital to a company's success (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Jones & Sasser, 1995). In general, the customer

experience will make a definite difference to the company through building loyalty, eventually leading to the company's growth and further increase profits (Thuan et al., 2018).

Drawing from this background, this thesis seeks to contribute by advancing knowledge on the influence of the elements of the marketing mix on customer experience within the context of Gulf- region construction companies in Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the city of Dubai in the United Arab of Emirates.

1.3 Research Problem and Questions

In the Gulf region, the construction sector has shown robust growth in recent decades. In wealthier Gulf-region States, the focus of leadership is the development of a national infrastructure to enhance both commercial and social relationships at the international level. This has brought about a number of investment opportunities for developers throughout the Gulf region. While many countries within the region enjoy strong market economies that can fund extensive construction costs, high competition and a lack of salient research have hindered growth in the sector. Many experts believe that the problem derives largely from the failure to adapt to general changes in market conditions, and particularly to tastes and preferences that guide demand for modern infrastructure. Thus, a combination of changes in market conditions and the apparent inability to respond to the market remain the primary causes of organisational inefficiency and slow growth in the construction markets in Gulf States. Strategically, firms often turn to non-price competition during low demand for their products to boost demand, and improved customer experience is one of the many ways' firms cope with economic recession.

In light of the previous literature, multiple studies in the area of customer experience have recently received greater consideration; however, a clear mechanism as to how the marketing mix (7Ps) directly affect customer experience has yet to be determined as no studies heretofore have investigated this causal relationship in any real detail (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005 and Hair et al., 2010),

The need to establish such an investigation becomes more pressing in the light of that fact that practical field observations indicated an extreme decline in customers' experience in the construction industry in the Gulf region (Al-Sabah et al., 2014), where the current study is intended to be conducted by examining the influence and effect of the marketing mix elements on customer experience which has not thoroughly been addressed in previous research by identifying key attributes of each element of the marketing mix (the 7P's) that impact the customer experience. The essential problem the current study is researching the effect of the construction companies' handling of marketing mix elements on customer experience in the Gulf region but not from a quantitative standpoint. Therefore, a quantitative method is adapted to satisfy the research objectives by answering the related research questions.

Research problems can be expressed through clear, specific questions that express testable relationships between two (or among more) variables (Burns & Bush, 2014; Hair et al., 2010). However, the way research questions are captured and framed dictate subsequent research activities (Hackley 2003; Malhotra 2010). The current study seeks to answer the research questions below to address the stated research problem:

1. What is the effect of the construction company's expectations of the practiced marketing mix on their customers' experience?
2. What is the effect of the customer perceptions of the practiced marketing mix by construction companies?
3. What is the effect of the difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry?
4. What is the effect of respondents' age, education level, managerial level, years of experience with the company and years of experience in the industry on the expected practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies?
5. What effect does respondents' age and educational level have on customer experience?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

A well-balanced marketing mix contributes effectively in boosting customer loyalty and reflects significant features of the marketing plan; specifically, those which increase customer satisfaction (Johnston & Kong, 2011; Rust et al., 2000). Therefore, organisations must embrace and commit to an optimised marketing mix in order to achieve greater market share. However, an essential element in determining a product's price, as outlined by Cravens & Piercy (2007), is the customers' response to the product value as determined through market analyses. Correspondingly, marketing techniques, as investigated by Hollensen (2007) fill the communication gap between a company and its customers by stimulating interest in particular products through promotional measures, such as advertisements shared through multimedia, print and other channels. According to Mills (2003), marketing also affects pricing because effective marketing persuades customers to part with their money through a purchase. In their research, Jensen and Jepsen (2008) found that integrating online and offline promotion techniques are sources of direct and indirect marketing, which, in fact, allow customers to choose directly their preferred products. The focus of the marketing mix elements (7P's) is to increase profitability by painting a colourful picture of the product and its characteristics to convince a customer to buy the product. While, the integrated elements in the distribution channel (i.e., Stockiest, Distributor, Dealer, Whole seller, Retailer) enable timely push of the product towards the end-user (Shostack, 1984). In addition, process is another important component of the marketing mix and primarily takes into account the systems and procedures for the delivery of final products and services to the customer. The industries ensure that all services are supported by well-characterized and effective procedures (Martin, 2014). Correspondingly, people comprise all the employees associated with the business. When the organisations provide the best services to their customers, they induce a positive impact, which consequently helps in establishing their brand name in the market (Iles, 2008). The physical evidence according to Cowell (2000) can be incorporated in the product and promotion, and place (i.e., distribution) elements.

Therefore, this study argues that customer perception needs to be reconciled with their actual experiences for effective customer experience management. In order to fill this gap, the following hypotheses will be deliberated upon, in this study:

H1: There is a direct effect from expected practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry.

H2: There is a direct effect from actual practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry.

H3: There is a difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry.

According to Hauser & Duncan (1959), demographic is “the study of the size, territorial distribution, and composition of population, changes therein, and the components of such changes” (p. 2). This statement delves into the respondents' demographic variables and how they affect their perception of marketing mix elements of companies, as well as their experiences with those companies. Demographics is viewed within the structure of a population in terms of age, educational level, managerial level and years of experience which is expected to predict the effectiveness of the practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by companies (Geissler & Rucks, 2011). According to Moyes (2008), age influences the relative importance that managers place on various work attributes. In a similar vein, LeBaron et al. (2002) argue that the level of education within a population affects the demographic environment because changes in education affect wealth and the desires and tastes of those higher up on the social ladder. While Goll & Rasheed (2005) support the assertion that particular high-level management characteristics influence top-tier decision-making and a company's performance.

In the marketing mix, product preferences differ across customer groups and relate directly to customers' demographic variables, such as age and level of education. Walsh & Mitchell (2005, p. 286) state that customer perceptions are influenced by several demographic variables, such as educational level and age. Age is a significant feature to consider because

personal purchase rates change as individuals grow older. In addition, McGoldrick & Andre (1997) explained that demographic variables affect consumers' loyalty, which is an outcome of their experience.

Thus, building on the findings of past research papers, it seems logical to assume that respondents' demographic variables (i.e., age, educational level, managerial level, years of experience in the company and/or industry) influence their perception of marketing mix elements of companies, along with their experiences with those companies. As such, the current research has adopted the following two general hypotheses:

H4: The expected practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies is affected by demographic variables, like the respondents' age, educational level, managerial level, years of experience with the company and years of experience in the industry.

H5: The actual practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies is affected by the respondents' age and educational level.

1.5 Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the effect of construction companies' marketing mix (7P's) on the experience of construction industry customers in the Gulf region. In particular, the study will explore the expected practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience from the construction companies' perspective.

The research will explore the actual practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience from the construction companies' customers' perspective. Moreover, the research will explore the difference between the expected and actual practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry. In order to reach its aim, the current research is seeking to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the expected practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience from the construction companies' perspective.

2. To explore the actual practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience from the construction companies' customers' perspective.
3. To explore the difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry.
4. To explore the effect of respondents' age, educational level, managerial level, years of experience with the company, and years of experience in the industry on the expected practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies.
5. To explore the effect of respondents' age and educational level on the actual practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies .

Objective 1 is aligned with Hypothesis 1 in that, the construction companies may entail an understanding of the customer's needs that are not found to adequately fulfil a positive customer experience. Hence, the objective of Hypothesis 1 is to explore all aspects of the construction companies in order to understand what they perceive to constitute a positive customer experience.

Objective 2 is aligned with Hypothesis 2 because it is pertinent to note that practicing marketing mix (7Ps) on the part of construction firms helps create a positive customer experience. This is important because if the practiced marketing mix is not commensurate with the customers' positive experience, then the construction companies would never be able to create a positive customer experience. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 attempts to elucidate whether or not the marketing mix is essential.

Objective 3 is aligned with Hypothesis 3 by determining whether or not there was a difference between expected marketing mix practices (Hypothesis 1) and perceived marketing mix practices (Hypothesis 2). Any difference between the two would assume significance for two reasons. Firstly, it would help identify where the difference was. Secondly, it would specify what actions the construction companies would need to take to close this difference. Such an active determination of the difference would be crucial in creating a positive customer experience.

Objective 4 meanwhile is aligned with Hypothesis 4 of determining whether respondent demographics impact the expected practiced marketing mix (7Ps). This is necessary to elucidate the effect of the respondent's social status, including, age, education level, managerial level, years of experience with the company, and years of experience in the industry on the expected practiced marketing mix (7Ps) offered by construction companies.

Objective 5 is aligned with Hypothesis 5 by considering the effect of particular aspects of respondent demography, namely age and education level, on the practiced marketing mix (7Ps) by construction companies. This is congruent with the notion that the respondent's perception of construction companies is most likely to depend on the respondents' age and education level.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the research presented herein results from its contribution to knowledge in the marketing sub-discipline of customer experience. This research contributes to the scholarly literature by examining the influence of the 7P's (marketing mix elements) on customer experience, which has not been sufficiently examined in previous research, by identifying key attributes of each of the seven elements of the marketing mix impacting customer experience. Therefore, this study represents a step forward to fill the gap of customer experience-based research in the Gulf region as a market and in the construction sector as an industry which has largely been unidentified.

The research aims to develop a model that will help construction companies gauge the effectiveness of their marketing strategy and contribute through empirical evidence to the literature that will help to minimise the differences that currently exist between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience. In addition, managerial implications of the model developed in this study will also help construction companies identify areas of focus and invest in them so that their customers can get the best experience when they interact with them. It is also important that communication is efficient to enable ease of access to the valuation processes of the services.

Furthermore, this study presents a valid and reliable means to assess and measure the practiced marketing mix (7Ps) by the construction companies. Conducting this kind of study by using the scales that are applied during the process of data collection (questionnaires) will diagnose the weaknesses of practicing the marketing mix strategy by construction companies and will accurately understand customer perception of their services and the reasoning behind those customer perceptions. Additionally, embarking on this research may further enhance and help revise the way in which construction companies execute their marketing strategies and achieve their objectives.

This study has given an enhanced understanding of the demographics that impact the expected marketing mix practiced by construction companies and the demographics that influence the customer experience.

1.7 The Structure of the Study

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. **Chapter 2**, which follows the current chapter presents a critical review of relevant, extant literature on customer experience, in addition to a discussion of the 7P's as logical antecedents of customer experience. Furthermore, conceptual model for effective customer experience management of the research is presented.

Chapter 3 is the empirical research context chapter. It provides an overview of the economic environment context of Gulf region including; Bahrain, Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Dubai in the United Arab of Emirates and the historical perspective of the construction industries of the Gulf region to provide the critically needed context to the research and their current operational processes. Moreover, the chapter presents the rationale for the empirical inquiry underpinning this research.

Chapter 4 reflects the presentation of the research methodology and method. It provides the justification for the choice of the research design and outlines the research population and

research sampling including the sampling frame. The chapter also explain the survey design, outlines the survey data collection and scale development of the study. Moreover, the chapter explain the statistical methodology used in analysing the data in this research.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the descriptive statistics and explains the preliminary assumptions of the EFA for both company and customer surveys including the adequacy of sample size, missing value analysis, assessment of normality, descriptive statistics for factors in both company and customer surveys, the assessment of factorability, Reliability, EFA, construct reliability and validity, model of factors in company and customer surveys, and the effects of respondent characteristics on the factors in both surveys.

Chapter 6 provides a general discussion of the research findings results, in light of the previous literature review and with the proposed theoretical framework for this research.

The thesis concludes with **Chapter 7** wherein the current study's conclusions, scholarly contributions, limitations, implications for future research, and relevant recommendations are presented.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the basic principles and a comprehensive literature review into the field of customer experience in order to provide a clear understanding of the research scope and define the gaps in this area of research. The chapter starts by presenting the basics of customer experience to construct foundational knowledge for a critical review of the literature in reference to the current research phenomenon. Furthermore, it offers the bases for the concepts, frameworks, contexts, schools of thought, and processes that underlie customer experience management. The later sections of this chapter will give a critical literature review of the concept of the marketing mix as antecedents of customer experience, which will guide the exploration of the research problem addressed in this thesis.

As noted previously, this chapter begins with a discussion of relationship marketing in section 2.2, and is followed by a critical reflection of customer experience in section 2.3. Section 2.4, the discussion of marketing mix as antecedents of customer experience are presented, followed by the discussion of the effect of demographics on customers' experience in section 2.5. The research theoretical framework is presented in section 2.6. Finally, a conclusion for the chapter is provided in section 2.7.

2.2 Relationship Marketing

The concept of relationship marketing entails developing relationships between brands (or products) and consumers through interactions (Abubakar & Mokhtar, 2015; Bordegoni, 2013; Gummesson, 2017). In line with this view, researchers have placed great value on the insights provided by consumers from varied perspectives, including their attitudes towards consumption. Kim et al., (2007) further claimed that because consumption catalyzes consumer knowledge, it thusly serves as means of identifying marketing strategies and bolstering marketing efficacy.

Accordingly, in many Business-to-Business (B2B) markets, long-term relationships with clients is considered crucial to conducting a successful business because “the number of clients, especially important ones, is so small that the seller can spend a significant amount of time with each client” (Wilburn, 2007, p. 19). Similarly, the goal of customer relationship management (CRM) is to achieve a larger customer share, rather than a larger share of the market (Ward & Dagger, 2007). This goal can be achieved only through customer acquisition retention and development (Zineldin & Philipson, 2007).

According to Grönroos (2007), the three main methods by which marketers can build and maintain long-term customer relationships are communication, interaction, and value creation. A relationship can only develop when customers present experience extra added value (higher than that offered by the competition) in their exchanges or touch points with a company, especially when those interactions translate to something special and important as a result of their dealings with that company (Grönroos, 2007). Consequently, customers become loyal to that company because they feel, according to their experience, that their needs are being better fulfilled (McIlroy & Barnett, 2000).

In this sense, loyalty can be seen as an outcome of customers’ experience of value received from a certain company in comparison to the competition (Hallowell, 1996). The main difference between loyalty and satisfaction is that satisfied consumers might believe they can find a higher value offer from other companies, in spite of their satisfaction, which is contrary to the belief loyal consumers hold (McIlroy & Barnett, 2000). Therefore, loyalty among customers is directly and positively affected by customer satisfaction (Thuan et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Yusuf (2003) contends that because it is significantly more cost effective to retain an established customer than initiate a relationship with a new customer, customer satisfaction directly applies to profitability in the following ways:

- Acquiring new customers can be expensive.
- Loyal customers represent a stable source of revenue and do not cost much to retain.

- Satisfied customers often make product and service recommendations on a company's behalf.
- Customers are more willing to pay premium prices to a company they know is trustworthy.
- Retaining existing customers protects one's market share.
- Positive complaint handling is crucial to customer satisfaction.
- Tactful, effective, and customer-focused communication assists greatly in customer retention (Yasamis et al., 2012).

To explain the currently robust influence of customer loyalty, Jones & Sasser (1995) argued increased competition within markets, as well as the emergence of new markets and product types has caused maturation of the customer satisfaction environment which includes customer loyalty in while attitudinal state, too, plays a role. Yet customer loyalty itself is difficult to quantify. Dick & Basu (1994) suggested loyal customers showed both a favorable attitude and made repeat purchases which in turn facilitates "spurious loyalty" which occurs when purchases are made repeatedly by customers without a special affinity for the brand itself.

Loyalty has been known to lead to favorable customer-initiated attitudinal behaviors like repeated purchase and lower attrition rates. However, these actions are manifestations of a feeling of loyalty and must not be confused with loyalty as an abstract construct. In the same vein, a reluctance to break a consumer relationship with a company or even a significant repurchase rate does not necessarily reflect consumer loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994).

The concept of customer loyalty eludes a facile definition, and thus researcher have endeavored to determine how loyalty manifests itself for the industrial buyer across consumer markets. Study in this area has yielded an attitude scale specifically constructed to operationalize customer loyalty. Not surprisingly, this scale comprises aspects of human interaction crucial to consumer loyalty and utilizes evaluations of a given business relationship. Despite the importance and relevance of the operationalization of loyalty, it has

been narrowly incorporated within customer satisfaction programs. Still, qualitative and quantitative measures of customer experiences within different industries involving both consumer and business-to-business have been developed to ascertain the nature of customer loyalty and better understands its predictors and outcomes (Dick & Basu, 1994).

For example, Loveman (1998) has determined customer satisfaction to be a necessary condition for loyalty in most cases, but it cannot stand in isolation as loyalty is the result of a complex of mechanism and attitudes. Satisfaction affects loyalty but is not it's only conditioning factor. While satisfaction can represent a specific circumstantial result related to product or service attributes, loyalty, on the contrary, while influenced by satisfaction, has been described as a more general attitude held by a customer towards a company.

Among the critical predictor variables for loyalty are price, service quality, brand image, and product quality, which can be expressed in terms of a causal sequence in which customer satisfaction and value represent the first set of intermediate variables. The latter is shown to be a function of both product quality and price perceptions and directly affects customer satisfaction (Maloney, 2002).

Intermediate variables of the second set include two aforementioned dimensions of loyalty, specifically, perceptions of value and customer satisfaction which in part influence the more rational aspects of loyalty. Ultimately, research has concluded that customer satisfaction correlates with customer retention, a manifestation of loyalty (Kennedy, 2001).

Customer retention is traditionally treated as an attitudinal item which is often measured through insights derived from questionnaires relating to the customer's future behavior which are used as a measure of customer retention. What is more, certain industries analyze actual measures of retention and its tangents, a longitudinal undertaking that requires a stable customer database that accounts for customer loss among other things, tacit acknowledgement that customer retention depends upon an amalgamation of complex effects

such as the proposed reciprocal causation existing between the cognitive and affective facets of loyalty (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990).

Furthermore, in some cases, the end result of causal customer retention represents profitability. Yet while it is ideal to capture and understand customer profitability on an individual-level, companies rarely have access to this information. But the digital age has improved the means by which companies can capture customer feedback and purchasing behaviors; thus, organisations such as those in the financial services sector have developed sophisticated profitability measures to predict the future profitability of a customer (Cook, 2011). Yet outside of the financial services arena, organisations are in a less strategic position due to the lagging development of models aimed to measure the relationship between customer satisfaction and profitability (Odindo & Devlin, 2007). The following sections provide a critical reflection on customer experience.

2.3 Critical Reflection on Customer Experience

Although the focus on customer experience is deeply rooted in innovative marketing strategies, only recently has the full potential of this marketing concept begun to gain recognition from academics and practitioners (Pugh & Wood, 2004) due to the competitive edge gained over rivals among firms that focus on customer experience which is manifested in customer retention and loyalty (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Jones & Sasser, 1995; Puccinelli et al., 2009), thereby producing significant economic value for firms (Ippolito, 2009; Novak, et al., 2000; Tseng et al., 1999; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Indeed, Lemke et al., (2011) emphasised the positive effects of customer experience on customer loyalty position, a conclusion further confirmed by a recent study concluding that customer loyalty is driven by consumer experience (IBM, 2013). Thus, the growing interest in optimizing customer experience as a competitive advantage is relevant (Palmer, 2010; Seligman & Taylor, 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009). However, while researchers' interest in customer experience is growing, customer experience as a marketing concept remains largely unexamined (Lemke et al., 2011; Novak et al., 2000; Piercy, 2012; Puccinelli et al., 2009).

Due to the expanding domain of the concept of customer experience in the field, various definitions of such have emerged which require critical review. Hence to better understand customer experience, an exploration of the various definitions introduced by a number of authors are critically reviewed. The multiple dimensions reflect the difficulties encountered when attempting to summarise the concept in one unique definition. The critical views of the range of definitions will also aid in assessing how customer experience is perceived by organisations and how this perception aids the decision-making part of the marketing strategy process. Accordingly, the following background reflects the conceptual definitions of customer experience, and the interaction between customers and employee in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how this interaction can influence customer experience.

2.3.1 Conceptual Definitions

This section aims to offer a critical assessment of the varied definitions of customer experience as per the literature to clarify of what “customer experience” means. According to Buttle & Maklan (2015), “customer experience” is defined as “the cognitive and affective outcome of the customer’s exposure to, or interaction with, a company’s people, processes, technologies, products, services and other outputs (p. 189). Lemke et al., (2011) also confirmed this comprehensive view of customer experience and further considered customer experience holistically as a subjective response to direct and indirect encounters with a given company, which comprised service, communication, and consumption encounters. In addition, Gartner (2016), considered customer experience is an antecedent of customer perception. However, Solomon & Stuart, (2000) stated that perceptions are always considered relative to expectations and formed by consumers about a service provider’s service. Other researchers have focused further on the emotional aspects when defining customer experience and have thus identified it as relating to the conscious and subconscious customer perceptions whilst engaging with goods and service providers (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Shaw et al., 2010).

Both perspectives of customer experience focus on the role of processes initiated by firms to enable consumers to realise and consolidate their expectations for the entire period of

engagement. Grewal et al. (2017), suggest organisations focus their approaches and strategies based on known consumer desires, a tactic that yields rewarding engagement and results-oriented customer experiences for their business. Furthermore, according to Petre et al. (2006), the totality of customer experience comprises cognitive (e.g., beliefs and thoughts) and affective elements (e.g., feelings and attitudes); therefore, both should be emphasised to enhance customers' perceptions of the value of companies' offerings.

Customer experience is not generally counted as separate from customer service or customer service management. In their research on this topic, Parasuraman et al. (1988) calculated the connection between the quality of service and customer satisfaction, and Verhoef, et al. (2007), found similar results in their work. On the other hand, Holbrook & Hirschmann, (1982) argue for the experiential aspects of consumer consumption. Ultimately, studies have shown how companies benefited from understanding how customers feel and think, as well as how they identify with a company and its products (Schmitt, 1999).

Berry et al. (2002) build on the concept further by suggesting that providing customers with a satisfactory experience relies on companies' understanding of consumers' purchasing processes. In order to capture the complexity of these processes, Verhoef et al. (2009) examined the multi-layered modalities of consumer relationship with a company and describes an “attachment at various levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual)” (p. 32).

Customer experience, according to authors such as Meyer & Schwager (2007), Pine & Gilmore, (1998), Prahalad & Ramaswamy, (2004), Shaw & Ivens, (2002) and Voss, (2003), offers a method through which the organisation may find new means of competition. On the other hand, Lulijander & Strandvik, (1997) focus on the services provided by organisations leading to improved customer satisfaction. Relating to this notion, Yu & Dean (2001) argue against customer loyalty with respect to customer satisfaction, while Flanagan et al., (2005) relate customer experience to influencing experiences. Flanagan et al., (2005) also state that customer experience instils confidence in the brand, supports the brand, and also creates

emotional bonding with the organisation. There has been a limited amount of research conducted in this area despite the recognised benefits, suggesting that an increased customer experience may counteract profitability.

Customer experience is a process or an activity of a customer's "personal interpretation of service processes" (Johnston & Clark, 2008, p. 72). The experience is perceived entirely from an individual personal point-of-view or similar experiences can be shared by others (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Consequently, a similar concept was posited by Puccinelli et al. (2009) who state that customer experience is a result of customers' feelings and emotions which could include "happiness, sadness, surprise, love, fear, shame, sadness and anger" (Ortony & Turner, 1990, p. 316).

Meyer & Schwager, (2007) describe customer experience as the internal, subjective response customers have to a company through any direct or indirect contact. Similarly, Addo & Kwarteng (2013) similarly assert customer experience is complex by nature and represents a constellation of cognitive, attitudinal, emotional, social and even physical responses from the customer in response to a company and its products. However, customer feelings about a business are also built around price, product variety, the storefront, comprehensive atmosphere of the retail location, and more. Therefore, customer experience is a complete viewpoint grounded in all aspects of the purchase and post-purchase, across varied channels, like brick and mortar, mobile, and online channels (Addo & Kwarteng, 2013). Most studies study all dominant aspects of the retail market that the business can control and how those elements contribute to the customer experience and response.

Naylor et al., (2008) pointed out that along with product, services present another important consideration in the retail experience on the customers' perspective. In addition, others focus on ambient elements present within the atmosphere of the retail space, i.e., scent, music, colour, etc., which in turn influence the customers' behaviour and responses thereafter. Most of the time, multiple customers with varied choices and desires have an influence of respective experience over others. For example, if a customer seeks help from a sales force,

then another nearby customer may also be influenced with the personal experience of the incident. Similarly, customer friends and family members also have an impact over each other's approach while shopping together, be it an online or brick-and-mortar shopping experience. Thus, because socio-environmental surroundings represent significant influence over the customer, they pose an important consideration.

Product characteristics may result in difficult contact; thus, communication becomes an important factor in determining the nature of the consumer experience (Smith, 1993). This viewpoint acknowledges that the product characteristics affect brand equity all the way through influencing customer experience (Margaret & Thompson, 2012). This unpretentious outlook recommends those product traits as being logically precious, so that customer experience is in agreement to the effectiveness of their consequence on brand equity. On the other hand, many argue that the product traits are not essentially precious, so the features of products can influence brand equity through their consequences on customer experience (Thomsin, 2006).

However, in a situation whereby the customer experience performs the role of an intermediary instead of a moderator, a need to re-evaluate the customers' standpoint towards the role of product features related to brand equity results in a situation whereby the customer experience is that of an intermediary (Matzler et al., 2005).

Brand commitment entails a particular character to sustain, expressed whilst reinforcing consumer identity: consumers define themselves through products. Customer satisfaction with their own performance can affect the level of their satisfaction in settings with high consumer involvement. Through products, consumers' capture of self-idea is an emotional process of involvement (Verheef et al., 2009).

The experience of customers is a chain of connections between a customer, a company, a product, or any fraction of an enterprise, which can influence the effect. The evaluation of customer experience depends on an association among customer expectations and motivation occurring from communication with the organisation (Thomsin, 2006). However, if the

managers overestimated their own customers' perception, they will underestimate their need to make adjustments and improvements (Habel & Klarman, 2015; Mithas & Rust, 2015; Rust et al., 2002). Similarly, Hult et al. (2017) stated that, the significant exaggerated favorable bias management affords its efficacy undermines success.

Previously, the focus of branding was towards the differentiation of products and services whereas now, it is taken as something that consumer understand and make use of it to improve their individual skill (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). For this purpose, branding is not about advertising the expected brand-related activities; instead, it is about developing a process to encourage the consumer experience (Frow & Payne, 2007). Consumer experience involves creating the experience with the company, this reflects that the companies should engage themselves in providing products and services (according to the circumstances) that are motivating to experience and that can be utilised by customers to co-develop their own sole knowledge (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). According to Womack & Jones (2005), managers may not actively deny the significance of customer experience or, for that matter, the tools used to collect, quantify, and analyse it, but many don't adequately appreciate what those tools can reveal. In keeping with these definitions, the next section will present the conceptual development of customer experience and how this concept has developed historically.

2.3.2 The Evolution of the Concept of Customer Experience

This section reviews the development of customer experience as a concept that has long been measured, analysed and implemented by organisations interested in customer retention and profitability. The idea of experience marketing, an off-shoot of customer experience, was first adopted by Holbrook & Hirschman, (1982) in their article "The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings and fun" published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* wherein they concluded that experiential consumption value is the result of a customer meeting a purchase due to a purchase setting facilitating the consumer meeting that goal. The positive outcome then results in a relative preference for products or services

arising from that interaction. Seth et al, (1999) also promote an experiential component and asserted the idea that customer's attitude to a purchase event is a combination of three factors:

1. Stimulus characteristics –The information or sensory experience received by customers affects their perception. Stimuli that differ from the norm draw attention (Solomon, 1999).
2. Context – The context within which an individual perceives an entity or experience is affected by the context of stimuli (Biswas & Blair, 1991).
3. Situational variables- Mutable factors or conditions that represent that influence information received by a consumer through social, cultural and previous experience with products or services (Biswas & Blair, 1991).

While the notion of customer experience is not new, the emergence of new technologies, communication and vending platforms, and the ensuing development of consumer communities has made this area of study rife with knowledge gaps to be identified, explored, and addressed for and by the business world.

2.3.3 Customer Experience; Customers and Employee Relation

This section offers a comprehensive review of the interaction between the customers and employee and how this interaction can influence customer experience. Most customer experience literature, including Berry et al. (2002); Gentile et al. (2007); Meyer & Schwager (2007); Naylor et al. (2008); Tsiros & Parasuraman (2006), has focused on customer experience in the context of the interaction between company (via employees) with customers and have concluded these interactions exert profound effects on the service experience. Marketers are realising the importance of building strong relationships with customers (Woodside & Sims, 1976), however, customers can affect one another both directly or indirectly (Baker, 1987; Baker et al., 2002; Bitner, 1992). For example, having customers too closely packed in a store can have a negative effect, as that kind of proximity can cause anxiety (Bateson & Hui, 1986). Even eye contact can have a negative effect when it is with strangers (Albas & Albas, 1989).

Furthermore, different customer roles can also affect other customers, according to Tsiros & Parasuraman (2006). They continue on to say that while some customers assume a supportive role for fellow customers, others play the advisee unsupportive roles. In addition, McGrath & Otnes (1995) identified specific roles like “help seeker”, “helper”, and “complainer”, among others. Many industries have had the myriad effects of customer-to-customer interactions collected empirically (Wu, 2007). Additionally, some conclude that informed customers who assist other customers can benefit a business (Boye & Jones, 1997) by improving other customers' experiences as those customers wishing to help others are gratified by the opportunity to do so, while those in need of help are assisted. However, disgruntled customers can potentially influence other customers' experience as a means of discrediting a company they dislike (Boye & Jones, 1997; Boye & Slora, 1993; Harris & Ogbonna, 2002; Harris & Reynolds, 2003) an abusive form of behaviour termed interchangeably as 'jay customer behaviour', 'deviant customer behaviour' and 'aberrant customer behaviour' (Fullerton & Punj, 1993). The detrimental effects of this behaviour pose negative impact on the company and its customer, alike, and comprises action such as destruction of company property, employee disillusionment, and high staff turnover. For example, *The Wall Street Journal* (2008) reported customer abuse of areas surrounding a company, e.g., ponds, lakes, at the hands of a dissatisfied customer, thereby ruining the experience of other customers trying to enjoy the company's setting.

To be sure, enhancing customer satisfaction is a complex process to which it has been noted that "To win, one needs to keep score, but the way one keeps score defines the game" (Townsend & Gebhardt, 2003). This “scoring” is often gauged by a company's recognition, and Oakland & Oakland (2001) observed recognition is represented by an “acknowledgement of gratitude perceived as a commendation by the recipient” (p. 782). Every company must then determine the form this recognition should take and how best to achieve it. Thus, it is not simply a matter of gaining recognition but a strategized approach to customers whereby a culture of appraisal and recognition is established and regularly evaluated for efficacy and trends in customer perception.

As reward and recognition exist in a complementary relationship, it is paramount for companies to institute reward management processes to meet specific needs. In the words of Cardozo (1965), “Reward is a gift or prize considered being of value by the recipient” [...] because “the balance between financial and non-financial motivation” will be unique reflection of a company’s fiscal needs, corporate culture, and client base (p. 244).

Alignment between the reward system and support of TQM has been highlighted in the research of Allen & Kilmann (2001) research which underscores how important the implementation of a reward program is to its ultimate effectiveness and positive impact on a company. Therefore, strategic quality objectives at an institutional, group and individual level must inform policies and programmes to optimize performance. Wilkinson (1997) states that TQM is a continually renewing, education-focused approach aimed at the development and improvement of a reward policy to ensure its mirroring of strategic corporate aims and adoption by staff who feel qualified and motivated to carry out the mission. Such practices send an appropriate and positive signal to employees in that organisation.

Best practices dictate that an organisation should be receptive to complaints and see them as an opportunity to improve customer relations as they provide insight into how products and services are adapting to the ever-changing landscape of customer needs and trends. The more efficient a company’s approach to handling complaints, the greater its chance of attaining customer loyalty through long-term consumer satisfaction, thereby securing the continued profitability of the organisation (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987). Furthermore, research indicates customer complaints negatively affect stock value (e.g., Luo, 2007; Luo & Homburg, 2008) and potential profitability (e.g., Morgan & Rego, 2006). Additionally, Gwinner et al. (1998) stated that satisfaction with problem solving processes will be more important than initial service attributes in influencing overall satisfaction and customer intention. However, companies that assume a 'defensive' stance on customer dissatisfaction and complaints alienate customers, propelling them towards alternative vendors and giving competitors an advantage.

Bodin & Dawson (1999) indicates that while the customer is not “always right” debating the fallibility or ignorance of customers is irrelevant to retaining customers. The customer often wants to be right and may perceive redirection or information as a deflective tactic made by the company. In addition, customers may become disgruntled if a company requires further information or time to a review a matter even when the customer is ultimately found to be correct or take offense when they corrected by the company as to how or why a situation arose (Beckett, 2004).

A company receptive to complaints, must also ensure its employees feel supported to take necessary recovery actions and facilitate their ability to effectively handle problems rather than divert them so as to avoid repercussions (Barrett, 2000). Employees are fallible beings, and they will make mistakes; however, they should be encouraged to provide resolution and not fear making an error in resolving the problems of the customer. A culture of education and redirection assist in establishing an environment conducive to complaint processing and conflict resolution (Anton, 2000). Educating managers on the verity of perception found in customer feedback data will increase the likelihood that they will pay attention to it (e.g., Morgan et al., 2005) and reduce clouded, biased thinking on the part of management. When the sense of trust is found to be strong between an employee and manager, it adds an element of efficiency to other aspects of workplace productivity. Trust is usually considered to be a positive attribute in a situation, even though trust and risk are two sides of the same coin (Moesel et al., 1996). Therefore, over-trust will certainly lead to negative consequences by failing to anticipate and meet the customers' needs and desires (Coleman, 1990). The following sections illuminate of how important it is for companies to manage their customers' conduct so that they can prevent misbehaviour.

2.3.4 Customer Behaviour and Experience

Despite the above examples, there are still not many studies about the domino effect of dysfunctional customer behaviour (Harris & Reynolds, 2003). To illustrate, customers might begin imitating poor and abusive behaviour towards employees or to physical objects in a

store. Martin (1996) also identified different negative customer types that may directly affect other customer experiences and showed the significance of customer compatibility. Therefore, companies should pay attention to managing their customers' conduct so that they can prevent misbehaviour. One method for managing this is to group compatible customers by creating sections throughout the store. Since customers share the retail environment, the need for compatibility management has emerged (Martin & Pranter, 1989).

Martin (1996) argued that compatibility management involves establishing a consumer profile to help attract like-minded customers and manage a tailored service environment to foster customer-to-customer interactions that could cultivate satisfaction. For example, attracting customers who are compatible in health clubs may engender a sense of collegiality that would heighten satisfaction and discourage attrition (Martin, 1996). Compatible customers may also forge relationships that foster a mutually serving culture that would indirectly enhance the customer experience.

According to Bhandari (2017), observations have discovered a deepening scope through customers' personal experience during interactions with an organisation at the point of interaction. This experience, from the customer's perspective, is an accommodation of a series of sub-experiences at different times of interaction. Ultimately, this generates strong positive or negative feelings about the organisation or product of that organisation in the form of a story. In addition, Hagel & Armstrong (1998) and Kozinets (1999) pointed out similar customer-to-customer interactions as brick-and-mortar settings in online settings, where customers can "interact" with each other through reviews posted on companies' blog or in chat rooms or directly on company websites via product reviews, for example. This type of information has been found to be very influential. In recent years, this has become the new form of traditional word-of-mouth communication. Customers establish communities that further enrich customer experience and help foster consumer loyalty (Mittal & Tsiros, 2007).

The advent of social media has spawned has provided a forum where information can be exchanged and social exchanges can occur across multiple platforms and consumer

communities. Although companies have a greater reach than ever, great (Hagel & Armstrong, 1998), they should approach those communities with caution and keep in mind that in the context of social media, the customers and their experiences, not the companies' products, are the focus (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Langerak et al., 2007). Customers' perceptions of a product or brand may also have an impact on customer experience. In addition, Foroudi et al., (2018) affirm that while increased communication affords companies the opportunity to reach more customers and develop new client relationships, the influence of customers themselves on brand recognition and consumer perception has increased exponentially. Therefore, any negative reaction expressed through these channels could be inflated as it moves through the communication channels provided by social media.

2.3.5 Brand, Price and Customer Behaviour

Fitzsimons, et al. (2008) have begun investigating new facets of the relationship between brand and customer behaviour. Specifically, they found that brand culture and consumers' perceptions of the brand could influence consumer behaviour. Apple customers, for example, have been assessed to be more imaginative than IBM consumers. In addition, Ofir & Simonson (2007) observed that customer expectations (when expressed prior to a service encounter) significantly affect post-purchase evaluations of the company and shopping experience, suggesting that customers' brand perceptions might significantly affect their purchase experience. Further, maintaining a longitudinal positive customer experience is important in motivating brand loyalty and overall customer satisfaction. Further, brand equity and customer equity have been shown to influence each other (Ambler et al., 2002; Leone et al., 2006), as have prices, market share, company and product success, customer awareness, consumer attitude, and purchasing activity, among other factors (Keller & Lehmann, 2003). Similarly, Keller (1993) proposed that brand benefits crucially determine consumer-driven brand equity and consumer knowledge of brand attributes, whereas Rust, et al. (2000) found that brand equity serves as a precursor to customer equity.

The prime aim of the customer experience is to develop a strong emotional reaction, as it is a part of the product experience that fulfils the brand promise done by companies. The most

valuable classification is the nature of the product itself, as it creates positive experiences leading to increased build customer loyalty (Garrett, 2006). Customer perception and attitude towards the product are shaped by product performance and integrated with an emotional framework in building sustainable relationships with the customers. There are very few authors, Billeter et al., (2011) among them, who have studied the relation between purchasing the product and the usage experience. Their study is dependent on several skill-requiring products such as electronics. In contrast, Clatworthy (2012) underlines the significance of relating customer experience to the brand of the company, suggesting how this experience can be achieved. Earlier studies such as that by Hellier et al., (2003) found that the customer experience and satisfaction is commensurate with the level of contentment-seeking assigned to experiencing a product or service. The following sections provide insight into how customers create their interaction of experience with an organisation through product, services attached to that product, and the ambience present inside the organisation.

2.3.6 Product and Brand Loyalty

Each customer has his own individual perspective that is constantly changing and subjective, just as his knowledge and skills are constantly changing (Fiore & Kim, 2007; Goodman, 2009; Qian & Liu, 2009; Liu & Dong, 2013; Nilsson, 2002; Rawson, et al., 2013; Same & Larimo, 2012; Wood & Masterman, 2008). Similarly, the perception of the customer about the product constantly changing, influenced by the time of its consumption, i.e. sometimes the experience is evaluated no sooner than the product is consumed; while on other hand, the experience counts after several repeated consumptions. It is ideal that the customers create their interaction of experience with an organisation through product, services attached to that product, and the ambience present inside the organisation, i.e. the place. This amalgamation of variables all together affects the overall range of the customers' experience at different levels of interaction. Not only the experience influences the customers' perception about the organisation, which is gained before, during and after the interaction, but also some of the vital factors that stimulate the urge of the customer. The service provider, by making use of the skills for reading customers' expectations precisely targets the touch point during the productive interaction.

The business providing goods or services generates two types of experiences amongst its potential customers. First is the perception, which is judged by the pre-experience senses, i.e. stimuli five different senses of an individual by and large. Whereas the other type of experience originates from the so-called "social experience", formed during the social interaction with social groups or sometimes with other customers which largely affects the consumers' behavioural approach at the end of the experience. The perceptive experience, as seen from a rational approach, can be instrumental or physical by its nature, and is subject to the rational motive of choice.

On the other hand, the so-called social experience influence can be positive, negative or neutral which is largely subject to the feelings and emotions of an individual. Notwithstanding, the understanding of experience marketing still needs to be well studied as a seminal study, representing the first of its kind, was written at the beginning of this century despite a lack of a clearly defined concept or related terminology (Gentile et al., 2007). Thus, this paper defines the concept of experience marketing and distinguishes its primary features (Hart, et al., 1990).

Schmitt (1999), a pioneer in the field of experience marketing, suggested that, the concept for experience marketing not only account for the organic perception of a product/service and the relevant features, but also the concurrent counter experience (emotional or rational) developed by the organisation to influence its customers. It has to be a mix 'n' match of both the customers' experience and the successful management of that experience by that provider. He also suggested that the adaptability towards the methodology should be flexible so that it can easily be reviewed and realigned based on five basic elements: actions, thinking, interactions, senses, and feelings. Some of the widely accepted aspects for an experience marketing include customers' experience, consumption, overall experience, associated customer rationality, emotions, and heterogeneous marketing approaches.

Another study by Deputatova (2012) suggested a further step, opining that merely taking due and extensive care for the product's quality is not sufficient enough, and at the same time, one has to be even more attentive towards high quality evaluation from customers' perceptual point-of-view. Also, it has been suggested that favourable response towards the goods or services depends equally over the emotional aspects. Visual merchandising, quality, features, price variable and value are also important, along with an associated criterion such as brand image, trust, and placement etc. These aspects come together as a tool, allowing the organisation to deal with collective customer action generated from an individual experience. Wood & Masterman (2008) argued that marketing experiments should be result from significant customer experiences that are current, not old.

Due to advancements in information technologies, integrated communications, and consumer entertainment elements, an increasing number of articles are being written about the customer experience (Melnik, 2012). People are looking for meaning and happiness, as well as new ways of being satisfied when they assess any advertisement or opportunity to make a purchase. Experience marketing is innovative approach requiring originality (Same & Larimo, 2012). Nilsson (2002) and Hauser (2007) studied the interaction of customers with brands and explained that experientially grounded companies should not overlook the emotional responses of consumers and assert marketing should create a unique and memorable experience for the customer.

According to Lin et al., (2004), perceived value is formed through experiences with a brand and/or a product. When a consumer has a positive and unique experience with a brand or product, they want to have that experience. Srivastava (2011) suggested that experience marketing "is striving for a powerful emotional (cognitive) response by using sensory techniques", a notion that was echoed by Rawson, et al. (2013) and Smilansky (2009), who agree that a customer's senses should be used when determining a marketing strategy.

2.3.7 Product Quality and Customer Experience

According to Alibage & Jetter (2017) it is important to consider a product's success as it is conceptualised in the emotional appraisal of the customer. Similarly, Rawson, et al. (2013), stated that it is not the products' quality that should be considered. Instead, factors stimulating customers' emotions through their senses should be the focus of marketing efforts. All such elements that directly stimulate the senses towards the self-experience should be the matter of concern through the targeted approach of the organisation.

These five senses of the concern are sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. The concept for experimental marketing uses customers' perception of a product/service and later the evaluation associated activities during an experience encounter related to said stimuli. Thus, the concept of experience marketing accounts for the associations, feelings, senses, and attachments, emotions. Therefore, a positive experience builds the value for the product, brand image, and organisational image, thereby making an effective marketing decision in terms of building a competitive strategy (Same & Larimo, 2012). Experiential marketing serves as the "tactical" part of experience marketing that invokes the methods and decisions in business that involve and gain the interest of the target market.

In Melnik's (2012) opinion, experience marketing is founded upon psychological theories of customers and their social behaviour. The elements of experiential marketing and its proposed characteristics, as described by Qian & Liu (2009), are as follows:

Experience: Experience is essential for an effective experimental marketing mix which includes feelings, emotions, thinking, actions and interaction. The experience's core function is satisfying customers' basic needs to realize their self-value.

Price: Price should reflect customer readiness and willingness to pay for the experience they have encountered and not for product features. Hence, the pricing strategy should highlight higher value awareness through their offerings instead of practicing cost effectiveness measures, ultimately gaining customers' acceptance.

Situation: Generating timely situation providing long lasting, unique experience whilst rousing the potential demand and desire in the customers.

Interaction: An effective interaction works as a bridge towards mutual benefits along with building a close interior relationship by meeting the demand and need through effective communication and exchange.

Word-of-mouth: An inseparable element of experimental marketing mix that also plays a pivotal role in this domain (Qian & Liu, 2009).

Qian & Liu (2009), revealed experience marketing is a natural as it pertains to building and maintaining of a strong bond and lasting relationship with the product brand or particular organisation. It is a positive approach generating inseparable and unique experience, and thereby delivering the utmost customer satisfaction which results in customer loyalty. This takes the form of a gifted positive recommendation, praise and word-of-mouth from those customers.

During this process, an organisation must correctly identify and meet the needs and desires of the customer by making an appropriately utilizing effective communicative, environmental, sensory and interactive opportunities. Similarly, Same & Larimo (2012) argued that when referring to the concept of experimental marketing, one is basically dealing skilfully with tactical decision and actions in that process of experimental marketing which entails building and later the managing brand identity, perfection in proposal preparation, optimal and genuine pricing, proper storage facilities for the product, as well as exploring customers' touch points based on experience, so as to create value for both the customer and the company itself.

In the case of services, as the product is prepared, and the pricing element is fixed for the customers, one should keep in mind that customers buy the experience and not the product, which is intangible by its nature. Therefore, the offer should reflect both rationales: buying motivation and associated emotional value. In addition, the consideration for the price element should be based on the concept of delivering customer value. While implementing

the experience-marketing plan, branding and its management should be at the forefront of tactical practice. Equal concern should be paid towards an effective two-way communication, word-of-mouth advertisement and other associated quick to response effective measures (Melnik, 2012). Thus, to give a more comprehensive understanding, the following section will give an overview of the marketing mix as antecedents of customer experience.

2.4 Marketing Mix as Antecedents of Customer Experience

To explain past customer experience management and the attendant consequences, Fatma (2014) developed a conceptual model of the antecedents and consequences of customer experience management, including six antecedent categories: “brand performance multichannel interaction, service interface, physical environment, social environment, price, and promotion” (p. 38). What is more, the study identified three direct consequences: “customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer equity” (p. 42).

In the retail industry, Srivastava & Kaul (2014) identified two antecedents of customer experience, including “employees’ behaviour and interaction with customers” and “the retailer’s ability to reduce customers' time, energy and effort through creating convenience of purchasing” (p. 1035). However, the two antecedents that were mentioned by Srivastava & Kaul (2014) can be respectively attributed to the elements of “people” and “place” within the marketing mix. Srivastava & Kaul (2014) concluded that for retailers to retain a sustainable competitive advantage, they must provide better ingredients of customer experience to their target market. In an earlier study, Verhoef et al. (2007) investigated the factors that influence customer experience in retailing and determined price, social milieu, service interface, retail setting, product variety, communication platforms, and branding to directly impact customer experience. However, it can be concluded that the factors mentioned by Verhoef et al. (2007) are directly related to the elements of people, product, physical evidence, price and promotion in the retailers’ marketing mix. Verhoef et al. (2009) later confirmed this opinion, emphasising the effect of retailers’ marketing strategies in the formation of customers’ expectations of future experiences.

According to Shaw (2007), customer experience intellectual and emotional reactions toward the perceived benefit of the company's marketing mix even before having any physical contact with the product or the company. Managers often employ contrary thinking, believing that their customers' experience begins with buying the product and ends with consuming it. Yet Shaw (2007) contends the experience begins well before the purchase is made and concludes some time thereafter.

As per Pine & Gilmore (1998), the main objective of marketing in companies is to create an experience for customers that has four specific qualities: entertainment, engagement, boundary breaking, and value creation. However, many would agree that marketing has either been misunderstood or underestimated by many companies (Polat & Donmez, 2010; Yisa et al., 1995). Hence, customers' perception of the benefit of the marketing mix elements dictates the nature and quality of their experience with the company or its brand. According to Kurtus (2007), there are many factors that firms must consider to create a positive customer experience, including timely response to customer inquiries, personalised customer interactions, and delivery of the right information to the right place, at the right time. These factors, as advised by Kurtus (2007), initiate from the elements of people, process, and promotion in the marketing mix of companies.

According to Fatma (2014), there is a direct relationship between pricing and customer experience although reduced prices incentivize purchase. The concept by Berry et al., (2002) related to companies focusing primarily on reduced costs to support lower prices rather than putting emphasis on customer experiences which might decrease the value of their offerings. Customer experience relates to their sensory experience, a factor that should not be underestimated. If customers are provided with an unfavourable environment such as long waiting lines, disorganized stores and no customer service providers, these negative conditions can affect the way a customer perceives pricing.

Pine & Gilmore (1999) posited there are four categories of customer experience including educational, entertainment, escapist, and esthetical factors. In contrast to this study, Gentile

et al. (2007) classified customer experience into six categories including emotional, sensorial, lifestyle, pragmatic and relational. This study offered the most comprehensive and in-depth classifications relating to customer experience and yielded information about the functional value of what customers actually experienced (Berry et al., 2002).

Haeckel et al. (2003) saw customer experience as an outcome of brand perception by consumers, which creates an integrated emotional and cognitive response reflected in customers' intentions to buy and their *post hoc* word-of-mouth. Barlow & Steward (2004) noted, "A strong brand promise can influence what customers remember about their experiences with a product or service" (p. 42) and later confirmed this opinion. Shaw (2005) also emphasised that the brand should correlate with customer experience (p. 137).

For Tseng et al. (1999), customer experience is tied to the service quality customer's encounter during their interaction with the company. More specifically, customer experience is related to the elements of people, process, and physical evidence of the marketing mix. Seybold (2002), however, defined the concept of "total customer experience" as a reflection of the perfect execution of emotional connection across distribution channels and interactions that companies and their brands establish with the customer.

Yet the real indicator of a customer's perception of the quality of products and services is not their satisfaction, but rather the customers' experience, as argued by Bennett & Thiele (2004), who explained that a high level of satisfaction is not always commensurate with an equal level of loyalty. Customers become loyal because of their positive experiences and the relationship with customer created by the company (Garret, 2006), which explains why customers' loyalty bonds are stronger at the abstract, corporate level than at the interpersonal level in sectors such as retail, for example (Wong & Sohal, 2003). Gordon (2004) noted that customer experience is a true reflection of a successful marketing strategy that starts with the customers' needs, and further designed the steps that conduct customers to a conclusion whereby those needs and desires have been fulfilled. In line with the previous view, Shaw (2005) asserted customer experience resulted from the interaction between the organisation

and customers as experienced during touch-points. In a later study, Shaw (2007) confirmed this idea by emphasising that customer experience is a reflection of a physical experience with the brand or its products, such as product, location, store schedules, and the delivery channels used.

Furthermore, Dorsey & Bodine (2006) explained the importance of the element of process within the marketing mix, emphasizing that processes are needed to fortify the goal of improving customer experience. Similarly, Thompson (2005) explained that price affects customers' perceptions of the benefit of the marketing offering of what they buy. Researchers have emphasised the importance of personal elements (contact employees) and physical evidence (or physical environment) within the marketing mix of service companies to enhance customers' experience during service delivery (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006; Swanson & Davis, 2003; Zeithaml et al., 2006).

Wilburn (2007), meanwhile, determined that customer experience comprised five components: price, product quality, service personnel, the purchasing environment, and brand image. Hyken (2009) also indirectly referred to these same components of customer experience. However, it is quite clear how customers' experiences, as perceived by Wilburn (2007) and later by Hyken (2009), relate directly to the elements of product, people, price, place, physical evidence, process and promotion in a complete marketing mix. Goodman (2009), who examined the drivers of creating a delightful customer experience, also mentioned the same elements in a later opinion. According to Goodman (2009), the five drivers of creating a delightful customer experience are enhanced product value, enhanced process value, increasing the value of price, proactive communication and creating emotional connections through people.

Establishing interactive communications with customers to enhance their experience has been emphasised as an efficient promotional strategy for companies in the digital age as it fosters enriched customer experience leading customer loyalty (Mittal & Tsiros, 2007), as customers are continually forming virtual communities through virtual communication

channels (Hagel & Armstrong, 1998; Kozinets, 1999; Rheingold, 1993). Companies can improve efficiencies through interactive communication with customers online, as virtual communities provide hubs where consumer-pertinent information are housed and exchanged, and social interactions with customers are cultivated (Kim & Jin, 2006). However, the enriched communication of the digital age poses a risk in that much of the content is generated and disseminated by consumers themselves (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Langerak et al., 2007). Successful interactive online communications with customers are considered part of the customer experience and often lead to positive exchanges that motivate others to seek a relationship with a product or brand (Lloyd & Luk, 2011; Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

Brands and customer loyalty are often linked to each other in marketing (Kotler, 2003). The theory is that a brand is a name, sign, symbol or a mixture of these that makes the company easily recognisable and unique amongst its competitors. Brand conveys a company's identity and unique aspects to potential customers. Having brand loyalty protects the company, in a sense, from severe competition and gives it greater control over marketing plans. Brand building requires a high cost and effort to attract customer loyalty, but it is necessary and worthwhile (Kotler, 2003).

Oliver (1999), in his study, stated that the loyalty of brand is a "deeply held commitment to re-buy a preferred product/service again and again in the future" despite adverse conditions or conditions that might otherwise lead to attrition (p. 34).

Therefore, loyalty can be behavioural, attitudinal, and situational (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Uncles et al., 2003). Loyalty of a customer through the behavioural approach is expressed by the repetitive purchase for that product. The purchase decision reflects the customers' level of satisfaction, extracted from the historical data of the customer engaging with the organisation. It has been found that an attitudinal loyalty is often reflected from its partial relationship with the brand and is built through optimistic customers' preferences associated with other strong rational influences. Lastly, the concept of loyalty is subject to the shopping and purchasing influencing situations at that time. Hence, these considerations

of customer loyalty are independently significant in terms of the situational roles they play, and some of them are more critical, such as maintaining long-term sales improvement and increasing market share at large. In this era of steep competition brand loyalty not only ensure for the sales, also helps in remarkably deducing offensive marketing costs (Datta, 2003).

According to Wong & Sohal (2003), the relationship between customer loyalty and service quality is very strong at the corporate rather than the individual level. On the other hand, Macintosh (2007) focused on interpersonal quality relationship to enhance the satisfaction of customer as it is linked to positive publicity of the organization through word-of-mouth marketing. Firms nowadays are involved greatly in customer satisfaction as an end goal to measure customer satisfaction. It is the organisation's belief that customers will be highly loyal and repeat purchase if they are provided with high level of satisfaction.

However, the argument against this concept was presented by Bennett & Thiele (2004) who stated that increased satisfaction is not a compulsory reason for superior quality. Customers are loyal because of their experience with the product and the service along with quality assurance and managing the relationship initiatives (Garret, 2006). Increase in loyalty, growth, and financially optimal performance is delivered by customer experience management within the organisation.

What is more, customer equity in the organisation is a result of customer relationship, which is a basic foundation of assets which are intangible. The need to address the factors and issues so as to manage and harness relationships is dependent on equity which is highly superior for improved financial performance and competitive advantage (Bejou & Iyer, 2006). This theory contradicted an earlier theory presented by Rust et al. (2000) who defined customer equity to be the combination of "discounted lifetime values of all customers of the organisation" (p. 4).

Researchers Biedenbach & Marell (2010) concluded in their studies that there is an overall positive influence of positive experience on brand equity that includes factors such as brand-

association, -perception, -awareness, -loyalty and the perceived brand quality. Furthermore, the study also advanced more within their findings than the previous researchers who indicated that the overall brand attitude is influenced by customer experience.

After exhaustive review of the aforementioned research, the author realized the concept of brand loyalty and customer equity were associated with the concepts of marketing which then leads to customer and brand equity. Customer equity is the concept propounded by customer experience management, incorporated through three dimensions such as customer acquisition, customer retention, and add-on selling (Arussy et al., 2010).

According to Berry (2000), brands that are successful are special in that they allow their customers to better understand the nature of services, in particular the intangible nature, which decreases the customer's perceived risk in choosing to consume those services. This risk evaluation is difficult to evaluate before using the service. In this sense, the company and the brand are inseparable. Research has increasingly focused on how closely brand relation is to customer experience (Berry, 2000; De Chernatony, 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Sandstrom et al., 2008). De Chernatony (2006), in particular, described a brand service in experiential terms. He highlighted that, "A brand can be regarded as a cluster of functional and emotional values, which promise a unique and welcome experience" (p. 12).

In Vargo & Lusch's (2004) description of service dominant logic, when value is something perceived and evaluated at the time of consumption, i.e., 'value in use'. Sandstrom et al., (2008) further stated that "Value in use is the evaluation of the service experience, i.e. the individual judgment of the sum total of all the functional and emotional experience outcomes" (p. 120). Further, Sanders & Stappers (2008) advocate that "organisations must manage the emotional dimension of experiences with the same rigor they bring to the management of service functionality" (p. 119). Therefore, brands providing services need to ensure that the customer experience reflects the brand promise.

De Chernatony & Segal-Horn (2003) stated that processes, behaviours and contact points are elements of a reliable brand promise conceived through “a unique culture which is revealed both in the brand and in the attitude and behaviour of staff as they represent the brand to consumers” (p. 1107). Berry (2000) echoed this, claiming, “With their on-the-job performances, service providers turn a marketer-articulated brand into a customer-experienced brand” (p. 135). Furthermore, Sandstrom et al., (2008) added a technology dimension to this, outlining self-service solutions, in which “the physical access device and the technical infrastructure are in a kind of symbiosis, both dependent upon on each other’s existence” (p. 115). Clatworthy (2011) directly related company and brand behaviours to touch-points, separate from their provisioning means, also stating that the total experiences from all touch-points form the customer’s perception of value in use. Fortini-Cambell (2003) put the phenomenon as “in a more complex consumer experience...there may be link to several small and significant elements of personal experience that consumer notices” (p. 63). Services lend a commendable association with the service provider while it's processing the required service, and therefore, the behavioural approach and tone for that matters greatly.

Even in case of digital interaction, the services provided must be accessible, user-friendly, beneficial, and also value oriented as this combination accurately represents the perfect blend for that brand. Hence, the design and the technology involved in partnering for the customer’s touch points must be considered collectively for delivering a unique and results oriented customer experience. Unfortunately, this link between a technologically designed approach, and proper awareness to deliver customer experience, has been ignored largely in the field (Jaworski et al., 2000). To clarify the elements of marketing mix, the following sections will discuss these elements (7Ps) in detail.

2.4.1 The Elements of Marketing Mix and Customer Experience

A well-balanced marketing mix helps in improving customer experience and contributes effectively to boost customers’ loyalty and reflects the main marketing plan features that increase customer satisfaction (Johnston & Kong, 2011; Rust et al., 2000). The research study conducted by Al Muala & Al Qurneh (2012) examined the relationship between marketing

mix, consumer service, satisfaction, and loyalty in the Jordanian tourism industry. Findings showed that, although the price and process were not important, product and location were important for customer experience. This indicates that the satisfaction and loyalty of the tourist are the result of the relationship between marketing mix and customer experience. The research findings also noted that by introducing a marketing mix in Jordan's tourism industry, it was possible to ensure the availability of quality products, cost/time savings in the production and promotion of the product. This would further enhance the customer experience, which would contribute to customer loyalty. The use of the marketing mix also advances the prospects of strong segmentation of the customers. It strengthens the analysis, including dimensions. Consequently, this gave the company an advantage over its competitors – an advantage resulting from customer experience. Therefore, this research supports the theory in this thesis by analysing empirical data with a novel structural model. This structural model would identify attributes of individual marketing mix elements that affect customer experience as delivered by the construction companies in the Gulf region. Additionally, the model fit analysis inherent in the research will provide an objective understanding of the marketing mix pertinent to customer experience.

Marketing techniques, as investigated by Hollensen (2007) fill the communication gap between a company and its customers by stimulating interest in particular products through promotional measures, such as advertisements communicated through multimedia, print, and other means. According to Mills (2003), marketing also affects pricing for effective marketing persuades customers to part with their money through a purchase. In their research, Jensen & Jepsen (2008) found that integrating online and offline promotion techniques are sources of direct and indirect marketing that allow customers to choose directly which products they wanted. The focus of the 7P's is to increase profitability by painting a colourful picture of a product and its characteristics to convince a customer to buy the product. While, the integrated elements in the distribution channel (Stockiest, Distributor, Dealer, Whole seller, Retailer) enable timely push of the product towards the end user (Shostack, 1984).

While, process is another important component of the marketing mix. It primarily takes into account the systems and procedures followed for delivering final products and services to the customer. The industries ensure that all services are supported by well characterized and effective procedures (Martin, 2014). In other hand, people comprise of all the employees associated with the business. When the organisations provide best services to their customers, they form a positive impact on them which consequently helps them in establishing their brand name in the market (Iles, 2008). The physical evidence according to Cowell (2000) can be incorporated in the product and promotion, and place (i.e., distribution) elements. Therefore, this study argues that customer perception needs to be reconciled with their actual experiences for effective customer experience management. To fill this gap, general hypotheses will be set and tested generally.

H1: There is a direct effect from expected practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry.

H2: There is a direct effect from actual practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry.

H3: There is a difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry.

2.4.1.1 Price

Product is another variable that can manipulated to attract new and existing customers. Pricing, according to Mochtar (2005), is a very effective marketing tool and plays a significant role in winning competitively bid jobs. Peter & Donnelly (2007) found in their study that price is the factor in which customers focus more than other attributes, while making purchase decisions. Collins & Parsa (2006) highlighted three techniques for pricing that lend themselves to increasing customer satisfaction:

1. Cost-based pricing: Price of product is directly determined by production, distribution and profitability level.
2. Customer-driven pricing: Price reflects customer spending capacity.

3. Market-driven pricing: Price is determined by relative and comparative relationship with products of parity in same market.

However, Cravens & Piercy (2007) noted another important factor to be used in determining price: customer response as derived through market analysis techniques. Hollensen (2007) suggested companies augment promotion as a means of communication with customers. Promotion techniques, according to Mills' (2003), should be considered a factor of influence in pricing because it facilitates customers to spend money on a particular product or service. Similarly, Keller (2009) established that the marketing and financial objectives should also affect pricing. The marketing objective refers to evaluate the impact of particular price level against the acceptance from the customers' side. Consequently, price works to moderate customer satisfaction and customer experience levels (Wang et al., 2018). Therefore, pricing of products needs to be competitive (Marr, 2003).

According to Ang et al. (1996), financial objectives seek the ways and means in terms of covering the developing cost of the product. Accuracy in sales forecasting helps in establishing the per unit cost and overall total cost of manufacturing for that product which enables the organisation to set the target over the selected segment with a specified price range which stands to determine the sufficiently acceptable price perceived by target customers. Many times, it has been seen that pre-set marketing objectives and financial objectives of the organisation are achieved by setting the optimum acceptable price determinant. Various pricing strategies are thus implemented into practice for the achievement of these objectives. These are skim pricing, penetration pricing, bait pricing, etc. In some instances, the conscious pricing technique purposely prices under cost. Additionally, the pricing approach adopted by an organisation is subject to the scenario of that market place. In the case of a new launch, for example, a penetration strategy can be selected to meet the objectives, whereas when the motive is to achieve high sales volume, the strategy adopted in pricing is different (Hoofnagle, 1965).

2.4.1.2 Products

Kotler & Armstrong (2013) considering the product as the core offering of a business, while Alibage & Jetter (2017) indicated that among marketing mix elements, product significantly influences customer experience. A product is a tangible or intangible entity produced to meet the desires or needs of an individual or group. Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2000) argued that products can be categorized based on tangibility or durability. Tangibility relates to items that can be physically possessed, while intangible relate to “immaterial” items such as services or experiences. Durability relates to how long an item can last or endure time. Durable goods last for a long time and often entail personalized sales services sold at a higher price margin and a warranty or guarantee. Non-durable goods, on the other hand, are typically consumed quickly, over just a few uses and are thus bought relatively quickly and often, and are made widely available. Furthermore, products can be placed into consumer or industrial categories, as well. According to Mandell & Rosenberg (1981), based on their utility and functions, the goods can be classified in terms of their ease of use (convenience), purpose, uniqueness, and novelty. Convenience goods again can be considered as three types: regular, impulse and emergency (normally purchased with the input of minimum effort). The other matter of concern for the customers are such suitability, design, quality, price looks, etc.

Specialty goods are intended to appeal to a specific group of consumers. Similarly, unsought goods consider for industrial products/raw material which normally contribute for production. These are bought in bulk and usually engage long term contract. No matter the type of goods one produces, one should develop a system to facilitate the management of the finished goods to the end customer.

2.4.1.3 Place/ Distribution

The efficient and timely delivery of products to customers is a subject of great importance and as an expectation held by most consumers (Piercy, et al., 2007). Effective channels of distribution ensure the timely delivery of products to customers, thereby satisfying customer expectations and increasing customers trust in the company (Cravens & Piercy, 2007). The distribution channel is characterised as a part of services offered which includes the service

supplier, intermediate individuals, and the same customer availing the service (in majority of the cases). In this manner, by keeping in mind the end goal of controlling and dealing with these procedures, organisations need to build up a fitting marketing channel to align with the organisation's objectives (Liang & Dang, 2015). It has been stated that the distribution processes associated with marketing are governed by two factors: the first factor focuses on acknowledging distribution as a channel of marketing which primarily aims to make the services more accountable and easily approachable and the second factor focuses on the physical distribution of products which is mainly determined by the surrounding conditions, technical practicability, transport facilities available, and other factors relying on the type of the service offered (Išoraitė, 2016).

These routes are majorly categorized into direct and indirect marketing channels (Liang & Dang, 2015). Therefore, this channel running from the producer makes products and services straightforwardly available to the clients. The direct distribution of products can be accomplished in two ways, i.e., firstly by using the distribution stores owned by the producers and their own employees, and secondly by independent agents who carry the distribution process as per the guidelines stated by the producer.

The integrated elements in the distribution channel (Stockiest, Distributor, Dealer, Whole seller, Retailer) enable timely push of the product towards the end user. Hence it stands to a prime concern in terms of strategic importance for the company to design it in most effective manner to advance an advantage over the competitors. Achieving timely and free flow of the product through well integrated intermediaries in the distribution channel is a challenge for organizations. Therefore, the adoption to new and innovative design for increasing the efficiency has gained importance over time. Now, direct marketing, online marketing is something vastly applied by organisations for the consumer market and industrial market, alike (Shostack, 1984).

2.4.1.4 Promotions

Promotion constitutes one of the four major elements of the marketing mix. The ultimate goal of promotional materials is to persuade consumers to inform customers so that they will make a purchase, feel satisfied with a purchase, or be reminded of a product's favourable attributes (Kotler & Armstrong, 1994), because promotion is more important for customers than they are to the company (Lovelock & Wright, 2002). It can influence consumers' perception, their emotions, their experience as well as their purchasing pattern thus, helping to create powerful images and a sense of credibility, confidence and reassurance (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). The major modalities of promotion include advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and personal selling which cooperate to achieve a company's marketing communication. To be effective, a marketing communicator must identify and manipulate the nine elements of communication: message, sender, receiver, encoding, decoding, medium, response, feedback and noise. The communicator's first task is to correctly identify the target audience for the promotion or products or services (Zingale & Arndt, 2001). In addition, the communicator must construct, the message with the content, format, and structure that will most likely result in the desired response. After conveying the message through the most appropriate means, the communicator finally must collect and analyse feedback as it pertains to customer reaction, purchasing intention, and brand recognition. The company must also decide how much to spend on promotion and divide the promotion budget among various tools to establish a promotion mix (Rumelt, 1998).

According to Thompson et al. (2013), advertising media is applied to persuade, stimuli and hammering about the product by the organisations, acts as a strong tool for growth of the organisation in terms of sales. Selecting an effective advertisement is formulated by undergoing a 5-step process comprising the alignment with the pre-set objectives, budget, the message, media selection, and the evaluation of the outcome. This process also includes the promotional methods for stimulating the targets, and thus by getting the desired sales, it is ultimately backed by the help from the skilled salesforce, which in turn develops relationships with the people through smart interaction, thereby gaining publicity and strong image in favour of the product/organisation.

In their research, Jensen & Jepsen (2008) found an integrated promotion approach that utilizes both online and offline promotion tools reflect direct and indirect marketing modalities, thereby allowing customers greater purchase options. The focus of the 7P's is to increase profitability by attracting buyers to a product by effectively communicating its favourable characteristics. Furthermore, Keller (2009) noted that 'yield management' is an approach touted to increase customer satisfaction that directly converts to brand loyalty. As yield management is predicated on price variation and inventory control, it is implicated as part of the 7P's because its pricing mechanism takes into consideration the spending capacity of the customer.

2.4.1.5 Process

Process is another important component of the marketing mix. It primarily takes into account the systems and procedures followed for delivering final products and services to the customer. According to Hirankitti et al. (2009) process pacing, as well as the skill of the service providers are fully observed by customers and forms the basis of consumer satisfaction with the purchase. Process management controls the availability and consistence of quality of service and should be optimized. Modern technology has revolutionized the service delivery options (Dabholkar & Bagozzi, 2002). Therefore, the industries ensure that all services are supported by well characterized and effective procedures (Martin, 2014).

At every phase of the process, the marketers make best efforts to ensure that they are able to deliver products of best quality to their consumers through all the channels associated with the processes of product distribution, thereby attempting to enhance their products on the basis of feedback received from their clients. Such initiatives, consequently, help in retaining the customers as they develop a trust over the products. The marketers thus take adequate measures in accordance to the customer feedback and modify their business processes and marketing strategies. It has been posited that while generating products, organisations distribute the responsibilities among various divisions to guarantee the recognition of important measures and their implementation.

Appropriate distribution strategies allow the clients to search and keep buying those items from those suppliers at the critical moments also (Išoraitė, 2016). The processes adopted for manufacturing and delivery of products to the customers are majorly based on the right choices made and initiatives undertaken (Išoraitė, 2016). In this way, the circulation of products may turn into a working complex framework where the product generators, agents, independent marketing, and the preferences of customers align completely and perfectly with each other in a particular set up within a particular time frame.

2.4.1.6 People

In a marketing mix, people comprise of all the employees associated with the business. When the organisations provide best services to their customers with smiling face, they form a positive impact on them, which consequently helps them in establishing their brand name in the market (Jones & Dent, 1994). People acknowledge these brands and also recommend them (Perna, 2005). According to Armando (2005), successful service providers can satisfy customer's requirements through people element, particularly 'face-to-face' interaction with the customer. In view of the marketing strategies to be adopted, organisations are required to train their employees about the right code of conduct reasonable conduct (Iles, 2008), guaranteeing that the staff of an organisation will more probably the vision of the organisation based on sustainability (Connelly et al., 2011; Iles, 2008). What is more, Malhotra & Mackelprang (2012) posit that, by maintaining an end goal of empowering effective sustainable business strategies, all individuals from in an organisation should feel a desire for, and a responsibility to the business approach and acknowledge their very own significant role in the execution of these business processes. Therefore, strategy and policy design for logistic management must be integrated into the strategic marketing plan if logistics is to play a significant role within the organisation (Ulwick, 2002).

Besides, organisations should treat clients, representatives, and all associated partners reasonably and with high moral and upright standards, while keeping in mind the community's social advantages and the workers' wellbeing (Liu et al., 2012; Luchs et al.,

2010; Matanda & Ndubisi, 2013). The impact on inappropriate treatment towards workers can be seen by considering the case of Nike (Nisen, 2013).

At the point when Nike was charged for their poor work practices, particularly with their utilization of child labour, the organisation faced a negative impact and the quantity of retail offers diminished altogether (Nisen, 2013). Thus, it comes as little surprise that investigators have mentioned in the available literature that organisations considering moral values are probably going to attract those applicants who value the ethical norms most, which in turn enhances the efficiency of the organisation (Crane, et al., 2010; Matanda & Ndubisi, 2013). Also, when organisations incorporate moral standards and conduct while training their workers about the job roles, there exists a probability that the workers will reflect moral conduct (Crane, et al., 2010; Matanda & Ndubisi, 2013). Subsequently, the present marketing strategies adopted by the organisations emphasize high moral standards, so that it can achieve an enhancement of the quality of training imparted to the workers and instil sustainable behaviour among them.

2.4.1.7 Physical Evidence

The physical evidence comprises the extent to which a company is committed to establishing a customer friendly atmosphere and the degree to which the marketing team is committed to reaching a suitable level of quality (Richard & Al-Bakri, 2005). According to Rathmell (1974), physical evidence is that which can be easily associated with the product. Therefore, firms should create a suitable environment to highlight the fact to the customers. This element of marketing mix holds great importance because the customer normally judges the quality of the service provided through it (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995).

The term “physical evidence” in the present context refers to all the things taken into consideration by the customers whilst interacting with the marketers. This incorporates the marketing strategies adopted, promotional techniques used, packaging of the product, overall appearance of the product, and the surrounding environment where the products are marketed to the customers. As research proposes, the choice to consider remaining faithful to a specific

product, brand, or company is greatly influenced by a consumer's feelings towards the brand itself (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2013; Bell, 2011; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Gupta & Kim, 2010).

Moreover, establishing an environmentally-friendly brand identity is progressively utilized to distinguish oneself from the competition, which is, as per Kotler (2010) vital so as to remain relevant in business (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011), and to illustrate this tendency, in 2009, McDonald's changed its logo in from a red to green base to appear more environmentally-conscious and 'green' (MacPherson Lane, 2010). In addition, construction companies in the Gulf region have started adopting green building technologies to curb the adverse environmental effects of their operations (Zimmermann, 2015). Then again, Meffert et al. (2010) express that making a feasible brand is just helpful in the event that it guarantees a separation from direct contenders. All things considered, other research proposes that because shoppers are progressively asking for environmentally friendly items, a brand can assemble an upper hand by focusing on ecological and societal needs (Liu et al., 2012; Susilo et al., 2015). Also, eco-marking can facilitate the advancement of reasonable items (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011).

An examination by Rahbar & Wahid (2011) even recognised that the achievement of eco-accommodating items vigorously depends on a societal imagining of the brand and that a positive open picture prompts buyer reliability. By the by, it is expressed that making a practical brand should just be considered if manageability is esteemed by the fundamental target gathering (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2015; Meffert et al., 2010). Despite what might be expected, Rahbar & Wahid (2011) clarified that a solid eco-brand can all the more effortlessly teach purchasers about the need to utilise natural, local items and administrations.

2.4.2 Critique on the Use of Marketing Mix

This section provides a critique of the use of marketing mix (7Ps) as a collection of marketing tools at a firm's disposal to produce a desired response within the targeted consumer audience. Keller (2009) presented the marketing mix concept by describing a "marketer" as a "mixer of elements" in the running of a business. Though, the proper practice of the

marketing mix model in the marketing context was presented by Keller (2009) who argued the 7Ps of the marketing mix elements model, the product, people, physical evidence, and promotion practices relate to the success of any company. Moreover, Cowell (2000) questioned whether the product, people, physical evidence, and promotion are new elements of the expanded companies. The remaining three “P’s” can be integrated into the framework of the primary 4Ps, particularly if the importance of the augmented product outweighs that of the general or essential product. So, whereas physical evidence can be placed with product and promotion, the process element can be housed within the place (distribution) element (Cowell, 2000).

Nonetheless, Cowell (2000) indirectly adopted the framework of the 7Ps of the marketing mix (Ennew, 2003). However, Magrath (2003) argued that the four Ps of product, people, physical evidence, and promotion were insufficient for the marketing of services, and introduced three more “P’s”: price, process and price that he deemed the essential traditional elements on which an organisation should focus as a failure to focus sufficiently on these 3Ps could prove disastrous. Judd (2004) claims that employees and management should be incorporated into the marketing mix as they play a significant role in carrying out the marketing strategy; specifically, the efficacy of a company’s employees in meeting customer needs positions a company for success. What is more, the “people factor” proves especially important when a company operates in a marketplace wherein the traditional marketing mix cannot thrive. Marr (2003) claimed that the customer package should be viewed as a fifth element, arguing this element to play a key part of a non-price competitive strategy.

However, Yelkur (2000) argued criticized the in 7Ps marketing mix model for the place/distribution, price, and process practices as they were too closely tied to tangibles and argued the mix concept extend to appropriate a fuller services marketing context and that the traditional elements be expanded to become the 7Ps services management. These elements could be used to formulate a progressive marketing strategy which could provide a service with a competitive advantage. Zineldin & Philipson (2007) argued that the marketing mix elements of place/distribution, price, and process practices are not of much importance to

production companies but are notwithstanding still considered an essential part of service marketing. Zeithaml et al. (2007) claims that; place/distribution, price, and process are measured as very significant, and they affect the perceived quality of service. Also, they highlighted that even if the long-standing the marketing mix is waning in relevance, it is still important (Zeithaml et al., 2007).

Even though there has been much disparagement of the 7Ps comprising the marketing mix model, a number of recent views have further complicated the debate over its viability. Willcocks (2008) criticized the marketing mix elements, too generalized and conceptually restrictive, in light of advancements in the modern marketplace and increased communication channels. In its stead, he recommended a more complex model, which included internal marketing, benefits expansion, product development, consumer targeting, communication and sales channels, product/service/brand differentiation, selling and positioning as elements to be considered. Baker (2000) determined that although the deliberation on the application of the marketing mix is to analysed and weighed before implementation, one should be careful not to reject it prematurely out-of-hand. He claimed that if marketing could be defined as an equally satisfying exchange, then care must be taken not to disproportionately favor of the consumer (Baker, 2000). Despite all the criticism of the marketing mix, however, it is an important marketing tool comprising all the elements which influence the demand for the products offered by a given company. Furthermore, the marketing mix helps in determining the marketing strategy best suited to an organisation and thus remains a worthy theory of marketing and an effective way of describing and managing various marketing conditions and scenarios (Grönroos, 1994). The following section will discuss the effect of demographics on customers' experience.

2.5 The Effect of Demographics on Customers' Experience

This section will discuss the respondents' demographic variables and how they affect their perception of marketing mix elements of companies, as well as their experiences with those companies. According to Hauser & Duncan (1959), demographic is “the study of the size, territorial distribution, and composition of population, changes therein, and the components

of such changes” (p. 2). Traditionally, a limited number of events can physically change populations, and each of these events can be counted, measured, or analysed. Events that commonly figure in the demographic equation (i.e. an expression of a change in numerical change of value) are births, deaths, and migration.

Yet from the perspective of mass reckoning systems for such events, demographic trends aren't listed *en masse* as births, deaths, and migration. Rather, when record keepers or statisticians track the individual birth rate of an entire country or region, the construct is known as “fertility rates”. Likewise, the result of tracking and then calculating the sum of individual deaths of an entire country is known as the “mortality rate”. Thus, fertility, mortality, and migration make up the true demographic equation that derives all population change (Ferber & Lee, 1974).

Demography, the study of population, utilizes a wide range of data, including the size of a population size, its birth and death rates, immigration and emigration rates, and social and ethnic composition. But to predict social behavior, such as purchasing, the most useful demographic variable is age. Two keys to forecast trends are the number of people in a given age group and the probability one will engage in a particular behavior. The activity participation rate for a society is derived by expressing the number of people doing certain thing as a percentage of the population (Fisher, 2009; Gummesson, 2017).

Probability and participation rate are the essentially equivalent, yet probability applies to an individual while participation applies to the larger society. Multiplying the participation rate by the population results in a discrete number of people doing a given thing (Graham et al., 2002). McGoldrick & Andre (1997) explained that demographic variables affect consumers' loyalty, which is an outcome of their experience. Several researchers have emphasised that the differences in customers' expectations in terms of the buying experience might be attributed to their age (Helgesen & Nettet, 2010; Kuruvilla et al., 2009; Mägi, 2003; Melnyk et al., 2009; Mhlanga & Machingambi, 2016). The attitude and product perception of customers undergoes a transition with passage of time based on the different types of

experiences gained. Customers belonging to old age group prefer to look at wide range of available options in comparison to the younger counterparts. It has been noted that the individuals belonging to younger age group are typically easily attracted to new marketing strategies (Dorota, 2013). Koduah & Farley (2016) argued that customers respond to loyalty programs differently, depending on age group. Older customers were found to be more conservative, loyal and less willing to try new brands than younger customers (Ndubisi, 2007; Patterson, 2007; Ramli et al., 2013; Wood, 2004). Therefore, Foscht et al. (2009) argued that to increase customers' retention rate, companies need to focus on younger customers to establish stronger long-term relationships.

The effect of age seems to be clearer when analysed from a generational perspective, according to Lu & Yoo (2008), who concluded that Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomers have different values, characteristics and behaviors toward buying. Generation Y was found to be less loyal to companies and brands than the former generations (Gurau, 2012), and it is hard to maintain re-purchasing behavior from these customers (Lazarevic, 2012) when the characteristics of product and price are among the main drivers in their decision to buy (Gurau, 2012). Generation X was also found to be more doubtful and less loyal compared to Baby Boomers (Lu & Yoo, 2008). While Wood (2004) initiate transformations in the degree of brand loyalty by younger customers 18-24 crossways product groups, nevertheless, there is a universal belief that: older customers are extra conservative and less eager to try innovative brands; customers' standards have changed, with the "grownup" generation being more likely to show loyal performance than the younger generation; and concentrated flexibility in later life limits brand choice (Wood, 2004).

The studies conducted in the past have established that males and females differ from each other in terms of attitude and behavioral patterns which consequently affects their product perception and preference (Goi, 2011). Considering this, the marketers have regarded gender as one of the important demographic variables that impacts the consumer behavior (Kim & Hyun, 2011). It has been found that males give more priority to the convenience factor while buying and item and showcase higher brand loyalty in comparison to females (Hart et al.,

2007). Furthermore, it has been established that males below the age of 35 exhibit a shopping behavior which matches very closely with the shopping behavior of females, implying that they prefer to investigate a lot about an item before making the actual purchase and also enjoy the shopping procedure (Byrne, 2006). Building on the findings of past research papers, it seems logical to assume that respondents' demographic variables (including age, educational level, managerial level, years of experience in the company and/or industry) influence their perception of marketing mix elements of companies, along with their experiences with those companies; therefore, the current research has adopted the following two general hypotheses:

H4: The expected practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies is affected by demographic variables, like the respondents' age, educational level, managerial level, years of experience with the company and years of experience in the industry.

Demographics is viewed within the structure of a population in terms of age, educational level, managerial level and years of experience which is expected to predict effectiveness of the practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by companies (Geissler & Rucks, 2011). According to Moyes (2008), age influences the relative importance that managers place on various work attribute. Concurrently, older managers are better able to achieve a work/life equilibrium younger manager. In addition, older managers are likely to exhibit more positive attitudes about their work. Additionally, Backes-Gellner & Veen (2009) stated that, increasing age in general can cause both an increase and a decrease in company productivity.

Jabulani (2001) appraises the effects of demographic characteristics on the effectiveness of the practiced marketing mix in clients in different firms. The results show that age and education affect the quality of perception by the customer. According to Beaudry & Collard (2003) the demographic environment and its implications on a given market fluctuate with trending age groups in a population. For example, an aging population will cause an increased demand for products/services sought by older people and mark a corresponding decrease in the demand for products consumed by mostly younger people (Barber & Odean,

2001).

In a similar vein, LeBaron, et al. (2002) argues the level of education within a population affects the demographic environment as changes in education affect wealth and the desires and tastes of those higher up on the social ladder. In addition, confidence in a making a purchase (decision) has been associated with variables such as education and experience, it may be possible to mitigate the dysfunctional effect of these variances. Understanding how confidence relates to individualized behaviors may be helpful to an individual and result in an increase of confidence once the person realizes the deficit is conditioned by a social variable rather than a personal deficiency (Morrow, 2004).

While the educational level of a managers has been known to determine performance, actual studies examining a manager's level of education and performance have made divergent conclusions. Gurbuz (2007), observed a positive correspondence between performance and education level increases Gately (1997) opined a contrary analysis. According to El-Baz & El-Sayegh (2007) educating managers in relevant competencies will show a strengthening of managerial performance which in turn will benefit the business as a whole. Others content that experiential, hands-on learning should also be viewed as a form of instruction.

Mesaros et al. (2017) confirmed that managerial competencies shaped by a formal education process, as well as practice increase chances for success, and place such businesses at an advantage. While, Zineldin & Philipson (2007), explain that different levels of people present demands that are not similar in cases of educated people in managerial positions, they will require different materials to meet the demands of their ideal product. According to Oke (2013), construction managers carry the greatest amount of responsibility on a project especially when they are of a technical nature. The expertise of each construction manager must be carefully vetted as they are answerable to any errors or mishaps that might occur during a construction project.

To understand what traits lend themselves to managerial leadership, Goll & Rasheed (2005) support the assertion that particular high-level management characteristics influence top-tier

decision making and a company's performance, which means that there must exist institutional policies that aim at minimising the differences between construction companies and their customers (Wu, 2007).

H5: The actual practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies is affected by the respondents' age and educational level.

In the marketing mix, product preferences differ across customer groups and relate directly to customers' demographic variables, such as age and level of education. Walsh & Mitchell (2005, p. 286) stated that customer perceptions are influenced by demographic variables such as educational level and age. Age is a significant feature to consider because personal purchase rates change as individuals grow older. Similarly, Garg et al. (2014) who stated that the age categories behaves differently on customer experience dimensions

Al-Doghaither (2004) argued that, the perception of customer experience will be affected by the respondents' age and educational level. Given that demographic information is an important and commonly necessary consideration for targeting and segmentation, understanding the effect of key demographic classifications, such as customer age and education level, plays an important role in customer experience. Liligeto et al. (2014) who posited that in the case of Fiji, age is a cue for marketers to tailor advertising to age groups rather than simplifying the ads. In customizing the ads based on age groups (e.g. young adults, early middle age, late middle age, and seniors), consumers may connect with an advertisement which may affect consumers positively. The study further states the need for marketers and advertisers of businesses in Fiji to be prepared and discover other strategies and new concepts that could show valuable in their advertising movements persuading consumer perception through TV and newspaper advertising and growing their level of attention to buying. In similar fashion, within the construction industry, a contractor may build and sell many different types of structures (LeBaron, et al., 2002), and a strategic marketing plan would be able to distinguish which age groups would be most likely to purchase a particular type of building and target the marketing to those identified building

buyers. (Holton, 2004). DeShields et al. (2005), argued that customers with higher levels of education are focus more on reaching their desired goods or services, and that educated customers are also fussier and demanding. Therefore, the consumer expectation is greater when customers' educational level is higher. In addition, the level of education also figures into the socio-economic status of an area as higher income leads to greater access to education, and those who are highly educated typically find lucrative employment. Because income increases with advanced educational progress, many businesses focus marketing profiling on income levels rather than education (Zeithaml, et al., 2006). Furthermore, Ozimek & Zakowska-Biemans (2011) claimed that customer perceptions were influenced by their levels of education, and customers with higher levels of education typically held higher expectations as consumers.

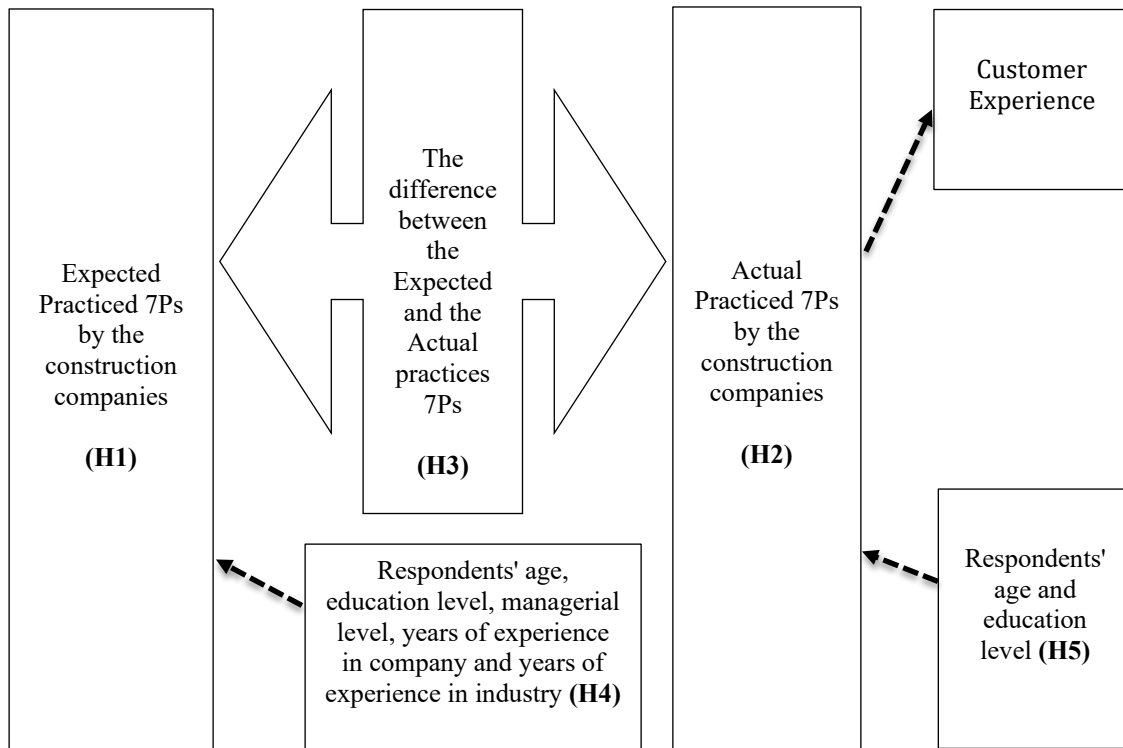
Education level in marketing mix is occasionally linked with income-based segmentation. On the contrary, Mirzagoli & Memarian (2015), stated that people with less education are more satisfied. Bowie & Buttle (2006) argue that the usual belief is that more education leads to advanced average incomes. In addition, education is a customer demographic reasonably linked with social class, actual or perceived. For example, customers with graduate degrees may occupy the upper middle class and thus may seek products aligned with an easier lifestyle. At times, marketers might treat education as a “stand-alone demographic” (Fahy et al., 2000).

2.6 The Research Theoretical Framework

Based on the relevant literature, the posited hypotheses, and the identified research gap, a clear theoretical framework of the customer experience process can be modelled. As previously explained in the literature, numerous studies in the discipline of customer experience have recently received even greater consideration. However, a clear mechanism as to how the marketing mix (7Ps) directly affects customer experience has yet to be determined. Even though this identified gap in the research area of customer experience are important to articulation of marketing mix, no studies have investigated this area in any real detail. This motivates us to explore this area of research in order to determine a theoretical

framework by which to enhance companies' customer experience process. The proposed theoretical framework is summarised as a block diagram, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: The Research Theoretical Framework



From the above figure, it is clear that the intention of this research is to examine the use and effects of the marketing mix (7P's) of companies on their customers' experience. Hence, the expected practiced marketing mix (7Ps) employed by companies have been identified to have a significant effect on customer experience. These 7Ps factors include the product, price, place/distribution, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process practices. Equally, the actual practiced marketing mix (7Ps) received by customers have effect on customer experience. Because the above factors affect both the expected and actual practices marketing mix to an equal extent. However, their effect in this regard still needs further investigation. Figure 2.1 also sheds light on the difference might exists between the expected practiced marketing mix (7Ps) employed by companies and the actual practiced marketing mix (7Ps) received by customers to identify its effect on creating a positive customer experience as this

difference still needs further investigation, as represented by the solid arrow in the block diagram. Lastly, respondents' demographic variables such as age, educational level, managerial level, years of experience with the company and years of experience in the industry with dotted arrow are very important and needs to be explore like whether these variables have an influence on the expected practiced marketing mix employed by companies. Furthermore, Figure 2.1 represents the actual practiced marketing mix which also needs further exploration whether will be affected by the respondents' age and educational level as represented by a dotted arrow.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has offered an explanation of the conceptualisation of customer experience in the field by presenting definitions from the various perspectives presented in the relevant literature, and indeed the development in this field. The chapter then continues to describe the interaction between the customers and employee and how this interaction can influence customer experience. Furthermore, the chapter provide a discussion of the marketing mix as antecedents of customer experience. For a better understanding of how the elements of marketing mix is practiced as a marketing strategy, each element from the (7P) has been discussed in detail. The literature also offered a clear understanding of how the respondents' demographic variables have an effect on their perception of the elements of the marketing mix of companies and their experiences with those companies. Based on a review of the literature, the gap in this area of research has been clearly identified. Firstly, there are numerous studies in the area of customer experience, which have recently received even greater consideration. However, a clear mechanism as to how the marketing mix (7Ps) directly affects customer experience has yet to be determined. Even though this identified gap in the research area of customer experience is important to an articulation of marketing mix, no studies have investigated this area in any real detail. Therefore, this thesis aims to fill in this gap and make important contributions to this body of literature. This chronological order of sections has provided the rationale for adopting the theoretical framework to this research. In the following chapter, the empirical research context will be introduced.

CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

3.1 Introduction

The context of any research plays a vital role in the sense that it underpins the research inquiry and provides for the understanding of the research findings. Furthermore, it helps to provide an explanation for the research phenomenon, or phenomena, under investigation. Moreover, besides the contribution of any research to knowledge in the chosen field of study, the choice of research context will add further value to the understanding of the complex nature of this particular context. Because this research is conducted on Kuwait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Dubai in United Arab of Emirates, providing a brief background of where the study was conducted may deliver to the reader a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Hence, this chapter includes five major sections starts with an overview of the economic environment in section 3.2, followed by the historical background of the construction industries of KSA, Kuwait, UAE and Bahrain to provide the critically needed context to the research is presented in section 3.3, and their current operational processes in section 3.4. The rationale for the empirical study were explained in section 3.5. Finally, the conclusion of this chapter is presented in section 3.6.

3.2 An Overview of the Economic Environment

The construction market in the Gulf region is among the fastest-growing business sectors in worldwide due to leadership commitment to improve the public images of their countries, as well as the modernisation of the regions' infrastructure, particularly transportation, educational, and healthcare facilities. Although investors' confidence waned during the global economic recession and many projects were canceled, evidence has since demonstrated that the construction industry in the region has undergone unprecedented expansion as the global economy recovers (Wells, 2007). Although much effort has been invested in researching improvements in customer experience, little attention has been given to the Gulf region (Al-Sabah et al., 2014).

The construction sector in the Gulf region has shown robust growth in recent decades. In wealthier Gulf Region States, the focus of leadership is the development of a national

infrastructure to enhance both commercial and social relationships at the international level (BMI Research, 2014). This has brought about a number of investment opportunities for developers throughout the Gulf region. While many countries within the region enjoy strong market economies that can fund extensive construction costs, high competition and a lack of salient research have hindered growth in the sector.

Many experts believe that the problem derives largely from the failure to adapt to general changes in market conditions, and particularly to tastes and preferences that guide demand for modern infrastructure (Baladhandayutham & Venkatesh, 2012). Thus, a combination of changes in market conditions and the apparent inability to respond to the market remain the primary causes of organisational inefficiency and slow growth in the construction markets in Gulf States such as Kuwait (Baladhandayutham & Venkatesh, 2012). Strategically, firms often turn to non-price competition during low demand for their products to boost demand, and improved customer experience is one of the many ways' firms cope with economic recession.

3.3 Historical Background of KSA, Kuwait, UAE and Bahrain Construction Companies

The construction industry in Saudi Arabia is the largest in the Gulf region, and experts believed that the trend toward growth would continue throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century (BMI Research, 2014). These analysts predicted a 6.81% rate of growth prior to 2010, while forecasting continued growth of 4.13% through 2014 (BMI Research, 2014). The industry value was predicted to increase quite substantially as well.

Experts predicted an increase in revenue of more than US\$13 billion. Within the same four-year period, industry professionals believed that revenues in the construction market would increase from US\$24.57 billion to US\$37.70 billion (BMI Research, 2014). These trends, however, were interrupted by various global political crises and instances of financial mismanagement at international levels. In recent years, FDI monetary flow to Saudi Arabia has diminished. According to the World Investment Report 2014, published by the United

Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2014), the country is now ranks third among the largest FDI recipients in Western Asia, following Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. After 2010, Saudi Arabia began a downward trend in investment proceeds, while operational expenses climbed and investors grew less confident. Political tensions and enduring economic uncertainty slowed the growth of the Saudi Arabian construction industry through 2014 (United Nations, 2014). Kuwait is also experiencing barriers to organisational efficiency. Kuwait is among the last of nations to adopt the latest administrative software, which constitutes a failure to adopt technical advancements after they have met an industry standard. These factors may well represent major impediments to organisational efficiency and revenue growth (Economic Section, U.S. Department of State, 2014). Any given technological advancement is generally considered to be an industry standard when it has been adopted by a majority of firms within that industry.

Furthermore, Kuwait has lagged comparatively in integrating technological advancements related to IT. In 2010, Kuwait passed its first long-term economic development plan in almost 25 years, and as a result, there are ample opportunities for growth and success among construction companies in Kuwait. In an attempt to diversify its economy, the government launched a plan to invest upwards of \$104 billion over a four term. The complex goals included a shift away from oil and investment in the private sector participation in the economy. However, an unstable political climate thwarted the anticipated growth (Ali, 2008). Moreover, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), political leadership has earmarked and funneled considerable monies and resources into infrastructure development to support manufacturing, and it has been a strategy that has been fruitful. However, the construction industry has not been a focus within this region and its efforts to diversify national economies, and the fragmented nature of the construction sector makes a holistic approach to its economic cultivation difficult. Thus, any reform of the construction industry as an abstract “whole” within the region must come from within and focus on multi-level cooperation of processes to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency (Adedeji, 2008).

In addition to the challenges posed by a rather mosaic construction sector, the very culture of the UAE, one which prizes political influence, has diminished interest in professional advancement within the private sector, where much of the construction industry resides.

The predisposition of the UAE employee base to seek government employment was even addressed by the International Monetary Fund which recommended suggested that the UAE Government reduce the employee benefits of Emirati in government positions to divert attention away from the political sector in hopes of fortifying other industries. (International Monetary Fund, 2004). In spite of the IMF recommendation, the UAE took a completely divergent course of action, and in May 2005 increased the pay of all Emirati government employees by 25% in a move to off-set increasing inflation levels (Emirates News Agency, 2005) which created a new set of inflationary concerns. The economic situation in the UAE is complex, as the education level of most Emiratis is relatively low for professional track employment; so while many jobs in the business sector are taken up by expatriates from abroad, Emirati citizens with an education find steady work with benefits whilst employed by the government (International Monetary Fund, 2006). The salary increase decreed by the UAE Government has inflationary implications for the economy and has created further difficulties for the Emiratization program.

Yet the government sector does not operate within an economic vacuum. In the UAE, civil and urban planners have invested time and energy into the broader economic needs of its nation. Aside from the governmental sector, the energy and chemical industries rank highly in importance and profitability in the UAE, in addition to transport (logistics) and tourism which reach well beyond its physical borders. Furthermore, niche dynamic sub-sectors such as the biotech industry, finance, and vocational education, have shown growth due to a changing economic landscape, globalisation and the aforementioned governmental investments in UAE infrastructure. However, the financial support of the government remains limited despite recently established regulatory standards which have minimised governmental favoritism. As a result, private-sector initiatives have refined and elevated the overall business model and have in turn been rewarded with government policy now focused on developing education (Diwany, 2015).

The Bahraini economy exhibited growth through 2012, with an average annual GDP growth of 5.0%. Leaders in Bahrain were equally concerned with attracting international investors and realised success by focusing on structural concerns, such as the system of demographics, economic diversification and promoting the country's location. These strategies took a decade to achieve results (Bahrain Economic Development Board, 2013).

While Kuwait and the UAE's efforts have focused on impressing foreign investors with accommodations, Bahraini leaders sought to attract business clientele through organisational efficiency. The original plan to improve the educational system, enhance the business climate and upgrade the national business sector has apparently been successful (Bahrain Economic Development Board, 2013). To promote excellence in customer service standards in the private sector and to make the experience of "Shopping in Dubai" a pleasurable one, the Development Quality Assurance (DQA) office launched the Dubai Service Excellence Scheme (DSES) in 2002 which is a membership-based program wherein member organisations, primarily retail businesses, pledge compliance with codified standards of customer service and business ethics (Thawani, 2011).

The core principles of the DSES include:

- Transparency of pricing and return/refund policy
- Integrity of product quality
- Reliability of service and staff responsiveness
- Customer service
- Staff competence

Continual compliance and commitment to the programmatic mission are monitored through a robust mystery shopping program (Diwany, 2015). Through investing in schools, offering tax concessions to businesses and wise financial management, it appears that Bahrain has the greatest economic advantage within the Gulf region. In order to gain accurate insight into

this circumstance, it is necessary to determine those factors influencing both growth and decreases in revenue of firms in various nations of this region (Chebbo, 2008).

Gulf region leaders judge the construction industry to be resilient because it has sustained profitability through the recent global recessions. These same leaders, however, also predict that this resiliency will be seriously threatened if the rate of project non-completion continues to rise (Kadragic, 2009). Several studies were conducted in the interest of resolving these concerns.

Early studies sought to define the causes for the delays named above. One study focused on construction claims, which is a broad term for any dispute over costs, progress or materials during the life cycle of a project (Zaneldin, 2005). At the time of this article's inception, the goal was to identify the causes for contract disputes and various project delays. By 2009, investigative research had identified the biggest contributors to construction delays and sought to eliminate these barriers. The world's fastest growing construction market exists in the city-state of Dubai, part of the UAE. Through the use of Cost of Quality software to improve the accuracy of contractual estimates and risk assessments, organisations in Dubai have managed to significantly improve their efficiency. An optimum percentage for Cost of Quality expenditures is 1.34%, and efficiency experts have rated companies in Dubai at 1.3%. The failure cost was rated at less than one percent (Abdelsalam & Gad, 2009). It would appear, in this case, that more accurate risk assessment leads to fewer instances of project failure.

3.4 Current Operational Processes

Since 2008, leadership experts have suggested a variety of methods for firms in numerous business sectors to improve corporate efficiency. There are several categories of operational systems for administrators to consider. Any one of these domains can have an impact on the others in terms of budgets, delays or other various detriments to customer satisfaction. Service delivery is a direct influence on customer satisfaction, so it is important for business managers to be aware of the operational issues that may impede or encourage timely and

cost-effective project completion (Johnston & Clark, 2008). In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this evaluation and improvement of operational efficiency is especially important.

Many efforts have been made to improve the national infrastructure of countries in the Gulf region. As expert assessments of areas such as Bahrain imply that the economy is thriving, professional observations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have noted that attempts to bolster real estate development as a means to improve economic conditions are likely to be impeded by the advocacy of policies that will work in favor of the developers (Bagaeen, 2014). This could mean expectations of lower estimates, along with the elimination of many firms' potential to compete. This observation also further exemplifies the need for more research into resolutions to operational efficiency hindrances.

One study in Bahrain sought to measure companies' success at incorporating financial processes into their efforts for improved efficiency. The study surveyed the administrators of 47 industrial firms to measure the extent to which they employed financial, nonfinancial and subjective processes to measure their performance. While a return on investment (ROI) evaluation is usually the method chosen to measure financial performance, it was found that industrial managers typically employed more subjective assessments (Joshi, et al., 2011). Many industrial leaders in this region measured success through operations-related determinants.

This investigation revealed that the manner of evaluation can impact organisational performance through employee motivation. Verbal performance critiques and acknowledgement have been shown to improve employee participation in terms of making short-term decisions, long-term plans, encouraging gamesmanship or coercion, innovative thinking and maintaining focus on the goals of both the department and the company (Joshi, et al., 2011). Certainly, knowledgeable and motivated staff members will contribute to the organisation's success.

Researchers in Kuwait, meanwhile, were trying to determine how much the cost of qualified labor impacted total project expenditures. It is generally accepted that labor will account for 30% to 50% of most projects' overall expense. As such, maintaining a labor cost of 50% or lower is one indicator of successful project management (Jarkas & Bitar, 2011). Among the most concerning challengers for construction firms in Kuwait, however, is a lack of productivity.

One investigation therefore sought to determine which factors impacted labor activity. The researchers identified 10 leadership qualities that had the greatest influence on workers' motivation. These variables included clarity of instruction, the number and frequency of order changes, the level of cohesion within the designs, lack of supervision, task overload, the difficulty of the project, lack of incentive, poor overall leadership, consistent evaluation and a lack of urgency in communication with management (Jarkas & Bitar, 2011). The hope was that this research could lend insight into various operational approaches that will encourage productivity, thereby addressing that challenge in Kuwait.

Many obstacles to the adoption of this strategy were revealed. Among these were language barriers, lower levels of education among the workers, a lack of current technology and deficiencies in general business knowledge (Al-Najem et al., 2013). The lean systems principle was examined in several other studies.

One such theory examined was that of Total Quality Management (TQM). This theory seeks to improve companies' organisational success through the development of higher levels of customer satisfaction. Adapted from strategies that existed in the 1990s, which assigned values to each consumer, this management approach emphasises the thought that customers are the driving force of industry, and that customer satisfaction is directly linked to service operations (Tseng, et al., 1999). Each consumer's value is determined through the frequency of purchases and brand-switching patterns when compared with the firm's contributing margin within the industry. It should be the goal of every firm to analyze the impact that certain consumer motivational factors have on purchase decisions, as well as the results that competitors are achieving through their use of certain tactics (Rust, et al., 2000). Marketing

experts spend extensive amounts of time generating marketing approaches that will maximise the advantage of any additional consumer exposure.

Consumer values are often applied to the overall value of the company. When investment experts examine corporate financial statements, they often make note of what is referred to as goodwill, or the monetary value of customer satisfaction and repeat business. In many cases, maximising this customer value is a key component of an organisation's business strategy. Many analysts refer to goodwill as customer equity. Some companies are highly challenged by the need to balance marketing expenditures with the benefits of the increased customer equity (Rust, et al., 2000). Certainly, increased customer satisfaction and loyalty can be utilized in many cases to improve organisational and budgetary deficiencies. Researchers later hoped that overall firm efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility and competitiveness would improve through practices that convey focus on customer value, growth and teamwork. Leadership commitment was found to be one of the top determinants of successful change initiatives, and it was suggested that this management approach would entail cultural changes through the top levels of administration (Tandon & Biswas, 2013). In fact, many businesses around the world have had phenomenal success through complete administrative overhaul.

Cultural reformation is vital to a successful global corporate growth strategy. In Kuwait, 12 various construction companies successfully utilised these strategies. After five years of implementation, these companies have found that the organisational culture was more influential in the overall market and encouraged stronger administrative leadership. These factors positively impacted customer satisfaction, leading to increased productivity and earnings for these companies (Tandon & Biswas, 2013). As these companies have had success through the use of TQM principles, this may be the most effective operational approach for construction firms in Kuwait.

In the UAE, meanwhile, one of their main challenges is compliance. One study sought to determine the organisational advantages and earnings benefits of International Organisation Standard (ISO) certification compliance. In that study, 900 various businesses

within the UAE region were assessed. The findings indicated that ISO certified companies had more concern for internal initiatives, like the improvement of processes and products, as opposed to external concerns, such as competitive imitation or consumer demands. As such, ISO compliance has yielded more internal benefits rather than external advantages. It was concluded that these organisational improvement measures have additionally improved companies' social performance (Suliman & Thomas, 2014). It is well known that public opinion can have a profound impact on corporate performance, and social performance can be drastically improved with steps toward social compliance. Once a company has achieved organisational proficiency and environmental compliance, it is time to formulate marketing strategies.

3.5 The Rationale for the Empirical Study

The economic growth and development of a country is largely influenced by its construction industries. The construction environment comprises of a high level of competition, complex operations, high-risk conditions, and well-informed clients (Tarawneh, 2014).

From time to time, various scholars have investigated the characteristics of the construction industry from various management viewpoints. Kangari (1988) says that the construction industry is fragmented, sensitive to economic change and highly competitive. According to, Arditi, et al. (2009) the industry is actually a capital-intensive, location- and weather-dependent one; and involves a complex long-term procurement process. In comparison to project-based industries, Vrijhoef & Koskela (2005) identified the peculiarities in the construction industry including on-site production, extremely low-volume and repetitive projects along with fragmentation of the industry, and one-off capital-intensive products. Alarcón & Mesa (2012) noted that according to them, the construction sector is a fragmented, complex, high risk, and multiparty business. Kärnä (2014) highlights the complexity in using the past experiences in new projects because of the complex and project-based nature of the industry.

Mokhtariani, et al. (2017) through systematic investigation, discovered 16 characteristics in the construction industry based on the literature regarding various management fields in the industry. "Fragmentation of the industry" was the most prominent in the prior studies. The cyclical and complex nature of the industries come in the next orders. According to experts of this field, 10 of these characteristics are indicated to be important and effective for marketing management within construction companies. Construction market is majorly affected by the Competitive bidding mechanism - which is often based on the lowest price; because it makes the contractors to focus more on cost reduction and pricing strategies and rather than other marketing practices. The next important point of consideration is the project-based nature of the construction industry as it leads to discontinuity of demand and relationships with clients.

The construction industry being dynamic in nature have evolved from past 20 years because of increased uncertainties in budget, technology, and development of the processes used; causing alteration in factors governing the construction environment. (Silas et al., 1996; Albert & Ada, 2004). Therefore, the environment of the construction industry has evolved to become much more dynamic than its previous version (Langford, 2001); and also, extra complicated in terms of different activities and parties involved within one particular project (Turner, 1999). All these aspects characterize the construction industry. Furthermore, construction projects are entirely dependent on estimates done for the future occurrences. Quantity surveyors and estimators must work on cost and time-related estimates that a project consumes, which is essentially unpredictable and unstable in nature (Ward & Chapman, 2003). Therefore, it is clear that this industry also involves risk factor, as every project is varying in various aspects, such as the project's location, technology used, and the level of the design (Ashworth, 2013).

Due to these aspects, the construction industry is likely to have a natural potential for disputes and conflicts that are adversarial in nature (Ashworth, 2013). These results are also applicable in real life as every construction project is a multifaceted process that necessitates the harmonized effort of a temporarily assembled multiple-member association of various

distinct groups. Where every group has its unique organizational culture, goals, needs, professional ethics and culture. Further, every group aims to maximise their own profits and benefits (Cheung & Suen, 2002; Weddikkara, 2003). The Consultants/Architect, Client, and Contractor are usually the key parties engaged in the construction project. Additionally, there are other significant characteristics too that are intrinsic in the construction industry which can be fragmented, temporary or short-termed (Albert & Ada, 2004). Subsequently, according to Ashworth (2013), disputes are one of the common aspects of the construction industry found everywhere. The construction industry always involves multidisciplinary players, which further hinders the ability of the industry to evade dispute (Emmitt, 2003).

The rationale for embarking on this research and shedding light on the construction companies is derived from the need to examine their development plan for enhancing customer experience, which is necessary for effective customer satisfaction as is recognised by many industries (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Jones & Sasser, 1995; IBM, 2013). However, not much work has been put into the construction industry due to limited research conducted in this area (Torbica & Stroh, 2001). Chau, et al. (2005) tried to find an explanation through several factors related to the very nature of the construction industry, including the characteristics of product and procurement dynamics; existing multilevel, complex relationships; the accompanying temporary nature of the construction process and its outputs; and the unique, one-off heterogeneous nature of the construction industry.

Nevertheless, the need to exploit marketing opportunities associated with enhanced consumer experience in the construction industry is overwhelming for several reasons. Firstly, the construction industry is plagued with customer dissatisfaction, which is exemplified by unpredictability in terms of delivery, budget, quality, and legal claims and counter claims. All of these factors contribute to poor customer experience (Norton, 2003). The Global Construction Perspectives and Oxford Economics (2013) forecasted that the global construction market is expected to grow by 70 percent by 2030 and to \$15 trillion US dollars by 2025, poor customer experience is expected to grow along with it; therefore, the clarion calls for better customer experience, and satisfaction must be taken seriously by

academics and industry practitioners (ILO, 2001; Norton, 2003) and hence, this industry was chosen as a population for the current study.

3.5.1 Rationale for Empirical Context

The reason behind choosing the construction companies in the selected four countries including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates as a location for the study because of the construction projects are increasing in complexity in Gulf region, with a gradual increase in the number of disputes in such places as United Arab of Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Allen & Dale, 2012). These four countries witnessed a slowdown in construction activities following the global economic recession, and they were at the top of global construction disputes, which saw the value of disputes increase significantly from US\$56.25 million in 2010 to US\$112.5 million in 2011, an increase of 104 percent (Allen & Dale, 2012).

In spite of the fact that the value of disputes fell dramatically from US\$112.5 million in 2011 to US\$65 million in 2012, the Gulf States remained the region with the greatest number of construction disputes except for Oman and Qatar. It is significant because the disputes in these areas are primarily focused on oil and gas, so Oman and Qatar didn't come into the limelight. As a result, no data regarding their construction industry's dispute were interpreted and thus not available (Ruqaishi & Bashir 2013). Therefore, they were both excluded from the study. Qatar is one of the few states that remain relatively insulated from the economic downturn due to its massive natural gas reserves, which put it in such a strong position and protect it from the entire current crisis. The result is that development continues apace in Qatar, with no construction disputes (Emam et al., 2015). In case of Oman, the disputes are concentrated in the oil and gas projects due to the contractual issues, workforce, materials, and external factors (Umar, 2018).

Despite this, the construction activities are currently booming in Gulf region as evinced by the example that the UAE remains the leader in the region's construction market, which is expected to witness an increase in projects as a response to the Dubai Expo 2020 (estimated

to be worth US\$48 billion). Saudi Arabia is waiting in the queue, with an estimated US\$45 billion worth of new projects, followed by Kuwait, which boasts the goal of transforming itself into a world-class financial and commercial centre as the vision of 2035. For this, it has executed projects worth more than USD 40 billion, followed by Bahrain which is focused on attracting the foreign investment in the construction industry to drive the expansion of the economic clusters (AECOM, 2018).

There is nothing that can reflect the level of customer dissatisfaction in the construction industry more than court disputes with clients. Hence, the overwhelming need to harness customer experience for enhanced customer satisfaction in the construction industry is very clear. Therefore, this research is undertaken to investigate the effect of construction companies' marketing mix on the experience of customers in the Gulf region, which targets individual property owners of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Dubai (UAE).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the empirical research context of this study due to its importance in underpinning the research phenomenon. Furthermore, the context of any research helps in the understanding of the formal as well as the informal settings of a particular situation. Moreover, this chapter is also vital to establishing a clear link with the research findings at a later stage. Therefore, it was important to provide the rationale for the empirical study to give a clear sense of the research problem and the significance of this study. The chapter also provided an overview of the economic environment of KSA, Kuwait, UAE and Bahrain and historical perspective of the construction industries for the purpose of capturing the economic qualities of this sector. In the next chapter, the research design that was adopted for this research study is explained in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Research methodology and methods is an important and integral part of any research effort. Through the methods adopted, researchers are able to underpin their research inquiries. Since the nature of research differs from one discipline to another in terms of content, objectives, and questions to be answered, it is therefore, necessary for researchers to clarify how and why they designed their research in a given manner. Such clarification will reflect the credibility of the research as well as forming an understanding and the justification that links the proposed research questions and the chosen methods. Consequently, researchers need to present, and at the same time justify, how they intend to collect their data and define some suitable analysis by which to fulfil their research objectives.

Therefore, this chapter starts with the justification for the choice of the research design in section 4.2. The population of the study, research sampling, and sample frame were explained in section 4.3. Section 4.4 discuss the survey design and scale development of the study, whilst section 4.5 outlines the survey data collection process, followed by the statistical methodology used in analysing the data in this research in section 4.6. Section 4.7 introduces the ethical considerations of the research. Finally, the conclusion will be presented in section 4.8.

4.2 Justification of the Research Design

The choice of research design reflects varied research philosophies that describe the construction of beliefs and assumptions, which in turn guides attainment of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009). Research philosophies are normally distinguished through three mains philosophical [...] “assumptions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 108). The terms are usually interpreted in terms of how human beings realise their world (Creswell, 2007). The philosophical assumptions fall into five major research

philosophies that form the business and management researches. These five philosophies are critical realism, interpretivism, positivism, post-modernism, and pragmatism. It is important to acknowledge that there is no best philosophy to adopt as each has its own unique and valuable way of seeing the world (Saunders et al., 2016). Within these philosophies, it is vital for researchers to acquire a good understanding of the theory used at the beginning of their research journey, as this will inform the approaches, they adopt towards theory development. This is often constrained with three reasoning approaches, namely deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, and abduction reasoning (Saunders et al., 2016, p.144). Based on a thorough critical review of the multiple research philosophies and concepts, the design of this research was formulated.

This research falls into the positivism philosophy since the nature of the proposed research questions can only be answered through adopting a quantitative method approach (Hanson et al., 2005). Quantitative research is a method of data collection whereby a result is ultimately to be presented in a numerical or statistical format (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Calls for the use of the quantitative method approach in the management and organisational field have been further supported by a number of researchers (Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

According to Bryman & Bell (2005) an advantage of quantitative research is that it can be controlled and presented in an informative manner due to its formalized structure. A quantitative investigation that contains measurable variables offers the opportunity to review them in multiple ways (Hunter & Leahey, 2008). The approach has been also used in various studies across a number of different fields (Patton, 2015). The research therefore adopts a deductive approach, wherein the focus moves from the general and narrows down to the specific (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Within this approach, it is argued the researcher must consider the best means by which data are to be specified and gathered (Bryman & Bell, 2005).

Having presented the justification for the choice of research design, it can therefore be concluded that the adoption of a quantitative method approach is the correct approach for

this kind of research due to the richness and diversity of the data that will be collected and subsequently analysed. Therefore, the next section presents the positivism philosophy and deductive reasoning in detail as a guideline or a thinking framework to underpin this research inquires.

4.2.1 Positivism Philosophy and Deductive Reasoning

Positivism is as a research approach founded on ontological principle which asserts that truth and reality are independent entities free from the perceptions and pre-conceived notions of an “experiencer”. Innumerable researchers and intellectuals concerned with purity as pertains to the philosophy of investigation have embraced this notion (Scheffler, 2007; Ryan & Julia, 2007). Positivism is known to “emphasise facts and the causes of behavior” and thus invokes “which prefer quantitative methods such as social surveys, structured questionnaires and official statistics” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 3-7) as they offer reliable representation. Positivism typically” applies the scientific method to the study of human action” (Crotty, 1998, p.76).

Crowth & Lancaster (2009), argued that the deductive approach deals with how researchers use various techniques to apply existing theories and test their validity against a certain context. Furthermore, the deductive approach implies the test and assessment of whether the gathered data are consistent with previous assumptions, theories, and hypotheses determined by a researcher or otherwise (Thomas, 2006). In this research, the deductive approach will be adopted due to the nature of the research questions, which aims to measure the effect of the factors that emerged from the findings of the questions. The research question will be answered through the close-ended questionnaire, which represents the quantitative part of this study and through which objectives of this research will be attained.

This explanatory research approach aims to help identify the key antecedents of customer experience in the construction industry in the sampled Arabian Gulf countries. The quantitative research techniques will result in a much more holistic and in-depth view of the construction companies’ marketing practices. Therefore, a deductive and quantitative

approach is best suited to this study as it grounded in specified data gathering and analysis with a primary objective of creating new information and presenting it in numerical or statistical formats.

4.3 The Population of the Study and Research Sampling

In this research the target population consist of the managers of the construction companies in Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Dubai in United Arab of Emirates and their customers as individual property owners of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Convenience sampling has been used to draw samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in the study (Castillo, 2009; Teddlie & Yu, 2007), because randomization is impossible if the population is very large (Etikan et al., 2016). Convenience sampling is defined by (Davis & Cosenza, 1993) as “the sampling procedure of obtaining those people or units that are most conveniently available and involves collecting information from the members of the population who are conveniently available to provide the information” (p. 182). Burns (2003) opined high-traffic areas like shopping malls or busy pedestrian thoroughfares to be optimal for research efficiency. Through surveys, data were collected from 400 usable questionnaires from the managers of the construction companies in the four selected Gulf state and 400 usable questionnaires from their customers (see Table 4.1).

It has been stated that, for regional samples, a sample size within the range of 200 to 500 respondents is acceptable in terms of expected precision (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005; Malhotra, 2010). The decision on the right sample size is also influenced by the average size of samples in similar studies (Hair et al., 2010). Although the cumulative effects of sampling error across variables are reduced in a large sample, an increased sample size beyond the stated range would suffer from the rule of diminishing returns, namely, increasing the sample size by one unit would result in a decreased gain in precision (Malhotra, 2010). Some researchers have also expressed the belief that since student research samples do not need to be randomized, as students very rarely have the time or resources to draw a random sample (Hackley, 2003) and thus, the sampling for this research was done accordingly.

4.3.1 Sample Frame

The aim of a sampling frame is to facilitate the possibility of identifying the different elements in the target population which should be a fair reflection of the population (Malhotra, 2010; WHO, 2001). In this research, the target population was identified as the managers of the construction companies in Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, who have been listed in the 'Central Tenders Committee' and have had continuous projects in the past 5 years in each country that is being investigated (see Table 4.1).

A list of 350 construction companies has been obtained from the four selected countries, which includes 65 companies from Bahrain, equal to 19% from a total of 350; 85 companies from Dubai (24%); 125 companies from Saudi Arabia (36%); and 75 companies from Kuwait (21%). Through surveys, data were collected from 400 managers of the construction companies in the four selected Gulf states. The number of managers of these companies have been surveyed based on their company percentage from the list total: 76 managers from Bahrain, 96 from Dubai, 144 from Saudi Arabia, and 84 from Kuwait.

Additionally, the research targeted 400 end-user customers of these construction companies. A list of total 288,590 customers has been obtained from all the construction companies, which includes 14,430 customers from Bahrain, equal to 5% from the total of 288,590; 21,530 customers from Dubai (7.5%); 209,330 customers from Saudi Arabia (72.5%); and 43,300 customers from Kuwait (15%). Through surveys, data were collected from 400 customers of the construction companies in the four selected Gulf state. The number of customers has been surveyed based on their percentages: 20 customers from Bahrain, 30 from Dubai, 290 from Saudi Arabia, and 60 from Kuwait.

Due to the large population of the study, convenience sampling has been used to draw samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in the study.

Table 4.1: Sampling Frame for the Study

The four selected States of Gulf Countries	Customers of Construction Companies			Managers of Construction Companies Central Tenders Committee (2017)		
	Number of customers	%	Number of customers surveyed	companies with continuous projects in the past 5 years	%	Number of managers of construction companies surveyed
Bahrain	14430	5%	20	65	19%	76
Dubai	21530	7.5%	30	85	24%	96
Saudi Arabia	209330	72.5%	290	125	36%	144
Kuwait	43300	15%	60	75	21%	84
Total	288590	100%	400	350	100%	400

4.4 Survey Design and Scale Development of the Study

The use of survey has been widely adopted in research across various disciplines. It can be used to measure behaviors, demographic characteristics, levels of knowledge, and attitudes. However, survey design is considered to be one of the most challenging tasks researchers can undertake. The difficulty can be assigned to the way in which researchers form questions to collect the required data or measure certain relationships. Peterson (2000) claimed that researchers will waste time and effort, and their results will be of little value, if an ineffective survey is constructed. As pointed out by Ambrose & Anstey (2010), the procedures depend on the researchers' abilities to consider the type and source of information that is most relevant to the research objectives. The process of designing a survey is probably more of an art than a science (Ambrose & Anstey, 2010).

Major marketing textbooks and research papers have identified the main characteristics of each element of the marketing mix. This research has pooled the most agreed-on characteristics and activities of each P of the marketing mix that relate to construction companies. Starting with the element of product within the marketing mix, many researchers (Atuahene-Gima et al., 2006; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Hsu, 2011; Kotler & Armstrong,

2012; Morse, 1998; Ulrich & Eppinger, 2008; Vorhies et al., 2009) have agreed that a successful product and branding strategy should be identified by the following entities and practices:

- The existence of a range of brands that helps the consumer to make better choices.
- The existence of a marketing strategy that helps the consumer to develop an ongoing relationship with a product.
- The existence of a marketing strategy that clearly differentiates the product from its competitors.
- The use of services to increase the attractiveness of product offers to customers.
- The definition of the product's market position in terms of attributes which are important to the buyer.
- The existence of a product strategy that emphasises benefits, rather than features, of the product to customers.
- The development of new markets relative to competitors.
- Conducting market research to know how customers think about products.
- Using customer related data to plan product strategy.
- Delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers.
- Marketing products and services that meet the requirements of customers.
- Offering 'specialized' services to customers.
- Providing unique services not offered by competitors.
- Serving more diverse segments of customer than competitors.

According to the above-mentioned practices, a scale measuring the product element of the marketing mix within companies was developed using fourteen Likert type questions, as shown in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: The Company Product Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Product, Sources; Atuahene-Gima et al., 2006; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Hsu, 2011; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Morse, 1998; Ulrich & Eppinger, 2008; Vorhies et al., 2009.

-
1. Our range of brands helps the consumer to make better choices.
 2. Our marketing strategy helps the consumer to develop an ongoing relationship with a product.
 3. Our marketing strategy clearly differentiates our product from its competitors.
 4. Our services do not always increase the attractiveness of our product offers to customers.
 5. It is difficult to define our product's market position in terms of attributes that are important to the buyer.
 6. We conduct market research to know how our customers think about our products.
 7. We do not always use customer related data to plan our product strategy.
 8. Our marketing strategy emphasizes on delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers.
 9. Our products and services do not always meet the requirements of our customers.
 10. Our product strategy emphasised the benefits of the product to customers rather than the features of the product.
 11. We focus on the development of new markets relative to competitors.
 12. We focus on offering 'specialized' services to our customers.
 13. We focus on providing unique services not offered by competitors.
 14. We focus on serving more diverse segments of customer than our competitors.
-

A similar scale to measure the perception of the "Product" element by consumers was also developed to match the above-mentioned practices, as shown in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: The Customer Perceived Product Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Product, Sources; Atuahene-Gima et al., 2006; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Hsu, 2011; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Morse, 1998; Ulrich & Eppinger, 2008; Vorhies et al., 2009.

1. Their range of brands helps me to make better choices
 2. Their marketing strategy helps me to develop an ongoing relationship with their products and services.
 3. Their marketing strategy clearly differentiates their products and services from their competitors.
 4. Their services do not always increase the attractiveness of their offers to me.
 5. Their product's offer does not emphasise the attributes that are important to me.
 6. Construction companies conduct market research to know how we think about their products.
 7. The product strategy of the construction companies do not respond to our needs and wants as customers in the market.
 8. Construction companies' marketing strategy emphasises on delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers.
 9. Their products and services do not always meet the requirements of customers.
 10. Their strategy emphasised the benefits of their products to customers.
 11. They attract more new customers than their competitors.
 12. They focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers.
 13. They focus on providing unique services not offered by competitors.
 14. They focus on serving more diverse segments of customer than their competitors.
-

The five-point Likert scale is considered to be among the most widely used scales in the academia (Saunders et al., 2016) because it provides sufficient discrimination of ratings in line with levels of agreement by respondents (Goodwin, 2002).

As for the element of "Place" within the marketing mix, many researchers (Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Dent, 2008, Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995; Rolnicki, 1998; Weitz & Jap, 1995) have agreed that a successful distribution strategy should be identified by the following practices:

- Reaching a wide geographic coverage of customers.
- The ability to access the targeted segment of the market.
- The ability to store, handle and display products appropriately.
- Careful movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from the company's place to customer's location.
- Provision of necessary customer service pre- and post-sale.
- Service to extensive geographic areas efficiently and cost effectively through networks of warehouses.
- Maintenance of stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity
- Demonstration of high performance in addressing the following issues:
 - Order processing
 - Stock availability
 - Speed of order fulfillment
 - Delivery time and reliability
 - Invoicing
 - Handling delivery problems
 - Handling maintenance problems
 - Handling complaints

According to the above-mentioned practices, a scale measuring the "Place" element of the marketing mix within companies was developed using seven Likert type questions along with eight differential type scale questions, as shown in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4: The Company Place Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Place, Sources; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Dent, 2008, Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995; Rolnicki, 1998; Weitz & Jap, 1995.

-
1. Our company cannot reach a wide geographic coverage of customers.
 2. It is difficult for our company to access the targeted segment of the market.
 3. Our company can store, handle and display our products appropriately.
 4. We take care of the movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from site to the customer's location.
 5. Our company can provide necessary customer service pre- and post-sale.
 6. Extensive geographic areas are served by our company efficiently and cost effectively through networks of warehouses.
 7. We hold stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity.
 8. Order processing.
 9. Stock availability.
 10. Speed of order fulfillment.
 11. Delivery time and reliability.
 12. Invoicing
 13. Handling delivery problems.
 14. Handling maintenance problems
 15. Handling complaints.
-

A similar scale to measure the perception of the "Place" element by consumers was also developed to match the above-mentioned practices, as Table 4.5 shows:

Table 4.5: The Customer Place Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Place, Sources; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Dent, 2008, Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995; Rolnicki, 1998; Weitz & Jap, 1995.

-
1. Construction companies cannot reach a wide geographic coverage of customers.
 2. It is difficult for them to access their customers in the market.
 3. They can store, handle and display their products appropriately.
 4. They take care of the movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from their place to customer's location.
 5. They can provide necessary customer service pre- and post-sale.
 6. Extensive geographic areas are served by construction companies efficiently and cost effectively through networks of warehouses.
 7. They hold stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity.
 8. Order processing.
 9. Stock availability.
 10. Speed of order fulfillment.
 11. Delivery time and reliability.
 12. Invoicing
 13. Handling delivery problems.
 14. Handling maintenance problems
 15. Handling complaints.
-

Regarding the element of "Price" within the marketing mix, many researchers (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Hanna & Dodge, 1995; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Marn et al., 2004; Nagle & Holden, 2002; Rao & Kartono, 2009) have agreed that a successful pricing strategy should be identified by the following practices:

- The pricing strategy should reinforce the quality image of the product.
- The pricing strategy should support the product and service package to increase customers' value for money.

- The pricing strategy should emphasise the long-term cost savings coming from using the product compared with the cheaper competition.
- Prices should be consistent with competing competitive prices.
- The pricing strategy should consider what a customer is prepared to pay for the product.
- The pricing strategy should be designed to achieve high market share and customer loyalty.
- The pricing strategy should have a positive effect on consumer's attitude and buying decision.
- The pricing strategy should differentiate products from those of competitors by setting higher prices.
- Companies should determine the price sensitivity of customers in the market.
- The pricing strategy's messages should be consistent with the rest of the marketing mix.
- The pricing strategy should take into consideration differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers.
- Companies should expand their market share through lower pricing.
- The pricing strategy should reinforce the product's market position.
- Companies should stimulate high volume sales through price reductions.
- Companies should not be drawn into price wars.
- The pricing strategy should help to differentiate a product through positioning it in a different price level from the competition.

According to the above-mentioned practices, a scale measuring the pricing element of the marketing mix within companies was developed using sixteen Likert type questions, as shown in Table 4.6 below:

Table 4.6: The Company Pricing Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Price, Sources; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Hanna & Dodge, 1995; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Marn et al., 2004; Nagle & Holden, 2002; Rao & Kartono, 2009.

-
1. Our prices reinforce the quality image of the product.
 2. Our prices support the product and service package to increase customers' value for money.
 3. Our prices emphasise the long-term cost savings coming from using our products compared with the cheaper competition.
 4. Our prices are consistently competitive.
 5. Our prices cannot consider what a customer is prepared to pay for the product.
 6. Our prices are designed to achieve high market share and customer loyalty.
 7. The effect of our prices on the consumer's attitude and buying decision is negative.
 8. We set higher prices to differentiate our products from those of the competitors.
 9. We cannot determine the price sensitivity of our customers in the market.
 10. Our pricing's messages is consistent with the rest of the marketing mix.
 11. Our prices cannot take into consideration differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers.
 12. We expand our market share through lower pricing.
 13. We reinforce our product's market position through appropriate pricing.
 14. We stimulate high volume sales through price reductions.
 15. It is very difficult for our company not to get drawn into price wars.
 16. Our prices help to differentiate our product through positioning it in a different price level from the competition.
-

A similar scale to measure the perception of the "Price" element by consumers was also developed to match the above-mentioned practices, as Table 4.7 shows:

Table 4.7: The Customer Pricing Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Price, Sources; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Hanna & Dodge, 1995; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Marn et al., 2004; Nagle & Holden, 2002; Rao & Kartono, 2009.

-
1. Their prices reinforce the quality image of their products.
 2. Their prices increase customers' value for money.
 3. Their prices emphasise the better cost savings compared with the competition.
 4. Their prices are consistent with their competitive prices.
 5. Their prices do not match what the customer is prepared to pay for the product.
 6. Their prices are helping them to achieve high market share and customer loyalty.
 7. The effect of their prices on consumer's attitude and buying decisions is negative.
 8. They set higher prices to differentiate their products from those of the competitors.
 9. Their prices do not respond to the price sensitivity of customers in the market.
 10. Their pricing message is consistent with the rest of their marketing mix.
 11. Their prices do not take into consideration the differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers.
 12. They expand their market share through lower pricing.
 13. They support their product image through appropriate pricing.
 14. They stimulate high volume sales through price reductions.
 15. They usually get into price wars with the competition.
 16. Their prices help to differentiate their product from that of the competition.
-

In relation to the element of "Promotion" within the marketing mix, many researchers (Ailawadi et al., 2009; Belch & Belch, 2003; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Clow & Baack, 2007; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Shimp, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2009)

have agreed that a successful promotion strategy should be identified by the following practices:

- Using promotional methods to motivate potential new customers.
- Using a company website to provide information and advice to customers.
- Using social media to gather customers' feedback.
- Taking into consideration the popularity or fashionability of different media channels when communicating with customers.
- Taking into consideration the popularity or trends of different communication techniques and promotional methods when communicating with customers.
- Taking into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising when communicating with customers.
- Implementing promotional activities should give the consumer a clear reason for 'buying' from the company.
- Implementing promotional activities should be positively affecting the company's reputation and standing with various publics.
- Ensuring the company keep an eye on how the competition is communicating with its customers.
- Providing customers, a scope for price negotiation, so they feel they are gaining value when dealing with the company.
- Using discounts to encourage prompt payment from customers.
- Creating promotional activities should emphasise product benefits to customers.
- Using promotional activities to target prior customers who have bought from the company before.

According to the above-mentioned practices, a scale measuring the "Promotion" element of the marketing mix within companies was developed using thirteen Likert type questions, as shown in Table 4.8 below:

Table 4.8: The Company Promotion Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Promotion, Sources; Ailawadi et al., 2009; Belch & Belch, 2003; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Clow & Baack, 2007; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Shimp, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2009.

-
1. We use promotional methods to motivate potential new customers.
 2. We do not use our website to give information and advice to customers.
 3. We do not usually use social media to get customers' feedback.
 4. In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the popularity or fashionability of different media channels.
 5. In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the popularity or fashionability of different communication techniques and promotional methods.
 6. In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising.
 7. Our promotion activities are giving the consumer a clear reason for 'buying' from our company.
 8. Our promotion activities are positively affecting our reputation and standing with various publics.
 9. Our company keeps an eye on how the competition is communicating with their customers.
 10. We give customers a scope for price negotiation, to let them feel they are gaining value when dealing with us.
 11. We use discounts to encourage prompt payment from customers.
 12. Our promotion activities do not emphasise product benefits to customers.
 13. Our promotion activities target old customers who have bought from us before.
-

A similar scale to measure the perception of the "Promotion" element by consumers was also developed to match the above-mentioned practices, as Table 4.9 shows:

Table 4.9: The Customer Promotion Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Promotion, Sources; Ailawadi et al., 2009; Belch & Belch, 2003; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Clow & Baack, 2007; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Shimp, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2009.

-
1. They use promotion to motivate to new customers to buy from them.
 2. They do not use their website to give information and advice to customers.
 3. They do not use their social media to get customers' feedback.
 4. When communicating with customers, they take into consideration the popularity or trending of different media channels.
 5. When communication with customers, they take into consideration the popularity or trending of different communication techniques and promotional methods.
 6. When communicating with customers, they take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising.
 7. Their promotion activities providing the consumer a clear reason for 'buying' from them.
 8. Their promotion activities are positively affecting their reputation among consumers.
 9. They keep an eye on how the competition is communicating with their customers.
 10. They give customers a scope for price negotiation, to let them feel they are gaining value when dealing with the company.
 11. They use discounts to encourage prompt payment from customers.
 12. Their promotion activities do not emphasise product benefits to customers.
 13. Their promotion activities target old customers who have bought from them before.
-

With respect to the element of "People" within the marketing mix, many researchers (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; McKean, 2003; Milligan & Smith, 2002; Pelletier, 2005; Robbins, 2003) have agreed that a successful client establishment and retention strategy should be identified by the following practices:

- Treating customers well in the company.
- Ongoing interaction between staff and customers.

- Professional appearance and courteous staff.
- Giving personal attention to customers by employees.
- Continuous recruitment and training of staff.
- Prompt service to customers by employees.
- Well educated and knowledgeable employees.
- Self-motivated employees to help customers.
- Trust in employees and consideration of their recommendations.
- Dependence on staff to anticipate customers' needs.
- Building personalised relationships between staff and customers.
- Commitment by top management to develop high quality customer service delivery teams.
- Appointment of team leaders according to their experience and strong people skills.
- The existence of strong measurement systems and staff appraisals to monitor staff performance in the company.

According to the above-mentioned practices, a scale measuring the "People" element of the marketing mix within companies was developed using fourteen Likert type questions, as shown in Table 4.10 below:

Table 4.10: The People Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for People, Sources; Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; McKean, 2003; Milligan & Smith, 2002; Pelletier, 2005; Robbins, 2003.

-
1. Customers are expected to be treated well in this company.
 2. There is a great deal of interaction between our staff and customers.
 3. The appearance and manners of our staff are not always professional.
 4. Our employees are expected to give customers personal attention.
 5. Continues recruitment and training of staff are very important activities in our company.
 6. It is not realistic to expect prompt service to customers from our employees.
 7. The majority of our employees are well educated and knowledgeable.
 8. Our employees are not always self-motivated to help customers.
 9. The recommendations from our employees are trusted and considered.
 10. Our staff plays a key role in anticipating customers' needs.
 11. Our staff build personalised relationships with customers.
 12. The top management is not always committed to develop high quality customer service delivery teams.
 13. We appoint team leaders according to their experience and strong people skills.
 14. We have strong measurement systems and staff appraisals to monitor staff performance in our company.
-

A similar scale to measure the perception of the "People" element by consumers was also developed to match the above-mentioned practices, as Table 4.11 shows:

Table 4.11: The Customer People Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for People, Sources; Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; McKean, 2003; Milligan & Smith, 2002; Pelletier, 2005; Robbins, 2003.

-
1. Customers are treated well in these companies.
 2. There is a great deal of interaction between the staff and customers.
 3. The appearance and manners of the staff are not always professional.
 4. The construction company employees are giving customers personal attention.
 5. These companies always recruit and train their staff.
 6. Employees of these companies always provide prompt service to customers.
 7. The majority of the employees are well educated and knowledgeable.
 8. The employees are not always self-motivated to help customers.
 9. Employee recommendations are trusted and considered in these companies.
 10. The staff play a key role in anticipating customers' needs.
 11. The staff build personalised relationships with customers.
 12. The top management is not always committed to develop high quality customer service delivery teams.
 13. Staff team leaders have great experience and strong people skills.
 14. The company has strong measurement systems and staff appraisals to monitor staff performance.
-

With regard to the element of "Process" within the marketing mix, many researchers (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; DiJulius, 2003; Evans & Laskin, 1994; Grönroos, 2004; Lovelock, 2001; Mandjak & Veres, 1998; McDonald et al., 2011; Payne, 2005; Payne & Holt, 2001; Peck et al., 1999; Tatikonda & Montoya-Weiss, 2001; Tax et al., 1998) have agreed that a successful process strategy should be identified by the following practices:

- The existence of more advanced systems and technology than the competitors.
- The automation or computerisation of communications between staff and customers.

- The existence of a strong and up to date database of customer information in the company.
- High innovation in service delivery compared to that of the competition.
- Analysis of customer data from the company's database to plan offers to customers.
- The ability to anticipate customers' needs and wants in the market in an accurate way through market research.
- High efficiency in order processing and reducing customers' waiting time.
- The process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures.
- The creation of accessible channels of communication to enable customers to provide feedback about the company's performance.
- Full commitment to processes and procedures among staff members.
- The sharing of knowledge and "know-how" techniques between staff members in the company.

According to the above-mentioned practices, a scale measuring the "Process" element of the marketing mix within companies was developed using eleven Likert type questions, as shown in Table 4.12 below:

Table 4.12: The Company Process Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Process, Sources; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; DiJulius, 2003; Evans & Laskin, 1994; Grönroos, 2004; Lovelock, 2001; Mandjak & Veres, 1998; McDonald et al., 2011; Payne, 2005; Payne & Holt, 2001; Peck et al., 1999; Tatikonda & Montoya-Weiss, 2001; Tax et al., 1998.

-
1. We have more advanced systems and technology than our competitors.
 2. Most of the communications between our staff and customers are automated or computerised.
 3. We have a strong and up-to-date database of customer information in our company.
 4. We are very innovative in-service delivery compared to competition.
 5. We analyse customer data from our database to plan our offers to customers.
 6. We can anticipate customers' needs and wants in the market in an accurate way through market research.
 7. We are efficient in order processing and reducing customers' waiting time.
 8. The process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures.
 9. It is not easy for customers to give us feedback about our performance.
 10. We have lots of processes and procedures but they are not followed.
 11. Only certain employees know how to do certain tasks, and if they leave, we're in big trouble.
-

A similar scale to measure the perception of the "Process" element by consumers was also developed to match the above-mentioned practices, as Table 4.13 shows:

Table 4.13: The Customer Process Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Process, Sources; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; DiJulius, 2003; Evans & Laskin, 1994; Grönroos, 2004; Lovelock, 2001; Mandjak & Veres, 1998; McDonald et al., 2011; Payne, 2005; Payne & Holt, 2001; Peck et al., 1999; Tatikonda & Montoya-Weiss, 2001; Tax et al., 1998.

-
1. They have more advanced systems and technology than our competitors.
 2. Most of the communications between their staff and customers are automated or computerised.
 3. They have a strong and up-to-date database of customer information in the company.
 4. They are very innovative in-service delivery compared to competition.
 5. Their offers match customers' needs in the market.
 6. They can anticipate customers' needs and wants in the market in an accurate way.
 7. They are efficient in order processing and reducing customers' waiting time.
 8. The process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures.
 9. It is not easy for customers to give them feedback about their performance.
 10. They have plenty of processes and procedures but they are not followed.
 11. Only certain employees know how to do certain tasks, if they leave the company is in big trouble.

With reference to the element of "Physical Evidence" within the marketing mix, many researchers (Aga & Safakli, 2007; Bebko, 2000; Bitner et al., 2007; Bitner, 1990; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Constantinides, 2006; DiJulius, 2003; Lee et al., 2000; Lovelock, 2001; McDonald et al., 2011; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995) have agreed that a successful physical evidence strategy should be identified by the following practices:

- The existence of up-to-date facilities and equipment.
- Visually appealing outdoor facilities of the company.
- Visually appealing informative materials (website, advertisements, brochures, etc.).
- Neat staff appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction.
- Professional office décor and design to positively influence customers' expectations of the service.

- An office environment to communicate high quality service standards to customers.
- The company's buildings, furnishings and layout reflect customers' service quality expectations.
- Clean machines and service delivery equipment.

According to the above-mentioned practices, a scale measuring the "Physical Evidence" element of the marketing mix within companies was developed using thirteen Likert type questions, as shown in Table 4.14 below:

Table 4.14: The Company Physical Evidence Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Physical Evidence, Sources; Aga & Safakli, 2007; Bebko, 2000; Bitner et al., 2007; Bitner, 1990; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Constantinides, 2006; DiJulius, 2003; Lee et al., 2000; Lovelock, 2001; McDonald et al., 2011; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995.

-
1. Our company has up-to-date facilities and equipment.
 2. The outdoor facilities of our company are not visually appealing.
 3. Our informative materials (website, advertisements, brochures, etc.) are visually appealing.
 4. Our staff takes very good care of their appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction.
 5. Our office décor and design positively influence customer's expectations of the service.
 6. As our services cannot be displayed, our firm creates the right office environment to communicate our high-quality service standards to customers.
 7. Our buildings, furnishings and layout are not reflective of customers' service quality expectations.
 8. It is difficult to keep our machines and service delivery equipment consistently clean.
 9. Cleanliness of cars and machines.
 10. Headquarters newness and location.
 11. Office Furniture and atmosphere.
 12. Professional look of staff.
 13. The professional look of our business cards and brochures.
-

A similar scale to measure the perception of the "Physical Evidence" element by consumers was also developed to match the above-mentioned practices, as Table 4.15 shows:

Table 4.15: The Customer Physical Evidence Element Scale Developed by the Current Study

Items for Physical Evidence, Sources; Aga & Safakli, 2007; Bebko, 2000; Bitner et al., 2007; Bitner, 1990; Brassington & Pettitt, 2005; Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Constantinides, 2006; DiJulius, 2003; Lee et al., 2000; Lovelock, 2001; McDonald et al., 2011; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995.

-
1. The company has up-to-date facilities and equipment.
 2. The outdoor facilities of the company are not visually appealing.
 3. Their informative materials (website, advertisements, brochures, etc.) are visually appealing.
 4. Their staff takes very good care of their appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction.
 5. Their offices' décor and design positively influence customer's expectations of the service.
 6. They create the right office environment to communicate their high-quality service standards to customers.
 7. Their buildings, furnishings and layout are not reflective of customers' service quality expectations.
 8. Their machines and service delivery equipment's are always dirty.
 9. Cleanliness of cars and machines.
 10. Headquarters newness and location.
 11. Office Furniture and atmosphere.
 12. Professional look of staff.
 13. The professional look of our business cards and brochures.
-

Klaus (2015) has devoted an entire book to prove beyond a doubt the validity of the customer experience scale which he developed. The customer experience scale that is adopted by the current study is derived from Klaus's (2015) scale (which was proved to be valid and reliable) to fit the nature of this study as Table 4.16 shows:

Table 4.16: The Customer Experience Scale Adopted by the Current Study (derived from Klaus 2015)

-
1. They have a good reputation in the market.
 2. I am confident in their expertise.
 3. They give independent advice on which product or service can best suit my needs.
 4. I choose my construction company not because of the price alone.
 5. The people who work at these companies represent their own brand well.
 6. The offer of company that I have chosen has the best quality.
 7. The offer of company that I have chosen is superior to the competition.
 8. My construction company advised me throughout the process.
 9. Dealing with my construction company is easy.
 10. My construction company keeps me informed.
 11. My construction company demonstrates flexibility in dealing with me.
 12. I always deal with the same firms and same people inside these companies.
 13. My construction company personnel relates to my wishes and concerns.
 14. The people I am dealing with at these companies have good people skills.
 15. They deliver good customer service.
 16. I have built a personal relationship with the people at these companies.
 17. They focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers.
 18. Their facilities are better designed to fulfill my needs than their competitors'.
 19. Their online facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.
 20. Their offline facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.
 21. I stay with my construction companies because they know me.
 22. They know exactly what I want.
 23. They keep me up-to-date.
 24. They will look after me whenever I need their services.
 25. They have dealt well with me when things went wrong.
 26. I am happy with my current construction company as my service provider.
 27. Being a customer of my current construction company gives me social prestige.
-

4.5 Survey Data Collection Process

Saunders et al. (2016) view the questionnaire as a general term comprising any data collection method whereby every interviewee is expected to answer a similar set of questions in a predetermined order. The questionnaire is the most frequently used technique for it is an efficient way of collecting data from a large population (De Vaus, 2002).

The questionnaire of the study will be available only in the English language. All questions are closed-ended, because of their ability to be completed quickly and can analysed statistically (Farrell, 2016). The survey data collection process was conducted in two parts; the pilot study part and the survey distribution part. The pilot test provides the researcher with an opportunity to fill in information gaps and help make unclear questions comprehensible to the respondents before the main data is gathered (Eliasson, 2010). In order to establish face validity of the company scale, the researcher conducted a pilot test with 40 construction company managers to verify the rightness of the scale as a true reflection of the element it is measuring within the marketing mix according to their own practices within their companies. In addition, the researcher conducted a pilot test with 23 customer respondents to verify their perception and understanding of the measuring scales of the customer questionnaire and guarantee no misunderstandings or errors exist and to help the researcher uncover hidden information or problematic areas that may have been generated during the construction phase of the survey. All respondents agreed that the content of scales items is accurately descriptive of the nature and characteristics of each of the 7P's.

4.6 Statistical Methodology

4.6.1 Factor Analysis

The survey data were analyzed using SmartPLS v.2 software using the methods described by Wong (2013) and by IBM SPSS v.20 software using the methods described by Field (2013). The results of inferential statistical tests (e.g., t-tests, correlation, and MANOVA) were assessed for statistical significance using p-values. Factor analysis is a technique that examines interdependent relationships among a complete set of variables (Hair et al., 2010). The motivation for adopting factor analysis in this study was to render a large variable set

more manageable (Hayton et al., 2004), and thereby provide understanding as to how the variables reveal latent constructs (Kline, 1994).

In addition, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was implemented to distribute data over a smaller set of factors (Hair et al., 2010) and to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis" (Hair et al., 2014, p. 94). Prior to running the factor analysis, the fundamental assumptions of the factor analysis, including adequacy of sample size, as well as assessments of normality, factorability and multicollinearity were examined (Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2016). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was then used "to test (confirm) specific hypotheses or theories concerning the structure underlining a set of variables" (Pallant, 2016, p. 182) and to examine the suitability of the structural model to the data (Hair et al., 2014). Furthermore, CFA was applied to ensure the identity, discriminant validity, convergent validity, and internal consistency reliability of each factor.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are very important while engaging with companies and participants. Saunders et al. (2016) argued that researchers should not subject participants to the risk of embarrassment or any harm. Therefore, it is important to maintaining a certain ethical standard while dealing with participants to achieve the trust among research parties. Thus, the questionnaire paper did not include any questions through which the researcher might be able to establish the identity of a participant, and therefore anonymity was assured. Participants were further briefed about the extent to which the information would be used and were given the option to participate, or otherwise decline to continue; also, the option of withdrawing from the study at any time was further assured. In addition, it was confidently communicated that their input would only be used for academic purposes and would under no circumstances be made available to a second party, with the exception of the researcher himself.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the rationale behind the choice of the quantitative method approach adopted in this study to answering the proposed questions. The purpose behind this

explanation was to communicate the rationale to the choices made by the researcher and how these choices were linked to the research questions and overall objectives. The chapter also provides detail information about the population of the study and sampling technique, as well as the survey design and scale development of the study.

Furthermore, ethical considerations were considered and discussed in this chapter in order to reflect the researcher's awareness of such concerns and to further to assure the compliance of this research with the required ethical practice and standards. Having explained the research methodology and methods, the next chapter will introduce the quantitative results and findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the quantitative study that was carried out in this research. In this chapter, the results are presented in two separate sections: Part I presents the results of the company survey; and Part II presents the results of the customer survey. The survey data were analysed using SmartPLS v.2 software using the methods described by Wong (2013) and by IBM SPSS v.20 software using the methods described by Field (2013). The results of inferential statistical tests (e.g., t-tests, correlation, and MANOVA) were assessed for statistical significance using p-values. However, given that statistical significance depends on the sample size, and furthermore, p-values do not explain the importance, meaning, or practical significance of the results (Halsey et al., 2015; Hubbard & Lindsay, 2008; Hurlbert & Lombardi, 2009; Nuzzo, 2014; Wasserstein & Lazar, 2016), effect sizes were also used to determine the practical significance of the results, as recommended in the literature (Ferguson, 2009; Fritz et al., 2012; Kelley & Preacher, 2012; Kotrlik & Williams, 2003; Lakens, 2013; Sullivan & Feinn, 2012).

5.1 Company Survey

The results of the company survey are presented in 13 sections: (1) Demographic and contextual characteristics of company respondents (2) Missing value analysis (3) Sample size (4) Assessment of Normality (5) Assessment of Multicollinearity (6) Factorability assessment (7) Reliability (8) Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (9) Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (10) Descriptive statistics for factors in company survey (11) Construct reliability and validity (12) Model of factors in company survey (13) Effects of respondent characteristics on the factors in company survey.

Factor Analysis

Traditionally, factor analysis is a multivariate statistical technique used to reduce data and furnish a simpler and more indicative set of the measured variables that might explain

patterns of observed correspondences among data in a set (Fabriger et al., 1999). According to Hair et al., (2010) factor analysis is a technique whereby interdependent relationships among a complete set of determined variables are investigated.

The primary goal of factor analysis in this research study, as has been typical of research best practices, whereby large sets of variables are reduced to a more manageable set and thus rendered more manageable which is achieved by identifying representative variables from the larger data set, whilst retaining the intrinsic traits and behavioral patterns of the original variables (Hayton et al., 2004). Furthermore, this technique was employed to ascertain the underlying structure among variables so as to determine latent constructs (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003), thereby offering an understanding of the interrelationships among variables to then load multiple items onto different factors to calculate composite measures needed for subsequent analysis (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003). In addition, factor analysis has been valued for providing insight into those variables pertinent to the analysis, by revealing hitherto unknown constructs (Kline, 1994).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) allows for the reduction or summary of data into a smaller set of factors (Hair et al., 2010), and has been defined as is "a statistical technique applied to a single set of variables where the researcher is interested in discovering which variables in the set form coherent subsets that are relatively independent of one another" (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996, p. 635). The primary purpose of the EFA "is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis" (Hair et al., 2014, p. 94). However, before initiating EFA, it is recommended one test any preliminary assumptions of the EFA (Pallant, 2016), such as factors like adequacy of sampling, normality, factorability (Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2016). The following sections introduce each study-relevant assumption and report the outcome of the assumption assessments.

5.1.1 Demographic and Contextual Characteristics of Company Respondents

The demographic characteristics of $N = 399$ respondents in the company survey are summarised in Table 5.1. The respondents were located in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait,

and Dubai. The country with the highest proportion of respondents was Saudi Arabia ($n = 143, 35.8\%$). The vast majority of the respondents ($n = 380, 95.2\%$) were male. The ages of the respondents ranged from 25 to 64 years. The most frequent age group was 35 to 44 years ($n = 172, 43.1\%$). The highest education levels of the respondents ranged from less than high school to doctoral degree. The most frequent educational qualification was a bachelor's degree ($n = 298, 74.7\%$).

Table 5.2 summarizes the contextual characteristics of $N = 399$ respondents in the company survey. The respondents had < 4 years to over 20 years of industry experience. The most frequent level of industry experience ($n = 138, 34.6\%$) was 12 to 15 years (Source: Data).

Table 5.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in Company Survey (N = 399)

Characteristic	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Country	Saudi Arabia	143	35.8
	Bahrain	76	19.0
	Kuwait	84	21.1
	Dubai	96	24.1
Gender	Male	380	95.2
	Female	18	4.5
	Missing Value	1	0.3
Age (Years)	25 to 34	124	31.1
	35 to 44	172	43.1
	45 to 54	75	18.8
	55 to 64	28	7.0
Education	Less than High School	10	2.5
	High School	78	19.5
	Bachelor's Degree	298	74.7
	Master's Degree	8	2.0
	Doctoral Degree	1	0.3
	Missing Value	4	1

The respondents had < 4 years to over 20 years of company experience. The most frequent level of company experience ($n = 168, 42.1\%$) was 8 to 11 years. The management levels of the respondents included top, senior, middle, and front-line, of which the most frequent levels were front-line ($n = 181, 45.4\%$) and middle ($n = 126, 31.6\%$).

Table 5.2: Contextual Characteristics of Respondents in Company Survey (N = 399)

Characteristic	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Industry Experience (Years)	< 4	13	3.3
	4 to 7	72	18.0
	8 to 11	99	24.8
	12 to 15	138	34.6
	16 to 19	55	13.8
	≥ 20	22	5.5
Company Experience (Years)	< 4	27	6.8
	4 to 7	86	21.5
	8 to 11	168	42.1
	12 to 15	88	22.0
	16 to 19	25	6.3
	≥ 20	5	1.3
Management Level	Top	3	0.7
	Senior	86	21.6
	Middle	126	31.6
	Front-line	181	45.4
	Missing Value	3	0.7

5.1.2 Missing Value Analysis

Missing data in datasets are a common occurrence and if they are found to be significant are deemed ‘not-ignorable’. To account for these gaps in the data, often due to respondents’ failure to complete survey items (Hair et al., 2010, p. 46), the quantifiable value of the missing data is evaluated and quantified post hoc through a descriptive and frequency-based statistical technique (Hair et al., 2010; Pallant, 2016). A total of 24 missing values were found among the responses to the 5-point Likert Scale Items (Q07 to Q18) in the company survey data as presented in Table 5.3 (Appendix I). The mean scores for the corresponding items were used to replace the missing values using the replacement procedures in SPSS. Replacement with mean scores is the most common way to handle missing values in survey response data, and does not seriously compromise the results, as long as the number of missing values is only a small proportion of the total number of responses (Enders, 2010). The results for the present study's datasets reveal the level of missing data was low as they

did not exceed 10% (Hair et al., 2010).

5.1.3 Sample Size

The ideal or requisite sample size for a study can be determined through varied means (Creswell, 2013). A popular method is to arrive at an ideal sample size based on the implemented statistical techniques (Cohen, 1977; Hinkin, 1995). For example, while employing a statistical method such as Exploratory Factor Analysis EFA, Guadagnoli & Velicer (1988) assert that a sample size of 150 is a sufficient “to obtain an accurate solution in EFA as long as item inter correlations are reasonably strong” (Hinkin, 1995, p. 973). For the current study, there were 399 participants involved in this stage of analysis, thus, exceeding the minimal number of 150 s recommended by Hinkin (1995).

5.1.4 Assessment of Normality

Normality, in terms analysis, refers to "the shape of the data distribution for an individual metric variable and its correspondence to the normal distribution, the benchmark for statistical methods" (Hair et al., 2010, p. 71). Normality is determined by using statistical methods (i.e., Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics) (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996), and according to Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics, $> .05$ indicates a normal rate of distribution, whereas a significant score of $.00$ indicates a lack or violation of normality. Table 5.4 (Appendix I) presents the tests for normality of the variable scores. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) statistics were all statistically significant ($p < .05$) reflecting strong deviations from normality. Whenever, the variables deviate from normality, the analysis can be continued by converting the variables to logarithms (Feng et al., 2014). Hence log conversion of the factors was used to deal with the data for the regressions.

5.1.5 Assessment of Multicollinearity

Correlations in statistics are conducted before subjecting the data to check the multicollinearity before analysing data for regression analysis. Multicollinearity is defined as "the extent to which a variable can be explained by other variables in the analysis" (Hair et al., 2014, p. 91), and often manifests as “two or more predictor variables in a multiple regression

model” showing high correlation, thereby posing serious difficulties to the regression analysis (Neter et al., 1989, p. 667).

It is first crucial to assess the correlation coefficient between variables (Hair et al., 2014), for if correlation coefficient between variables is greater than .90, at the .90 level of a correlation coefficient or higher, as argued by Dohoo et al. (1997) it can be concluded that the variables display multicollinearity and are not significantly pendent from each other (Hair et al., 2014), thus rendering the data unsuitable for the regression analysis (O'Brien & Scott, 2012).

An examination of the correlation coefficient matrix for the present study revealed that the correlation between the variables ranged between .184 and .833 for product factor, .311 and .853 for place factor, .311 and .884 for price factor, .242 and .882 for promotion factor, .193 and .736 for people factor, .3 and .740 for process factor, and .272 and .879 for physical evidence factor (see Appendix I, Tables 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, and 5.11), a value below the threshold of .90 (Hair et al., 2010), thereby indicating variables were sufficiently intercorrelated, and not displaying multicollinearity. To further confirm the absence of multicollinearity, Craney & Surles (2002) suggest using the variance inflation factor (VIF) test, wherein the value of $VIF < 10.00$ negates the multicollinearity threat (Craney & Surles, 2002; Hair et al., 2006). To ensure a viable dataset, the VIF test was administered, of which the results indicated that the VIF values were less than 10, thereby, supporting an absence of multicollinearity (see Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: Variance Inflation Factors

Factor	VIF
Product	1.38
Place	1.86
Price	1.40
People	1.44
Process	1.96
Physical Evidence	2.28
Promotion	1.45
Customer Experience	1.21

5.1.6 Factorability Assessment

Factorability refers to the appropriateness of the data so that they can be considered suitable for the factor analysis test (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996), and this trait is assessed using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett's test of sphericity, and through analysis of the correlation coefficient between variables (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). In order for the dataset to be considered suitable for EFA, the KMO value should be .6 or above, and Bartlett's test score should be statistically significant at $P < .05$. For this dataset, the KMO value was .948, which is considered above the cut-off value of .60 (Pallant, 2016), while the value of the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Table 5.13) showed a chi-square value of 56045.177 which is considered significant at $p = .000$, thus making the data statistically suitable for factor analysis.

Table 5.13: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.948
	Approx. Chi-Square	56045.177
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	7626
	Sig.	.000

5.1.7 Reliability

Table 5.14 shows that the Cronbach's alpha in this research ranged from 0.903 to 0.956 indicating a superb consistency which is far beyond the acceptable value of 0.60 according to many researchers (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Hence all the items were considered for the further analysis.

Table 5.14: Reliability of Factors in Company Survey

Variables	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Product	0.929
Place/Distribution	0.933
Price	0.956
Promotion	0.928
People	0.918
Process	0.903
Physical Evidence	0.934
Customer Experience	0.955

5.1.8 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA was conducted with 123 items in the company survey data that were used to investigate the effect of construction companies' marketing mix (the 7P's) on their customers' experiences in the four Arabian Gulf States, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The implemented iterative sequence of factor analysis resulted in eight distinct factors comprising 104 items with factor loadings $>.5$ (Hair et al., 2014) suggesting that the individual items were reliable measures of the extracted factors (see EFA matrix Appendix II). High Cronbach's alpha values $>.6$ (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) also indicated that items loaded onto the factors are internally consistent. These eight factors explained 76.457% of the variance, a value regarded as sufficient to represent the data (Pett et al., 2003). What is more, it is also higher than the threshold of 60% recommended by Malhotra et al. (2012).

Table 5.15: *Extracted Factors*

Initial Eigenvalues			
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	50.809	40.975	40.975
2	11.984	9.664	50.639
3	8.311	6.703	57.342
4	6.71	5.412	62.754
5	5.47	4.411	67.165
6	4.443	3.584	70.749
7	3.808	3.071	73.82
8	3.27	2.637	76.457

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

The results of the factor analysis are presented in Table 5.15. Eight factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1 (Kaiser, 1958), were extracted using principal component analysis (PCA). In the research, an Eigenvalue greater than 1 criterion means a factor will be retained for interpretation if the individual factor account for a variance of at least a single variable.

Table 5.15 presents Eigenvalues corresponding to the individual factors, as well as the percentage of variance explained by the extracted factor structure. The table shown that factor 1 accounted for 40.975% of variance with an eigenvalue of 50.809. Factor 2 accounted

for 9.664% of variance with an eigenvalue of 11.984. Factor 3 accounted for 6.703% of variance with an eigenvalue of 8.311. Factor 4 accounted for 5.412% of variance with an eigenvalue of 6.71. Factor 5 accounted for 4.411% of variance with an eigenvalue of 5.47. Factor 6 accounted for 3.584% of variance with an eigenvalue of 4.443. Factor 7 accounted for 3.071% of variance with an eigenvalue of 3.808. Factor 8 accounted for 2.637% of variance with an eigenvalue of 3.27.

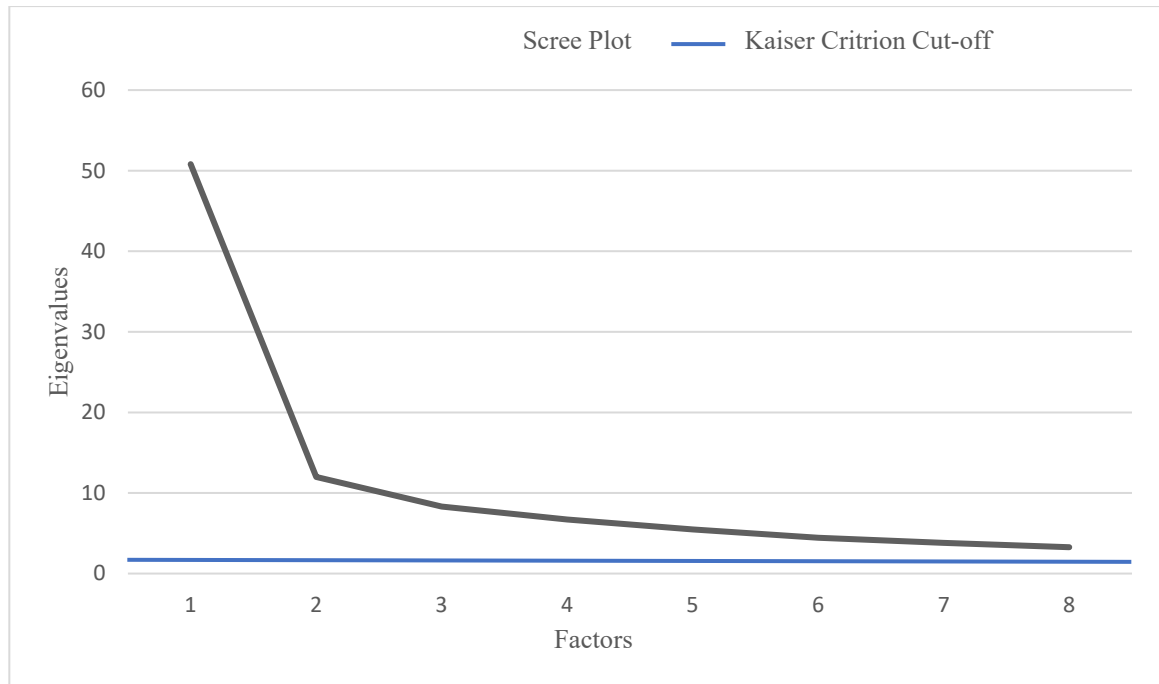


Figure 5.1 Scree plot with the Kaiser criterion for company

In addition, the scree plot in Figure 5.1 was used to decide the number of factors that need to be kept. This guideline determines that all factors having an Eigenvalue more than one will be preserved for reading (Kaiser, 1958). The figure showed that eight factors had an Eigenvalue more than one. Thus, factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1 are to be considered significant and are retained in the analysis. Individual factors, factor loadings, the Cronbach's alpha, and the item communalities are calculated and discussed below.

Factor 1 (Cmp_Product)

Items that loaded on to the first factor pertain to the product practices that were adopted by the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State (see Table 5.16). Hence, this factor was assigned the name "Cmp_Product". This factor explained 41% of the total variance and consisted of 14 items with factor loadings ranging from .536 to .765 and communalities for the items loaded in this factor range from .528 to .754. Cronbach's alpha value of .937 indicates a high degree of internal consistency among items. All the 14 items in Table 5.16 describe the product related practices of the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State. The product practices indicate that the construction companies develop brands, which is then helped their customers to make better choices and the companies initially sitting their marketing strategy to emphasises on delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers and helping them to develop an ongoing relationship with a product. This also indicates that these construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State emphasized the benefits of the product to customers rather than the features of the product and to differentiate their product from its competitors. Conducting market research is a very important of construction companies to know "how their customers think about their products" in order to provide them a unique service not offered by their competitors. However, their products and services do not always meet the requirements of their customers. The higher factor loadings (>.5) and high communality values (>.5) implies that these items are reliable measures for assessing this factor and confirms the importance of this variable in the factor structure.

Table 5.16: Cmp_Product Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q07_12 We focus on offering 'specialized' services to our customers.	.765	.654
Q07_01 Our range of brands helps the consumer to make better choices.	.732	.560
Q07_13 We focus on providing unique services not offered by competitors.	.719	.634
Q07_04 Our services do not always increase the attractiveness of our product offers to customers.	.707	.713
Q07_09 Our products and services do not always meet the requirements of our customers.	.691	.695

Q07_10 Our product strategy emphasized the benefits of the product to customers rather than the features of the product.	.672	.727
Q07_06 We conduct market research to know how our customers think about our products.	.659	.616
Q07_02 Our marketing strategy helps the consumer to develop an ongoing relationship with a product.	.628	.653
Q07_07 We do not always use customer related data to plan our product strategy.	.615	.754
Q07_11 We focus on the development of new markets relative to competitors.	.609	.603
Q07_03 Our marketing strategy clearly differentiates our product from its competitors.	.581	.639
Q07_14 We focus on serving more diverse segments of customer than our competitors.	.576	.528
Q07_08 Our marketing strategy emphasizes on delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers.	.554	.647
Q07_05 It is difficult to define our product's market position in terms of attributes that are important to the buyer.	.536	.619

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .937

Factor 2 (Cmp_Place/ Distribution)

The second factor was assigned the name "Cmp_Place/ Distribution", as ten items that loaded in this factor explained the distribution practices adopted by assessed construction companies in the Arabian Gulf States (see Table 5.17). Each item of this factor measuring the different distribution practices relevant to the construction companies in Arabian Gulf states. This factor accounts for 10% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .539 to .738. Cronbach's alpha value of .940 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. The distribution practices indicate the construction companies handling delivery, complaints, maintenance problems, speed of order fulfilment and invoicing. The construction companies can store, handle, process orders and display their products appropriately. Furthermore, they can reach a wide geographic coverage of customers, take care of the movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from site to the customer's location and hold stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity. Factor loadings on these factors (>.5) are statistically significant. Communalities >.5 ranging from .526 to .746 indicate the variables are adequately explained by the factor solution.

Table 5.17: *Cmp Place/ Distribution Factor Loadings and Communalities*

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q09_07 Handling maintenance problems	.738	.631
Q09_01 Order processing	.721	.652
Q09_05 Invoicing	.694	.712
Q09_08 Handling complaints	.670	.594
Q09_06 Handling delivery problems	.664	.723
Q08_01 Our company reaches a wide geographic coverage of customers.	.641	.676
Q08_04 We take care of the movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from site to the customer's location.	.592	.617
Q08_03 Our company can store, handle and display our products appropriately.	.575	.638
Q08_07 We hold stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity	.563	.526
Q09_03 Speed of order fulfilment	.539	.746

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .940

Factor 3 (Cmp_Price)

The third factor was assigned the name "Cmp_Price" as 16 items that loaded in this factor which have been extracted through factor analysis relate to the pricing strategies of the construction companies which indicates the influence of these items on the pricing decisions made by the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf States (see Table 5.18). The pricing decisions are primarily influenced by the perceptions among consumers, the quality image of the product, and designed to achieve high market share and customer loyalty. Construction companies' prices support the product and service package to increase customers' value for money, reinforcing their product's market position through appropriate pricing. This factor accounts for 7% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .552 to .782 and communalities for the items loaded in this factor range from .534 to .732. The Cronbach's alpha value of .959 for this factor confirms the internal consistency of the measures that assess the pricing practice of the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State.

Table 5.18: Cmp Price Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q10_11 Our prices cannot take into consideration differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers.	.782	.702
Q10_12 We expand our market share through lower pricing.	.765	.715
Q10_03 Our prices emphasize the long-term cost savings coming from using our products compared with the cheaper competition.	.737	.694
Q10_9 We cannot determine the price sensitivity of our customers in the market.	.722	.657
Q10_07 The effect of our prices on the consumer's attitude and buying decision is negative.	.691	.583
Q10_05 Our prices cannot consider what a customer is prepared to pay for the product.	.665	.732
Q10_02 Our prices support the product and service package to increase customers' value for money.	.661	.580
Q10_13 We reinforce our product's market position through appropriate pricing.	.652	.547
Q10_01 Our prices reinforce the quality image of the product.	.645	.535
Q10_10 Our pricing's message is consistent with the rest of the marketing mix.	.639	.714
Q10_08 We set higher prices to differentiate our products from those of the competitors.	.631	.612
Q10_06 Our prices are designed to achieve high market share and customer loyalty.	.604	.561
Q10_15 It is very difficult for our company not to get drawn into price wars	.586	.637
Q10_14 We stimulate high volume sales through price reductions.	.562	.628
Q10_16 Our prices help to differentiate our product through positioning it in a different price level from the competition.	.558	.534
Q10_04 Our prices are consistently competitive.	.552	.552

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .959

Factor 4 (Cmp_Promotion)

The fourth factor was labeled as "Cmp_Promotion" as the variables that have loaded in this factor describes the promotion practices of the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State (see Table 5.19). Nine items contribute to this factor and account for 5% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .518 to .751 and communalities for the items loaded in this factor range from .536 to .714. Cronbach's alpha value of .940 indicates a high

degree of internal consistency between these items. The promotion practices indicate that the construction companies in Arabian Gulf State are found to engage in social media and the popularity or fashion of different media channels to get customers' feedback. They use promotional methods to motivate potential new customers and while them communicating with their customers, they take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising.

Table 5.19: Cmp Promotion Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q11_08 Our promotion activities are positively affecting our reputation and standing with various publics.	.751	.642
Q11_09 Our company keeps an eye on how the competition is communicating with their customers.	.732	.673
Q11_07 Our promotion activities are giving the consumer a clear reason for 'buying' from our company.	.695	.714
Q11_04 In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the popularity or fashion of different media channels.	.669	.709
Q11_10 We give customers a scope for price negotiation, to let them feel they are gaining value when dealing with us.	.648	.703
Q11_02 We do not use our website to give information and advice to customers.	.626	.549
Q11_06 In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising.	.585	.536
Q11_01 We use promotional methods to motivate potential new customers.	.564	.589
Q11_03 We do not usually use social media to get customers' feedback.	.518	.621

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .940

Factor 5 (Cmp_People)

The fifth factor was assigned the name "Cmp_People", as ten items that loaded in this factor explained the people practices that are adopted by the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf States (see Table 5.20). Ten items contribute to this factor and account for 4% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .526 to .727 and communalities for the items loaded in this factor range from .527 to .729. Cronbach's alpha value of .926 indicates a high degree of internal consistency among these items. The people practices indicate that the

construction companies trust and consider the recommendations from their employees as they are always self-motivated to help customers. In addition, they have continued recruiting and training their staff and appointing the team leaders according to their experience and strong people skills. The construction companies have strong measurement systems and staff appraisals to monitor their staff performance as they play a vital role in anticipating customers' needs and are expected to provide customers personal attention within the interaction.

Table 5.20: Cmp_People Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q12_09 The recommendations from our employees are trusted and considered.	.727	.708
Q12_08 Our employees are not always self-motivated to help customers.	.701	.729
Q12_02 There is a great deal of interaction between our staff and customers.	.693	.647
Q12_04 Our employees are expected to give customers personal attention.	.671	.714
Q12_13 We appoint team leaders according to their experience and strong people skills.	.654	.541
Q12_10 Our staff plays a key role in anticipating customers' needs.	.633	.676
Q12_05 Continues recruitment and training of staff are very important activities in our company.	.609	.635
Q12_06 It is not realistic to expect prompt service to customers from our employees.	.572	.527
Q12_03 The appearance and manners of our staff are not always professional.	.543	.643
Q12_14 We have strong measurement systems and staff appraisals to monitor staff performance in our company.	.526	.595

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .926

Factor 6 (Cmp_Process)

Table 5.21 displays the ten items that loaded as the sixth factor, which have been extracted through factor analysis. All ten items relate to the process strategies of the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf States and hence, this factor was assigned the name "Cmp_Process". Ten items contribute to this factor and account for 4% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .544 to .752 and the communalities range from .535 to

.754. Cronbach's alpha value of .916 indicates a high internal consistency of the variables measuring this factor. The process practices indicate that the construction companies' process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures. Since they use more advanced systems and technology, most of the communications between their staff and customers are computerised, which they use the customer data from the database for sitting plan and offers for customers.

Table 5.21: Cmp Process Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q13_08 The process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures.	.752	.621
Q13_11 Only certain employees know how to do certain tasks, and if they leave, we're in big trouble.	.730	.662
Q13_09 It is not easy for customers to give us feedback about our performance.	.718	.649
Q13_02 Most of the communications between our staff and customers are automated or computerized.	.709	.535
Q13_06 We can anticipate customers' needs and wants in the market in an accurate way through market research.	.675	.754
Q13_03 We have a strong and up-to-date database of customer information in our company.	.662	.617
Q13_10 We have lots of processes and procedures but they are not followed.	.646	.559
Q13_05 We analyse customer data from our database to plan our offers to customers.	.628	.669
Q13_01 We have more advanced systems and technology than our competitors.	.586	.704
Q13_04 We are very innovative with service delivery compared to competition.	.544	.617

*Communalities
Cronbach's alpha: .916

Factor 7 (Cmp_Physical Evidence)

Factor 7 was assigned "Cmp_Physical Evidence" and comprised of 12 items pertaining to the physical appearance practices of the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State (see Table 5.22). Ten items contribute to this factor and account for 3% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .529 to .746 and the communalities range from .545 to

.727. Cronbach's alpha value of .947 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. The physical practices indicate that the construction companies create an ideal office environment to communicate their high-quality service standards to customers were their staff takes very good care of their appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction. The office décor, design and buildings layout of the construction companies positively influence customer's expectations.

Table 5.22: Cmp Physical Evidence Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q14_06 As our services cannot be displayed, our firm creates the right office environment to communicate our high-quality service standards to customers.	.746	.629
Q14_05 Our office décor and design positively influence customer's expectations of the service.	.732	.662
Q14_07 Our buildings, furnishings and layout are not reflective of customers' service quality expectations.	.718	.639
Q14_01 Our company has up-to-date facilities and equipment.	.709	.727
Q15_12 Professional look of staff	.692	.714
Q14_04 Our staff takes very good care of their appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction.	.675	.652
Q15_11 Office Furniture and atmosphere.	.664	.567
Q15_10 Headquarters newness and location	.635	.545
Q14_02 The outdoor facilities of our company are not visually appealing.	.611	.617
Q14_03 Our informative materials (website, advertisements, brochures, etc.) are visually appealing.	.581	.620
Q14_08 It is difficult to keep our machines and service delivery equipment consistently clean.	.546	.591
Q15_09 Cleanliness of cars and machines	.529	.563

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .947

Factor 8 (Cmp_Customer Experience)

Factor 8 was assigned "Cmp_Customer Experience" and comprised of 23 items pertaining to the customer experience practices of the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State (see Table 5.23). The items contribute to this factor and account for 3% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .526 to .764 and the communalities range from .560 to

.724. Cronbach's alpha value of .96 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. The customer experience indicates customers of construction companies consistently complain current companies did not deliver favorable customer service nor advised or informed them throughout the process. What is more, customers felt the online and offline facilities of construction companies were not designed to be as efficient as possible. They also did not give independent advice on which product or service can best suit to the customers' needs and they did not focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers or demonstrates flexibility in dealing with the customers as the dealing with them are not easy.

Table 5.23: Cmp Customer Experience Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q17_24 They will look after me whenever I need their services.	.764	.665
Q17_10 My construction company keeps me informed.	.758	.682
Q17_26 I am happy with my current construction company as my service provider.	.752	.586
Q17_27 Being a customer of my current construction company gives me social prestige.	.743	.724
Q17_11 My construction company demonstrates flexibility in dealing with me.	.726	.712
Q17_25 They have dealt well with me when things went wrong.	.721	.692
Q17_16 I have built a personal relationship with the people at these companies.	.720	.642
Q17_9 Dealing with my construction company is easy.	.718	.663
Q17_23 They keep me up-to-date.	.686	.589
Q17_22 They know exactly what I want.	.682	.684
Q17_15 They deliver good customer service.	.676	.644
Q17_7 The offer of company that I have chosen is superior to the competition.	.670	.628
Q17_8 My construction company advised me throughout the process.	.664	.656
Q17_6 The offer of company that I have chosen has the best quality.	.648	.682
Q17_17 They focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers.	.637	.712
Q17_3 They give independent advice on which product or service can best suit my needs.	.627	.565
Q17_13 My construction company personnel relate to my wishes and concerns.	.612	.580
Q17_14 The people I am dealing with at these companies have good people skills.	.608	.560

Q17_12 I always deal with the same forms and same people inside these companies.	.606	.616
Q17_19 Their online facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.	.603	.589
Q17_5 The people who work at these companies represent their own brand well.	.566	.681
Q17_2 I am confident in their expertise.	.548	.676
Q17_20 Their offline facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.	.526	.703

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .96

5.1.9 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) a statistical technique used “to test (confirm) specific hypotheses or theories concerning the structure underlining a set of variables” (Pallant, 2016, p. 182) and is traditionally used to examine the suitability of a preconceived structural model to account for the data (Hair et al., 2014). In the present study, CFA was employed using the selected items in Table 5.24 (Appendix III). Later, the eight factors resulting from the EFA were specified and a model was drawn based on the result of the former EFA (see Figure 5.2).

5.1.10 Descriptive Statistics for Factors in Company Survey

Table 5.25 presents the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum) for the product factor. From the Table 5.25, the values ranged between 1.84 and 1.97 with Q7_8 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q7_12 the lowest mean value, indicating positive perceptions with regards to the factor "Product" (Source: Data).

Table 5.25: Descriptive Statistics for Product Factor in the Company Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q7_01	399	1	5	1.91	.385
Q7_02	399	1	5	1.90	.454
Q7_03	399	1	4	1.88	.391
Q7_04	399	1	5	1.85	.460
Q7_05	399	1	4	1.87	.403
Q7_06	399	1	4	1.91	.375

Q7_07	399	1	5	1.96	.331
Q7_08	399	1	4	1.97	.311
Q7_09	399	1	4	1.93	.355
Q7_10	399	1	5	1.93	.392
Q7_11	399	1	4	1.91	.358
Q7_12	399	1	5	1.84	.462
Q7_13	399	1	4	1.89	.412
Q7_14	399	1	5	1.98	.324
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.26, the values ranged between 1.66 and 2.02 with Q9_7 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q8_6 the lowest mean value, indicating positive perceptions with regards to the factor "Place/ Distribution" (Source: Data).

Table 5.26: Descriptive Statistics for Place Factor in the Company Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q8_01	399	1	5	1.91	.461
Q8_02	399	1	5	1.98	.328
Q8_03	399	1	5	1.80	.493
Q8_04	399	1	5	1.91	.448
Q8_05	399	1	5	1.71	.572
Q8_06	399	1	5	1.66	.600
Q8_07	399	1	5	1.78	.521
Q9_01	399	1	5	1.84	.507
Q9_02	399	1	5	1.92	.460
Q9_03	399	1	5	1.96	.443
Q9_04	399	1	5	1.92	.426
Q9_05	399	1	5	1.99	.372
Q9_06	399	1	5	2.01	.388
Q9_07	399	1	5	2.02	.422
Q9_08	399	1	5	1.97	.413
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.27, the values ranged between 1.90 and 2.03 with Q10_6 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q10_10 the lowest mean value, indicating positive perceptions with regards to the factor "Price" (Source: Data).

Table 5.27: Descriptive Statistics for Price Factor in the Company Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q10_1	399	1	5	1.97	.357
Q10_2	399	1	5	1.99	.358
Q10_3	399	1	5	2.02	.416
Q10_4	399	1	5	2.03	.496
Q10_5	399	1	5	2.02	.451
Q10_6	399	1	5	2.03	.466
Q10_7	399	1	5	1.98	.388
Q10_8	399	1	5	2.01	.509
Q10_9	399	1	5	1.92	.482
Q10_10	399	1	5	1.90	.526
Q10_11	399	1	5	1.95	.429
Q10_12	399	1	5	1.97	.412
Q10_13	399	1	5	1.99	.407
Q10_14	399	1	5	2.01	.372
Q10_15	399	1	5	2.00	.451
Q10_16	399	1	5	2.00	.404
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.28, the values ranged between 1.70 and 2.01 with Q11_2 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q11_10 the lowest mean value, indicating positive perceptions with regards to the factor "Promotion" (Source: Data).

Table 5.28: Descriptive Statistics for Promotion Factor in the Company Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q11_1	399	1	5	2.00	.404
Q11_2	399	1	5	2.01	.425
Q11_3	399	1	5	1.86	.537
Q11_4	399	1	5	1.84	.545

Q11_5	399	1	5	1.93	.396
Q11_6	399	1	5	1.71	.560
Q11_7	399	1	5	1.80	.543
Q11_8	399	1	5	1.83	.556
Q11_9	399	1	5	1.75	.564
Q11_10	399	1	5	1.70	.576
Q11_11	399	1	5	1.97	.353
Q11_12	399	1	5	1.97	.361
Q11_13	399	1	5	1.97	.332
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.29, the values ranged between 1.64 and 1.95 with Q12_7 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q12_2 the lowest mean value, indicating positive perceptions with regards to the factor "People" (Source: Data).

Table 5.29: Descriptive Statistics for People Factor in the Company Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q12_1	399	1	5	1.76	.557
Q12_2	399	1	5	1.64	.627
Q12_3	399	1	5	1.73	.579
Q12_4	399	1	5	1.64	.650
Q12_5	399	1	5	1.72	.705
Q12_6	399	1	5	1.65	.606
Q12_7	399	1	5	1.95	.547
Q12_8	399	1	5	1.79	.568
Q12_9	399	1	5	1.71	.581
Q12_10	399	1	5	1.76	.550
Q12_11	399	1	5	1.88	.636
Q12_12	399	1	5	1.74	.612
Q12_13	399	1	5	1.73	.573
Q12_14	399	1	5	1.73	.559
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.30, the values ranged between 1.75 and 2.00 with Q13_11 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q13_7 the lowest mean value, indicating positive perceptions with regards to the factor "Process" (Source: Data).

Table 5.30: Descriptive Statistics for Process Factor in the Company Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q13_1	399	1	5	1.83	.575
Q13_2	399	1	5	1.84	.531
Q13_3	399	1	5	1.93	.391
Q13_4	399	1	5	1.88	.500
Q13_5	399	1	5	1.76	.567
Q13_6	399	1	5	1.80	.546
Q13_7	399	1	5	1.75	.601
Q13_8	399	1	5	1.87	.732
Q13_9	399	1	5	1.86	.784
Q13_10	399	1	5	1.86	.690
Q13_11	399	1	5	2.00	.382
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.31, the values ranged between 1.87 and 2.04 with Q14_8 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q15_11 the lowest mean value, indicating positive perceptions with regards to the factor "Physical evidence" (Source: Data).

Table 5.31: Descriptive Statistics for Physical Evidence Factor in the Company Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q14_1	399	1	5	2.00	.443
Q14_2	399	1	5	2.01	.413
Q14_3	399	1	5	1.96	.380
Q14_4	399	1	5	1.98	.407
Q14_5	399	1	5	2.00	.465
Q14_6	399	1	5	1.98	.431
Q14_7	399	1	5	1.96	.367
Q14_8	399	1	5	2.04	.447
Q15_9	399	1	5	2.00	.378
Q15_10	399	1	5	1.95	.473
Q15_11	399	1	5	1.87	.589
Q15_12	399	1	5	1.92	.662
Q15_13	399	1	5	1.98	.368
Valid N (listwise)	399				

Table 5.32 presents the descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum) for the 7Ps variables in the company survey.

Table 5.32: Descriptive Statistics for the 7Ps Variables in the Company Survey

Statistics	Factors						
	Product	Place	Price	Promotion	People	Process	Physical Evidence
<i>N</i>	399	399	399	399	399	399	399
<i>M</i>	1.91	1.89	1.986	1.87	1.745	1.85	1.97
<i>Mdn</i>	1.91	1.92	1.995	1.86	1.73	1.86	1.98
<i>Mode</i>	1.91	1.92	2.0	1.97	1.73	1.86	2.0
<i>SD</i>	0.2808	0.3317	0.3379	0.3513	0.4139	0.4197	0.3432
<i>Min</i>	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<i>Max</i>	4.3	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

The characteristic features of the descriptive statistics for the 7Ps variables were: (a) the mean scores for each factor were similar ($M = 1.745$ to 1.986) and reflected a consistently high level of agreement for the items in each factor; (b) the medians and the modes did not coincide with the mean scores, reflecting the skewness of the frequency distributions; and (c) the full range of the 5-point scales were not used, because the minimum scores were consistently greater than 1.0 ($Min = 1.0$). The standard deviations for each factor were small and similar in magnitude ($SD = 0.2808$ to 0.4197) reflecting the attenuation of the variance associated with the clustering of the item scores around the higher end of the 5-point scales (i.e., 1 or 2).

5.1.11 Construct Reliability and Validity

The items used to measure the constructs have been operationally defined, and the results of the EFA for the study's company survey are presented. As next step is to ensure the operational measurements are both reliable and valid, this section will analyse of the reliability and discuss the validity of the measures.

5.1.11.1 Reliability

Reliability is considered a measure of the degree of internal consistency among the items measuring variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010), and the most common means to assess the reliability of measures is with Cronbach's alpha values (Spicer, 2005) which show the degree of relation among a set of items measuring a construct. Nunnally (1978) concluded .7 to be an acceptable lower limit for this reliability coefficient. As shown in Table 5.33, the Cronbach's alpha value exceeded .70 for all factors extracted through EFA, and the composite reliabilities (CR) were well above the recommended threshold, thus indicating the internal consistency of the developed measures.

Table 5.33: Convergent Validity and Internal Consistency Reliability of Factors in the Company Survey Data

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customer experience	0.96	0.96	0.962	0.523
People	0.926	0.929	0.935	0.509
Physical evidence	0.947	0.953	0.954	0.617
Place/Distribution	0.94	0.942	0.947	0.547
Price	0.959	0.962	0.964	0.624
Process	0.916	0.92	0.93	0.548
Product	0.937	0.944	0.946	0.559
Promotion	0.94	0.945	0.948	0.585

5.1.11.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to the “extent to which indicators of a specific construct converge or share a high proportion of variance in common” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 601). Yet unlike content validity, convergent validity can be determined using common measures, such as Average Variance Extracted (AVE), standardized factor loadings, and construct reliability (Hair et al., 2014). To determine convergent validity, the value of AVE should be greater than

.50, while the standardized factor loadings should be $> .50$ (Hair et al., 2014). For a newly developed measure, the acceptable reliability score is greater than .70 (Nunnally, 1978). Table 5.33 shows that the criterion to confirm convergent factor validity (i.e., AVE $> 50\%$) as proposed by Hair, et al. (2017) was satisfied and recorded for a composite reliability higher than 0.70 for the present study (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as determined through analysing the constituent items in each of the eight factors was consistently more than 50%. Hence the results of AVE support the reliability and validity of the measurement scales.

5.1.11.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is performed to demonstrate and confirm that all constructs are different from one other (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, Gefen & Straub (2005) stated that discriminant validity is determined by discerning the correlation among the constructs. To calculate and confirm validity, the square root of AVE values of each construct should be higher than all of the correlation values of the constructs (Zahir & Sentosa, 2013). Table 5.34 shows that all constructs differed from one another, and the diagonal indicates the square root of AVE values for each construct, and as seen in the table, these values were higher than the other correlation values among the constructs. The study also confirmed the Discriminant Validity of measurements using composite reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Table 5.33). The test for the average variance extracted (AVE) on the constructs demonstrated that the AVE exceeded the square of the structural link between the constructs. Moreover, composite reliability, a measure of the internal consistency of the items of a latent variable, was also sought in this study (Chin, 1998). To determine composite validity, a composite reliability score was calculated for each latent variable (Fornell & Larckers, 1981). In the present work, all the marketing mix and customer experience factors showed a composite reliability score of above 0.70, suggesting adequate reliability.

Table 5.34: Discriminant Validity

Factors	Customer experience	People	Physical evidence	Place	Price	Process	Product	Promotion
Customer experience	0.723							
People	0.712	0.713						
Physical evidence	0.716	0.702	0.785					
Place/ Distribution	0.715	0.663	0.668	0.739				
Price	0.704	0.648	0.697	0.714	0.790			
Process	0.655	0.667	0.673	0.701	0.674	0.740		
Product	0.675	0.687	0.658	0.703	0.615	0.617	0.748	
Promotion	0.718	0.649	0.711	0.706	0.705	0.707	0.645	0.764

Note: Diagonal values: square root values of AVEs
 Values below diagonal: correlations between constructs

5.1.12 Model of Factors in Company Survey

The path model created by the graphic user interface of SmartPLS to predict customer experience (Figure 5.2). The seven factors in the company survey representing the practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) were incorporated in the model as the hypothesized predictors of customer experience. The purpose of the path model was to explore and describe the relationships between the 7P's and customer experience.

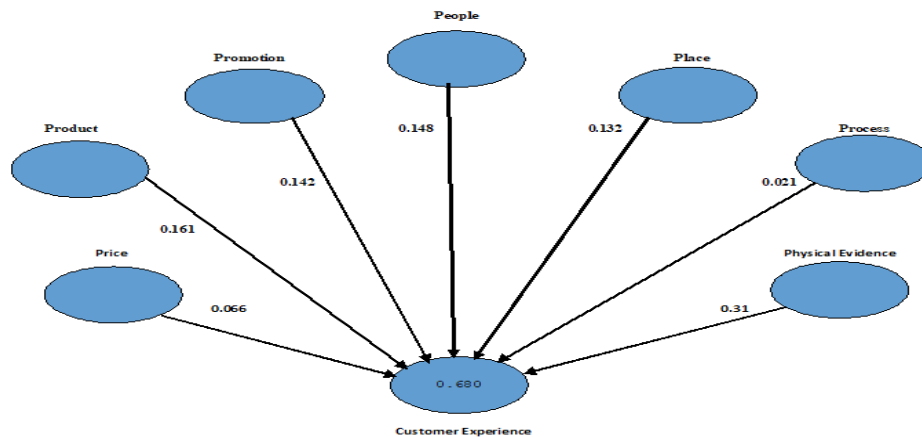


Figure 5.2: Path Model with Coefficients (β) and Effect Size (R^2) to Predict Customer Experience using the Practiced Marketing Mix (the 7P's) in the Company Survey (Copy of SmartPLS output)

5.1.12.1 Model Fit Indices

The model fit was assessed using absolute fit indices (i.e., Chi-square, standardized root mean square residual SRMR) (Hair et al., 2010). Chi-Square value is the traditional measure for evaluating overall model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999: 2). A good model fit would provide an insignificant result at a 0.05 threshold (Barrett, 2007); standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is the square root of the difference between the residuals of the sample covariance matrix and the hypothesized covariance model. Values for the SRMR range from zero to 1.0 with well-fitting models obtaining values less than .05 (Byrne, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000), however values as high as 0.08 are deemed acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The first of these indices to appear in LISREL output is the Normed Fit Index (NFI: Bentler & Bonnet, 1980) which assesses the model by comparing the χ^2 value of the model to the χ^2 of a null model. The null/independence model represents a worst-case scenario as it means all measured variables are uncorrelated. Values for this statistic range between 0 and 1 with Bentler & Bonnet (1980) asserting values greater than 0.90 reflective of a good fit. Since the Chi-square for the estimated model in Table 5.35 was 22,214.20 with an insignificant p value ($p > 0.05$), SRMR was 0.069 and NFI was 0.923. Hence the model is suitable.

Table 5.35: Chi Square Statistic

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.069	0.069
d ULS	23.778	23.778
d G1	16.483	16.483
d G2	14.684	14.684
Chi-Square	22,214.20	22,214.20
NFI	0.923	0.923

5.1.12.2 Path Coefficients

As noted previously, path coefficients are standardized versions of linear regression weights used to detect and examine causal linkages between statistical variables in a structural equation modelling approach. The standardization entails multiplying the ordinary regression

coefficient by the standard deviations of the corresponding explanatory variable and can be extended to apply to partial regression coefficients (Wright, 1921).

According to Brannick (n.d.) "A path coefficient indicates the direct effect of a variable, assumed to be a cause, on another variable, assumed to be an effect. Path coefficients are standardized because they are estimated from correlations (a path regression coefficient is unstandardized)" (para. 3). Table 5.36 provides the statistics to indicate the significance of the path coefficients (β) located next to the arrows. Table shows the path coefficients of the latent constructs in the study.

Table 5.36: The Path Coefficients (β) of the Latent Constructs in the Study

	Path Coefficients (β)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ($ O/STDEV $)	P Values
People → Customer experience	0.148	0.141	0.05	3.062	0.002*
Physical evidence → Customer experience	0.31	0.32	0.087	3.168	0.001*
Place/ Distribution → Customer experience	0.132	0.121	0.092	1.612	0.04*
Price → Customer experience	0.066	0.064	0.078	0.782	0.032*
Process → Customer experience	0.021	0.024	0.065	0.32	0.021*
Product → Customer experience	0.161	0.162	0.068	2.43	0.018*
Promotion → Customer experience	0.142	0.144	0.061	2.162	0.031*

Note: * β is significantly different from zero ($p < .05$)

After bootstrapping the data provided by $N = 399$ participants using 5000 subsamples, the mean and standard error (SE) of each path coefficient (β) were computed. Two-tailed t-tests were conducted (where $t = \beta/SE$) to determine if the β coefficients were significantly different from zero. All the seven factors representing the practiced marketing mix were significant predictors of customer experience.

People → customer experience ($t = 3.062, p < .05$) with the mean path coefficient ($\beta = 0.148$), physical evidence → customer experience ($t = 3.168, p < .05$) with the mean path coefficient ($\beta = 0.31$), place → customer experience ($t = 1.612, p < .05$) with the mean path coefficient ($\beta = 0.132$), price → customer experience ($t = 0.782, p < .05$) with the mean path coefficient

($\beta = 0.066$), process \rightarrow customer experience ($t = 0.32, p < .05$) with the mean path coefficient ($\beta = 0.021$), product \rightarrow customer experience ($t = 2.43, p < .05$) with the mean path coefficient ($\beta = 0.161$), promotion \rightarrow customer experience ($t = 2.162, p < .05$) with the mean path coefficient ($\beta = 0.142$) had significantly higher path coefficients.

This implies that the regression results affirmed that the product, price, place/distribution, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process practices employed by the construction companies in Arabian Gulf State strongly influence customer experience. The effect size ($R^2 = .68$) indicated that the model explained a substantial proportion (68%) of the variance in customer experience. Therefore, the path model in (Figure 5.2) predicted that the effect of an increase in the scores for product, price, place/distribution, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process was to increase the scores for customer experience. Hence, the finding shows there is a direct effect from expected practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry which supported (H1).

In conclusion, from the company's perspective, it was analysed physical evidence is the most significant factor, which is followed by product, people, promotion, place/distribution, price and lastly, process. According to company's stance, the process is the least effective factor which influences customer experience given that it is entirely an internal matter of the company.

5.1.13 Effects of Respondent Characteristics on the Factors in the Company Survey

The purpose of MANOVA was to test hypothesis (H4): The expected practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies is affected by demographic variables, like the respondents' age, educational level, managerial level, years of experience with the company and years of experience in the industry.

The dependent variable was an exact linear combination of product + place + price + promotion + people + process + physical evidence. The proposed independent variables were age, education level, managerial level, years of experience in the company, and years of experience in the industry.

The dependent variables in MANOVA are moderately positively correlated, indicated by

correlation coefficients < 0.8 (Huberty & Olejnik, 2006). If the correlations are > 0.8 then multicollinearity compromises the results. The correlation matrix in Table 5.37 indicates that there was no strong multicollinearity. (Pearson's r (399) = .628 to .798, $p < .01$) between the 7P's. The independent variables in MANOVA must not be dependent on each other, or in any other way related to each other (Huberty & Olejnik, 2006). The correlation matrix in Table 5.38 indicates that this assumption was violated with respect to age, industry experience, and company experience (Pearson's r (399) = .755 to .847 ($p < .01$)). Consequently, industry experience and company experience were not included in the MANOVA model. Age was used as the independent variable, acting as a proxy for both industry experience and company experience.

Table 5.37: Correlation Matrix between the 7P's in the Company Survey Data

Correlations							
	cmp_prdct	cmp_plce	cmp_price	cmp_promo	cmp_people	cmp_process	cmp_physical
cmp_prdct	1						
cmp_plce	.752**	1					
cmp_price	.639**	.798**	1				
cmp_promo	.665**	.778**	.770**	1			
cmp_people	.668**	.666**	.638**	.657**	1		
cmp_process	.628**	.702**	.681**	.692**	.697**	1	
cmp_physical	.666**	.685**	.699**	.721**	.694**	.683**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5.38: Correlation Matrix between Age, Industry Experience, and Company Experiences

	Age	Industry Experience	Company Experience
Age	1		
Industry Experience	.847**	1	
Company Experience	.755**	.849**	1

Note: ** Statistically significant correlation ($p < .01$)

In order to generate accurate MANOVA statistics: (a) the sample sizes in each category of each independent variable must be large enough (at least $n = 20$) to provide sufficient power to detect statistically significant differences between the categories; and (b) the sample sizes

in each category should not be highly unbalanced, meaning that the size of one category must not be more than 10 times larger than the size of another category (Huberty & Olejnik, 2006). Tables 5.1 and 5.2 indicate that this criterion was violated for gender (male = 380; female = 18); for education (< high school = 10, high school= 78; bachelor’s degree = 298; master’s degree= 8; and doctoral degree = 1); and for managerial level (top = 3, senior = 86; middle =126, front-line = 181). Consequently, gender had to be excluded from the MANOVA model. Education was collapsed into two categories (high school or less = 88, and degree = 307) and management level was collapsed into three categories (top and senior = 89; middle =126, front-line = 181). The variances of the dependent variables across the independent variables in a MANOVA model should ideally be equal. Table 5.39 presents the results of Levene’s test for equality of variance.

Table 5.39: Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance of Seven Dependent Variables in Company Survey Data

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Product	2.587	42	354	.000*
Place	2.418	42	354	.000*
Price	2.540	42	354	.000*
Promotion	2.403	42	354	.000*
People	2.658	42	354	.000*
Process	1.986	42	354	.000*
Physical evidence	2.982	42	354	.000*

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Country + Age + Education + Country * Age + Country * Education + Age * Education + Country * Age * Education

The assumption of equality of variance was violated for all the dependent variables indicated by $p < .05$ for Levene’s F statistics. However, violation of the assumption of equality of variance should not seriously compromise the statistical inferences of MANOVA as long as the overall sample size is large, and the sample sizes in each category of the independent variables are balanced (Huberty & Olejnik, 2006). The multivariate statistics for the MANOVA model are presented in Table 5.40. Wilk’s λ was applicable as the multivariate test statistic because the sample size was large ($N = 399$), and there were more than two categories within the independent variables (Huberty & Olejnik, 2006). The effect sizes in MANOVA were indicated by Partial η^2 (Field, 2013). According to Ferguson (2009) the

minimum acceptable effect size to indicate a practically significant or meaningful effect in social science data is $\eta^2 = .04$ (i.e., > 4% of the variance in the dependent variables must be explained by each of the independent variables).

Table 5.40: MANOVA Multivariate Statistics for Company Survey Data

Effect	Wilk's λ	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	Effect size Partial η^2
Country	1.551	21	999.818	.054*	.045
Age	1.671	21	999.818	.03*	.042
Education	1.042	28	1256.154	.04*	.046
Management Level	1.017	22	1109.284	.024*	.048

Note: * Significant effect ($p < .05$)

Country had significant effect on the 7P's (Wilk's λ (21, 999.818) = 1.551, $p = 0.054$; $\eta^2 = .045$). The age of the respondents had statistically significant effect (Wilk's λ (21, 999.818) = 1.671, $p < .03$) the effect size was ($\eta^2 = .042$). The education level of the respondents had statistically significant effect (Wilk's λ (28, 1256.154) = 1.042, $p = .04$), the effect size was ($\eta^2 = .046$). Management level had a statistically significant effect (Wilk's λ (22, 1109.284) = 1.017, $p = .024$) with effect size ($\eta^2 = .048$). Applying Ferguson's (2009) criteria, the effects of country, age, education, and management level on the 7P's had a strong practical significance. In conclusion, the findings revealed that the age, education level, and the managerial level of the employees have strong effects on the practiced marketing mix by the construction companies.

5.2 Customer Survey

The results of the customer survey are presented in 13 sections: (1) Demographic and contextual characteristics of company respondents (2) Missing value analysis (3) Sample size (4) Assessment of Normality (5) Assessment of Multicollinearity (6) Factorability assessment (7) Reliability (8) Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (9) Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (10) Descriptive statistics for factors in company survey (11) Construct reliability and validity (12) Model of factors in company survey (13) Effects of respondent characteristics on the factors in company survey.

5.2.1 Demographic and Contextual Characteristics of Customer Respondents

The demographic characteristics of $N = 399$ respondents in the customer survey are summarized in Table 5.41. The respondents were located in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Dubai. The country with the highest proportion of respondents was Saudi Arabia ($n = 290$, 72.7%). The vast majority of the respondents ($n = 394$, 98.7%) were male. The ages of the respondents ranged from 25 to 64 years. The most frequent age group was 35 to 44 years ($n = 234$, 58.6%). The highest education levels of the respondents ranged from less than high school to doctoral degree. The most frequent educational qualification was a bachelor's degree ($n = 312$, 78.2%) (Source: Data).

Table 5.41: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in the Customer Survey

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Country	Saudi Arabia	290	72.7
	Bahrain	20	5.0
	Kuwait	60	15.0
	Dubai	29	7.3
Gender	Male	394	98.7
	Female	1	0.3
	Missing value	4	1
Age (Years)	25 to 34	10	2.5
	35 to 44	234	58.6
	45 to 54	129	32.3
	55 to 64	25	6.3
	Missing Value	1	0.3
Education	Less than high school.	4	1.0
	High school degree.	45	11.2
	Bachelor's degree.	312	78.2
	Masters' degree.	19	4.8
	Doctoral degree.	19	4.8

5.2.2 Missing Value Analysis

Missing data in datasets were found to be significant and thus 'not-ignorable', and it appears missing data reflect participants' failure to complete survey items (Hair et al., 2010, p. 46),

and the quantifiable value of the missing data was assessed using descriptive and frequency statistics (Hair et al., 2010; Pallant, 2016).

A total of 19 missing values were found among the responses to the 5-point Likert Scale Items (Q08 to Q20) in the customer survey data as presented in Table 5.42 (Appendix IV). The mean scores for the corresponding items were used to replace the missing values using the replacement procedures in SPSS. Replacement with mean scores is the most common way to handle missing values in survey response data, and does not seriously compromise the results, so long as the number of missing values is only a small proportion of the total number of responses (Enders, 2010). The results for the present study's datasets reveal the level of missing data was low as they did not exceed 10% (Hair et al., 2010).

5.2.3 Sample Size

The ideal or requisite sample size for a study can be determined through varied means (Creswell, 2013). A popular method is to arrive at an ideal sample size based on the implemented statistical techniques (Cohen, 1977; Hinkin, 1995). For example, while employing a statistical method such as Exploratory Factor Analysis EFA, Guadagnoli & Velicer (1988) assert that a sample size of 150 is a sufficient “to obtain an accurate solution in EFA as long as item inter correlations are reasonably strong” (Hinkin, 1995, p. 973). For the current study, there were 399 participants involved in this stage of analysis, thus, exceeding the minimal number of 150 s recommended by Hinkin (1995).

5.2.4 Assessment of Normality

Normality, in terms analysis, refers to "the shape of the data distribution for an individual metric variable and its correspondence to the normal distribution, the benchmark for statistical methods" (Hair et al., 2010, p. 71). Normality is determined by using statistical methods (i.e., Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics) (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996), and according to Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics $> .05$ indicates a normal rate of distribution, whereas a significant score of $.00$ indicates a lack or violation of normality. Table 5.43 (Appendix IV) presents the tests for normality of the variable scores. The Kolmogorov-

Smirnov (K-S) statistics were all statistically significant ($p < .05$) reflecting strong deviations from normality. Whenever, the variables deviate from normality, the analysis can be continued by converting the variables to logarithms (Feng et al., 2014). Hence log conversion of the factors was used to deal with the data for the regressions.

5.2.5 Assessment of Multicollinearity

Correlations in statistics are conducted before subjecting the data to check the multicollinearity before analysing data for regression analysis. Multicollinearity is defined as "the extent to which a variable can be explained by other variables in the analysis" (Hair et al., 2014, p. 91), and often manifests as "two or more predictor variables in a multiple regression model" showing high correlation, thereby posing serious difficulties to the regression analysis (Neter et al., 1989, p. 667). It is first crucial to assess the correlation coefficient between variables (Hair et al., 2014), for if correlation coefficient between variables is greater than .90, at the .90 level of a correlation coefficient or higher, as argued by Dohoo et al. (1997) it can be concluded that the variables display multicollinearity and are not sufficiently independent from each other (Hair et al., 2014), thus rendering the data unsuitable for the regression analysis (O'Brien & Scott, 2012).

An examination of the correlation coefficient matrix for the present study revealed that the correlation between the variables ranged between .075 and .748 for product factor, .145 and .894 for place factor, .280 and .769 for price factor, .017 and .880 for promotion factor, .247 and .804 for people factor, .148 and .823 for process factor, .210 and .874 for physical evidence factor and .098 and .806 for customer experience factor (see Tables 5.44, 5.45, 5.46, 5.47, 5.48, 5.49, 5.50 and 5.51 Appendix IV), a value below the threshold of .90 (Hair et al., 2010), thereby indicating variables were sufficiently intercorrelated and not displaying multicollinearity. To further confirm the absence of multicollinearity, Craney & Surles (2002) suggest using the variance inflation factor (VIF) test, wherein the value of $VIF < 10.00$ negates the multicollinearity threat (Craney & Surles, 2002; Hair et al., 2006). To ensure a viable dataset, the VIF test was administered, of which the results indicated that the VIF values were less than 10, thereby, supporting an absence of multicollinearity (see Table 5.55).

Table 5.55: Variance Inflation Factors

Factor	VIF
Product	1.49
Place	1.81
Price	1.46
People	1.38
Process	1.84
Physical Evidence	2.17
Promotion	1.52
Customer Experience	1.42

5.2.6 Factorability Assessment

Factorability refers to the appropriateness of the data so that they can be considered suitable for the factor analysis test (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996), and this trait is assessed using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett's test of Sphericity, and through examination of the correlation coefficient between the variables (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). In order for the dataset to be considered suitable for EFA, the KMO value should be .6 or above, and Bartlett's test score should be statistically significant at $P < .05$. For this dataset, the KMO value was .876, which is above the cut-off value of .60 (Pallant, 2016), while the value of the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Table 5.56) showed a chi-square value of 62172.946 significant at $p = .000$ thus making the data statistically suitable for factor analysis.

Table 5.56: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.876
Approx. Chi-Square	62172.946
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
df	10731
Sig.	.000

5.2.7 Reliability

The reliability in statistics indicates the inter item consistency. The reliability in statistics is indicated by Cronbach's alpha. Table 5.57 shows that the Cronbach's alpha in this research ranged from 0.884 to 0.958 indicating a superb consistency. Hence all the items were considered for the further analysis (Source: Data).

Table 5.57: Reliability of Factors in Customer Survey

Variable	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Customer experience	0.958
Product	0.916
Place/Distribution	0.943
Price	0.926
Promotion	0.884
People	0.936
Process	0.915
Physical Evidence	0.922

5.2.8 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA was conducted with 147 items in the customer survey data that were used to investigate the effect of construction companies' marketing mix (the 7P's) on their customers' experiences in the four Arabian Gulf States, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. An iterative sequence of factor analysis was used resulting in ten distinct factors comprising 130 items with factor loadings $> .5$ (Hair et al., 2014) suggested that the individual items were reliable measures of the extracted factors.

High Cronbach's alpha values $>.6$ (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) also indicated that items loaded onto the factors are internally consistent. These ten factors explained 75.116% of the variance which is regarded as sufficient to represent the data (Pett et al., 2003). It is also higher than 60% threshold recommended by Malhotra et al. (2012).

Table 5.58: Extracted Factors

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	34.907	23.746	23.746
2	18.402	12.519	36.265
3	13.406	9.12	45.385
4	12.184	8.288	53.673
5	8.622	5.866	59.539
6	6.426	4.371	63.91
7	5.29	3.598	67.508
8	4.241	2.885	70.393
9	3.698	2.517	72.91
10	3.242	2.206	75.116

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

The results of the factor analysis are presented in Table 5.58. Ten factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1 (Kaiser, 1958), were extracted using principal component analysis. The principle behind Eigenvalue greater than 1 criterion is that a factor will be retained for interpretation if the individual factor will account for a variance of at least a single variable. Table 5.58 presents Eigenvalues corresponding to the individual factors and the percentage of variance explained by the extracted factor structure. The table shown that factor 1 accounted for 23.746% of variance with an eigenvalue of 34.907. Factor 2 accounted for 12.519% of variance with an eigenvalue of 18.402. Factor 3 accounted for 9.12% of variance with an eigenvalue of 13.406. Factor 4 accounted for 8.288% of variance with an eigenvalue of 12.184. Factor 5 accounted for 5.866% of variance with an eigenvalue of 8.622. Factor 6 accounted for 4.371% of variance with an eigenvalue of 6.426. Factor 7 accounted for 3.598% of variance with an eigenvalue of 5.29. Factor 8 accounted for 2.885% of variance with an eigenvalue of 4.241. Factor 9 accounted for 2.517% of variance with an eigenvalue of 3.698. Factor 10 accounted for 2.206% of variance with an eigenvalue of 3.242.

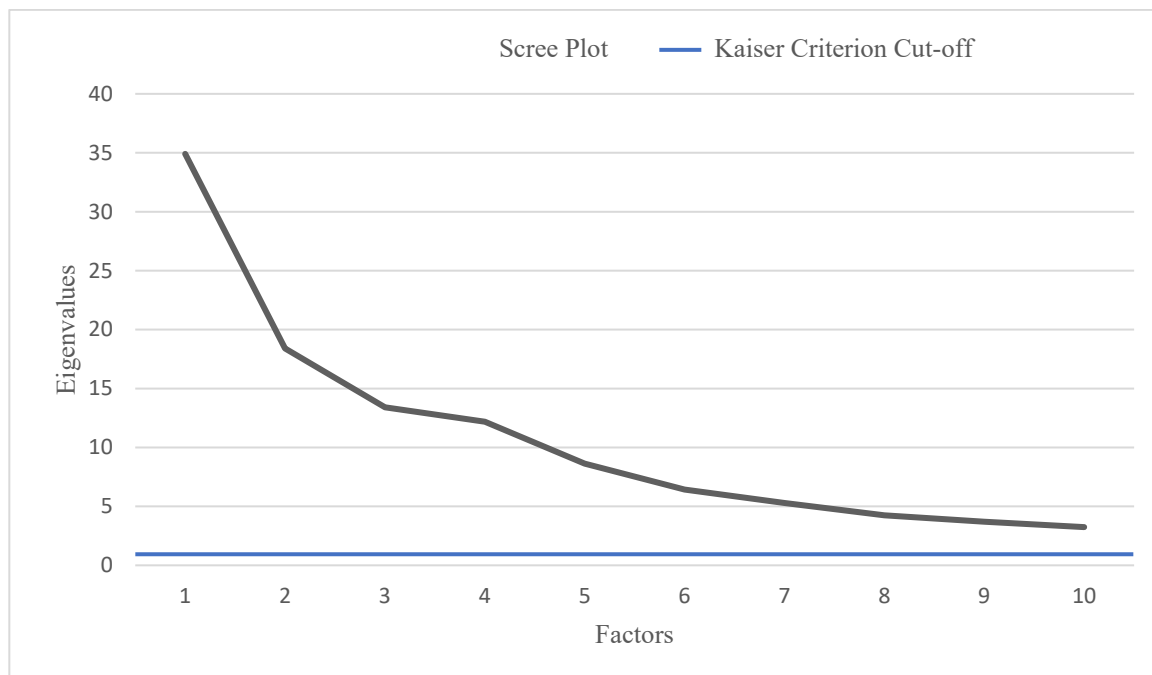


Figure 5.3 Scree plot with the Kaiser criterion for customer

In addition, the scree plot in Figure 5.3 was used to decide the number of factors that need to be kept. This guideline determines that all factors having an Eigenvalue more than one will be preserved for reading (Kaiser, 1958). The figure showed that ten factors had an Eigenvalue more than one. Thus, factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1 are to be considered significant and are retained in the analysis. Individual factors, factor loadings, the Cronbach's alpha, and the item communalities are calculated and discussed below.

Factor 1 (Cus_Product)

The items that loaded on to the first factor pertain to the actual product activities of the construction companies' in the Arabian Gulf State that the customers dealt with. Hence, this factor was assigned the name "Cus_Product". This factor explained 24% of the total variance and consisted of 14 items with factor loadings ranging from .518 to .850 and the communalities range from .536 to .763. Cronbach's alpha value of .920 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. All the 14 items in Table 5.59 describe the actual product related practices of the construction companies that customers in Arabian Gulf State dealt with. The actual product indicate that the services of construction companies do not always increase the attractiveness of their offers to the customers and their product's offer does not emphasise the attributes that are important to the customers. The products and services of construction companies do not always meet the requirements of customers as their product strategy do not respond to the customers' needs and wants as customers in the market. The higher factor loadings (>.5) and communalities (>.5) implies that these items are reliable measures to assess this factor and indicates the importance of this variable in the factor structure.

Table 5.59: Cus Product Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q8_4 Their services do not always increase the attractiveness of their offers to me.	.850	.763
Q8_5 Their product's offer does not emphasize the attributes that are important to me.	.812	.725

Q8_11 They attract more new customers than their competitors.	.780	.738
Q8_9 Their products and services do not always meet the requirements of customers.	.778	.713
Q8_10 Their strategy emphasized the benefits of their products to customers.	.763	.631
Q8_8 Construction companies marketing strategy emphasizes on delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers.	.760	.648
Q8_7 The product strategy of the construction companies does not respond to our needs and wants as customers in the market.	.754	.625
Q8_6 Construction companies conduct market research to know how we think about their products.	.729	.612
Q8_2 Their marketing strategy helps me to develop an ongoing relationship with their products and services.	.649	.563
Q8_1 Their range of brands helps me to make better choices.	.635	.552
Q8_14 They focus on serving more diverse segments of customer than their competitors.	.617	.549
Q8_3 Their marketing strategy clearly differentiates their products and services from their competitors.	.609	.652
Q8_12 They focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers.	.566	.697
Q8_13 They focus on providing unique services not offered by competitors.	.518	.536

*Communalities
Cronbach's alpha: .92

Factor 2 (Cus_Place/ Distribution)

Factor 2 was assigned the name "Cus_Place/ Distribution", as 15 items that loaded in this factor explained the actual distribution practices of the construction companies that customers are dealt with (see Table 5.60). This factor accounts for 13% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .712 to .929 and the communalities range from .563 to .771. Cronbach's alpha value of .960 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. The actual distribution practices indicate that the customers were not happy from the way that the construction companies handling their complaints, maintenance their problems and the invoicing. Construction companies cannot reach a wide geographic coverage of customers as they have difficulty to access their customers in the market.

Table 5.60: Cus Place Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q10_8 Handling complaints	.929	.760
Q10_3 Speed of order fulfilment	.910	.733
Q10_7 Handling maintenance problems	.897	.712
Q10_6 Handling delivery problems	.895	.705
Q10_4 Delivery time and reliability	.882	.717
Q10_5 Invoicing	.879	.723
Q9_5 They can provide necessary customer service pre- and post-sale.	.819	.679
Q9_2 It is difficult for them to access their customers in the market.	.793	.711
Q10_2 Stock availability	.784	.771
Q9_1 Construction companies cannot reach a wide geographic coverage of customers.	.780	.682
Q9_3 They can store, handle and display their products appropriately.	.776	.654
Q10_1 Order processing	.764	.675
Q9_4 They take care of the movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from their place to customer's location.	.759	.563
Q9_6 Extensive geographic areas are served by construction companies efficiently and cost effectively through networks of warehouses.	.734	.572
Q9_7 They hold stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity	.712	.616

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .96

Factor 3 (Cus_Price)

The third factor was assigned the name "Cus_Price" as 14 items that loaded in this factor which have been extracted through factor analysis relate to the pricing strategies of the construction companies that customers dealt with (see Table 5.61). These items that have loaded on to the "Cus_Price" indicate that the pricing message of the construction companies was not consistent with the rest of their marketing mix and the effect of their prices on consumer's attitude and buying decisions was negative. Their prices do not respond to the price sensitivity of customers in the market, did not reinforce the quality image of their products and did not take into consideration the differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers. This factor accounts for 9% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .507 to .722 and the communalities range from .511 to .726. The Cronbach's alpha value of .920 for this factor indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items.

Table 5.61: Cus Price Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q11_10 Their pricing messages is consistent with the rest of their marketing mix.	.722	.645
Q11_7 The effect of their prices on consumer's attitude and buying decisions is negative.	.710	.693
Q11_9 Their prices do not respond to the price sensitivity of customers in the market.	.687	.726
Q11_12 They expand their market share through lower pricing.	.686	.709
Q11_3 Their prices emphasize the better cost savings compared with the competition.	.667	.573
Q11_1 Their prices reinforce the quality image of their products	.661	.554
Q11_2 Their prices increase customers' value for money.	.656	.571
Q11_15 They usually get into price wars with the competition.	.644	.511
Q11_11 Their prices do not take into consideration the differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers.	.641	.623
Q11_13 They support their product image through appropriate pricing.	.572	.594
Q11_8 They set higher prices to differentiate their products from those of the competitors.	.536	.618
Q11_14 They stimulate high volume sales through price reductions.	.517	.582
Q11_4 Their prices are consistent with their competitive prices.	.514	.676
Q11_6 Their prices are helping them to achieve high market share and customer loyalty.	.507	.602

*Communalities
Cronbach's alpha: .92

Factor 4 (Cus_Promotion)

Table 5.62 presents those items that loaded on to the fourth factor which was labeled as "Cus_Promotion" as the variables that have loaded in this factor describes the promotion practices of the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State that customers dealt with. 13 items contribute to this factor and account for 8% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .555 to .791 and the communalities range from .528 to .740. Cronbach's alpha value of .920 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items.

These items that have loaded on to this factor indicate that the promotion activities of the construction companies did not emphasise product benefits to customers and they did not use discounts to encourage prompt payment from customers. Customers were not happy with

their pricing strategies as they did not take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising or trending of different media channels.

Table 5.62: Cus_Promotion Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q12_12 Their promotion activities do not emphasize product benefits to customers.	.791	.740
Q12_11 They use discounts to encourage prompt payment from customers.	.777	.695
Q12_6 When communicating with customers, they take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising.	.767	.687
Q12_10 They give customers a scope for price negotiation, to let them feel they are gaining value when dealing with the company.	.750	.615
Q12_7 Their promotion activities provide the consumer a clear reason for 'buying' from them.	.743	.721
Q12_4 When communicating with customers, they take into consideration the popularity or trending of different media channels.	.740	.733
Q12_5 When communicating with customers, they take into consideration the popularity or trending of different communication techniques and promotional methods.	.730	.674
Q12_1 They use promotion to motivate to new customers to buy from them.	.719	.644
Q12_8 Their promotion activities are positively affecting their reputation among consumers.	.659	.553
Q12_2 They do not use their website to give information and advice to customers.	.654	.536
Q12_3 They do not use their social media to get customers' feedback.	.643	.528
Q12_9 They keep an eye on how the competition is communicating with their customers.	.590	.627
Q12_13 Their promotion activities target old customers who have bought from them before.	.555	.642

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .92

Factor 5 (Cus_People)

The fifth factor was assigned the name "Cus_People", as all the items that loaded in this factor explained the people practices that are adopted by the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf States that customers dealt with (see Table 5.63). 12 items contribute to this

factor and account for 6% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .537 to .747 and the communalities range from .548 to .745. Cronbach's alpha value of .950 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. These items that have loaded on to this factor indicate that the employees of the construction companies are not always self-motivated to help customers as should they play a key role in anticipating customers' needs. The top management and staff leaders of the construction companies despite they are well educated and have great experience but not always committed to develop high quality customer service delivery teams. The appearance and manners of the staff in the construction companies are not always professional as there no deal of interaction between the staff and customers.

Table 5.63: Cus People Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q13_8 The employees are not always self-motivated to help customers.	.747	.647
Q13_10 The staff play a key role in anticipating customers' needs,	.739	.638
Q13_6 Employees of these companies always provide prompt service to customers.	.737	.573
Q13_9 Employee recommendations are trusted and considered in these companies.	.734	.592
Q13_7 The majority of the employees are well educated and knowledgeable.	.726	.644
Q13_13 Staff team leaders have great experience and strong people skills.	.720	.745
Q13_11 The staff build personalized relationships with customers.	.673	.556
Q13_4 The construction company employees are giving customers personal attention.	.672	.619
Q13_12 The top management is not always committed to develop high quality customer service delivery teams.	.650	.548
Q13_1 Customers are treated well in these companies.	.626	.711
Q13_3 The appearance and manners of the staff are not always professional.	.612	.586
Q13_2 There is a great deal of interaction between the staff and customers.	.537	.643

*Communalities
Cronbach's alpha: .95

Factor 6 (Cus_Process)

Table 5.64 displays the ten items that loaded on to the sixth factor which have been extracted

through factor analysis. Ten items relate to the "Cus_Process" account for 4% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .513 to .788 and the communalities range from .534 to .735. Cronbach's alpha value of .930 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. These items that have loaded on to this factor indicate that the construction companies' process of handling customer complaints effectively is not clear to employees when they address service failures and their offers did not match customers' needs in the market. The construction companies are not efficient in order processing and reducing customers' waiting time as there are only certain employees know how to do certain tasks.

Table 5.64: Cus_Process Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q14_8 The process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures.	.788	.726
Q14_5 Their offers match customers' needs in the market.	.765	.679
Q14_6 They can anticipate customers' needs and wants in the market in an accurate way.	.751	.662
Q14_9 It is not easy for customers to give them feedback about their performance.	.737	.598
Q14_7 They are efficient in order processing and reducing customers' waiting time.	.734	.652
Q14_11 Only certain employees know how to do certain tasks, if they leave the company is in big trouble.	.723	.688
Q14_4 They are very innovative in-service delivery compared to competition.	.621	.735
Q14_1 They have more advanced systems and technology than our competitors.	.600	.534
Q14_2 Most of the communications between their staff and customers are automated or computerized.	.558	.650
Q14_3 They have a strong and up-to-date database of customer information in the company.	.513	.631

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .93

Factor 7 (Cus_Physical Evidence)

Factor 7 was assigned "Cus_Physical Evidence" and comprised of 13 items pertaining to the physical appearance practices of the construction companies in the Arabian Gulf State that customer dealt with (see Table 5.65). 13 items contribute to this factor and account for 4%

of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .637 to .819 and the communalities range from .553 to .778. Cronbach's alpha value of .930 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. These items indicate that the construction companies' machines and service delivery equipment are always dirty and their offices' décor and design negatively influence customer's expectations of the service. The construction companies' buildings, furnishings and layout are not reflective of customers' service quality expectations and the outdoor facilities of the company are not visually appealing.

Table 5.65: Cus Physical Evidence Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q15_8 Their machines and service delivery equipment are always dirty.	.819	.778
Q16_11 Office Furniture and atmosphere	.817	.719
Q16_10 Headquarters newness and location	.811	.682
Q16_9 Cleanliness of cars and machines	.800	.753
Q16_12 Professional look of staff	.794	.671
Q16_13 The professional look of business cards and brochures	.750	.658
Q15_5 Their offices' décor and design positively influence customer's expectations of the service.	.745	.694
Q15_7 Their buildings, furnishings and layout are not reflective of customers' service quality expectations.	.724	.573
Q15_6 They create the right office environment to communicate their high-quality service standards to customers.	.702	.591
Q15_1 The company has up-to-date facilities and equipment.	.681	.553
Q15_2 The outdoor facilities of the company are not visually appealing.	.670	.593
Q15_4 Their staff takes very good care of their appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction.	.642	.713
Q15_3 Their informative materials are visually appealing.	.637	.706

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .93

Factor 8 (Cus_Customer Experience)

Table 5.66 displays the items that loaded on to factor eight was assigned "Cus_Customer Experience" and comprised of 25 items pertaining to the customer experience. The items contribute to this factor and account for 3% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .512 to .778 and the communalities range from .544 to .772. Cronbach's alpha value of .960 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. The customer experience indicates that the customers of construction companies are not happy with their

current companies as they did not deliver good customer service and they did not advise them throughout the process. The construction companies online and offline facilities are not designed to be as efficient as possible. They also did not give independent advice on which product or service can best suit to the customers' needs and they did not focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers.

Table 5.66: Cus Customer Experience Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q17_27 Being a customer of my current construction company gives me social prestige.	.778	.772
Q17_26 I am happy with my current construction company as my service provider.	.773	.704
Q17_10 My construction company keeps me informed.	.773	.674
Q17_16 I have built a personal relationship with the people at these companies.	.770	.629
Q17_11 My construction company demonstrates flexibility in dealing with me.	.749	.642
Q17_23 They keep me up-to-date.	.749	.593
Q17_24 They will look after me whenever I need their services.	.748	.669
Q17_9 Dealing with my construction company is easy.	.746	.638
Q17_25 They have dealt well with me when things went wrong.	.740	.625
Q17_22 They know exactly what I want.	.733	.596
Q17_8 My construction company advised me throughout the process.	.724	.643
Q17_15 They deliver good customer service.	.718	.670
Q17_17 They focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers.	.717	.668
Q17_7 The offer of company that I have chosen is superior to the competition.	.707	.549
Q17_13 My construction company personnel relate to my wishes and concerns.	.703	.593
Q17_21 I stay with my construction companies because they know me.	.687	.561
Q17_14 The people I am dealing with at these companies have good people skills.	.682	.544
Q17_12 I always deal with the same forms and same people inside these companies.	.646	.573
Q17_19 Their online facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.	.633	.569
Q17_6 The offer of company that I have chosen has the best quality.	.607	.551
Q17_4 I choose my construction company not because of the price alone.	.555	.674
Q17_2 I am confident in their expertise.	.545	.689

Q17_20 Their offline facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.	.533	.717
Q17_3 They give independent advice on which product or service can best suit my needs.	.530	.705
Q17_5 The people who work at these companies represent their own brand well.	.512	.641

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .96

Factor 9 (Cus_Satisfaction)

The five items that loaded on to this factor "Cus_Satisfaction" explained 3% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .575 to .631 and the communalities range from .619 to .751 (see Table 5.67). Cronbach's alpha value of .910 indicates a high degree of internal consistency between these items. The customer satisfaction indicates that the customers of construction companies are not happy about their decision to deal with the construction company that they've chosen and not satisfied with the customer service that they've received from the company that they've dealt with.

Table 5.67: Cus_Satisfaction Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q18_5 I am happy about my decision to deal with the construction company I have chosen.	.631	.751
Q18_4 I am satisfied with the customer service I received from the construction company I dealt with.	.628	.682
Q18_3 I would recommend the construction company I dealt with to my friends and associates.	.622	.674
Q18_2 I am happy with the results I got from the construction company I dealt with.	.579	.725
Q18_1 I am satisfied with the products and services of the construction company I dealt with.	.575	.619

*Communalities

Cronbach's alpha: .91

Factor 10 (Cus_Recommendation)

The nine items that loaded on to this factor "Cus_Recommendation" explained 2% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .547 to .883 and the communalities range from .509 to .722 (see Table 5.68). Cronbach's alpha value of .870 indicates a high degree of

internal consistency between these items. The customer recommendation indicates that the customers of construction companies are intend to tell people and their colleagues about their negative experience with the construction company that they've dealt with. Furthermore, the customers also will spread negative word-of-mouth about their construction company that they've previously dealt with.

Table 5.68: Cus Recommendation Factor Loadings and Communalities

Items	Factor loadings	C*
Q20_6 I tell people around me about my positive experience with the construction company I have previously dealt with.	.883	.716
Q20_7 I tell my colleagues about my satisfaction with the construction company I have previously dealt with.	.878	.722
Q20_9 I tell others about how bad was the construction company I have previously dealt with.	.735	.642
Q20_8 I openly criticize the construction company I have previously dealt with.	.710	.665
Q20_3 I would advise my friends to buy from the construction company I have previously dealt with.	.704	.594
Q20_5 I bad-mouthed against the construction company I have previously dealt with to my friends.	.689	.541
Q20_2 If my friends were looking for construction companies, I would tell them to try the construction company I have previously dealt with.	.674	.598
Q20_1 I would recommend the construction company I have previously dealt with to my friends	.659	.509
Q20_4 I spread negative word-of-mouth about the construction company I have previously dealt with.	.547	.638

*Communalities
Cronbach's alpha: .87

5.2.9 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) a statistical technique used “to test (confirm) specific hypotheses or theories concerning the structure underlining a set of variables” (Pallant, 2016, p. 182) and is traditionally used to examine the fit of a preconceived structural model of a construct to the data (Hair et al., 2014). In the present study, CFA was employed using the selected items in Table 5.69 (Appendix V). Later, the ten factors which resulted from the EFA, were specified and a model was drawn based on the result of the previous EFA (see Figure 5.4).

5.2.10 Descriptive Statistics for Factors in Customer Survey

Table 5.70 presents the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum) for the product factor. From the Table 5.70, the values ranged between 2.04 and 4.06 with Q8_2 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q8_7 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "product" (Source: Data).

Table 5.70: Descriptive Statistics for Product Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q8_1	399	3	5	4.03	.273
Q8_2	399	3	5	4.06	.307
Q8_3	399	3	5	4.03	.273
Q8_4	399	3	5	2.08	.310
Q8_5	399	3	5	2.06	.281
Q8_6	399	2	5	4.04	.285
Q8_7	399	3	5	2.04	.242
Q8_8	399	3	5	4.05	.256
Q8_9	399	3	5	2.06	.273
Q8_10	399	3	5	4.05	.270
Q8_11	399	3	5	3.99	.279
Q8_12	399	3	5	4.04	.267
Q8_13	399	3	5	4.03	.216
Q8_14	399	3	5	4.00	.181
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.71, the values ranged between 1.90 and 4.08 with Q9_5 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q9_1 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "place" (Source: Data).

Table 5.71: Descriptive Statistics for Place Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q9_1	399	1	5	1.90	.715
Q9_2	399	1	5	1.92	.566
Q9_3	399	2	5	4.07	.431
Q9_4	399	2	5	4.06	.424
Q9_5	399	2	5	4.08	.403
Q9_6	399	2	5	4.04	.393
Q9_7	399	2	5	3.94	.442
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.72, the values ranged between 2.02 and 4.06 with Q10_6 demonstrating

the highest mean value and Q10_2 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "place" (Source: Data).

Table 5.72: Descriptive Statistics for Place Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q10_1	399	2	5	3.01	.395
Q10_2	399	2	5	2.02	.378
Q10_3	399	2	5	3.05	.359
Q10_4	399	2	5	4.06	.377
Q10_5	399	2	5	3.02	.350
Q10_6	399	2	5	4.06	.377
Q10_7	399	2	5	4.06	.380
Q10_8	399	2	5	4.03	.342
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.73, the values ranged between 2.02 and 4.18 with Q11_12 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q11_7 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "price" (Source: Data).

Table 5.73: Descriptive Statistics for Price Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q11_1	399	2	5	4.02	.279
Q11_2	399	2	5	4.07	.358
Q11_3	399	2	5	4.09	.375
Q11_4	399	2	5	4.14	.424
Q11_5	399	2	5	2.05	.392
Q11_6	399	2	5	4.08	.430
Q11_7	399	2	5	2.02	.472
Q11_8	399	2	5	2.11	.480
Q11_9	399	2	5	2.16	.446
Q11_10	399	2	5	4.15	.436
Q11_11	399	2	5	2.16	.440
Q11_12	399	2	5	4.18	.453
Q11_13	399	2	5	4.13	.419
Q11_14	399	2	5	4.15	.436
Q11_15	399	2	5	4.06	.418
Q11_16	399	2	5	4.01	.284
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.74, the values ranged between 1.72 and 4.17 with Q12_6 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q12_12 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "promotion" (Source: Data).

Table 5.74: Descriptive Statistics for Promotion Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q12_1	399	2	5	4.09	.398
Q12_2	399	1	5	2.05	.494
Q12_3	399	1	5	2.05	.509
Q12_4	399	2	5	4.11	.425
Q12_5	399	2	5	4.17	.473
Q12_6	399	2	5	4.17	.468
Q12_7	399	2	5	4.12	.434
Q12_8	399	2	5	4.13	.482
Q12_9	399	2	5	4.08	.498
Q12_10	399	2	5	4.14	.447
Q12_11	399	2	5	4.15	.475
Q12_12	399	1	5	1.72	.964
Q12_13	399	2	5	3.04	.430
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.75, the values ranged between 2.03 and 4.08 with Q13_3 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q13_12 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "people" (Source: Data).

Table 5.75: Descriptive Statistics for People Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q13_1	399	2	5	4.02	.287
Q13_2	399	2	5	3.23	.488
Q13_3	399	2	5	4.08	.394
Q13_4	399	2	5	4.05	.325
Q13_5	399	2	5	2.98	.403
Q13_6	399	2	5	4.02	.287
Q13_7	399	2	5	3.07	.355
Q13_8	399	2	5	2.05	.329
Q13_9	399	2	5	4.04	.307
Q13_10	399	2	5	4.03	.295
Q13_11	399	2	5	4.07	.358
Q13_12	399	2	5	2.03	.324
Q13_13	399	2	5	4.03	.303
Q13_14	399	2	5	2.99	.340
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.76, the values ranged between 3.01 and 4.23 with Q14_7 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q14_1 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "process" (Source: Data).

Table 5.76: Descriptive Statistics for Process Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q14_1	399	2	5	3.01	.434
Q14_2	399	1	5	3.07	.526
Q14_3	399	2	5	3.06	.544
Q14_4	399	2	5	4.09	.505
Q14_5	399	2	5	4.20	.461
Q14_6	399	2	5	4.22	.474
Q14_7	399	2	5	4.23	.487
Q14_8	399	2	5	4.09	.458
Q14_9	399	2	5	3.13	.413
Q14_10	399	2	5	3.10	.591
Q14_11	399	2	5	3.12	.406
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.77, the values ranged between 1.92 and 4.02 with Q15_3 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q16_11 the lowest mean value, indicating positive perceptions with regards to the factor "physical evidence" (Source: Data).

Table 5.77: Descriptive Statistics for Physical Evidence Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q15_1	399	2	5	2.03	.350
Q15_2	399	2	5	2.05	.366
Q15_3	399	2	5	4.02	.347
Q15_4	399	2	5	2.00	.378
Q15_5	399	2	5	2.01	.410
Q15_6	399	2	5	3.99	.398
Q15_7	399	2	5	4.02	.368
Q15_8	399	2	5	2.84	.519
Q16_9	399	2	5	3.86	.536
Q16_10	399	2	5	3.93	.493
Q16_11	399	2	5	1.92	.497
Q16_12	399	2	5	2.93	.493
Q16_13	399	2	5	1.95	.496
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.78, the values ranged between 2.02 and 4.33 with Q17_27 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q17_4 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "customer experience" (Source: Data).

Table 5.78: Descriptive Statistics for Customer Experience Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q17_1	399	2	5	4.11	.392
Q17_2	399	2	5	4.18	.453
Q17_3	399	2	5	4.20	.496
Q17_4	399	1	5	2.02	.616
Q17_5	399	2	5	4.16	.490
Q17_6	399	2	5	4.17	.457
Q17_7	399	2	5	4.23	.488
Q17_8	399	2	5	4.30	.499
Q17_9	399	2	5	4.30	.506
Q17_10	399	2	5	4.30	.517
Q17_11	399	2	5	4.29	.511
Q17_12	399	1	5	2.16	.650
Q17_13	399	2	5	4.28	.494
Q17_14	399	2	5	3.27	.493
Q17_15	399	2	5	4.30	.540
Q17_16	399	2	5	3.30	.502
Q17_17	399	2	5	4.27	.499
Q17_18	399	1	5	4.09	.601
Q17_19	399	2	5	4.27	.551
Q17_20	399	2	5	4.22	.554
Q17_21	399	2	5	4.28	.507
Q17_22	399	2	5	4.28	.507
Q17_23	399	2	5	4.28	.493
Q17_24	399	2	5	4.27	.486
Q17_25	399	2	5	4.28	.507
Q17_26	399	2	5	4.32	.509
Q17_27	399	2	5	4.33	.527
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.79, the values ranged between 4.50 and 4.64 with Q18_5 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q18_2 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "satisfaction" (Source: Data).

Table 5.79: Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q18_1	399	2	5	4.59	.545
Q18_2	399	2	5	4.50	.553
Q18_3	399	2	5	4.55	.550
Q18_4	399	2	5	4.60	.544
Q18_5	399	2	5	4.64	.536
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.80, the values ranged between 3.18 and 4.41 with Q19_3 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q19_10 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "satisfaction" (Source: Data).

Table 5.80: Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q19_1	399	2	5	3.61	.603
Q19_2	399	2	5	4.34	.544
Q19_3	399	2	5	4.41	.555
Q19_4	399	2	5	3.42	.617
Q19_5	399	2	5	4.33	.541
Q19_6	399	1	5	3.37	.616
Q19_7	399	2	5	3.41	.590
Q19_8	399	2	5	3.46	.596
Q19_9	399	2	5	4.34	.533
Q19_10	399	2	5	3.18	.687
Valid N (listwise)	399				

From the Table 5.81, the values ranged between 2.43 and 4.59 with Q20_1 demonstrating the highest mean value and Q20_5 the lowest mean value, indicating negative perceptions with regards to the factor "recommendation" (Source: Data).

Table 5.81: Descriptive Statistics for Recommendation Factor in the Customer Survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q20_1	399	2	5	4.59	.546
Q20_2	399	2	5	4.56	.549
Q20_3	399	2	5	4.57	.548
Q20_4	399	2	5	2.46	.648
Q20_5	399	2	5	2.43	.645
Q20_6	399	1	5	4.35	.794
Q20_7	399	1	5	4.36	.786
Q20_8	399	2	5	2.62	.540
Q20_9	399	2	5	2.60	.549
Valid N (listwise)	399				

Table 5.82 presents the descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum) for the 7Ps variables in the customer survey.

Table 5.82: Descriptive Statistics for the 7Ps Variables in the Customer Survey

Statistics	Factors						
	Product	Place	Price	Promotion	People	Process	Physical Evidence
<i>N</i>	399	399	399	399	399	399	399
<i>M</i>	3.468	3.42	3.467	3.555	3.447	3.57	2.88
<i>Mdn</i>	4.03	4.03	4.065	4.11	4.02	3.13	2.84
<i>Mode</i>	4.03	4.06	4.15	4.17	4.03	4.09	4.02
<i>SD</i>	0.19	0.32	0.286	0.34	0.29	0.26	0.36
<i>Min</i>	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
<i>Max</i>	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0

The characteristic features of the descriptive statistics for the 7Ps variables in the customer survey were: (a) the mean scores for each variable were similar ($M = 2.88$ to 3.57); reflecting a consistent difference between the company and the customer survey scores for each factor; (b) the medians and the modes almost did not coincide with the mean scores, reflecting the skewness of the frequency distributions.

5.2.11 Construct Reliability and Validity

The items used to measure the constructs have been operationally defined, and the results of the EFA for the study's customer survey are presented. The next step is to ensure that the operational measurements are both reliable and valid. In this section, analysis of the reliability and the validity of the measures is discussed.

5.2.11.1 Reliability

Reliability is considered a measure of the degree of internal consistency among the items that measure a variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010), and the most common means to assess the reliability of measures is through Cronbach's alpha values (Spicer, 2005) which indicate how closely related a set of items measuring a construct are. Nunnally (1978) has indicated .7 to be an acceptable lower limit for this reliability coefficient. As shown in Table 5.83, the Cronbach's alpha value has exceeded .70 for all the factors extracted through EFA and the

composite reliabilities (CR) were well above the recommend threshold, indicating the internal consistency of the developed measures.

Table 5.83: Convergent Validity and Internal Consistency Reliability of Factors in the Customer Survey Data

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	rho A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customer experience	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.521
People	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.619
Physical evidence	0.93	0.96	0.93	0.531
Place/ Distribution	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.632
Price	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.512
Process	0.93	0.95	0.93	0.588
Product	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.506
Promotion	0.92	0.94	0.93	0.553
Recommendation	0.87	0.93	0.92	0.574
Satisfaction	0.91	0.88	0.91	0.662

5.2.11.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to the “extent to which indicators of a specific construct converge or share a high proportion of variance in common” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 601). Yet unlike content validity, convergent validity can be determined using common measures, such as Average Variance Extracted (AVE), standardized factor loadings and construct reliability (Hair et al., 2014). To establish convergent validity, the value of AVE should be greater than .50, while the standardized factor loadings should be $> .50$ (Hair et al., 2014). For a newly developed measure, an acceptable reliability score is greater than .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 5.83 shows that the criterion to confirm the convergent validity of the factors (i.e., AVE $>50\%$) proposed by Hair, et al. (2017) was satisfied for a composite reliability higher than 0.70 for the present study was recorded (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as determined through analysing the constituent items in each of the ten factors was consistently more than 50%. Hence the results of AVE support the reliability and validity of the measurement scales.

5.2.11.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was performed to show that all of the constructs were different from each other. Fornell & Larcker (1981) and Gefen & Straub (2005) stated that discriminant validity is evaluated by considering the correlation among the constructs. The square root of AVE values of each construct should be higher than all of the correlation values of the constructs.

Table 5.84 shows that all constructs were different from one another. The diagonal shows the square root of AVE values for each construct, and these values were higher than the other correlation values among the constructs. The study also confirmed the Discriminant Validity of measurements using composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) (Table 5.83). The test for the average variance extracted (AVE) on the constructs demonstrated that the AVE exceeded the square of the structural link between the constructs. For each latent variable, Fornell & Larcker's (1981) composite reliability score was calculated. Composite reliability is a means of looking into the internal consistency of the items of a latent variable (Chin, 1998). In the present work, all the marketing mix and customer experience factors had shown a composite reliability score of above 0.70, suggesting adequate reliability.

Table 5.84: Discriminant Validity

Factors	Customer experience	People	Physical evidence	Place	Price	Process	Product	Promotion
Customer experience	0.722							
People	0.506	0.787						
Physical evidence	0.448	0.426	0.729					
Place	0.296	0.284	0.221	0.795				
Price	0.474	0.587	0.383	0.176	0.716			
Process	0.433	0.411	0.465	0.182	0.401	0.767		
Product	0.335	0.352	0.216	0.276	0.234	0.132	0.712	
Promotion	0.392	0.494	0.362	0.119	0.532	0.345	0.126	0.744

Note: Diagonal values: square root values of AVEs

Values below diagonal: correlations between constructs

5.2.12 Model of Factors in Customer Survey

Figure 5.4 presents the path model computed by SmartPLS to predict customer experience using the seven factors in the customer survey representing the practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) as the predictors. Satisfaction and recommendation were assumed to be the outcomes of customer experience. The purpose of this model was to explore and describe the relationships between the seven factors. The model tests hypothesis (H2): There is a direct effect from actual practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry.

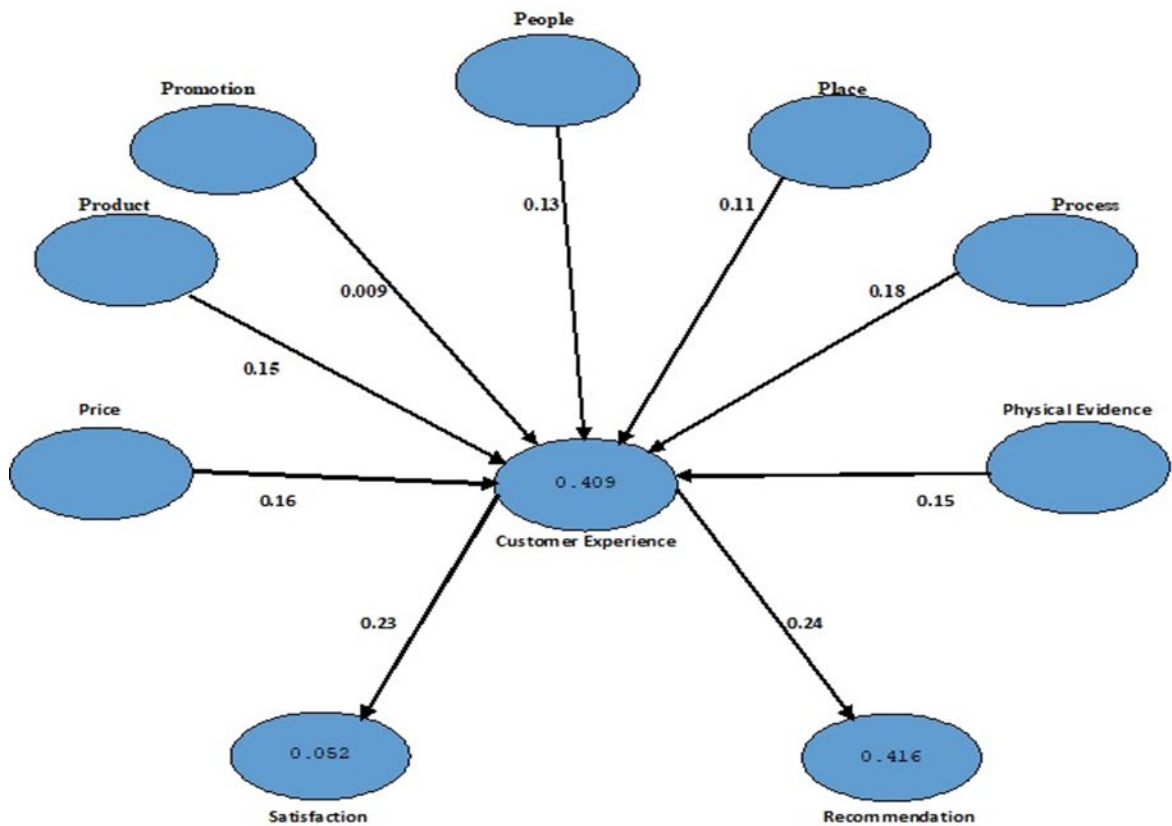


Figure 5.4: Path Model with Coefficients (β) and Effect Sizes (R^2) to Predict Customer Experience, Satisfaction, and Recommendation using the Practiced Marketing Mix (the 7P's) in the Customer Survey Data (SmartPLS output).

5.2.12.1 Model Fit Indices

The model fit was assessed using absolute fit indices (i.e., Chi-square, standardized root mean square residual SRMR) (Hair et al., 2010). Chi-Square value is the traditional measure for evaluating overall model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999: 2). A good model fit would provide an insignificant result at a 0.05 threshold (Barrett, 2007); standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is the square root of the difference between the residuals of the sample covariance matrix and the hypothesized covariance model. Values for the SRMR range from zero to 1.0 with well-fitting models obtaining values less than .05 (Byrne, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Siguaaw, 2000), however values as high as 0.08 are deemed acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The first of these indices to appear in LISREL output is the Normed Fit Index (NFI: Bentler & Bonnet, 1980). This statistic assesses the model by comparing the χ^2 value of the model to the χ^2 of the null model. Values for this statistic range between 0 and 1 with Bentler & Bonnet (1980) recommending values greater than 0.90 indicating a good fit. Because the Chi-square for the estimated model in Table 5.85 was 24,248.93 with an insignificant p value ($p > 0.05$), SRMR was 0.07 and NFI was 0.91. Hence the model is a suitable and appropriate.

Table 5.85: Chi Square Statistic

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.07	0.07
d ULS	31.67	31.67
d G1	18.4	18.4
d G2	16.17	16.17
Chi-Square	24,248.93	24,248.93
NFI	0.91	0.91

5.2.12.2 Path Coefficients

Path coefficients are standardized versions of linear regression weights utilized to examine possible causal linkages between statistical variables in the structural equation modelling a given approach. The standardization involves multiplying ordinary regression coefficients by standard deviations of the corresponding explanatory variable: these can then be

compared to assess the relative effects of the variables within the fitted regression model. Furthermore, this type of standardization can be extended to apply to partial regression coefficients (Wright, 1921).

According to Brannick (n.d.) “A path coefficient indicates the direct effect of a variable, assumed to be a cause, on another variable, assumed to be an effect. Path coefficients are standardized because they are estimated from correlations (a path regression coefficient is unstandardized)” (para. 3). Table 5.86 provides the statistics to indicate the significance of the path coefficients (β) located next to the arrows. Table shows the path coefficients of the latent constructs in the study.

Table 5.86: The Path Coefficients of the Latent Constructs in the Study

	Path Coefficients (β)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
People → Customer experience	0.13	0.14	0.06	2.14	0.03*
Physical evidence → Customer experience	0.15	0.15	0.06	2.44	0.01*
Place/ Distribution → Customer experience	0.11	0.12	0.05	2.49	0.01*
Price → Customer experience	0.16	0.17	0.06	2.73	0.01*
Process → Customer experience	0.18	0.18	0.05	3.53	0.00*
Product → Customer experience	0.15	0.15	0.05	2.83	0.00*
Promotion → Customer experience	0.009	0.01	0.05	2.08	0.04*
Customer experience → Recommendation	0.24	0.24	0.06	3.93	0.00*
Customer experience → Satisfaction	0.23	0.22	0.06	3.43	0.001*

Note: * β is significantly different from zero ($p < .05$)

After bootstrapping the data provided by $N = 399$ participants using 5000 subsamples (following Wong, 2013), the mean and standard deviation (SD) of each path coefficient (β) were computed, and two-tailed t-tests were conducted. All the seven factors representing the 7P’s were significant predictors of customer experience.

People → customer experience was significant ($t = 2.14, p < .05$) with the strongest mean path coefficient ($\beta = .13$). Physical evidence → customer experience ($t = 2.44, p < .05$) was also significant mean path coefficient ($\beta = .15$). Place/Distribution → customer experience ($t = 2.49, p < .05$) was also significant mean path coefficient ($\beta = .11$). Price → customer experience ($t = 2.73, p < .05$) was significant with a mean path coefficient ($\beta = .16$). Process → customer experience ($t = 3.53, p < .05$) was significant with a mean path coefficient ($\beta = .18$). Product → customer experience ($t = 2.83, p < .05$) was also significant mean path coefficient ($\beta = .15$). Promotion → customer experience ($t = 2.08, p < .05$) was also significant with a lower mean path coefficient ($\beta = .09$).

Using the criteria defined by Ferguson (2009) the effect size ($R^2 = .409$) indicated that the model explained a large proportion (40.9%) of the variance in customer experience. Therefore, the path model predicted that the effect of an increase in the scores for people, physical evidence, place/ distribution, price, process, product and promotion was to increase the scores for customer experience. Hence, the finding shows there is a direct effect from actual practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry which supported (H2).

Customer experience was a statistically significant predictor of recommendation ($\beta = .24, t = 3.93, p < .001$). Using the criteria of Ferguson (2009) the effect size ($R^2 = .416$) implying that a moderate proportion (41.6%) of the variance was explained. Customer experience was also statistically significant predictor of satisfaction ($\beta = .23, t = 3.43, p = .001$); however, the effect size was very small ($R^2 = .052$) implying that 5.2% of the variance was explained. Therefore, the path model in (Figure 5.4) predicted that customer experience had a much stronger effect on recommendation and satisfaction.

Based on these estimates, the study found that the most significant factors are process, price and product based on their significance levels while they are followed by physical evidence, people, place, and lastly promotion. In this regard, there is a significance difference between

the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry which supported (H3).

These findings imply that this gap needs to be narrowed down for an enhanced consumer experience because coherence is necessary for comprehensive strategies to be made by the companies.

5.2.13 Effects of the Customers' Demographic Characteristics

Table 5.41 shows that the gender of the respondents in the customer survey was dominated by men (98.7%). Therefore, it was not possible to determine the effects of gender by comparing the responses of male vs. female customers because the sample size of women was too small. Moreover, no information on family income was collected in the customer survey. Therefore, the age and education of the customers were the only control variables that could be used in the statistical analysis, to test the stated hypotheses concerning the effects of the demographic characteristics.

The analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis (H5): The actual practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) by construction companies is affected by the respondents' age and educational level. The dependent variable was customer experience, whereas the predictor variables were the age and the educational level of the customers. In order to ensure that the sample sizes in each demographic category were large enough ($n > 20$) to provide sufficient power to conduct the statistical analysis the categories were collapsed. Age was divided into 25 to 44 years ($n = 244$) and 45 to 64 years ($n = 154$). Education was collapsed into two categories (high school degree or less ($n = 49$) and bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree ($n = 350$)).

A path model was constructed to test the stated hypothesis using SmartPLS with path customer experience and satisfaction as the dependent variables. Age and Education were the predictor variables. Figure 5.5 presents the path model constructed using the graphic user interface of Smart PLS. Table 5.87 presents the results of the t -tests to determine the statistical significance of the path coefficients.

Table 5.87: Statistical Significance of Path Coefficients (β) in Model to Predict Customer Experience and Satisfaction using Age and Education

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Age → Customer experience	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.25	0.08
Age → Satisfaction	-0.12	-0.13	0.05	2.39	0.02
Education → Customer experience	0.19	0.2	0.05	3.64	0.00*
Education → Satisfaction	0.17	0.18	0.05	3.79	0.00*

Note: * β is significantly different from zero ($p < .05$)

Age → customer experience was not statistically significant ($t = 0.25, p > .05$) with a low path coefficient ($\beta = .02$). Education → customer experience was statistically significant ($t = 3.64, p < .05$) with a path coefficient ($\beta = .19$). Age → satisfaction was not statistically significant ($t = 2.39, p < .05$) with a negative path coefficient ($\beta = -0.12$). Education had a statistically significant predictor of satisfaction ($t = 3.79, p < .05$) with a path coefficient ($\beta = .17$). Applying the criteria of Ferguson (2009) the effect sizes ($R^2 = .035$ and $.053$) indicated that the model explained only a small proportion (5.3%) of the variance in satisfaction and a negligible proportion of the variance in customer experience (3.5%).

Therefore, the path model in Figure 5.5 predicted the effect of decreased education level of the customers would decrease the scores for customer experience and satisfaction, suggesting customer experience and satisfaction levels were lower when the education level of the customers was lower. In conclusion, the findings revealed that the educational level of customer exerts a substantial positive effect on customer experience and satisfaction.

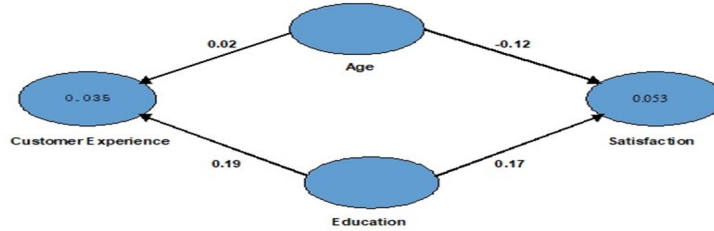


Figure 5.5: Path Model with Coefficients (β) and Effect Sizes (R^2) to Predict Customer Experience and Satisfaction in the Customer Survey using Age and Education (SmartPLS output).

Furthermore, the difference variables were computed by subtracting the median score for each 7P's variable computed using the company survey (expected practiced) from each 7P's variable computed using the customer survey (actual practiced). The reason why the median was used instead of the mean to compute the difference variables was that all of the 7P's variables deviated strongly from normality. Whenever, the variables deviate from normality, the analysis can be continued by converting the variables to logarithms (Feng et al., 2014). Hence log conversion of the factors was used to deal with the data for the regressions.

Table 5.88 shows how the median scores for the 7P's in the company survey were consistently less than median scores for the 7P's in the customer survey. The difference arose because the managers reported a higher level of agreement with the survey items (mainly 2 = agree to 1 = strongly agree) than did the customers (mainly 5 = strongly disagree and 4 = disagree). Based on these estimates, the study found the difference between the expected and actual practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry were negative. The descriptive statistics for the 7P difference variables are summarised in Table 5.89.

Table 5.88: Median Scores for the 7P's in Company and Customer Surveys

Survey	Factors						
	Product	Place	Price	Promotion	People	Process	Physical Evidence
Company	1.91	1.92	1.995	1.86	1.73	1.86	1.98
Customer	4.03	4.03	4.065	4.11	4.02	3.13	2.84

Table 5.89: Descriptive Statistics for the 7Ps Difference Variables

Statistics	Factors						
	Product	Place	Price	Promotion	People	Process	Physical Evidence
<i>N</i>	399	399	399	399	399	399	399
<i>M</i>	-1.558	-1.53	-1.481	-1.685	-1.702	-1.72	-0.91
<i>Mdn</i>	-2.12	-2.11	-2.07	-2.25	-2.29	-1.27	-0.86
<i>Mode</i>	-2.12	-2.14	-2.15	-2.2	-2.3	-2.23	-2.02
<i>SD</i>	0.31	0.45	0.44	0.44	0.5	0.56	0.46
<i>Min</i>	0.1	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-0.6	1.4
<i>Max</i>	3.3	3.6	3.30	3.3	3.6	3.8	3.5

The characteristic features of the descriptive statistics were: (a) the mean scores for each gap variable were similar ($M = -0.91$ to -1.72); reflecting a consistent difference between the company and the customer survey scores for each factor; (b) the medians and the modes did not coincide with the mean scores, reflecting the skewedness of the frequency distributions.

5.2.14 Conclusion

In this chapter, the data analysis and the results of the descriptive statistics were presented. The preliminary assumptions of the EFA including adequacy of sample size, missing value, normality and the factorability were examined, and the results for the study's datasets revealed that the level of missing data did not exceed 10% (Hair et al., 2010) and participants exceeded the minimal number of 150 as recommended by Hinkin (1995). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) statistics revealed that all the variables are statistically significant ($p < .05$) reflecting strong deviations from normality and not displaying multicollinearity, whereas, the KMO value was .948, well above the cut-off value of .60 (Pallant, 2016). Consequently, CFA was conducted, factors were specified, and a model was drawn.

The findings from the quantitative method suggested that all the seven factors were significant predictors of customer experience. This was revealed through the path model as this test indicated that the significance value of the study factors was below the threshold value $p < .05$ (see Table 5.36). This implies that the regression results affirmed that the product, price, place/distribution, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process practices employed by the construction companies strongly influence customer experience. The effect size ($R^2 = .68$) indicated that the path model explained a substantial proportion (68%) of the variance in customer experience. Therefore, the path model in (Figure 5.2) predicted that the effect of an increase in the discrete scores of the 7P elements would increase the scores for customer experience. Based on these estimates, the study found that physical evidence is the most significant factor, which is followed by product, people, promotion, place/distribution, price and lastly process. According to company's stance, the process is the least effective factor which influences customer experience given that it is entirely an internal matter of the company (see section 5.1.12.2).

The findings also suggested that all the seven factors in the customer survey representing the practiced marketing mix (the 7P's) were significant predictors of customer experience. This was revealed through the path model as this test indicated that the significance value of the study factors was below the threshold value $p < .05$ (see Table 5.86). The effect size ($R^2 = .409$) indicated that the model explained a large proportion (40.9%) of the variance in customer experience. Therefore, the path model in (Figure 5.4) predicted the effect of an increase in the scores for people, physical evidence, place/ distribution, price, process, product and promotion to increase the scores for customer experience. In addition, the findings suggested that customer experience was a statistically significant predictor of recommendation which was revealed through the path model as this test indicated the significance value of the recommendation was below the threshold value $p < .001$ (see Table 5.86). The effect size ($R^2 = .416$) implying that a moderate proportion (41.6%) of the variance was explained. Customer experience was also statistically significant predictor of satisfaction and the significance value of satisfaction of customer was $p = .001$, however, the

effect size was very small ($R^2 = .052$) implying that 5.2% of the variance was explained. Therefore, the path model in (Figure 5.4) predicted that customer experience had a much stronger effect on recommendation and satisfaction. Based on these estimates, the study found that the most significant factors are process, price and product based on their significance levels while they are followed by physical evidence, people, place, and lastly promotion (see section 5.2.12.2). In this regard, there is a significance difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry. These findings imply that this gap needs to be narrowed down for an enhanced consumer experience because coherence is necessary for comprehensive strategies to be made by the companies. In addition, the difference variables between the expected and actual practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction companies were computed by subtracting the median score for each 7P's variable computed using the company survey (expected practiced) from each 7P's variable computed using the customer survey (actual practiced). The findings as summarised in Table 5.88, shows how the median scores for the 7P's in the company survey were consistently less than median scores for the 7P's in the customer survey. The difference arose because the managers reported a higher level of agreement with the survey items (mainly 2 = agree to 1 = strongly agree) than did the customers (mainly 5 = strongly disagree and 4 = disagree). The descriptive statistics for the 7P's differences variables are summarised in Table 5.89, (see section 5.2.13).

The findings also suggested that age, educational level, and the management level of employees have strong positive effect on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies (see section 5.1.13). Whereas, only the educational level of customer has a substantial positive effect on customer experience and satisfaction (see section 5.2.13).

The next chapter will present a comprehensive discussion that links the quantitative findings in line with the available literature and proposed framework.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This research was conducted to investigate the effect of construction companies' marketing mix on the experience of customers in the Gulf region, and the focus of study was the four Gulf countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The study was carried out by examining the practices of the elements of marketing mix in the construction companies and their impact towards the customer experience. This chapter discusses the main findings of the current research that were reached in the quantitative study reported in Chapter 5.

An overview of the research findings is presented in section 6.2. The construction company's expectations of the practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience will be discussed in section 6.3, and the customer perceptions of the practiced marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in construction companies will be discussed in section 6.4. The difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry will be discussed in section 6.5. Marketing mix impacting the customer experience will be discussed in section 6.6, followed by highlights on the effect of age, education level, and the managerial level of employees on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies in section 6.7. The effect of the educational level of customer experience and satisfaction in construction companies will be discussed in section 6.8. Having discussed the main findings of this research, it is imperative to present the conceptual model of the customer experience, which is indeed presented in section 6.9. Finally, the conclusion of this chapter is presented in section 6.10.

6.2 Overview of Research Findings

This section reports the main findings of interest to emerge from the chapter on data analysis (chapter 5). With respect to the first research objective, the research finding indicates that the

construction companies' expectation of the practiced marketing mix (7P's) is evidently significant in creating a positive customer experience (see section 5.1.12.2). Palpably, the use of 7Ps advances the prospects of clear customer segmentation, improves the analysis by considering dimensions as well, thereby providing the company with an edge over its rivals, which is derived from customer experience (Kaufmann et al., 2014). However, the significance of each factor of marketing mix varies and a deviation is also possible if the customers' perspective is compared to the organisation's perspective. To that end, the path coefficients have helped in ranking the factors based on their quantitative significance (see Table 5.36). From the company's perspective, it was analysed physical evidence is the most significant factor, which is followed by product, people, promotion, place/distribution, price and lastly, process. According to company's stance, the process is the least effective factor which influences customer experience given that it is entirely an internal matter of the company. The findings are relatable to the study conducted by Azila-Gbetor et al. (2013) where significance was attached to physical evidence in the case of service industry. Therefore, the company's stance is inexorably clear which acknowledges the significance of all factors of marketing mix.

Besides, if the customer's perspective is analysed, which is related to the second objective of the study, the most significant factors are found to be different based on their significance level: process, price and product, followed by physical evidence, people, place, and lastly, promotion (see Table 5.86). In this regard, there is a significance difference between the company's expectations and customer's perceptions in terms of their perception about the marketing mix in the Gulf region. These findings imply that this gap needs to be narrowed down for an enhanced consumer experience because coherence is necessary for comprehensive strategies to be made by the companies. The research study conducted by Al Muala & Al Qurneh (2012) noted that by introducing a marketing mix in Jordan's tourism industry, it was possible to ensure the availability of quality products, cost/time savings in the production and promotion of the product. This would further enhance the customer experience, which would contribute to customer loyalty, thereby supporting the findings of this study.

Cumulatively, the results further surmise the fact that all factors of marketing mix (7Ps) are evidently significant from and the perspective of both customers and the company. Since no factor can be deemed irrelevant, it is important for the marketing strategy to focus on all the aspects. Therefore, this fulfils the third objective of the study where the difference needed to be identified between the expectations of company and customer perceptions.

In addition, the difference variables between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction companies were computed by subtracting the median score for each 7P's variable computed using the company survey (expected practiced) from each 7P's variable computed using the customer survey (actual practiced). The findings as summarised in Table 5.88, shows how the median scores for the 7P's in the company survey were consistently less than median scores for the 7P's in the customer survey. The difference arose because the managers reported a higher level of agreement with the survey items (mainly 2 = agree to 1 = strongly agree) than did the customers (mainly 5 = strongly disagree and 4 = disagree). The descriptive statistics for the 7P's difference variables are summarised in Table 5.89, (see section 5.2.13).

In context to the fourth objective of this research, the findings indicate that age, educational level, and the management level of employees have strong positive effect on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies (see section 5.1.13). As for the fifth objective of this research, the findings indicate that the educational level of customer has a substantial positive effect on customer experience and satisfaction (see section 5.2.13).

Drawing from the above overview of the research findings, this research combines a simultaneous investigation of the elements of the marketing mix and the demographics that affect the experience of customers and their satisfaction, as this study is among the first to empirically examine the effect of construction companies' marketing mix (the 7P's) on their customers' experiences in the Gulf region. The following sections will discuss each major finding of this research in further detail in order to elucidate how they relate to, extend to, or differ from previous studies in the literature review. While the overview section has

succinctly discussed the findings in the context of other studies, a detailed discussion has been undertaken in each of the following section with respect to the objectives of the research.

6.3 Construction Company's Expectations of the Practiced Marketing Mix

The first objective of this research study attempted to determine the critical importance of the role played by the practiced marketing mix in creating a positive customer experience among the construction companies. The researcher surveyed the employees/ managers of construction companies in order to ascertain their stance over the practicing marketing mix as well as the level of significance of each element in the marketing mix. These findings were obtained quantitatively, which indicated that the construction companies' expectations of the practiced marketing mix (7P's) have a significant impact on customer experience, which ultimately leads to customer satisfaction. Accordingly, it can be inferred that the marketers of construction companies in the Gulf region are vigilant in providing the best possible experience to their customers. In this concern, findings of this study are in line with the observations of Woodside & Sims (1976), who opined that consumers have a significant impact on the companies significantly and vice versa.

On the other hand, if the factors are discussed separately, it becomes evident from the path model that physical evidence is the most significant variable. An assertion can be made that the companies need to be physically appealing and have an eco-friendly effect on the environment in the context of physical evidence. The findings in this concern are positively correlated with the study of Kotler (2010), who professed that the business seems to be progressive as they focus on sustainability. Therefore, for construction companies, the effect of their physical evidence on the environment is inexorably immense owing to the consumption of raw materials which can be hazardous in the long-run. In order to curb the adverse environmental effects of their operations, construction companies in the Gulf region have started adopting green building technologies, as stated by Zimmermann (2015). Therefore, the significance of physical evidence for construction companies in Gulf region as part of the marketing mix has also been supported by previous researches. Meanwhile in

terms of the direction of effect, a positive effect has been found on the consumer experience as the coefficient was positive. This further deduces that betterment in the physical evidence of construction companies of Gulf region will result in betterment in the consumer experience, thereby paving the way to customer satisfaction.

Additionally, from the standpoint of a company, the variable of product has also been found to be significant as an element of marketing mix on customer experience. They believe it is important to focus on product activities in terms of positioning the product, as well as to understand customers' feedback about the reputation of their product. It has been shown that product quality positively affects customer experience and plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of construction firms. The research of Mandell & Rosenberg (1981) postulated that with respect to industries, the products do undergo change. In this context, the products of each industry are somewhat distinct from other industries. Hence, their significance cannot be neglected, something that is also deduced by the findings of this study. Therefore, businesses need a stronger consideration of activities related to products by training their employees on coping effectively with the ever-changing preferences of the consumer (Mittal & Sheth, 2004). Moreover, the effect was found to be positive, which implies that if the quality of product is improved, there would be an improvement in customer experience as well. Alibage & Jetter (2017), who make a similar claim, opine that it is crucial not only to offer high quality products, but also to cultivate a high-quality assessment of customers. The researchers stated that it is important to consider the success of a product as it is conceptualized in the emotional appraisal of the customer.

The majority of managers responded that process of activities assumes great significance in improving customer experience in the construction industry, which has been proposed by the current study as well. Therefore, this study contributes in evaluating tall significant elements of marketing mix which can allow construction companies in the Gulf region to improve their overall system. The findings are consistent with those of Işoraité (2016), who found that the processes undertaken by organisations affect the decisions made by the customers, which ultimately affect their experience. Consequently, Dorsey & Bodine (2006) imbue clarity on

the reputation of process within the marketing mix when they assert that processes are desirable when they reinforce and support the aim of enhancing customer experience.

Moreover, managers believed pricing reinforces the quality image of the product and service as compared to the existing competitive prices in the market. This is aligned with the thesis literature review and the findings of this study (see section 5.1.9), which claims pricing a product is another factor that appeals to established as well as new customers. As noted previously, Collins & Parsa (2006) focus on three methods used in pricing a product, which also increase customers' satisfaction, i.e., (1) Cost-based pricing; (2) Customer driven pricing; and (3) A market driven pricing. Construction companies' prices support the product and service package to increase customers' value for money, reinforcing their product's market position through appropriate pricing (see section 5.1.9). The research of Marr (2003) further extended the significance of pricing strategy by stating that the pricing of products needs to be competitive. From the perspective of construction companies operating in the Gulf region, they need to offer competitive pricing to the customers in order to increase their satisfaction levels.

Cumulatively, the effectiveness of marketing mix helps the organisation attain efficiency in their performance. According to Polat & Donmez (2010), the performance represents one of the most important aspects to be taken into account when considering the internal marketing of a company. Reaching performance to the highest level becomes more and more challenging, given the continuous development of the construction companies and the continuous increase of the market standards. Thus, performance management assumes not only providing quality of the service and products, but also having a high-performance workforce. The more the employees exceed expectations, the greater the company's competitive advantage will be. Therefore, successful service providers can satisfy construction customer's expectations by making a human connection, a goal achieved through the attitude and interactional behavior of the staff who represent the "face of the company". Jones & Dent (1994) found that a smiling face had a profound favorable effect on customer behavior. Similarly, Srivastava & Kaul (2014) recognised two qualifications of

customer experience, including “employees’ behavior and communication with customers” (p. 1035).

Managers of construction companies responded that the main objective of their marketing strategy is to create positive customer experiences with the help of physical evidence on priority, which is then followed by other aspects. However, marketing has either been misunderstood or completely neglected in many construction companies (Polat & Donmez, 2010; Yisa et al., 1995). Therefore, without customer satisfaction, it would be impossible for any construction company to survive in the current competitive market. According to Kurtus (2007), there are many factors that firms must consider to create a positive customer experience, including timely response to customer inquiries, personalised customer interactions, and delivery of the right information to the right place at the right time.

Companies’ marketing offerings include clues that directly affect customer experiences (Berry & Carbone, 2007), and these clues help them generate a set of impressions. In their investigation regarding customer satisfaction in the construction industry, Omonori & Lawal (2015) concluded that customers’ perceptions of the quality of the product depend on the fulfillment of customers’ expectations, which leads to customer satisfaction, strong long-term relationships with customers, and profitable company performance.

6.4 Customer Perceptions of the Practiced Marketing Mix

The second objective of this research was linked with the analysis of marketing mix as well as its impact on customer experience from the perspective of customers. The research findings indicated that the customers’ perceptions of the practiced marketing mix (7P’s) is positively impacted by all factors in the marketing mix. It was evident from (section 5.2.12) that elements of the marketing mix are antecedent of the construction companies’ customer experience. The findings imply that in wake of the evolving relationship between customers and companies, the customers’ perceptions of the company and its products or services will change. The more experience the customers accumulate, the more their perceptions will shift from fact-based judgments to a more generalised meaning. Over time, customers tend to put

a stronger onus on the consequence of a product or service consumption. Therefore, the case with construction companies is also similar where satisfaction is derived with better experience, something that the companies strive for; to that end, the marketing mix helps them devise their strategies appropriately. Perceptions are always considered relative to expectations and formed by consumers about a service provider's service (Solomon & Stuart, 2000). This enables them to create a service experience, which in turn, influences realistic as well as emotional perceptions relating to an organisation's quality of service (Berry et al, 2002). In terms of the direction of effect of the variables, the researcher found a positive effect of all 7Ps on customer experience, which was later analysed from the perspective of customer satisfaction. Consequently, it can be surmised that an improvement in the quality of any of the 7Ps would lead to enhancement of customer experience and the resultant satisfaction of the construction companies operating in the Gulf region.

In their perceptions, the findings revealed that the product/service of construction companies do not always increase the attractiveness of their offers to the customers, and their product offers does not emphasise the attributes that are important to the customers. Moreover, the products did not always meet the requirements of customers as their product strategy did not respond to the customers' needs and wants in terms of quality as customers in the market. This was clear as the managers of the construction companies seemed to have conflicting view over the priorities of the customer needs and the customer experience strategy objectives. This was contrary to the assumption of Tseng et al. (1999) who emphasised that customer experience is tied to the service quality customer's encounter during their interaction with the company. Consequently, there is no fact in developing a product or service that no one wants to purchase, yet construction industries decide what to offer first, then hope to find a market for it subsequently. Fruitful companies find out what customers need or want and then develop the right product with the right level of value to live up to their expectations, both now and in the future.

The real indicator of customers' perception of the quality of products and services is not satisfaction but, rather, customer experience, as argued by Bennett & Thiele (2004), who explained that a high level of satisfaction does not always result in a high level of loyalty.

Customers become loyal because of their experiences and companies' relationship management initiatives (Garret, 2006), and this explains the fact that customers' loyalty bonds are stronger at the company level rather than at the interpersonal level with employees in sectors such as construction, for example (Wong & Sohal, 2003). Gordon (2004) noted that customer experience is a true reflection of a successful marketing strategy that starts with the needs of customers, and designs the steps that move customers to an end state in which those needs and desires have been fulfilled. In line with the previous view, Shaw (2005) identified customer experience as the result of the interaction between the organisation and customers as experienced during touch-points. In a later study, Shaw (2007) confirmed this idea by emphasising that customer experience is a reflection of a physical customer experience, such as price, product, location, opening times, and the channel used.

While the performance in terms of handling complaints, delivery time and reliability were less visible and less convenient for customers in the construction companies. This was in contrary with the findings of (Piercy, et al., 2007) who states that timely delivery of products to customers is a subject of great importance. Solid channels of distribution ensure efficient production and delivery which increases customers' trust because their needs are met. Additionally, Gwinner et al. (1998) stated that satisfaction with problem solving processes will be more important than initial service attributes in influencing overall satisfaction and customer intention.

Additionally, the customer believes the facilities of company must be appealing and design of the offices has positive impact on the customer's perception toward that company. The finding herein aligns with previous findings of (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006; Swanson & Davis, 2003), as they stated that physical evidence within the marketing mix of service companies is important in attracting the experience of customers during service delivery.

Customers believe the word of mouth plays a key role in their decision making to do business with a specific company or not. This is supported by Macintosh (2007) who affirmed that interpersonal quality relationship to enhance the satisfaction of customer as it is linked to positive publicity of the organisation through word-of-mouth marketing.

In addition, promotion was cited as not very common in construction companies, or it was noted that the related strategies demand more attention. In a research, Jensen & Jepsen (2008) investigated the matter and concluded that mixture of online and offline promotion methods are sources of direct and indirect marketing and when implemented together, increase the likelihood for customers to choose his/her described product directly. The focus of 7P's is to raise success by providing an appealing, colorful picture of a product and its quality features to persuade a customer to purchase the product. Marketing techniques, as examined by Hollensen (2007) decrease the gap of communication between a customer and the company because a customer is propelled toward a specific product through promotional standards that include advertisement of company products using technology, multimedia, newspapers and other promotion tricks. What is more, promotional methods, according to Mills (2003), also affect the pricing feature of a product as customers are persuaded to spend money.

Additionally, Foroudi et al. (2018) affirm, "The customer experience is no longer limited to customers and their friends. Smart technologies, combined with social media, have given customers the ability to reach out to their contracts online and share that same message with millions of people around the globe. One mistake by a company or one bad customer experience can put a firm's reputation at significant risk. However, there are also plenty of opportunities to harness smart technologies and encourage customer advocates to share their experiences, which can extend their reach" (p. 279).

On the other hand, customers responded that the location of the construction companies' headquarters were not easily accessible which reflects that the physical place of the organisation was not local. This was in contrary with the assumption of Shaw (2005) who

stated that the subject of place is made up of two different but consistent sections: channels of distribution and physical distribution management. Both of them form a significant aspect of strategic marketing management. For physical distribution, it is part of the subject of logistic management, which should reflect feasibility in finding routines processes, which in turn enables the distribution process.

The logistic function speaks to transporting value and fulfilment to customers. It is a long-term strategic method that is applied to advance an organisation's competitive advantage as it provides a high level of service to customers in a timely manner. To transport the multifaceted jobs that make up the logistics function, professional staffing is desired. However, strategy and policy design for logistic management must be integrated into the strategic marketing plan if logistics is to play a significant role within the organisation (Ulwick, 2002).

Moreover, the researcher explored whether or not customer satisfaction is affected through customer experience. In this regard, the researcher analysed the aspect of customer satisfaction, which was found to be significantly impacted by customer experience with a positive effect, while the effect of customer experience (of the recommendations) was also explored and significance was found.

6.5 Difference between the Expected and Actual Practices Marketing Mix

The third objective was associated with the analysis of differences in the marketing mix related practices. The research finding indicates that the difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry were negative, as the difference variables were computed by subtracting the median score for each 7P's variable computed using the company survey (expected practiced) from each 7P's variable computed using the customer survey (actual practiced). The research finding shows how the median scores for the 7P's in the company survey were consistently less than median scores for the 7P's in the customer survey (see section 5.2.13). The difference arose because the managers reported a higher level of agreement with the survey items (mainly 2 = agree to 1 = strongly agree) than did the

customers (mainly 5 = strongly disagree and 4 = disagree). On the other hand, the research attained the objective by analysing the customer survey and company survey separately, which enables the marketers to reflect upon their actual practices as opposed to what their customers in the construction industry are expecting from them. The analyses revealed that the significance of physical evidence is more for managers working at construction companies, while for the customers, processes, price and products are a matter of greater significance than other factors in 7Ps (see Tables 5.88 and 5.89).

The primary aim of this study was to assess the extent to which the expectations of the construction managers about their customers' perception of products and services aligned with customers' actual perceptions. The research of Goi (2011) also posited that perceptions pertaining to marketing mix cannot be consistent as they differ on certain aspects such as gender, etc. Thus, the differences observed existed between customers and managers within the construction companies, and it appears the latter, who occupy a position of influence to improve processes, are erroneously confident that they understand their customers' perceptions.

First, the findings showed that managers deviate from analysing the most significant factors on the basis of customer perceptions of the company's products and services. There could be a number of reasons for that. Logically, either managers are not aware of customer feedback data, are not accessing it, or they are not interpreting it accurately. This pattern of overestimation of their own companies' customer performance could lead managers to fail in taking needed steps to improve drivers of satisfaction, which could lead to customer displeasure and loss of valuable market share. This has been supported by Mithas & Rust (2015) and Rust et al. (2002) who stated that where managers overestimated their own customers' perception of the company's performance, they underestimate their need to make adjustments and improvements. Similarly, Hult et al. (2017) stated that, the significant exaggerated favorable bias management affords its efficacy undermines success.

Second, the results also revealed that the managers' perception of the construction companies deviates from the stance adopted by customers in a significant manner. Specifically, this suggests that even when managers do recognize a need to take corrective actions to improve customers' perceptions of the company's product and services, they are unlikely to do so effectively. For example, the results indicate that managers are likely to underestimate the need to raise customer quality perceptions as a means of enhancing customer satisfaction (Habel & Klarmann, 2015).

In addition, managers often dismiss customer complaints when in fact they reflect a diminishment in customer satisfaction. Research indicates customer complaints negatively affect stock value (e.g., Luo, 2007; Luo & Homburg, 2008) and potential profitability (e.g., Morgan & Rego, 2006). Thus, customer complaints and negative feedback must be acted upon to avoid lapses in profitability and efficiency.

Managers without understanding of the importance of customer satisfaction (and perception) will likely not use the tools and resources necessary to achieve those related ends. Managers must manipulate factors that clearly correspond to ensuring customer loyalty, rather than lose money or economic traction using outdated perception models that are not effective. Therefore, managers must operationalise the findings from customer satisfaction surveys and other means and take corrective action. While there will always be some sort of gap between customer satisfaction and managerial perception. It is imperative managers fully process customer feedback and use it as an opportunity to correct and grow.

For firms without formal customer feedback systems, managers must focus energy into communication and establishing credibility in responding to customers. Educating managers on the verity of perception found in customer feedback data will increase the likelihood that they will pay attention to it (e.g., Morgan et al., 2005) and reduce clouded, biased thinking on the part of management. Significant attention should also be given to how the results of the firm's customer feedback system can be effectively communicated to managers within

the firm. These results suggest that new or revised customer feedback system design and may also have significant resource cost and allocation implications in implementing such systems.

Some of the underlying causes of differences in the perceptions of customers and organisation can be better comprehended from the literature review. For instance, when the sense of trust is found to be strong between an employee and manager, it adds an element of efficiency to other aspects of workplace productivity. Trust is usually considered to be a positive attribute in a situation, even though trust and risk are two sides of the same coin (Moesel et al., 1996). Therefore, construction managers are exposed to greater risks that are invisible to them. Effectual logic used by construction managers plays a pivotal role in causing over-trust and forms the basis of the role of managers (Coleman, 1990). Therefore, over-trust on part of the construction managers on their employees will certainly lead to negative consequences by failing to anticipate and meet the customers' needs and desires.

In conclusion, this study provides evidence that managers presume that physical evidence assumes more importance, while customers attach more importance to processes and products. These differences are by the research study conducted by Hult et al. (2017), who stated that managers generally find it difficult to understand their companies' customers as they tend to overestimate the customer perceptions relating to construction company services. It implies that they comprehend consumer perception from their own perspective and neglect the consumers' notion of better construction products in the Gulf region. Cumulatively, these findings suggest that although customer feedback is the most costly line-item of most construction companies' market research expenditures, these tools are not as effective as they might be as the data are not used for corrective action. In addition, firms need to engage in deep, analytical conversation about the findings of customer feedback. Therefore, the way in which managers' act has a considerable influence on a construction company's performance toward the customer experience.

According to Womack & Jones (2005), managers may not actively deny the significance of customer experience or, for that matter, the tools used to collect, quantify, and analyse it, but

many don't adequately appreciate what those tools can reveal. Moreover, the authors stated that, there are three forces in the main conspire to preserve these differences; too much money already lavished on CRM, lack of attunement to customers' needs, and fear of what the data may reveal. Conclusively, the findings of this study make it clear that consumers consider processes that the construction companies undergo whilst finalising the product to be more significant along with the products offered by construction companies in the Gulf region. The following section will discuss the relative importance of each element of the marketing mix impacting the customer experience

6.6 Marketing Mix Impacting the Customer Experience

The aim of this section was to discuss the relative importance of each element of the marketing mix impacting the customer experience by comparing the impact of the elements of the marketing mix on customer experience from managers' perspective with the impact of the elements of the marketing mix on customer experience from the customers' perspective. Based on the beta coefficients (β) obtained from the analysis in Tables 5.36 and 5.86 (see sections 5.1.12.2 & 5.2.12.2), the findings suggested that managers of the construction companies give more emphasis on the following elements of the marketing mix in the descending order: "physical evidence, product, people, promotion, place/distribution, price, and process" on determining the customer experience, while customers of the construction companies give more emphasis on the following elements of the marketing mix in the descending order: "process, price, product, physical evidence, people, place/ distribution, and promotion" when evaluating their experience with the construction company.

The findings of the research revealed that the physical evidence element of the marketing mix for managers of construction companies is very important in impacting the customer experience with a coefficient value of 0.31, but also this element is important for customers when evaluating their experience with the construction companies as they weigh this element with a coefficient value of 0.15. According to Rathmell (1974), physical evidence is that which can be easily associated with the product. Therefore, firms should create a suitable environment to highlight the fact to the customers. This element of 7P's holds great

importance because the customer normally judges the quality of the service provided through it (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995).

The findings of the research also revealed that managers of the construction companies value their product/service as the second most important element of their marketing mix strategy with a coefficient value of 0.161 but for the customers, the same element is on the third rank with a coefficient value of 0.15 which is lower than companies. This shows that customer experience will be negatively affected if construction companies in the Gulf region keep on focusing on their product and not the process which is most important for the customer with a score of 0.18. Kotler & Armstrong (2013) considering the product as the core offering of a business, while Alibage & Jetter (2017) indicated that among marketing mix elements, product significantly influences customer experience.

Similarly, managers of construction companies tend to put people as the third important element of marketing mix in impacting the customer experience with a coefficient value of 0.148 but for customers, the element of people is in fifth ranking when evaluating their experience with the construction company with a coefficient value of 0.13. According to Armando (2005), successful service providers can satisfy customer's requirements through people element, particularly 'face-to-face' interaction with the customer.

In addition, the findings revealed that although managers of the construction companies weigh the promotion as very important in impacting the customer experience with a coefficient value of 0.142 more than customers (0.009), but when it comes to this element of marketing mix impacting the customer experience, then promotion is more important for customers than they are to the company (Lovelock & Wright, 2002). It can influence consumers' perception, their emotions, their experience as well as their purchasing pattern thus, helping to create powerful images and a sense of credibility, confidence and reassurance (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). Promotions are designed to persuade consumers to act, offer factual information on the product, remind consumers that an old established product

is still available, and reinforce consumer satisfaction with a purchase by emphasizing that they have made a wise choice, as stated by Kotler & Armstrong (1994).

As for the place element of the marketing mix, the findings revealed that managers of the construction companies weigh this element with a coefficient value of 0.132 in impacting the customer experience more than customers (0.11). According to Cravens & Piercy (2007) strong channels of distribution ensure that customers get their desired product in time, which increases customers' trust in the end because customers' needs are satisfied. The distribution channel is characterised as a part of services offered which includes the service supplier, intermediate individuals, and the same customer availing the service (in majority of the cases). In this manner, by keeping in mind the end goal of controlling and dealing with these procedures, organisations need to build up a fitting marketing channel to align with the organisation's objectives (Liang & Dang, 2015).

It has been stated that the distribution processes associated with marketing are governed by two factors: the first factor focuses on acknowledging distribution as a channel of marketing which primarily aims to make the services more accountable and easily approachable and the second factor focuses on the physical distribution of products which is mainly determined by the surrounding conditions, technical practicability, transport facilities available, and other factors relying on the type of the service offered (Išoraitė, 2016).

Moreover, the findings revealed that the element of price of the product/service for customers is very important when evaluating their experience with the construction company as the results showed that the element with a coefficient value of 0.16 comparing with the same element for the managers in impacting the customer experience which is very low with a coefficient value of 0.066. Pricing, according to Mochtar (2005), is a very effective marketing tool in the construction industry and plays a significant role in winning competitively bid jobs. In many instances, pricing in construction is based on cost plus a percentage mark-up. This method requires a good estimate of the actual costs of construction

by accounting for quantities and unit costs of equipment, labor and materials and making reasonable adjustments for risks and uncertainties (Mochtar, 2005).

The expertise of estimators is crucial in this process (Polat & Donmez, 2010). Thus, it is reasonable that construction companies attach great importance to train estimators, which could help to provide clients with better prices. Due to the intangible nature of services, price becomes a crucial quality indicator. Peter & Donnelly (2007) found in their study that price is the factor in which customers focus more than other attributes while making purchase decisions. Even when deciding to repurchase from a service provider, consumers usually think whether or not they received their value for money.

This is not the case for process, as the findings revealed that although construction companies' managers think of process as the least important of their marketing mix strategy in impacting the customer experience with a coefficient value of 0.021, but for the customers' process with a coefficient value of 0.18 is the element that will define a lot about customer's experience. The marketing element of process carries the most significant implications for services and service-based products. As noted by Hirankitti et al. (2009) process pacing, as well as the skill of the service providers are fully observed by customers and forms the basis of consumer satisfaction with the purchase. Process management controls the availability and consistence of quality of service and should be optimized. Modern technology has revolutionized the service delivery options (Dabholkar & Bagozzi, 2002).

6.7 Effect of Age, Educational and Managerial Level on the Marketing Mix

The aim of this section was to gain insight into how is the effect of respondents' age, education level and the managerial level on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies. The analysis in (section 5.1.13) revealed that the effects of age, educational level, and the management level of employees on the elements of marketing mix (7Ps) had a strong practical significant by with ($p = .03$), ($p = .04$), and ($p = .024$) respectively.

6.7.1 Age

As for the age, the findings indicate that there is a positive effect on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies. This is supported by Moyes (2008), who stated that older managers compared to younger counterparts have direct effect on the construction companies' marketing mix practice, as they are better able to balance the customer needs through practicing the marketing mix elements than those who are younger. In addition, older professionals are likely to develop more positive relationship toward customers.

6.7.2 Level of Education

The level of education results indicates that around quarter of the front-line managers possess less than a high school and a high school certificate, therefore, their level of education is still low. However, the results indicate an important characteristic that the majority of the managers have a bachelor degree. The educational level of a managers will to a very large extent determine the level of performance. Studies that considered a manager's level of education and performance found mixed results. Gurbuz (2007), discovered that performance increases when education level increases while Gately (1997) opined a contrary opinion.

Education process is a first step and presumption for better performance and results of every manager. Thus, the achievement of higher level of education increases the precondition for its successful results in the management of construction companies. Knowledge and a high level of education is a prerequisite for achieving successful results. This is supported by El-Baz & El-Sayegh (2007) who stated that knowledge and managerial competencies by education process are very important for increasing value of manager and company and probably increasing better performance of managers and final results in company. Second point of view in real business conditions are experiences and developing managerial and soft skills by practice. This also supported by Mesaros et al. (2017) who confirmed that the managerial competencies achieved by education process and practices increase the possibility to be successful. Consequently, human resources in the construction companies needs to address the education requirements for front-line managers. The selection and appointment strategies should be designed to target front-line managers with the necessary

skills. Because of varying levels of education among the managers and corporate leadership within the construction industry, these companies should increase workplace training and education to make sure all managers attain the same educational level. This will not only enhance staff competency, but also allow them to take notice of what is happening in the construction companies.

6.7.3 Managerial Level

The management level of employees has strong positive effects on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies. Usually, the decision that are made in the industry are made by the top level/upper middle level personnel. These professionals shape up for the next move by the lower level managers, those who actually responsible for implementation of that decision. Goll & Rasheed (2005), in their study, provide a support for the assertion that top management demographic characteristics influence decision making and companies' performance. According to Oke (2013), the construction managers are the most responsible persons in a project especially when technical works are concerned. The expertise of each construction manager must be carefully exercised as they are answerable to any sinfulness occurred during the constructions. Whilst the characteristics of substandard managers can be wide-ranging, from poor communication to lack of integrity or courage, the effects of these can be extremely damaging to morale and productivity. In fact, poor management affects employee morale, productivity, adaptability and further innovation. Positive management can prevent the typical symptoms of poorly led teams which include stressed, over-worked, and unmotivated employees who in turn provide sub-standard service.

What's more, poor communication, whether that be the lack of through instruction, or inability to give proper direction – can also contribute to poor employee productivity. Confusion or lack of understanding is likely to lead the team member to misinterpret what has been asked of them, diminishing their own work performance and breeding resentment in customers. Resentment and blame culture are toxic to morale and therefore productivity, resulting in a less energetic workforce who care less about their quality or work and their overall operative level.

Given that managers are responsible for an individual organisational department, any drop in efficiency or productivity could have potentially disastrous implications for business performance overall. A manager sets the context to help each component to deliver its contribution to wider organisational goals, with poor performance in one specific area potentially undermining strategic goals. A bad or ineffective manager can also affect an employee's perception of the construction company's overall vision and values, potentially causing unhappiness and leading to a high turnover of staff, causing another detrimental cost to the business. When this occurs, a manager also has a significant impact upon the culture and employer brand of a company, impacting upon the ability to attract top talent, or how the business in the construction is perceived by its customers and stakeholders.

In conclusion, with the quality of the services offered by the company and their perceived solutions to the needs and ability to meet the expectations of the customers. Precisely, all these qualities directly contribute to the quality of the services that a company is able to offer to the customers. Ideally, a company with employees or managers with a high level of education is expected to pay attention to every detail of the production line to ensure that the services offered or products made by the company are in position to meet the needs and expectations of the customer. This is the same thing with other variables inclusive of managerial level and the age of the manager or employee. Therefore, construction companies should focus its efforts on improving the performance of younger and newly employed construction managers by developing management training programs, workshops, financial incentives, and other non-work-related activities that would encourage and support them to stay and grow with the industry, since there are relatively few young managers in the construction industry.

6.8 Effect of educational Level on Customer Experience and Satisfaction

The aim of this section was to gain insight into how is the effect of respondents' education level on customer experience and satisfaction. The analysis in (section 5.2.13) revealed that the educational level had statistically significant effect on customer experience and

satisfaction with ($p = .00$). This means that customer experience and satisfaction were higher when education level of the customers were higher which implies that construction companies must do more for the less educated customers as ensuring the same to attract more educated customers to their services will in anyway result in more satisfied customers.

The reason as to why a company should attract educated customers is because these individuals tend to have high income and are generally willing to use their income on purchasing quality products and services. Similarly, the study conducted by Ozimek & Zakowska-Biemans (2011) indicated that the level of education also influences customer perception as the higher the education level, the higher the expectations of the customers, which, in turn, makes it difficult for the company to meet the needs of their customers. In this context, the study of Bowie & Buttle (2006) pointed out that higher education level leads towards higher incomes. For example, a customer who has a graduate degree may be able to influence the middle class and is likely to seek products and services that are aligned with their lifestyle.

On the other hand, it is still recommended for companies to attract lesser educated customers. Mirzagol & Mermarian (2015) suggested that it is easier for companies to meet the needs of lesser-educated customers. Based on the arguments presented in extant literature, it is critical for construction companies in the Gulf region to focus towards both educated and lesser-educated segments. However, satisfying educated customers may be an onerous task due to the high expectations of this segment of consumers. Therefore, it is imperative for construction companies to deliver high quality service to more educated consumers. By attracting educated customers, construction companies will be better positioned to acquiring profitable construction orders, thereby increasing the overall profit margin of the company.

The outputs are in line with Al-Doghaither (2004), who argued that, the perception of customer experience will be affected by the respondents' educational level. Given that demographic information is an important and commonly necessary consideration for targeting and segmentation, understanding the effect of key demographics such as education

level on customer experience is important. Similarly, DeShields et al. (2005), argued that customers with higher levels of education focus more on reaching their desired goods or services, and that educated customers are also fussier and demanding. Therefore, the customer experience is greater when customers' educational level is higher.

Based on the arguments provided by the authors, it can be inferred that satisfying the needs and expectation of customers can be a highly difficulty process for construction companies operating in the Gulf region. Thus, it is imperative for them not to compromise the quality of their services else they could miss out on attracting both educated and less educated customers. The underlying rationale is that the quality needs to be in accordance with expectations among both educated and uneducated segments, which was also recommended by the study of Ozimek & Zakowska-Biemans (2011). Less educated customers may also have strong knowledge about the services of construction companies. Thus, construction companies are recommended to provide high quality services to both the education and uneducated customers to fulfil their customer needs and meet their expectations. Similarly, the study of LeBaron et al. (2002) indicated that education factors have a significant effect on the demographic environment by influencing the income and purchasing behaviours of consumers. Therefore, an understanding of education is highly important for the researchers as it helps them evaluate the purchase behaviour of individuals. Therefore, based on the analysis and extant literature, it can be surmised that education plays a crucial role in shaping the customers' experience.

Moreover, the level of education also figures into the socio-economic status of an area. Because income increases with advancing educational attainment, many sellers focus on income level rather than education (Zeithaml, et al., 2006). Furthermore, Ozimek & Zakowska-Biemans (2011) claimed that outlooks of customers were influenced by their levels of education in finding that customers with higher levels of education tended to have higher expectations. Education level in marketing mix is occasionally linked with income-based segmentation.

In addition, education is a customer demographic that marketers might also link with social class, actual or perceived. For example, customers with graduate degrees may notice themselves to be in the upper middle class and thus may wish for more comfortable products. At times, marketing managers might use education as a stand-alone demographic (Fahy et al., 2000). On the contrary, Mirzagoli & Memarian (2015), stated that people with less education are more satisfied. Bowie & Buttle (2006) argue that the usual belief is that more education leads to above-average incomes. Since customer is educated, he knows the things happening in the industry from several sources. The manager has to be over skilled with not only the product or service knowledge but also the implications of soft skills at right time.

On the other hand, the finding with regards to age revealed that age did not impact on customer experience and satisfaction as the results showed this demographic was not statistically significant. This result was in contrary with several researchers. Walsh & Mitchell (2005, p. 286) stated that customer perceptions are influenced by demographic variables such as age, because personal expenditures change as individuals grow older. Similarly, Garg et al. (2014) who stated that the age categories behaves differently on customer experience dimensions. In the construction industry, LeBaron, et al. (2002), stated that the contractor may build and sell many different types of buildings, however, the marketing plan could state the age groups that are likely to purchase each type of buildings. With some of the buildings, company managers could plan to target building buyers between the age group (Holton, 2004). Additionally, Liligeto et al. (2014) who posited that in the case of Fiji, age is a cue for marketers and advertisers to try and distinguish advertising based on age groups rather than simplifying the ads.

6.9 The Revised Conceptual Model of the Study

The revised model that was developed based on the results that were obtained from linear regression analysis (Path coefficients) is presented in Figure 6.1. The model presented introduced in a block diagram to provide a clear understanding the difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7Ps) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry. This includes those elements of the marketing mix (7Ps) and the

demographics that had a significant direct influence of customer experience in the construction companies in Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Dubai in United Arab of Emirates.

As shown in Figure 6.1, all the marketing mix elements of the expected and actually practiced 7Ps by the construction companies directly influenced customer experience. This mean that the effect of an increase in the scores for people, physical evidence, place/ distribution, price, process, product and promotion was to increase the scores for customer experience. In addition, the research findings indicate that the actual practiced marketing mix (7P's) by construction companies' is quite different from the expected practiced. This difference, as discussed in Section 5.2.13, shows that actual practiced affects the elements of marketing mix practices of construction companies, and in doing also affects their customer experience, which ultimately becomes unsatisfactory for the customer perceptions. According to Gartner (2016), customer experience is an antecedent of customer perception.

The direct effect of these dependent variables on customer experience is shown by the solid black arrows between these constructs. On the other hand, the customer survey predicted that customer experience had a much stronger effect on recommendation and satisfaction. Based on the statistical results presented in (section 5.2.12.2), Figure 6.1 and the clarification should help to address the first two questions and objectives, presented in sections 1.3 and 1.5, respectively.

The light black arrows in Figure 6.1 also represents the difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry, which the finding indicates that the difference were negative, and the rationale behind these differences is that managers overestimate the positivity of customer perceptions of the company's products and services and fail to grasp the fact that what they think about customer perceptions of their practiced marketing mix is totally different from what customers actually think about their practiced marketing mix and this again stems from the company expectations and thus, construction companies tend to over trust their

employees. Based on the statistical results presented in (section 5.2.13), Figure 6.1 provides an answer to the third research question, as paired with the third objective, presented in sections 1.3 and 1.5, respectively.

Additionally, Figure 6.1 represents age, educational level, and managerial level as a demographics that influence the expected practiced of marketing mix applied by construction companies. The findings indicate that age, educational level, and the management level of employees have strong positive effect on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies, which means that the practices marketing mix of managers were higher when their age, education level and the managerial level were higher. Based on the statistical results presented in (section 5.1.13), Figure 6.1 also provides an answer to the fourth research question, as paired with the fourth objective, presented in sections 1.3 and 1.5, respectively.

Figure 6.1 also represents the educational level as a demographic that influence the customer experience and satisfaction. The findings indicate that the educational level of customer has a substantial positive effect on customer experience and satisfaction, which means that customer experience and satisfaction were higher when education level of the customers were higher. Based on the statistical results presented in (section 5.2.13), Figure 6.1 also provides an answer to the fifth research question, as paired with the fifth objective, presented in sections 1.3 and 1.5, respectively.

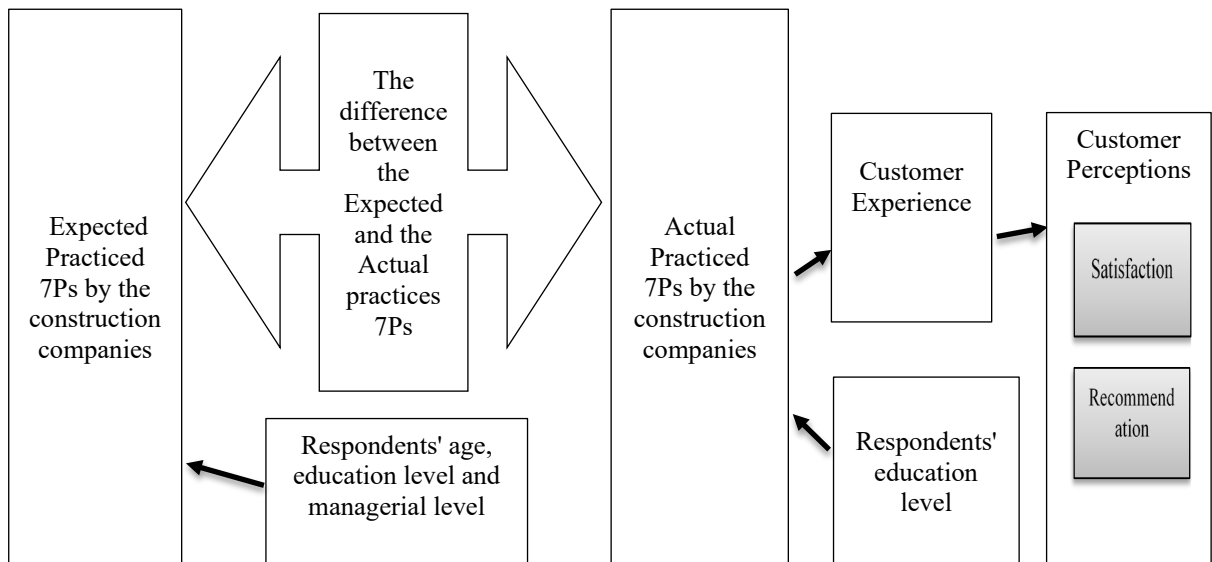
The revised model incorporates the attributes of the respondent demographics as crucial attribute in identifying appropriate measures to integrity the needs of the customers. It also helps the construction companies filter through their customers to determine the suitable products and services that can be tailored made for specific groups of clients. As such, this helps to the correct the effectiveness question when it comes to strategic planning of an appropriate market approached concentrating on a specific niche for the four selected Gulf countries.

According to Gummesson (2017), such a practice is essential when it comes to tailoring services for particular people. The model is interrelated to the objectives of the construction company, by helping them streamline the 7Ps with the respective demographics to eliminate wastage. Through the model is ascertainable that the relationship between the 7Ps and the demographics of the respondents replicate the fact that one is able to attain experience depending on the relationship they develop with the brand. In this case the construction companies, focus on orienting customers into their business culture, to foster development of customer-based services.

The model is also fundamental as it helps construction companies to minimise the differences between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience and recognise objective goals and missions to support their customer's needs. The model does not describe the individual requirements, but it describes the aspects that can be incorporated to produce the expected strategies of meeting the elements that foster improvement of customer experience. Zineldin & Philipson (2007), explain that different levels of people present demands that are not similar in cases of educated people in managerial positions, they will require different materials to meet the demands of their ideal product; thus, this enable the construction companies offer plans to specific individuals with various demands. The extent of customer experience also depends on the 7Ps affecting the ability of the business to regulate the changes that can eliminate costs.

The elimination of the differences shows that model focuses on aligning the interests of the respondents to those of the construction companies, which means that there must exist institutional policies that aim at minimising the differences between the construction companies and their customers (Wu, 2007). The use of the model will help the companies identify areas of focus and invest in them so that their customers can get the best experience when they interact with them. It is also important that communication is efficient to enable ease of access to the valuation processes of the services.

Figure 6.1: Revised Conceptual Model of the Study



6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the three main findings to emerge from the quantitative analysis presented in chapter 5. The findings were discussed in line with the available literature review. In some cases, the major findings were found to confirm the findings of earlier literature studies as well as more recent studies in the field, while in other cases these findings shed light on some of the aspects discussed in the literature review chapter (Chapter 2). The discussion showed that the construction companies' expectations of the practiced marketing mix (7P's) are overestimated, thus fail to create a positive customer experience through engagement. The findings revealed that the customer perceptions of the practiced marketing mix (7P's) is not satisfactory in creating a positive customer experience in construction companies. Furthermore, the findings showed important disconnect between managers' expectations and customer perceptions in relation to the construction companies' products and services offerings. The study found that the difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction industry were negative, and the rationale behind these differences was that managers overestimate the positivity of customer perceptions of the company's products and services

and fail to grasp the fact that what they think about customer perceptions of their practiced marketing mix is totally different from what customers actually think about their practiced marketing mix, and this again stems from the company expectations and thus, construction companies tend to over trust their employees.

To summarise, this chapter provided answers to the proposed research questions, therefore fulfilling the respective objectives (See Chapter 1). Furthermore, the chapter shed light on the contributions made by the model of the research that will help construction companies gauge the effectiveness of their marketing strategy and to minimise the differences that currently exists between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience and recognise objective goals and missions to support their customer's needs.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the effect of construction companies' marketing mix (7P's) on the experience of customers in the Gulf region. The research was conducted on construction companies and their customers in the Arabian Gulf countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates in order to achieve the research objectives and to provide clear answers for the research questions presented in sections 1.3 and 1.5.

A positivism approach was employed in this study, including the use of quantitative analysis. The primary data were obtained in which a survey of 400 usable questionnaires were collected equally from the managers of construction companies in the four capital cities of the selected Gulf countries and 400 usable questionnaires from their customers. The findings of this study provided evidence as to the construction companies' practices of the marketing mix (7P's) is failing to create a positive customer experience.

This final chapter begins with a summary of main research findings in section 7.2, followed by the contributions of this thesis makes to knowledge in section 7.3. Section 7.4 discusses the implication for practice, followed by the discussion of the limitations of the research in section 7.5. The discussion of scope for further research is presented in section 7.6. In section 7.7 the recommendations of the research are presented. Finally, a conclusion of the chapter is provided in section 7.8.

7.2 Summary of Main Research Findings

The results of this study were presented in the data analysis chapter (chapter 5) and followed by a discussion of these findings in chapter 6. The research findings indicate that the most significant factor of marketing mix practice by the construction companies is physical evidence which is followed by product, people, promotion, place, price and lastly process.

According to company's stance, the process is the least effective factor which influences customer experience given that it is entirely an internal matter of the company.

Based on the customer's perspective, the research findings indicate that the most significant factors are process, price and product based on their significance levels while they are followed by physical evidence, people, place, and lastly promotion. In this regard, there is a significance difference between the company's expectations and customer's perceptions in terms of their perception about the marketing mix in the Gulf region. These findings imply that this gap needs to be narrowed down for an enhanced consumer experience because coherence is necessary for comprehensive strategies to be made by the companies.

In addition, the difference variables between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction companies were computed by subtracting the median score for each 7P's variable computed using the company survey (expected practiced) from each 7P's variable computed using the customer survey (actual practiced). Thus, the research findings indicate that the difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience in the construction companies were negative.

Moreover, the findings indicate that age, educational level, and the management level of employees have strong positive effect on the marketing mix practiced by construction companies. Additionally, the findings also indicate that the educational level of customer has a substantial positive effect on customer experience and satisfaction.

In chapter 6, a discussion of the findings was reported in line with available literature review and the framework designed in this research. It was understood that customer experience is tied to the quality of service customers encounter during their contact with a company, hence, construction companies must enhance their customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the results obtained from quantitative studies showed that there are a large number of challenges that face construction companies while practicing their marketing mix strategies to enhance customer experience, as stated above. Based on these results, a clear connection between the findings and the research questions and objectives was made.

7.3 Contributions of the Research

This research offers significant advancement to the current literature both on marketing theory and practice. This research adds to the literature by examining the impact of the marketing mix elements on customer experience which has not thoroughly been examined in previous research by identifying key attributes of each element of the marketing mix (7P's) that impact the customer experience. Therefore, this study represents a step forward to fill the gap of customer experience-based research in the Gulf region as a market and in the construction sector as an industry which has largely been unidentified.

The study contributes to deepening the understanding of researchers about the antecedents of customer experience in construction industry and establish a direct and clear cause-effect link between the elements of the marketing mix and customer experience through using the model of the study. The model will help construction companies gauge the effectiveness of their marketing strategy and to minimise the differences that currently exists between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience and recognising objective goals and missions to support their customer's needs. In other words, the findings will help construction companies to create more efficient marketing strategies in order to enhance their customers' actual experience. The model does not describe the individual requirements, but it describes the aspects that can be incorporated to produce the expected strategies of meeting the elements that foster improvement of customer experience. The managerial implications of the model developed in this study will also help the companies identify areas of focus and invest in them so that their customers can get the best experience when they interact with them. It is also important that communication is efficient to enable ease of access to the valuation processes of the services.

Furthermore, the study developed a valid and reliable scale to measure the practiced marketing mix (7Ps) by the construction companies. Conducting this kind of study by using the scales that are applied during the process of data collection (questionnaires) will diagnose the weaknesses of practicing the marketing mix strategy by construction companies and will

accurately understand what customer think of their services and why customer hold the perceptions that they do. Additionally, embarking on this research may further enhance and help revise the way in which construction companies execute their marketing strategies and achieve their objectives.

This study has given an enhanced understanding of the demographics that impact the expected marketing mix practiced by construction companies and the demographics that influence the customer experience.

7.4 Implication for Practice

The findings of this study imply that customer experience management systems should be concerned with improving the marketing mix within the construction companies across Gulf region countries as all the dimensions are key determinants of customer satisfaction. The thesis showed that customers believed all the elements of marketing mix of construction companies in the four countries of Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia are not practiced well. Yet according to the managers, their company paid full attention to improve customer experience, while customers believed the actual practice of the elements of marketing mix of construction companies in Gulf region countries was lagging.

Based on the finding in this study, it can be deduced that interpreting customer perception is crucial for organisation to apply the marketing mix effectively. For example, this thesis result showed that customer educational level asserts influence when it comes to practicing the 7P's. The result also showed that there is a lack of promotion skills within this organisational domain. Therefore, the customers expect savvier advertising skills and marketing, yet word-of-mouth is a key element in improving customer perception toward construction companies. According to Akroush (2011) word-of-mouth plays an especially important role in a collectivist society where people's opinions matter a lot. The use of online social networks and other technological friendly platforms also help to improve promotion.

Due to the environment of customer experience, which is dependent not only on front-line managers, but on all areas that add to the customer experience, evaluation of customer

experience quality can only be applied, operatively and dependably, if the results are possessed and acknowledged by all business purposes (Reichheld, 2003) to increase responsiveness that they are all responsible for bringing the experiences anticipated by their customers. Next, due to the important position of customer experience quality for an organisation, the operation of such a strategy must be started and synchronized by the general manager of the organisation, rather than for a single purpose, such as marketing (Reichheld, 2003).

Managing customer perception and expectations prove very challenging for employees and business managers. As (Palmer & O'Neill, 2003) state, "Managers should be aware of the limitations on using post-consumption survey data and should seek to understand more clearly the link between these measures and longer-term behavioral intention. It only seems logical, therefore, that practitioners should develop and operationalise some mechanism by which they can track consumer perceptions over time" (p. 266).

Thus to overcome the limits of post consumption survey data, the use of more quantitative measures of service quality, such as EFA, could be applied to analyse these meanings in a longitudinal fashion, which would also help to regulate whether the significance of customer experience qualities and dimensions modifies over time, for instance, as with more knowledgeable customers (O'Neill & Palmer, 2003).

7.5 Limitations of the Research

The scope of this research is limited to its goal of investigating the effects of construction companies' marketing mix on their customers' experiences in the Gulf region. The applicability of the results is limited to the construction sector of the selected countries and can be extended only to other similar markets. The research applies a convenience sampling method of data collection, which might affect the generalisation of results.

The framework of the research, while chosen based on the proposals of the literature, has limitations in terms of the generalisation of the findings, as has any context-specific study. Therefore, findings representing the role of customer experience quality and the consistency

of related strategies need to be assessed not only in other frameworks, but also in a longitudinal style.

In addition, because the survey was conducted on both managers and customers of construction companies, the results showed that managers had ranked their company marketing mix high and best in terms of performances and delivering what customers would desire while customers showed different aspects. Therefore, biased elements were clearly shown through managers' perceptions when they answered the survey questionnaire, even though anonymity was encouraged.

7.6 Scope for Further Research

This study was focused on customer experience in terms of their perception using the 7Ps at marketing level within the construction industry. Although this research has fulfilled its aim and objectives and answered its questions, it would be more interesting to explore other areas of work like administration and employees at lower levels. This would provide an all-inclusive understanding as well as overview of the differences in customer experience and marketing practices for various organisations and fields of work. Although anticipated and vital mindsets change concerning the significance of customer experience, management has been taking place for quite some good time. This phenomenon of customer experience is still crucial and of great importance in the business world. There is still need for further studies carried out on the findings within other industries, such as oil and gas, infrastructure works, power plants, etc.

It is at the same time imperative that such studies are also supported by qualitative research other than the quantitative one which is usually used. The concept of customer experience in its entirety is arguably holistic and for that matter qualitative data can help add a lot of crucial content to its credibility, pragmatically and understandability.

In this research, emphasis was put on customer perspective of the elements of marketing mix within some Arab countries like Kuwait, KSA, UAE and Bahrain. Preferably, comparative

studies including states from other cultural and geographical settings like Europe would be interesting to enable analysis of regional variations in multi-cultural and diversified nations. Since culture is one of the factors that affect consumer experiences, comparative studies would provide essential information to marketing departments in choosing the practices that will realise maximum customer experiences. It would be interesting to measure cultural differences in consumers' measurement of customer experience. Cross-industry, cross-sectional and cross-national data would deliver more confidence in the dimensions discussed here and eventually could be applied to build industry-specific benchmarking tools.

Additionally, previous research proposes that customer experience touches business performance and future research should examine whether EFA and its extents clarify significant marketing outcomes, such as market share and market success.

Finally, a research venture that incorporates numerous socio-demographic as well as bio socio and economic variables would be motivating to discover the impact of marketing practices on customer experiences in different areas, departments and organisations.

7.7 Recommendations

It is observed that the construction industry in the Gulf region countries is facing formidable challenges, as there is a negative difference between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience. The following recommendations are aimed to minimise these differences.

1. It is important for managers of construction companies to implement more customer engagement activities such as educating customers, developing interpersonal skills with target customers, etc.
2. Managers should draft an internal process design which will ensure the phase by phase involvement of customer in end to end project cycle.
3. It is important to implement modern and customized CRM methods to ensure the services provided are as latest trend matching needs of that customers.

4. It is imperative for managers to periodic market research and analysis (R&A) to take the necessary adjustment measures to have a competitive edge in the industry segments. The backbone of any customer perception management and measurement system, however, is thorough market research and surveys. There are several aspects of measuring customer perceptions. First of all, the company has to find out how it and its offerings are perceived by the customers. It is essential to identify what the customer is actually buying and which features are most important to him. Only this way it is possible to align the internal focus and resources to the customers' expectation. This information is of greater value if it can be compared to the customers' perception of competitive offerings. Not only will this reveal relative strengths and weaknesses, it is also a valuable source of ideas for improvement. Secondly, besides that, surveys should also identify the relative importance of several influencing variables in the eyes of the customer. To know what matters most to the customer helps to set priorities for projects. Thirdly, of course, as with any market research activities, it should be based on a careful customer segmentation. Customer groups that differ by frequency of use, social status, geographical region or other criteria, are likely to have different expectations and preferences. Hence, they will probably perceive an offering in different ways.
5. Managers of the construction companies have to participate in the forums which boast the latest trends in the evolving industry, e.g.: Expo, industrial based conferences.
6. Construction companies need to have a system of managing the complaints of their customers. In marketing there is offensive and defensive marketing strategies. Since managers believe in delivering maximum satisfaction to their customers. Instead, of going for defensive marketing strategies through advertisement, etc. which counts for more cost. The organisation encourages its customers to freely communicate with their issues so that fair response is generated to satisfy that customer. In regards to the fact that clients know what they need, they keep presenting their issues. The marketing departments and managers of these companies must find opportunities of improving quality through these complaints and complements. Whenever the clients come out with issues, the managers should look into them to create lasting relations

as well as quality services and products that will enhance the reputation of the company and client experiences. All in all, this study found that the reactions of customers act as eye-openers for construction companies which helps them to remain relevant in the ever-changing building structures and materials.

7. In order to minimise the differences, construction companies must deconstruct it into its component experiences. Because a great many customer experiences aren't the direct consequence of the product's messages or the company's actual offerings, a company's reexamination of its initiatives and choices will not suffice. The customers themselves and their expectations must be monitored and probed. Furthermore, construction companies need to use a good product strategy to respond to customer needs and wants as customers in the market. Such attention to customers requires a closed-loop process in which every function focuses on delivering a good experience, and senior management ensures that the offering keeps all those parochial conceptions in balance and thus linked to the bottom line.
8. Construction companies have to measure their customer perception as any serious effort to manage customer perceptions starts with a good measurement system. Companies must be truly willing to look at the whole process of interaction through the customers' eyes. For many companies, this requires a more or less extensive shift in mindset, since most departments from development to sales will be involved.

In order to enhance the scope of utilising human resources efficiency and the effectiveness in construction industry, the human resources part of the industry can take the following measures.

1. Screening new applicants carefully.
2. Make the process to make the seamless knowledge transfer among the employees sharing expertise opinion with the employees.

3. Developing employees with both off job and on job training on latest industry best practices and process.
4. Focus on providing opportunities, platform for continues skills improvement of the employees.

Having presented these recommendations, it should be noted that these recommendations were put forward based on the findings of the study, which emerged according to the methods adopted during the course of the research. Hence, the researcher does not claim to have proffered permanent solutions to the challenges of the construction industry in the Arabian Gulf countries in particular, or other entities with similar or larger challenges, in general. Rather, the recommendations offered in this study are aimed to minimise the negative differences between the expected and actual practices marketing mix (7P's) in creating a positive customer experience. Therefore, it can only be affirmed that the objectives of the study, and the respective questions mentioned earlier, have been properly addressed in this research.

7.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the summary of the main research findings obtained from the quantitative method was introduced, and the contribution of this thesis to the field and the pre-existing corpus of knowledge has been established. What is more, implications for application in the field of customer service and the 7P's, as practiced by construction companies in the Gulf nations, limitations of the study, and possible avenues leading to further research also have been mentioned. The chapter also provided some real-world, practical recommendations to managers and staff in construction companies in the Gulf region countries. The purpose of this research study was to investigate the effect of construction companies' marketing mix on the perceived experiences of customers as they related to the 7ps, in the chosen Gulf region. Using a valid and useful conceptual model, results provided empirical evidence to support the thesis that the marketing mix adopted by the construction companies significantly influences customer experience and company performance and clarifies where the companies

must focus their marketing efforts and strategies to fill gaps in customer experience and satisfaction. The study also recognises the current research gaps in the field of marketing within the construction sector and foresees further progress in the form of additional research and a richer literature base in the years to come.

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Appendix I

Table 5.3: Univariate Statistics for Company Survey

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Missing		No. of Extremes ^{a,b}	
				Count	Percent	Low	High
Q7_01	399	1.91	.385	0	.0	.	.
Q7_02	399	1.90	.454	0	.0	.	.
Q7_03	399	1.88	.391	0	.0	.	.
Q7_04	399	1.85	.460	0	.0	.	.
Q7_05	399	1.87	.403	0	.0	.	.
Q7_06	399	1.91	.375	0	.0	.	.
Q7_07	399	1.96	.331	0	.0	.	.
Q7_08	399	1.97	.311	0	.0	.	.
Q7_09	399	1.93	.355	0	.0	.	.
Q7_10	399	1.93	.392	0	.0	.	.
Q7_11	399	1.91	.358	0	.0	.	.
Q7_12	399	1.84	.462	0	.0	.	.
Q7_13	399	1.89	.412	0	.0	.	.
Q7_14	399	1.98	.324	0	.0	.	.
Q8_01	399	1.91	.461	0	.0	.	.
Q8_02	399	1.98	.328	0	.0	.	.
Q8_03	399	1.80	.493	0	.0	.	.
Q8_04	399	1.91	.448	0	.0	.	.
Q8_05	399	1.71	.572	0	.0	0	4
Q8_06	399	1.66	.600	0	.0	0	6

Q8_07	399	1.78	.521	0	.0	0	3
Q9_01	399	1.84	.507	0	.0	.	.
Q9_02	399	1.92	.460	0	.0	.	.
Q9_03	399	1.96	.443	0	.0	.	.
Q9_04	399	1.92	.426	0	.0	.	.
Q9_05	399	1.99	.372	0	.0	.	.
Q9_06	399	2.01	.388	0	.0	.	.
Q9_07	399	2.02	.422	0	.0	.	.
Q9_08	399	1.97	.413	0	.0	.	.
Q10_1	399	1.97	.357	0	.0	.	.
Q10_2	399	1.99	.358	0	.0	.	.
Q10_3	399	2.02	.416	0	.0	.	.
Q10_4	399	2.03	.496	0	.0	.	.
Q10_5	399	2.02	.451	0	.0	.	.
Q10_6	399	2.03	.466	0	.0	.	.
Q10_7	399	1.98	.388	0	.0	.	.
Q10_8	399	2.01	.509	0	.0	.	.
Q10_9	399	1.92	.482	0	.0	.	.
Q10_10	399	1.90	.526	0	.0	.	.
Q10_11	399	1.95	.429	0	.0	.	.
Q10_12	399	1.97	.412	0	.0	.	.
Q10_13	399	1.99	.407	0	.0	.	.
Q10_14	399	2.01	.372	0	.0	.	.
Q10_15	399	2.00	.451	0	.0	.	.
Q10_16	399	2.00	.404	0	.0	.	.
Q11_1	399	2.00	.404	0	.0	.	.
Q11_2	399	2.01	.425	0	.0	.	.

Q11_3	399	1.86	.537	0	.0	.	.
Q11_4	399	1.84	.545	0	.0	.	.
Q11_5	399	1.93	.396	0	.0	.	.
Q11_6	399	1.71	.560	0	.0	0	3
Q11_7	399	1.80	.543	0	.0	.	.
Q11_8	399	1.83	.556	0	.0	.	.
Q11_9	399	1.75	.564	0	.0	0	5
Q11_10	399	1.70	.576	0	.0	0	4
Q11_11	399	1.97	.353	0	.0	.	.
Q11_12	399	1.97	.361	0	.0	.	.
Q11_13	399	1.97	.332	0	.0	.	.
Q12_1	399	1.76	.557	0	.0	0	5
Q12_2	399	1.64	.627	0	.0	0	6
Q12_3	399	1.73	.579	0	.0	0	5
Q12_4	399	1.64	.650	0	.0	0	7
Q12_5	399	1.72	.705	0	.0	0	13
Q12_6	399	1.65	.606	0	.0	0	5
Q12_7	399	1.95	.547	0	.0	.	.
Q12_8	399	1.79	.568	0	.0	0	3
Q12_9	399	1.71	.581	0	.0	0	5
Q12_10	399	1.76	.550	0	.0	0	3
Q12_11	399	1.88	.636	0	.0	.	.
Q12_12	399	1.74	.612	0	.0	0	8
Q12_13	399	1.73	.573	0	.0	0	4
Q12_14	399	1.73	.559	0	.0	0	5
Q13_1	399	1.83	.575	0	.0	.	.
Q13_2	399	1.84	.531	0	.0	.	.

Q13_3	399	1.93	.391	0	.0	.	.
Q13_4	399	1.88	.500	0	.0	.	.
Q13_5	399	1.76	.567	0	.0	0	6
Q13_6	399	1.80	.546	0	.0	0	4
Q13_7	399	1.75	.601	0	.0	0	6
Q13_8	399	1.87	.732	0	.0	0	16
Q13_9	399	1.86	.784	0	.0	0	18
Q13_10	399	1.86	.690	0	.0	0	16
Q13_11	399	2.00	.382	0	.0	.	.
Q14_1	399	2.00	.443	0	.0	.	.
Q14_2	399	2.01	.413	0	.0	.	.
Q14_3	399	1.96	.380	0	.0	.	.
Q14_4	399	1.98	.407	0	.0	.	.
Q14_5	399	2.00	.465	0	.0	.	.
Q14_6	399	1.98	.431	0	.0	.	.
Q14_7	399	1.96	.367	0	.0	.	.
Q14_8	399	2.04	.447	0	.0	.	.
Q15_9	399	2.00	.378	0	.0	.	.
Q15_10	399	1.95	.473	0	.0	.	.
Q15_11	399	1.87	.589	0	.0	.	.
Q15_12	399	1.92	.662	0	.0	.	.
Q15_13	399	1.98	.368	0	.0	.	.
Q16_1	399	1.96	.363	0	.0	.	.
Q16_2	399	1.92	.555	0	.0	.	.
Q16_3	399	1.86	.463	0	.0	.	.
Q16_4	399	1.96	.476	0	.0	.	.
Q16_5	399	2.01	.321	0	.0	.	.

Q16_6	399	2.01	.378	0	.0	.	.
Q16_7	399	2.03	.424	0	.0	.	.
Q16_8	399	2.03	.361	0	.0	.	.
Q16_9	399	1.90	.422	0	.0	.	.
Q17_1	399	1.89	.502	0	.0	.	.
Q17_2	399	1.96	.387	0	.0	.	.
Q17_3	399	1.96	.366	0	.0	.	.
Q17_4	399	1.86	.491	0	.0	.	.
Q18_1	399	1.85	.467	0	.0	.	.
Q18_2	399	1.87	.515	0	.0	.	.
Q18_3	399	1.85	.497	0	.0	.	.
Q18_4	399	1.93	.595	0	.0	.	.
Q18_5	399	1.90	.455	0	.0	.	.
Q18_6	399	2.01	.321	0	.0	.	.
Q18_7	399	2.01	.347	0	.0	.	.
Q18_8	399	1.96	.421	0	.0	.	.
Q18_9	399	2.03	.387	0	.0	.	.
Q18_10	399	2.02	.401	0	.0	.	.
Q18_11	399	2.05	.420	0	.0	.	.
Q18_12	399	1.97	.450	0	.0	.	.
Q18_13	399	2.02	.391	0	.0	.	.
Q18_14	399	2.02	.397	0	.0	.	.
Q18_15	399	1.67	.605	0	.0	0	5

a. Number of cases outside the range (Q1 - 1.5*IQR, Q3 + 1.5*IQR).

b. indicates that the inter-quartile range (IQR) is zero.

Table 5.4: Test for Normality of the Variable Scores of the Company Survey

	N	Normal Parameters ^{a,b}		Most Extreme Differences			Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Absolute	Positive	Negative		
Q7_01	399	1.91	.385	.480	.400	-.480	9.583	0.000
Q7_02	399	1.90	.454	.452	.395	-.452	9.030	0.000
Q7_03	399	1.88	.391	.483	.364	-.483	9.644	0.000
Q7_04	399	1.85	.460	.451	.359	-.451	9.000	0.000
Q7_05	399	1.87	.403	.479	.365	-.479	9.573	0.000
Q7_06	399	1.91	.375	.482	.392	-.482	9.633	0.000
Q7_07	399	1.96	.331	.482	.443	-.482	9.630	0.000
Q7_08	399	1.97	.311	.484	.441	-.484	9.668	0.000
Q7_09	399	1.93	.355	.486	.407	-.486	9.702	0.000
Q7_10	399	1.93	.392	.473	.416	-.473	9.454	0.000
Q7_11	399	1.91	.358	.489	.391	-.489	9.762	0.000
Q7_12	399	1.84	.462	.448	.349	-.448	8.953	0.000
Q7_13	399	1.89	.412	.468	.382	-.468	9.348	0.000
Q7_14	399	1.98	.324	.477	.460	-.477	9.529	0.000
Q8_01	399	1.91	.461	.445	.397	-.445	8.882	0.000
Q8_02	399	1.98	.328	.480	.460	-.480	9.584	0.000
Q8_03	399	1.80	.493	.434	.333	-.434	8.661	0.000
Q8_04	399	1.91	.448	.450	.397	-.450	8.984	0.000
Q8_05	399	1.71	.572	.364	.281	-.364	7.261	0.000
Q8_06	399	1.66	.600	.333	.264	-.333	6.644	0.000
Q8_07	399	1.78	.521	.412	.318	-.412	8.221	0.000

Q9_01	399	1.84	.507	.425	.357	-.425	8.487	0.000
Q9_02	399	1.92	.460	.444	.401	-.444	8.859	0.000
Q9_03	399	1.96	.443	.438	.419	-.438	8.749	0.000
Q9_04	399	1.92	.426	.462	.406	-.462	9.222	0.000
Q9_05	399	1.99	.372	.462	.462	-.455	9.226	0.000
Q9_06	399	2.01	.388	.473	.473	-.447	9.440	0.000
Q9_07	399	2.02	.422	.486	.486	-.439	9.713	0.000
Q9_08	399	1.97	.413	.452	.448	-.452	9.019	0.000
Q10_1	399	1.97	.357	.473	.454	-.473	9.451	0.000
Q10_2	399	1.99	.358	.472	.472	-.463	9.420	0.000
Q10_3	399	2.02	.416	.484	.484	-.436	9.669	0.000
Q10_4	399	2.03	.496	.463	.463	-.412	9.239	0.000
Q10_5	399	2.02	.451	.470	.470	-.427	9.396	0.000
Q10_6	399	2.03	.466	.488	.488	-.430	9.743	0.000
Q10_7	399	1.98	.388	.455	.449	-.455	9.098	0.000
Q10_8	399	2.01	.509	.448	.448	-.409	8.954	0.000
Q10_9	399	1.92	.482	.434	.406	-.434	8.662	0.000
Q10_10	399	1.90	.526	.410	.382	-.410	8.194	0.000
Q10_11	399	1.95	.429	.449	.428	-.449	8.972	0.000
Q10_12	399	1.97	.412	.451	.441	-.451	9.016	0.000
Q10_13	399	1.99	.407	.458	.458	-.447	9.140	0.000
Q10_14	399	2.01	.372	.478	.478	-.446	9.555	0.000
Q10_15	399	2.00	.451	.455	.455	-.428	9.081	0.000
Q10_16	399	2.00	.404	.472	.472	-.447	9.436	0.000
Q11_1	399	2.00	.404	.472	.472	-.447	9.436	0.000

Q11_2	399	2.01	.425	.474	.474	-.440	9.474	0.000
Q11_3	399	1.86	.537	.404	.360	-.404	8.071	0.000
Q11_4	399	1.84	.545	.397	.342	-.397	7.927	0.000
Q11_5	399	1.93	.396	.473	.422	-.473	9.442	0.000
Q11_6	399	1.71	.560	.371	.278	-.371	7.421	0.000
Q11_7	399	1.80	.543	.402	.335	-.402	8.024	0.000
Q11_8	399	1.83	.556	.389	.335	-.389	7.771	0.000
Q11_9	399	1.75	.564	.379	.305	-.379	7.578	0.000
Q11_10	399	1.70	.576	.358	.276	-.358	7.160	0.000
Q11_11	399	1.97	.353	.474	.449	-.474	9.464	0.000
Q11_12	399	1.97	.361	.470	.455	-.470	9.389	0.000
Q11_13	399	1.97	.332	.480	.457	-.480	9.588	0.000
Q12_1	399	1.76	.557	.386	.309	-.386	7.702	0.000
Q12_2	399	1.64	.627	.300	.264	-.300	6.002	0.000
Q12_3	399	1.73	.579	.363	.291	-.363	7.257	0.000
Q12_4	399	1.64	.650	.282	.266	-.282	5.636	0.000
Q12_5	399	1.72	.705	.280	.280	-.271	5.596	0.000
Q12_6	399	1.65	.606	.322	.254	-.322	6.439	0.000
Q12_7	399	1.95	.547	.379	.368	-.379	7.563	0.000
Q12_8	399	1.79	.568	.374	.308	-.374	7.469	0.000
Q12_9	399	1.71	.581	.358	.283	-.358	7.157	0.000
Q12_10	399	1.76	.550	.387	.302	-.387	7.726	0.000
Q12_11	399	1.88	.636	.338	.336	-.338	6.761	0.000
Q12_12	399	1.74	.612	.344	.300	-.344	6.875	0.000
Q12_13	399	1.73	.573	.366	.288	-.366	7.307	0.000

Q12_14	399	1.73	.559	.381	.298	-.381	7.612	0.000
Q13_1	399	1.83	.575	.382	.345	-.382	7.625	0.000
Q13_2	399	1.84	.531	.412	.357	-.412	8.237	0.000
Q13_3	399	1.93	.391	.476	.414	-.476	9.507	0.000
Q13_4	399	1.88	.500	.430	.384	-.430	8.594	0.000
Q13_5	399	1.76	.567	.380	.314	-.380	7.600	0.000
Q13_6	399	1.80	.546	.394	.322	-.394	7.878	0.000
Q13_7	399	1.75	.601	.350	.299	-.350	6.996	0.000
Q13_8	399	1.87	.732	.329	.329	-.290	6.574	0.000
Q13_9	399	1.86	.784	.319	.319	-.260	6.366	0.000
Q13_10	399	1.86	.690	.338	.338	-.314	6.754	0.000
Q13_11	399	2.00	.382	.472	.472	-.452	9.437	0.000
Q14_1	399	2.00	.443	.462	.462	-.435	9.237	0.000
Q14_2	399	2.01	.413	.472	.472	-.443	9.433	0.000
Q14_3	399	1.96	.380	.469	.440	-.469	9.376	0.000
Q14_4	399	1.98	.407	.450	.450	-.447	8.992	0.000
Q14_5	399	2.00	.465	.447	.447	-.422	8.936	0.000
Q14_6	399	1.98	.431	.456	.456	-.444	9.109	0.000
Q14_7	399	1.96	.367	.473	.447	-.473	9.447	0.000
Q14_8	399	2.04	.447	.488	.488	-.424	9.751	0.000
Q15_9	399	2.00	.378	.462	.462	-.450	9.234	0.000
Q15_10	399	1.95	.473	.432	.420	-.432	8.628	0.000
Q15_11	399	1.87	.589	.366	.341	-.366	7.315	0.000
Q15_12	399	1.92	.662	.315	.315	-.311	6.301	0.000
Q15_13	399	1.98	.368	.467	.461	-.467	9.320	0.000

Q16_1	399	1.96	.363	.476	.446	-.476	9.510	0.000
Q16_2	399	1.92	.555	.390	.379	-.390	7.795	0.000
Q16_3	399	1.86	.463	.449	.365	-.449	8.970	0.000
Q16_4	399	1.96	.476	.425	.414	-.425	8.497	0.000
Q16_5	399	2.01	.321	.484	.484	-.461	9.674	0.000
Q16_6	399	2.01	.378	.486	.486	-.449	9.701	0.000
Q16_7	399	2.03	.424	.478	.478	-.427	9.551	0.000
Q16_8	399	2.03	.361	.480	.480	-.437	9.590	0.000
Q16_9	399	1.90	.422	.468	.391	-.468	9.357	0.000
Q17_1	399	1.89	.502	.425	.382	-.425	8.481	0.000
Q17_2	399	1.96	.387	.463	.441	-.463	9.258	0.000
Q17_3	399	1.96	.366	.476	.444	-.476	9.507	0.000
Q17_4	399	1.86	.491	.432	.363	-.432	8.628	0.000
Q18_1	399	1.85	.467	.448	.359	-.448	8.953	0.000
Q18_2	399	1.87	.515	.418	.371	-.418	8.352	0.000
Q18_3	399	1.85	.497	.429	.358	-.429	8.570	0.000
Q18_4	399	1.93	.595	.381	.381	-.373	7.615	0.000
Q18_5	399	1.90	.455	.450	.397	-.450	8.990	0.000
Q18_6	399	2.01	.321	.493	.493	-.459	9.848	0.000
Q18_7	399	2.01	.347	.486	.486	-.456	9.717	0.000
Q18_8	399	1.96	.421	.453	.439	-.453	9.047	0.000
Q18_9	399	2.03	.387	.486	.486	-.434	9.705	0.000
Q18_10	399	2.02	.401	.475	.475	-.435	9.485	0.000
Q18_11	399	2.05	.420	.478	.478	-.415	9.538	0.000
Q18_12	399	1.97	.450	.438	.438	-.437	8.749	0.000

Q18_13	399	2.02	.391	.485	.485	-.439	9.696	0.000
Q18_14	399	2.02	.397	.483	.483	-.437	9.639	0.000
Q18_15	399	1.67	.605	.324	.255	-.324	6.471	0.000

Note* significant deviation from normality ($p < .05$)

Table 5.5: Correlation Coefficients for Product in the Company Survey

Correlations														
	Q7_01	Q7_02	Q7_03	Q7_04	Q7_05	Q7_06	Q7_07	Q7_08	Q7_09	Q7_10	Q7_11	Q7_12	Q7_13	Q7_14
Q7_01	1													
Q7_02	.770**	1												
Q7_03	.480**	.525**	1											
Q7_04	.581**	.590**	.527**	1										
Q7_05	.561**	.507**	.410**	.413**	1									
Q7_06	.592**	.598**	.543**	.522**	.608**	1								
Q7_07	.608**	.596**	.471**	.527**	.646**	.705**	1							
Q7_08	.542**	.492**	.338**	.422**	.588**	.557**	.746**	1						
Q7_09	.600**	.581**	.445**	.460**	.606**	.596**	.729**	.662**	1					
Q7_10	.660**	.611**	.453**	.501**	.598**	.609**	.679**	.620**	.833**	1				
Q7_11	.493**	.457**	.373**	.411**	.412**	.487**	.441**	.471**	.605**	.692**	1			
Q7_12	.390**	.379**	.295**	.351**	.485**	.427**	.457**	.383**	.438**	.523**	.419**	1		
Q7_13	.276**	.266**	.184**	.262**	.388**	.282**	.379**	.404**	.379**	.407**	.467**	.717**	1	
Q7_14	.388**	.345**	.337**	.418**	.462**	.420**	.509**	.491**	.425**	.464**	.310**	.532**	.473**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.6: Correlation Coefficients for Place in the Company Survey

Correlations															
	Q8_1	Q8_2	Q8_3	Q8_4	Q8_5	Q8_6	Q8_7	Q9_1	Q9_2	Q9_3	Q9_4	Q9_5	Q9_6	Q9_7	Q9_8
Q8_01	1														
Q8_02	.651**	1													
Q8_03	.463**	.548**	1												
Q8_04	.508**	.619**	.741**	1											
Q8_05	.357**	.474**	.564**	.449**	1										
Q8_06	.343**	.472**	.455**	.450**	.613**	1									
Q8_07	.378**	.545**	.469**	.510**	.427**	.463**	1								
Q9_01	.359**	.432**	.381**	.426**	.389**	.396**	.794**	1							
Q9_02	.462**	.554**	.427**	.537**	.395**	.399**	.585**	.612**	1						
Q9_03	.460**	.546**	.398**	.474**	.426**	.371**	.558**	.563**	.845**	1					
Q9_04	.460**	.580**	.425**	.528**	.375**	.362**	.575**	.545**	.811**	.832**	1				

Q9_05	.348**	.555**	.444**	.479**	.403**	.360**	.459**	.474**	.613**	.654**	.615**	1			
Q9_06	.311**	.573**	.373**	.450**	.369**	.396**	.415**	.387**	.593**	.600**	.519**	.853**	1		
Q9_07	.359**	.512**	.347**	.449**	.381**	.398**	.468**	.451**	.618**	.623**	.612**	.851**	.843**	1	
Q9_08	.397**	.553**	.371**	.437**	.374**	.412**	.489**	.414**	.545**	.557**	.631**	.572**	.550**	.624**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.7: Correlation Coefficients for Price Factor in the Company Survey

Correlations																
	Q10_1	Q10_2	Q10_3	Q10_4	Q10_5	Q10_6	Q10_7	Q10_8	Q10_9	Q10_10	Q10_11	Q10_12	Q10_13	Q10_14	Q10_15	Q10_16
Q10_1	1															
Q10_2	.884**	1														
Q10_3	.749**	.812**	1													
Q10_4	.572**	.610**	.692**	1												
Q10_5	.596**	.624**	.708**	.684**	1											
Q10_6	.549**	.573**	.605**	.616**	.870**	1										
Q10_7	.668**	.723**	.626**	.539**	.548**	.490**	1									
Q10_8	.555**	.608**	.593**	.537**	.471**	.433**	.740**	1								
Q10_9	.601**	.622**	.573**	.555**	.584**	.480**	.610**	.566**	1							
Q10_10	.521**	.557**	.459**	.463**	.336**	.311**	.582**	.538**	.574**	1						
Q10_11	.632**	.669**	.640**	.573**	.576**	.497**	.690**	.566**	.785**	.649**	1					
Q10_12	.660**	.697**	.634**	.619**	.598**	.541**	.641**	.576**	.772**	.635**	.874**	1				
Q10_13	.603**	.603**	.610**	.512**	.549**	.452**	.556**	.449**	.636**	.512**	.731**	.792**	1			
Q10_14	.609**	.605**	.551**	.462**	.524**	.447**	.525**	.425**	.510**	.457**	.650**	.724**	.798**	1		
Q10_15	.562**	.591**	.576**	.517**	.506**	.465**	.575**	.536**	.555**	.552**	.598**	.662**	.712**	.659**	1	
Q10_16	.610**	.660**	.628**	.539**	.551**	.493**	.529**	.562**	.581**	.380**	.581**	.649**	.581**	.569**	.551**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.8: Correlation Coefficients for Promotion Factor in the Company Survey

Correlations													
	Q11_1	Q11_2	Q11_3	Q11_4	Q11_5	Q11_6	Q11_7	Q11_8	Q11_9	Q11_10	Q11_11	Q11_12	Q11_13
Q11_1	1												
Q11_2	.880**	1											
Q11_3	.685**	.699**	1										
Q11_4	.595**	.614**	.765**	1									
Q11_5	.708**	.706**	.585**	.661**	1								
Q11_6	.459**	.456**	.478**	.576**	.583**	1							
Q11_7	.437**	.433**	.287**	.340**	.525**	.569**	1						
Q11_8	.527**	.539**	.384**	.437**	.531**	.523**	.693**	1					
Q11_9	.488**	.493**	.321**	.350**	.468**	.438**	.603**	.656**	1				
Q11_10	.392**	.392**	.242**	.276**	.410**	.505**	.452**	.520**	.706**	1			
Q11_11	.599**	.588**	.456**	.483**	.633**	.489**	.545**	.588**	.594**	.573**	1		
Q11_12	.569**	.542**	.424**	.452**	.623**	.536**	.603**	.542**	.526**	.484**	.882**	1	
Q11_13	.563**	.536**	.390**	.422**	.600**	.434**	.489**	.453**	.464**	.395**	.659**	.667**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.9: Correlation Coefficients for People Factor in the Company Survey

Correlations														
	Q12_1	Q12_2	Q12_3	Q12_4	Q12_5	Q12_6	Q12_7	Q12_8	Q12_9	Q12_10	Q12_11	Q12_12	Q12_13	Q12_14
Q12_1	1													
Q12_2	.567**	1												
Q12_3	.425**	.439**	1											
Q12_4	.528**	.584**	.586**	1										
Q12_5	.411**	.552**	.431**	.583**	1									
Q12_6	.480**	.449**	.396**	.594**	.541**	1								
Q12_7	.422**	.460**	.417**	.479**	.479**	.486**	1							
Q12_8	.410**	.406**	.597**	.481**	.420**	.489**	.654**	1						
Q12_9	.387**	.344**	.578**	.447**	.344**	.456**	.484**	.736**	1					
Q12_10	.467**	.448**	.522**	.385**	.284**	.393**	.436**	.547**	.601**	1				
Q12_11	.334**	.512**	.523**	.470**	.558**	.359**	.481**	.575**	.508**	.419**	1			
Q12_12	.345**	.329**	.508**	.363**	.363**	.305**	.404**	.485**	.444**	.428**	.538**	1		
Q12_13	.399**	.341**	.542**	.418**	.362**	.410**	.430**	.542**	.608**	.552**	.563**	.644**	1	
Q12_14	.266**	.388**	.395**	.259**	.207**	.193**	.318**	.376**	.363**	.413**	.310**	.332**	.236**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.10: Correlation Coefficients for Process Factor in the Company Survey

Correlations											
	Q13_1	Q13_2	Q13_3	Q13_4	Q13_5	Q13_6	Q13_7	Q13_8	Q13_9	Q13_10	Q13_11
Q13_1	1										
Q13_2	.584**	1									
Q13_3	.437**	.680**	1								
Q13_4	.464**	.618**	.740**	1							
Q13_5	.433**	.506**	.603**	.638**	1						
Q13_6	.427**	.544**	.649**	.658**	.730**	1					
Q13_7	.374**	.480**	.597**	.572**	.626**	.652**	1				
Q13_8	.300**	.443**	.406**	.425**	.428**	.393**	.407**	1			
Q13_9	.300**	.375**	.386**	.427**	.329**	.300**	.398**	.635**	1		
Q13_10	.315**	.514**	.503**	.470**	.501**	.453**	.530**	.676**	.592**	1	
Q13_11	.458**	.458**	.572**	.461**	.395**	.422**	.438**	.369**	.336**	.448**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.11: Correlation Coefficients for Physical Evidence Factor in the Company Survey

Correlations													
	Q14_1	Q14_2	Q14_3	Q14_4	Q14_5	Q14_6	Q14_7	Q14_8	Q15_9	Q15_10	Q15_11	Q15_12	Q15_13
Q14_1	1												
Q14_2	.879**	1											
Q14_3	.643**	.690**	1										
Q14_4	.697**	.703**	.777**	1									
Q14_5	.733**	.798**	.669**	.810**	1								
Q14_6	.751**	.734**	.703**	.715**	.740**	1							
Q14_7	.681**	.714**	.784**	.788**	.708**	.760**	1						
Q14_8	.394**	.421**	.410**	.418**	.339**	.369**	.377**	1					
Q15_9	.525**	.546**	.594**	.571**	.514**	.570**	.615**	.759**	1				
Q15_10	.516**	.490**	.479**	.518**	.526**	.539**	.540**	.652**	.743**	1			
Q15_11	.415**	.426**	.392**	.474**	.487**	.458**	.479**	.460**	.574**	.671**	1		
Q15_12	.334**	.369**	.347**	.406**	.424**	.383**	.413**	.435**	.531**	.549**	.760**	1	
Q15_13	.540**	.546**	.552**	.518**	.529**	.600**	.554**	.326**	.469**	.428**	.324**	.272**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Appendix II

Exploratory Factor Analysis Matrix of Items in the Company Survey

Item		Cross-Loadings							
		Customer Experience	People	Physical Evidence	Place	Price	Process	Product	Promotion
Q07_1	Our range of brands helps the consumer to make better choices.	.224	.263	.221	.232	.164	.148	.732	.124
Q07_2	Our marketing strategy helps the consumer to develop an ongoing relationship with a product.	.267	.254	.301	.282	.221	.295	.628	.231
Q07_3	Our marketing strategy clearly differentiates our product from its competitors.	.304	.252	.279	.294	.245	.251	.581	.268
Q07_4	Our services do not always increase the attractiveness of our product offers to customers.	.247	.212	.153	.189	.217	.183	.707	.131
Q07_5	It is difficult to define our product's market position in terms of attributes that are important to the buyer.	.124	.263	.274	.152	.172	.230	.536	.181
Q07_6	We conduct market research to know how our customers think about our products.	.239	.186	.143	.219	.076	.091	.659	.151
Q07_7	We do not always use customer related data to plan our product strategy.	.269	.256	.167	.213	.264	.231	.615	.219
Q07_8	Our marketing strategy emphasizes on delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers.	.252	.174	.224	.186	.142	.165	.554	.126
Q07_9	Our products and services do not always meet the requirements of our customers.	.238	.206	.119	.124	.129	.093	.691	.085
Q07_10	Our product strategy emphasized the benefits of the product to customers rather than the features of the product.	.119	.125	.213	.152	.116	.179	.672	.125
Q07_11	We focus on the development of new markets relative to competitors.	.161	.225	.224	.218	.223	.232	.609	.209

Q07_12	We focus on offering ‘specialized’ services to our customers.	.261	.206	.211	.223	.272	.243	.765	.267
Q07_13	We focus on providing unique services not offered by competitors.	.124	.178	.164	.116	.202	.225	.719	.152
Q07_14	We focus on serving more diverse segments of customer than our competitors.	.301	.279	.247	.271	.296	.271	.576	.245
Q08_1	Our company reaches a wide geographic coverage of customers.	.163	.202	.144	.641	.132	.187	.145	.141
Q08_2	It is not difficult for our company to access the targeted segment of the market.	.124	.103	.130	.329	.113	.086	.078	.062
Q08_3	Our company can store, handle and display our products appropriately.	.134	.189	.136	.575	.161	.187	.112	.164
Q08_4	We take care of the movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from site to the customer’s location.	.202	.176	.258	.592	.275	.217	.186	.219
Q08_5	Our company can provide necessary customer service pre- and post-sale.	.142	.163	.144	.364	.192	.147	.161	.185
Q08_6	Extensive geographic areas are served by our company efficiently and cost effectively through networks of warehouses.	.160	.128	.172	.416	.201	.180	.126	.154
Q08_7	We hold stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity	.212	.182	.168	.563	.171	.157	.202	.116
Q09_1	Order processing	.234	.263	.165	.721	.217	.241	.246	.205
Q09_2	Stock availability	.189	.153	.119	.388	.193	.137	.140	.169
Q09_3	Speed of order fulfilment	.218	.136	.212	.539	.146	.191	.194	.181
Q09_4	Delivery time and reliability	.145	.201	.181	.369	.092	.088	.062	.101
Q09_5	Invoicing	.181	.235	.221	.694	.189	.135	.213	.221
Q09_6	Handling delivery problems	.254	.192	.187	.664	.161	.276	.234	.205
Q09_7	Handling maintenance problems	.265	.243	.282	.738	.268	.251	.262	.213
Q09_8	Handling complaints	.146	.238	.232	.670	.164	.216	.142	.177

Q10_1	Our prices reinforce the quality image of the product	.252	.163	.179	.196	.645	.132	.203	.154
Q10_2	Our prices support the product and service package to increase customers' value for money.	.287	.169	.134	.118	.661	.233	.257	.242
Q10_3	Our prices emphasize the long-term cost savings coming from using our products compared with the cheaper competition.	.255	.224	.223	.257	.737	.169	.181	.187
Q10_4	Our prices are consistently competitive.	.236	.167	.185	.134	.552	.118	.186	.129
Q10_5	Our prices cannot consider what a customer is prepared to pay for the product.	.222	.207	.181	.178	.665	.190	.152	.145
Q10_6	Our prices are designed to achieve high market share and customer loyalty.	.121	.160	.117	.166	.604	.202	.124	.165
Q10_7	The effect of our prices on the consumer's attitude and buying decision is negative.	.217	.208	.226	.223	.691	.231	.242	.226
Q10_8	We set higher prices to differentiate our products from those of the competitors.	.235	.241	.221	.229	.631	.187	.153	.164
Q10_9	We cannot determine the price sensitivity of our customers in the market.	.211	.226	.194	.232	.722	.178	.189	.201
Q10_10	Our pricing's message is consistent with the rest of the marketing mix.	.178	.188	.198	.175	.639	.189	.211	.202
Q10_11	Our prices cannot take into consideration differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers.	.175	.196	.163	.168	.782	.205	.164	.181
Q10_12	We expand our market share through lower pricing.	.165	.121	.139	.144	.765	.178	.207	.188
Q10_13	We reinforce our product's market position through appropriate pricing.	.291	.257	.286	.262	.652	.253	.287	.261
Q10_14	We stimulate high volume sales through price reductions.	.254	.228	.217	.196	.562	.214	.169	.161
Q10_15	It is very difficult for our company not to get drawn into price wars.	.179	.185	.146	.170	.586	.184	.203	.111

Q10_16	Our prices help to differentiate our product through positioning it in a different price level from the competition.	.159	.207	.176	.121	.558	.158	.211	.172
Q11_1	We use promotional methods to motivate potential new customers.	.112	.164	.153	.117	.169	.136	.121	.564
Q11_2	We do not use our website to give information and advice to customers.	.143	.128	.238	.132	.178	.178	.212	.626
Q11_3	We do not usually use social media to get customers' feedback.	.166	.184	.143	.132	.170	.217	.191	.518
Q11_4	In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the popularity or fashion of different media channels.	.145	.198	.165	.208	.112	.152	.147	.669
Q11_5	In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the popularity or fashion of different communication techniques and promotional methods.	.162	.129	.131	.117	.145	.138	.180	.458
Q11_6	In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising.	.239	.276	.153	.185	.194	.208	.182	.585
Q11_7	Our promotion activities are giving the consumer a clear reason for 'buying' from our company.	.160	.231	.210	.166	.215	.239	.228	.695
Q11_8	Our promotion activities are positively affecting our reputation and standing with various publics.	.178	.162	.216	.192	.203	.162	.218	.751
Q11_9	Our company keeps an eye on how the competition is communicating with their customers.	.209	.289	.272	.228	.157	.197	.230	.732
Q11_10	We give customers a scope for price negotiation, to let them feel they are gaining value when dealing with us.	.231	.193	.164	.138	.119	.123	.128	.648
Q11_11	We use discounts to encourage prompt payment from customers.	.112	.141	.153	.140	.165	.159	.201	.428
Q11_12	Our promotion activities do not emphasize product benefits to customers.	.160	.136	.125	.119	.128	.177	.201	.358

Q11_13	Our promotion activities target old customers who have bought from us before.	.168	.093	.130	.162	.154	.088	.120	.415
Q12_1	Customers are expected to be treated well in this company.	.128	.139	.142	.190	.178	.131	.152	.397
Q12_2	There is a great deal of interaction between our staff and customers.	.253	.693	.247	.242	.236	.138	.149	.277
Q12_3	The appearance and manners of our staff are not always professional.	.129	.543	.230	.227	.216	.146	.171	.217
Q12_4	Our employees are expected to give customers personal attention.	.228	.671	.240	.139	.106	.112	.192	.201
Q12_5	Continues recruitment and training of staff are very important activities in our company.	.211	.609	.191	.229	.161	.227	.295	.234
Q12_6	It is not realistic to expect prompt service to customers from our employees.	.184	.572	.247	.245	.119	.263	.268	.248
Q12_7	The majority of our employees are well-educated and knowledgeable.	.160	.465	.131	.165	.160	.113	.124	.110
Q12_8	Our employees are not always self-motivated to help customers.	.264	.701	.254	.137	.211	.221	.240	.116
Q12_9	The recommendations from our employees are trusted and considered.	.207	.727	.198	.208	.246	.213	.224	.196
Q12_10	Our staff plays a key role in anticipating customers' needs.	.266	.633	.246	.122	.217	.142	.119	.159
Q12_11	Our staff build personalized relationships with customers.	.172	.398	.126	.154	.119	.164	.176	.118
Q12_12	The top management is not always committed to develop high quality customer service delivery teams.	.122	.455	.099	.165	.146	.128	.151	.142
Q12_13	We appoint team leaders according to their experience and strong people skills.	.157	.654	.105	.185	.123	.209	.161	.156

Q12_14	We have strong measurement systems and staff appraisals to monitor staff performance in our company.	.167	.526	.153	.110	.101	.146	.141	.171
Q13_1	We have more advanced systems and technology than our competitors.	.185	.176	.115	.131	.095	.586	.183	.126
Q13_2	Most of the communications between our staff and customers are automated or computerized.	.219	.206	.098	.119	.169	.709	.134	.251
Q13_3	We have a strong and up-to-date database of customer information in our company.	.217	.128	.253	.216	.225	.662	.184	.155
Q13_4	We are very innovative with service delivery compared to competition.	.163	.209	.186	.217	.203	.544	.116	.110
Q13_5	We analyze customer data from our database to plan our offers to customers.	.178	.154	.125	.197	.116	.628	.197	.189
Q13_6	We can anticipate customers' needs and wants in the market in an accurate way through market research.	.165	.204	.157	.166	.202	.675	.136	.128
Q13_7	We are efficient in order processing and reducing customers' waiting time.	.139	.181	.201	.162	.138	.462	.201	.171
Q13_8	The process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures.	.231	.116	.123	.146	.221	.752	.196	.172
Q13_9	It is not easy for customers to give us feedback about our performance.	.203	.206	.195	.159	.112	.718	.174	.125
Q13_10	We have lots of processes and procedures but they are not followed.	.146	.164	.234	.160	.173	.646	.206	.121
Q13_11	Only certain employees know how to do certain tasks, and if they leave, we're in big trouble.	.111	.223	.202	.122	.161	.730	.201	.229
Q14_1	Our company has up-to-date facilities and equipment.	.217	.167	.709	.167	.186	.155	.124	.115
Q14_2	The outdoor facilities of our company are not visually appealing.	.203	.113	.611	.177	.194	.245	.179	.224

Q14_3	Our informative materials (website, advertisements, brochures, etc.) are visually appealing.	.165	.206	.581	.174	.201	.196	.227	.173
Q14_4	Our staff takes very good care of their appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction.	.216	.165	.675	.152	.234	.140	.172	.178
Q14_5	Our office décor and design positively influence customer's expectations of the service.	.162	.137	.732	.188	.176	.214	.217	.202
Q14_6	As our services cannot be displayed, our firm creates the right office environment to communicate our high-quality service standards to customers.	.231	.202	.746	.142	.168	.177	.162	.187
Q14_7	Our buildings, furnishings and layout are not reflective of customers' service quality expectations.	.210	.172	.718	.216	.157	.185	.122	.174
Q14_8	It is difficult to keep our machines and service delivery equipment consistently clean.	.285	.223	.546	.156	.218	.205	.212	.190
Q15_9	Cleanliness of cars and machines	.204	.187	.529	.247	.123	.293	.204	.246
Q15_10	Headquarters newness and location	.214	.209	.635	.221	.170	.291	.288	.227
Q15_11	Office Furniture and atmosphere	.248	.156	.664	.188	.139	.157	.186	.167
Q15_12	Professional look of staff	.228	.167	.692	.206	.202	.161	.159	.143
Q15_13	The professional look of our business cards and brochures	.081	.101	.389	.097	.110	.134	.119	.089
Q17_1	They have a good reputation in the market.	.445	.109	.112	.151	.146	.122	.139	.077
Q17_2	I am confident in their expertise	.548	.219	.130	.136	.128	.111	.110	.138

Q17_3	They give independent advice on which product or service can best suit my needs.	.627	.209	.201	.136	.128	.211	.110	.138
Q17_4	I choose my construction company not because of the price alone.	.482	.223	.094	.118	.206	.172	.146	.149
Q17_5	The people who work at these companies represent their own brand well.	.566	.218	.172	.119	.201	.191	.166	.153
Q17_6	The offer of company that I have chosen has the best quality.	.648	.225	.231	.197	.169	.181	.144	.139
Q17_7	The offer of company that I have chosen is superior to the competition.	.670	.209	.192	.129	.216	.189	.167	.183
Q17_8	My construction company advised me throughout the process.	.664	.265	.208	.161	.177	.134	.190	.202
Q17_9	Dealing with my construction company is easy.	.718	.270	.232	.289	.198	.158	.172	.169
Q17_10	My construction company keeps me informed.	.758	.241	.261	.209	.220	.155	.163	.201
Q17_11	My construction company demonstrates flexibility in dealing with me.	.726	.189	.207	.135	.174	.162	.151	.169
Q17_12	I always deal with the same forms and same people inside these companies.	.606	.206	.178	.166	.182	.130	.142	.191
Q17_13	My construction company personnel relate to my wishes and concerns.	.612	.120	.184	.203	.197	.202	.162	.216
Q17_14	The people I am dealing with at these companies have good people skills.	.608	.247	.205	.159	.182	.190	.201	.128
Q17_15	They deliver good customer service.	.676	.290	.165	.182	.119	.151	.135	.166
Q17_16	I have built a personal relationship with the people at these companies.	.720	.191	.212	.127	.130	.091	.084	.101

Q17_17	They focus on offering ‘specialized’ services to customers.	.637	.173	.110	.132	.114	.109	.122	.096
Q17_18	Their facilities are better designed to fulfil my needs than their competitors’.	.421	.113	.164	.202	.139	.162	.201	.133
Q17_19	Their online facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.	.603	.224	.173	.129	.151	.238	.208	.198
Q17_20	Their offline facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.	.526	.201	.171	.112	.107	.150	.182	.179
Q17_21	I stay with my construction companies because they know me.	.466	.131	.120	.108	.103	.091	.119	.127
Q17_22	They know exactly what I want.	.682	.169	.177	.105	.114	.206	.219	.127
Q17_23	They keep me up-to-date.	.686	.205	.181	.122	.134	.211	.164	.172
Q17_24	They will look after me whenever I need their services.	.746	.153	.109	.161	.114	.189	.207	.169
Q17_25	They have dealt well with me when things went wrong.	.721	.237	.156	.178	.208	.217	.203	.198
Q17_26	I am happy with my current construction company as my service provider.	.752	.201	.177	.181	.116	.107	.135	.193
Q17_27	Being a customer of my current construction company gives me social prestige.	.743	.235	.209	.198	.162	.120	.213	.140

Note: Items with strong factor loadings (> .5) highlighted in **bold** were selected as the factor indicators

Appendix III

5.24: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Items in the Company Survey

	Customer experience	People	Physical evidence	Place/ Distribution	Price	Process	Product	Promotion
Q10 1					0.831			
Q10 10					0.672			
Q10 11					0.853			
Q10 12					0.883			
Q10 13					0.806			
Q10 14					0.762			
Q10 15					0.764			
Q10 16					0.761			
Q10 2					0.868			
Q10 3					0.834			
Q10 4					0.751			
Q10 5					0.766			
Q10 6					0.691			
Q10 7					0.797			
Q10 8					0.725			
Q10 9					0.796			
Q11 1								0.85
Q11 10								0.637
Q11 2								0.856
Q11 3								0.738
Q11 4								0.746
Q11 6								0.729
Q11 7								0.692

Q11 8								0.768
Q11 9								0.727
Q12 10		0.737						
Q12 13		0.717						
Q12 14		0.546						
Q12 2		0.694						
Q12 3		0.773						
Q12 4		0.738						
Q12 5		0.647						
Q12 6		0.68						
Q12 8		0.79						
Q12 9		0.779						
Q13 1						0.647		
Q13 10						0.732		
Q13 11						0.698		
Q13 2						0.787		
Q13 3						0.831		
Q13 4						0.811		
Q13 5						0.76		
Q13 6						0.765		
Q13 8						0.668		
Q13 9						0.611		
Q14 1			0.826					
Q14 2			0.848					
Q14 3			0.817					
Q14 4			0.856					
Q14 5			0.844					
Q14 6			0.839					
Q14 7			0.855					

Q14 8			0.622					
Q15 10			0.756					
Q15 11			0.676					
Q15 12			0.602					
Q15 9			0.794					
Q17 2	0.692							
Q17 3	0.608							
Q17 5	0.664							
Q17 6	0.716							
Q17 7	0.704							
Q17 8	0.712							
Q17 9	0.782							
Q17 10	0.732							
Q17 11	0.728							
Q17 12	0.673							
Q17 13	0.718							
Q17 20	0.671							
Q17 22	0.663							
Q17 23	0.622							
Q17 24	0.814							
Q17 25	0.752							
Q17 26	0.745							
Q17 27	0.658							
Q17 14	0.642							
Q17 15	0.568							
Q17 16	0.582							
Q17 17	0.629							
Q17 19	0.719							
Q7 01							0.78	

Q7 02							0.756	
Q7 03							0.608	
Q7 04							0.675	
Q7 05							0.753	
Q7 06							0.781	
Q7 07							0.844	
Q7 08							0.766	
Q7 09							0.827	
Q7 10							0.855	
Q7 11							0.681	
Q7 12							0.658	
Q7 13							0.565	
Q7 14							0.651	
Q8 01				0.603				
Q8 03				0.658				
Q8 04				0.724				
Q8 07				0.748				
Q9 01				0.712				
Q9 03				0.795				
Q9 05				0.834				
Q9 06				0.786				
Q9 07				0.819				
Q9 08				0.738				

Appendix IV

Table 5.42: Univariate Statistics for Customer Survey

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Missing		No. of Extremes ^a	
				Count	Percent	Low	High
Q8_1	399	4.03	.273	0	.0	9	21
Q8_2	399	4.06	.307	0	.0	7	32
Q8_3	399	4.03	.273	0	.0	10	20
Q8_4	399	2.08	.310	0	.0	4	37
Q8_5	399	2.06	.281	0	.0	4	29
Q8_6	399	4.04	.285	0	.0	6	24
Q8_7	399	2.04	.242	0	.0	4	20
Q8_8	399	4.05	.256	0	.0	4	23
Q8_9	399	2.06	.273	0	.0	4	27
Q8_10	399	4.05	.270	0	.0	5	25
Q8_11	399	3.99	.279	0	.0	17	14
Q8_12	399	4.04	.267	0	.0	7	22
Q8_13	399	4.03	.216	0	.0	3	16
Q8_14	399	4.00	.181	0	.0	7	6
Q9_1	399	1.90	.715	0	.0	22	0
Q9_2	399	1.92	.566	0	.0	14	0
Q9_3	399	4.07	.431	0	.0	14	47
Q9_4	399	4.06	.424	0	.0	14	44
Q9_5	399	4.08	.403	0	.0	12	46
Q9_6	399	4.04	.393	0	.0	17	36
Q9_7	399	3.94	.442	0	.0	43	24

Q10_1	399	3.01	.395	0	.0	23	30
Q10_2	399	2.02	.378	0	.0	16	29
Q10_3	399	3.05	.359	0	.0	11	32
Q10_4	399	4.06	.377	0	.0	11	38
Q10_5	399	3.02	.350	0	.0	14	26
Q10_6	399	4.06	.377	0	.0	11	38
Q10_7	399	4.06	.380	0	.0	11	39
Q10_8	399	4.03	.342	0	.0	11	27
Q11_1	399	4.02	.279	0	.0	6	16
Q11_2	399	4.07	.358	0	.0	6	38
Q11_3	399	4.09	.375	0	.0	6	44
Q11_4	399	4.14	.424	0	.0	6	64
Q11_5	399	2.05	.392	0	.0	16	37
Q11_6	399	4.08	.430	0	.0	16	51
Q11_7	399	2.20	.472	0	.0	6	0
Q11_8	399	2.11	.480	0	.0	15	0
Q11_9	399	2.16	.446	0	.0	7	0
Q11_10	399	4.15	.436	0	.0	6	0
Q11_11	399	2.16	.440	0	.0	6	0
Q11_12	399	4.18	.453	0	.0	6	0
Q11_13	399	4.13	.419	0	.0	6	62
Q11_14	399	4.15	.436	0	.0	6	0
Q11_15	399	4.06	.418	0	.0	18	44
Q11_16	399	4.01	.284	0	.0	9	14
Q13_1	399	4.02	.287	0	.0	6	18
Q13_2	399	3.23	.488	0	.0	6	0
Q13_3	399	4.08	.394	0	.0	9	43

Q13_4	399	4.05	.325	0	.0	6	28
Q13_5	399	2.98	.403	0	.0	31	25
Q13_6	399	4.02	.287	0	.0	6	18
Q13_7	399	3.07	.355	0	.0	6	37
Q13_8	399	2.05	.329	0	.0	6	29
Q13_9	399	4.04	.307	0	.0	6	23
Q13_10	399	4.03	.295	0	.0	6	20
Q13_11	399	4.07	.358	0	.0	6	38
Q13_12	399	2.03	.324	0	.0	8	22
Q13_13	399	4.03	.303	0	.0	6	22
Q13_14	399	2.99	.340	0	.0	18	19
Q14_1	399	3.01	.434	0	.0	30	36
Q14_2	399	3.07	.526	0	.0	31	0
Q14_3	399	3.06	.544	0	.0	3	0
Q14_4	399	4.09	.505	0	.0	28	0
Q14_5	399	4.20	.461	0	.0	5	0
Q14_6	399	4.22	.474	0	.0	5	0
Q14_7	399	4.23	.487	0	.0	6	0
Q14_8	399	4.09	.458	0	.0	5	0
Q14_9	399	3.13	.413	0	.0	6	59
Q14_10	399	3.10	.591	0	.0	6	0
Q14_11	399	3.12	.406	0	.0	6	56
Q15_1	399	2.03	.350	0	.0	13	27
Q15_2	399	2.05	.366	0	.0	12	33
Q15_3	399	4.02	.347	0	.0	15	24
Q15_4	399	2.00	.378	0	.0	22	26
Q15_5	399	2.01	.410	0	.0	22	30

Q15_6	399	3.99	.398	0	.0	24	24
Q15_7	399	4.02	.368	0	.0	16	26
Q15_8	399	2.84	.519	0	.0	3	24
Q16_9	399	3.86	.536	0	.0	4	29
Q16_10	399	3.93	.493	0	.0	7	28
Q16_11	399	1.92	.497	0	.0	8	26
Q16_12	399	2.93	.493	0	.0	9	26
Q16_13	399	1.95	.496	0	.0	8	32
Q17_1	399	4.11	.392	0	.0	5	52
Q17_2	399	4.18	.453	0	.0	5	0
Q17_3	399	4.20	.496	0	.0	7	0
Q17_4	399	2.02	.616	0	.0	19	0
Q17_5	399	4.16	.490	0	.0	15	0
Q17_6	399	4.17	.457	0	.0	8	0
Q17_7	399	4.23	.488	0	.0	6	0
Q17_8	399	4.30	.499	0	.0	4	0
Q17_9	399	4.30	.506	0	.0	5	0
Q17_10	399	4.30	.517	0	.0	5	0
Q17_11	399	4.29	.511	0	.0	5	0
Q17_12	399	2.16	.650	0	.0	10	0
Q17_13	399	4.28	.494	0	.0	4	0
Q17_14	399	3.27	.493	0	.0	5	0
Q17_15	399	4.30	.540	0	.0	10	0
Q17_16	399	3.30	.502	0	.0	4	0
Q17_17	399	4.27	.499	0	.0	6	0
Q17_18	399	4.09	.601	0	.0	4	0
Q17_19	399	4.27	.551	0	.0	13	0

Q17_20	399	4.22	.554	0	.0	19	0
Q17_21	399	4.28	.507	0	.0	5	0
Q17_22	399	4.28	.507	0	.0	5	0
Q17_23	399	4.28	.493	0	.0	4	0
Q17_24	399	4.27	.486	0	.0	4	0
Q17_25	399	4.28	.507	0	.0	5	0
Q17_26	399	4.32	.509	0	.0	4	0
Q17_27	399	4.33	.527	0	.0	5	0
Q18_1	399	4.59	.545	0	.0	5	0
Q18_2	399	4.50	.553	0	.0	5	0
Q18_3	399	4.55	.550	0	.0	5	0
Q18_4	399	4.60	.544	0	.0	5	0
Q18_5	399	4.64	.536	0	.0	5	0
Q19_1	399	3.61	.603	0	.0	7	18
Q19_2	399	4.34	.544	0	.0	8	0
Q19_3	399	4.41	.555	0	.0	7	0
Q19_4	399	3.42	.617	0	.0	16	11
Q19_5	399	4.33	.541	0	.0	8	0
Q19_6	399	3.37	.616	0	.0	17	10
Q19_7	399	3.41	.590	0	.0	10	11
Q19_8	399	3.46	.596	0	.0	9	12
Q19_9	399	4.34	.533	0	.0	6	0
Q19_10	399	3.18	.687	0	.0	0	13
Q20_1	399	4.59	.546	0	.0	5	0
Q20_2	399	4.56	.549	0	.0	5	0
Q20_3	399	4.57	.548	0	.0	5	0
Q20_4	399	2.46	.648	0	.0	28	0

Q20_5	399	2.43	.645	0	.0	28	0
Q20_6	399	4.35	.794	0	.0	11	0
Q20_7	399	4.36	.786	0	.0	11	0
Q20_8	399	2.62	.540	0	.0	5	0
Q20_9	399	2.60	.549	0	.0	6	0
Q12_1	399	4.09	.398	0	.0	6	45
Q12_2	399	2.05	.494	0	.0	11	0
Q12_3	399	2.05	.509	0	.0	11	0
Q12_4	399	4.11	.425	0	.0	6	56
Q12_5	399	4.17	.473	0	.0	6	0
Q12_6	399	4.17	.468	0	.0	6	0
Q12_7	399	4.12	.434	0	.0	6	60
Q12_8	399	4.13	.482	0	.0	14	0
Q12_9	399	4.08	.498	0	.0	27	0
Q12_10	399	4.14	.447	0	.0	6	0
Q12_11	399	4.15	.475	0	.0	7	0
Q12_12	399	1.72	.964	0	.0	17	0
Q12_13	399	3.04	.430	0	.0	16	37

a. Number of cases outside the range (Mean - 2*SD, Mean + 2*SD).

Table 5.43: Tests for Normality of the factors of Customer Survey

	N	Normal Parameters ^{a,b}		Most Extreme Differences			Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Absolute	Positive	Negative		
Q8_1	399	4.03	.273	.491	.491	-.434	9.813	0.000
Q8_2	399	4.06	.307	.501	.501	-.402	10.002	0.000
Q8_3	399	4.03	.273	.486	.486	-.438	9.716	0.000
Q8_4	399	2.08	.310	.512	.512	-.385	10.236	0.000
Q8_5	399	2.06	.281	.516	.516	-.402	10.298	0.000
Q8_6	399	4.04	.285	.499	.499	-.425	9.974	0.000
Q8_7	399	2.04	.242	.516	.516	-.424	10.299	0.000
Q8_8	399	4.05	.256	.516	.516	-.416	10.310	0.000
Q8_9	399	2.06	.273	.516	.516	-.406	10.306	0.000
Q8_10	399	4.05	.270	.511	.511	-.414	10.207	0.000
Q8_11	399	3.99	.279	.468	.454	-.468	9.351	0.000
Q8_12	399	4.04	.267	.501	.501	-.427	10.003	0.000
Q8_13	399	4.03	.216	.520	.520	-.433	10.384	0.000
Q8_14	399	4.00	.181	.488	.479	-.488	9.748	0.000
Q9_1	399	1.90	.715	.477	.370	-.477	9.522	0.000
Q9_2	399	1.92	.566	.446	.371	-.446	8.910	0.000
Q9_3	399	4.07	.431	.447	.447	-.400	8.925	0.000
Q9_4	399	4.06	.424	.449	.449	-.406	8.959	0.000
Q9_5	399	4.08	.403	.461	.461	-.393	9.212	0.000
Q9_6	399	4.04	.393	.450	.450	-.417	8.998	0.000
Q9_7	399	3.94	.442	.444	.388	-.444	8.872	0.000
Q10_1	399	3.01	.395	.435	.435	-.432	8.688	0.000
Q10_2	399	2.02	.378	.451	.451	-.436	9.011	0.000

Q10_3	399	3.05	.359	.470	.470	-.422	9.385	0.000
Q10_4	399	4.06	.377	.468	.468	-.409	9.351	0.000
Q10_5	399	3.02	.350	.461	.461	-.439	9.199	0.000
Q10_6	399	4.06	.377	.468	.468	-.409	9.351	0.000
Q10_7	399	4.06	.380	.468	.468	-.407	9.343	0.000
Q10_8	399	4.03	.342	.470	.470	-.434	9.394	0.000
Q11_1	399	4.02	.279	.485	.485	-.460	9.688	0.000
Q11_2	399	4.07	.358	.485	.485	-.404	9.694	0.000
Q11_3	399	4.09	.375	.482	.482	-.392	9.633	0.000
Q11_4	399	4.14	.424	.467	.467	-.357	9.332	0.000
Q11_5	399	2.05	.392	.453	.453	-.414	9.050	0.000
Q11_6	399	4.08	.430	.446	.446	-.386	8.914	0.000
Q11_7	399	2.02	.472	.441	.441	-.318	8.808	0.000
Q11_8	399	2.11	.480	.429	.429	-.376	8.568	0.000
Q11_9	399	2.16	.446	.455	.455	-.344	9.098	0.000
Q11_10	399	4.15	.436	.462	.462	-.348	9.221	0.000
Q11_11	399	2.16	.440	.460	.460	-.345	9.182	0.000
Q11_12	399	4.18	.453	.453	.453	-.334	9.042	0.000
Q11_13	399	4.13	.419	.469	.469	-.361	9.367	0.000
Q11_14	399	4.15	.436	.462	.462	-.348	9.221	0.000
Q11_15	399	4.06	.418	.445	.445	-.400	8.879	0.000
Q11_16	399	4.01	.284	.472	.472	-.470	9.428	0.000
Q13_1	399	4.02	.287	.486	.486	-.454	9.712	0.000
Q13_2	399	3.23	.488	.429	.429	-.303	8.561	0.000
Q13_3	399	4.08	.394	.468	.468	-.402	9.347	0.000
Q13_4	399	4.05	.325	.488	.488	-.427	9.748	0.000
Q13_5	399	2.98	.403	.445	.415	-.445	8.881	0.000

Q13_6	399	4.02	.287	.486	.486	-.454	9.712	0.000
Q13_7	399	3.07	.355	.486	.486	-.407	9.702	0.000
Q13_8	399	2.05	.329	.488	.488	-.424	9.746	0.000
Q13_9	399	4.04	.307	.488	.488	-.439	9.745	0.000
Q13_10	399	4.03	.295	.487	.487	-.448	9.729	0.000
Q13_11	399	4.07	.358	.485	.485	-.404	9.694	0.000
Q13_12	399	2.03	.324	.476	.476	-.449	9.502	0.000
Q13_13	399	4.03	.303	.488	.488	-.442	9.741	0.000
Q13_14	399	2.99	.340	.461	.446	-.461	9.204	0.000
Q14_1	399	3.01	.434	.418	.417	-.418	8.348	0.000
Q14_2	399	3.07	.526	.393	.393	-.369	7.844	0.000
Q14_3	399	3.06	.544	.372	.372	-.353	7.426	0.000
Q14_4	399	4.09	.505	.402	.402	-.357	8.038	0.000
Q14_5	399	4.20	.461	.449	.449	-.323	8.960	0.000
Q14_6	399	4.22	.474	.440	.440	-.312	8.783	0.000
Q14_7	399	4.23	.487	.430	.430	-.305	8.584	0.000
Q14_8	399	4.09	.458	.451	.451	-.326	9.003	0.000
Q14_9	399	3.13	.413	.471	.471	-.366	9.418	0.000
Q14_10	399	3.10	.591	.353	.353	-.334	7.043	0.000
Q14_11	399	3.12	.406	.474	.474	-.371	9.466	0.000
Q15_1	399	2.03	.350	.464	.464	-.436	9.263	0.000
Q15_2	399	2.05	.366	.466	.466	-.421	9.316	0.000
Q15_3	399	4.02	.347	.457	.457	-.445	9.131	0.000
Q15_4	399	2.00	.378	.442	.437	-.442	8.833	0.000
Q15_5	399	2.01	.410	.438	.432	-.438	8.740	0.000
Q15_6	399	3.99	.398	.452	.427	-.452	9.037	0.000
Q15_7	399	4.02	.368	.451	.451	-.444	9.011	0.000

Q15_8	399	2.84	.519	.409	.320	-.409	8.171	0.000
Q16_9	399	3.86	.536	.400	.324	-.400	7.997	0.000
Q16_10	399	3.93	.493	.433	.371	-.433	8.654	0.000
Q16_11	399	1.92	.497	.438	.369	-.438	8.755	0.000
Q16_12	399	2.93	.493	.443	.376	-.443	8.854	0.000
Q16_13	399	1.95	.496	.430	.382	-.430	8.598	0.000
Q17_1	399	4.11	.392	.480	.480	-.377	9.597	0.000
Q17_2	399	4.18	.453	.454	.454	-.331	9.066	0.000
Q17_3	399	4.20	.496	.426	.426	-.326	8.517	0.000
Q17_4	399	2.02	.616	.425	.377	-.425	8.494	0.000
Q17_5	399	4.16	.490	.423	.423	-.334	8.443	0.000
Q17_6	399	4.17	.457	.448	.448	-.339	8.956	0.000
Q17_7	399	4.23	.488	.429	.429	-.303	8.561	0.000
Q17_8	399	4.30	.499	.413	.413	-.267	8.240	0.000
Q17_9	399	4.30	.506	.406	.406	-.264	8.101	0.000
Q17_10	399	4.30	.517	.398	.398	-.266	7.950	0.000
Q17_11	399	4.29	.511	.405	.405	-.274	8.098	0.000
Q17_12	399	2.16	.650	.333	.333	-.331	6.656	0.000
Q17_13	399	4.28	.494	.419	.419	-.273	8.363	0.000
Q17_14	399	3.27	.493	.420	.420	-.279	8.395	0.000
Q17_15	399	4.30	.540	.378	.378	-.264	7.551	0.000
Q17_16	399	3.30	.502	.409	.409	-.263	8.166	0.000
Q17_17	399	4.27	.499	.415	.415	-.277	8.282	0.000
Q17_18	399	4.09	.601	.345	.345	-.329	6.890	0.000
Q17_19	399	4.27	.551	.375	.375	-.279	7.493	0.000
Q17_20	399	4.22	.554	.377	.377	-.299	7.539	0.000
Q17_21	399	4.28	.507	.410	.410	-.279	8.196	0.000

Q17_22	399	4.28	.507	.410	.410	-.279	8.196	0.000
Q17_23	399	4.28	.493	.420	.420	-.274	8.387	0.000
Q17_24	399	4.27	.486	.427	.427	-.282	8.532	0.000
Q17_25	399	4.28	.507	.410	.410	-.279	8.196	0.000
Q17_26	399	4.32	.509	.400	.400	-.254	7.991	0.000
Q17_27	399	4.33	.527	.384	.384	-.252	7.675	0.000
Q18_1	399	4.59	.545	.386	.248	-.386	7.708	0.000
Q18_2	399	4.50	.553	.335	.299	-.335	6.694	0.000
Q18_3	399	4.55	.550	.365	.269	-.365	7.293	0.000
Q18_4	399	4.60	.544	.390	.244	-.390	7.786	0.000
Q18_5	399	4.64	.536	.408	.249	-.408	8.146	0.000
Q19_1	399	3.61	.603	.326	.259	-.326	6.502	0.000
Q19_2	399	4.34	.544	.365	.365	-.257	7.290	0.000
Q19_3	399	4.41	.555	.333	.333	-.293	6.654	0.000
Q19_4	399	3.42	.617	.318	.318	-.261	6.348	0.000
Q19_5	399	4.33	.541	.371	.371	-.250	7.417	0.000
Q19_6	399	3.37	.616	.335	.335	-.237	6.700	0.000
Q19_7	399	3.41	.590	.350	.350	-.248	6.986	0.000
Q19_8	399	3.46	.596	.327	.327	-.271	6.532	0.000
Q19_9	399	4.34	.533	.377	.377	-.252	7.538	0.000
Q19_10	399	3.18	.687	.327	.327	-.267	6.529	0.000
Q20_1	399	4.59	.546	.383	.251	-.383	7.656	0.000
Q20_2	399	4.56	.549	.370	.264	-.370	7.397	0.000
Q20_3	399	4.57	.548	.374	.260	-.374	7.475	0.000
Q20_4	399	2.46	.648	.335	.224	-.335	6.684	0.000
Q20_5	399	2.43	.645	.317	.242	-.317	6.332	0.000
Q20_6	399	4.35	.794	.278	.208	-.278	5.561	0.000

Q20_7	399	4.36	.786	.282	.207	-.282	5.625	0.000
Q20_8	399	2.62	.540	.400	.242	-.400	7.992	0.000
Q20_9	399	2.60	.549	.388	.242	-.388	7.746	0.000
Q12_1	399	4.09	.398	.472	.472	-.400	9.427	0.000
Q12_2	399	2.05	.494	.436	.431	-.436	8.710	0.000
Q12_3	399	2.05	.509	.437	.428	-.437	8.732	0.000
Q12_4	399	4.11	.425	.464	.464	-.380	9.274	0.000
Q12_5	399	4.17	.473	.442	.442	-.342	8.832	0.000
Q12_6	399	4.17	.468	.445	.445	-.347	8.893	0.000
Q12_7	399	4.12	.434	.461	.461	-.374	9.209	0.000
Q12_8	399	4.13	.482	.429	.429	-.360	8.572	0.000
Q12_9	399	4.08	.498	.407	.407	-.370	8.123	0.000
Q12_10	399	4.14	.447	.456	.456	-.364	9.104	0.000
Q12_11	399	4.15	.475	.441	.441	-.356	8.806	0.000
Q12_12	399	1.72	.964	.441	.279	-.441	8.801	0.000
Q12_13	399	3.04	.430	.440	.440	-.427	8.785	0.000

Note* significant deviation from normality ($p < .05$)

Table 5.44: Correlation coefficients for Product Factor in the Customer Survey

Correlations														
	Q8_1	Q8_2	Q8_3	Q8_4	Q8_5	Q8_6	Q8_7	Q8_8	Q8_9	Q8_10	Q8_11	Q8_12	Q8_13	Q8_14
Q8_1	1													
Q8_2	.728**	1												
Q8_3	.596**	.581**	1											
Q8_4	.505**	.553**	.331**	1										
Q8_5	.598**	.596**	.339**	.748**	1									
Q8_6	.598**	.545**	.406**	.586**	.657**	1								
Q8_7	.514**	.541**	.364**	.658**	.701**	.594**	1							
Q8_8	.447**	.538**	.378**	.678**	.587**	.489**	.617**	1						
Q8_9	.415**	.377**	.351**	.685**	.640**	.550**	.535**	.572**	1					

Q8_10	.559**	.630**	.494**	.641**	.555**	.593**	.622**	.583**	.643**	1				
Q8_11	.234**	.182**	.200**	.152**	.294**	.162**	.153**	.075	.105*	.172**	1			
Q8_12	.467**	.523**	.503**	.417**	.403**	.408**	.403**	.341**	.383**	.461**	.273**	1		
Q8_13	.580**	.500**	.454**	.447**	.380**	.467**	.503**	.426**	.394**	.532**	.213**	.588**	1	
Q8_14	.358**	.275**	.256**	.273**	.201**	.246**	.347**	.274**	.258**	.312**	.498**	.366**	.324**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.45: Correlation coefficients for Place Factor in the Customer Survey

Correlations															
	Q9_1	Q9_2	Q9_3	Q9_4	Q9_5	Q9_6	Q9_7	Q10_1	Q10_2	Q10_3	Q10_4	Q10_5	Q10_6	Q10_7	Q10_8
Q9_1	1														
Q9_2	.621**	1													
Q9_3	.153**	.208**	1												
Q9_4	.145**	.283**	.732**	1											
Q9_5	.184**	.237**	.894**	.693**	1										
Q9_6	.354**	.444**	.636**	.634**	.727**	1									
Q9_7	.563**	.806**	.391**	.436**	.364**	.549**	1								
Q10_1	.369**	.375**	.557**	.507**	.612**	.565**	.551**	1							
Q10_2	.232**	.420**	.561**	.603**	.616**	.655**	.580**	.706**	1						
Q10_3	.253**	.377**	.694**	.692**	.723**	.701**	.492**	.672**	.734**	1					
Q10_4	.227**	.388**	.623**	.621**	.714**	.646**	.474**	.655**	.696**	.891**	1				
Q10_5	.320**	.428**	.638**	.668**	.682**	.651**	.593**	.689**	.737**	.812**	.808**	1			
Q10_6	.255**	.329**	.623**	.637**	.747**	.680**	.413**	.689**	.679**	.809**	.876**	.789**	1		
Q10_7	.189**	.304**	.679**	.647**	.723**	.674**	.441**	.666**	.638**	.846**	.868**	.820**	.886**	1	
Q10_8	.342**	.429**	.683**	.697**	.729**	.682**	.561**	.779**	.753**	.810**	.881**	.854**	.801**	.893**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.46: Correlation coefficients for Price Factor in the Customer Survey

		Correlations														
	Q11_1	Q11_2	Q11_3	Q11_4	Q11_5	Q11_6	Q11_7	Q11_8	Q11_9	Q11_10	Q11_11	Q11_12	Q11_13	Q11_14	Q11_15	Q11_16
Q11_1	1															
Q11_2	.769**	1														
Q11_3	.731**	.721**	1													
Q11_4	.640**	.647**	.715**	1												
Q11_5	.591**	.442**	.503**	.371**	1											
Q11_6	.429**	.338**	.378**	.326**	.456**	1										
Q11_7	.451**	.434**	.482**	.513**	.385**	.391**	1									
Q11_8	.381**	.365**	.368**	.386**	.402**	.337**	.560**	1								
Q11_9	.443**	.353**	.413**	.510**	.333**	.314**	.624**	.392**	1							
Q11_10	.433**	.396**	.471**	.552**	.283**	.310**	.631**	.379**	.574**	1						
Q11_11	.428**	.438**	.419**	.449**	.323**	.451**	.559**	.290**	.488**	.529**	1					
Q11_12	.473**	.464**	.471**	.515**	.323**	.354**	.538**	.331**	.559**	.640**	.541**	1				
Q11_13	.475**	.455**	.533**	.547**	.300**	.457**	.435**	.280**	.493**	.466**	.540**	.578**	1			
Q11_14	.495**	.509**	.502**	.552**	.356**	.390**	.472**	.295**	.522**	.485**	.463**	.487**	.590**	1		
Q11_15	.315**	.341**	.448**	.395**	.290**	.478**	.450**	.370**	.301**	.351**	.387**	.291**	.343**	.434**	1	
Q11_16	.508**	.418**	.540**	.454**	.473**	.409**	.462**	.440**	.411**	.421**	.376**	.443**	.481**	.482**	.654**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.47: Correlation coefficients for Promotion Factor in the Customer Survey

		Correlations												
	Q12_1	Q12_2	Q12_3	Q12_4	Q12_5	Q12_6	Q12_7	Q12_8	Q12_9	Q12_10	Q12_11	Q12_12	Q12_13	
Q12_1	1													
Q12_2	.708**	1												
Q12_3	.687**	.880**	1											
Q12_4	.774**	.562**	.557**	1										
Q12_5	.602**	.418**	.406**	.540**	1									
Q12_6	.612**	.489**	.486**	.576**	.722**	1								
Q12_7	.608**	.419**	.407**	.619**	.667**	.679**	1							
Q12_8	.532**	.588**	.570**	.579**	.476**	.630**	.501**	1						
Q12_9	.398**	.292**	.313**	.493**	.423**	.463**	.561**	.377**	1					
Q12_10	.654**	.438**	.425**	.659**	.612**	.600**	.586**	.536**	.460**	1				
Q12_11	.649**	.399**	.398**	.674**	.565**	.621**	.543**	.606**	.471**	.730**	1			
Q12_12	.055	.190**	.194**	.022	-.087	-.148**	-.110*	.017	-.149**	.031	.071	1		
Q12_13	.511**	.584**	.578**	.515**	.390**	.434**	.408**	.621**	.316**	.433**	.589**	.406**	1	

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.48: Correlation coefficients for People Factor in the Customer Survey

Correlations														
	Q13_1	Q13_2	Q13_3	Q13_4	Q13_5	Q13_6	Q13_7	Q13_8	Q13_9	Q13_10	Q13_11	Q13_12	Q13_13	Q13_14
Q13_1	1													
Q13_2	.501**	1												
Q13_3	.607**	.550**	1											
Q13_4	.742**	.532**	.737**	1										
Q13_5	.373**	.345**	.374**	.391**	1									
Q13_6	.604**	.483**	.518**	.661**	.503**	1								
Q13_7	.527**	.473**	.466**	.559**	.239**	.750**	1							
Q13_8	.547**	.398**	.456**	.589**	.331**	.760**	.746**	1						
Q13_9	.618**	.466**	.518**	.587**	.392**	.618**	.624**	.730**	1					
Q13_10	.645**	.496**	.544**	.614**	.406**	.674**	.581**	.633**	.765**	1				
Q13_11	.547**	.436**	.532**	.575**	.342**	.547**	.554**	.610**	.709**	.719**	1			
Q13_12	.642**	.424**	.438**	.537**	.274**	.507**	.554**	.555**	.749**	.728**	.657**	1		
Q13_13	.598**	.459**	.548**	.596**	.458**	.684**	.586**	.639**	.663**	.804**	.743**	.606**	1	
Q13_14	.387**	.355**	.322**	.343**	.384**	.490**	.399**	.452**	.507**	.527**	.416**	.503**	.416**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.49: Correlation coefficients for Process Factor in the Customer Survey

Correlations											
	Q14_1	Q14_2	Q14_3	Q14_4	Q14_5	Q14_6	Q14_7	Q14_8	Q14_9	Q14_10	Q14_11
Q14_1	1										
Q14_2	.823**	1									
Q14_3	.648**	.627**	1								
Q14_4	.776**	.742**	.612**	1							
Q14_5	.407**	.368**	.285**	.515**	1						
Q14_6	.468**	.413**	.381**	.504**	.772**	1					
Q14_7	.408**	.369**	.359**	.466**	.674**	.690**	1				
Q14_8	.473**	.435**	.420**	.531**	.762**	.713**	.729**	1			
Q14_9	.500**	.423**	.461**	.475**	.663**	.619**	.608**	.658**	1		
Q14_10	.301**	.148**	.279**	.163**	.409**	.346**	.420**	.367**	.454**	1	
Q14_11	.552**	.444**	.482**	.498**	.602**	.612**	.615**	.596**	.768**	.476**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.50: Correlation coefficients for Physical Evidence Factor in the Customer Survey

Correlations													
	Q15_1	Q15_2	Q15_3	Q15_4	Q15_5	Q15_6	Q15_7	Q15_8	Q16_9	Q16_10	Q16_11	Q16_12	Q16_13
Q15_1	1												
Q15_2	.874**	1											
Q15_3	.659**	.648**	1										
Q15_4	.645**	.599**	.689**	1									
Q15_5	.664**	.634**	.688**	.663**	1								
Q15_6	.599**	.626**	.602**	.618**	.694**	1							
Q15_7	.621**	.593**	.628**	.523**	.648**	.722**	1						
Q15_8	.260**	.210**	.404**	.399**	.301**	.307**	.263**	1					
Q16_9	.289**	.263**	.485**	.423**	.336**	.310**	.304**	.816**	1				
Q16_10	.317**	.269**	.359**	.257**	.288**	.431**	.255**	.318**	.380**	1			
Q16_11	.432**	.394**	.488**	.469**	.422**	.491**	.295**	.427**	.504**	.775**	1		
Q16_12	.477**	.394**	.505**	.539**	.400**	.508**	.324**	.417**	.484**	.711**	.857**	1	
Q16_13	.514**	.469**	.515**	.455**	.458**	.519**	.375**	.400**	.466**	.683**	.799**	.796**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.51: Correlation coefficients for Customer Experience Factor in the Customer Survey

Correlations																												
	Q17_1	Q17_2	Q17_3	Q17_4	Q17_5	Q17_6	Q17_7	Q17_8	Q17_9	Q17_10	Q17_11	Q17_12	Q17_13	Q17_14	Q17_15	Q17_16	Q17_17	Q17_18	Q17_19	Q17_20	Q17_21	Q17_22	Q17_23	Q17_24	Q17_25	Q17_26	Q17_27	
Q17_1	1																											
Q17_2	.806*	1																										
Q17_3	.493*	.496*	1																									
Q17_4	.448*	.283*	.240*	1																								
Q17_5	.444*	.444*	.342*	.254**	1																							
Q17_6	.487*	.473*	.374*	.264**	.453*	1																						
Q17_7	.537*	.559*	.410*	.275**	.506*	.629**	1																					
Q17_8	.424*	.505*	.511*	.240**	.442*	.490**	.648*	1																				
Q17_9	.440*	.483*	.420*	.228**	.483*	.502**	.583*	.652*	1																			
Q17_10	.492*	.524*	.429*	.192**	.472*	.585**	.609*	.645*	.621*	1																		
Q17_11	.481*	.532*	.366*	.187**	.457*	.538**	.600*	.562*	.568*	.744*	1																	
Q17_12	.402*	.436*	.187*	.229**	.453*	.205**	.348*	.370*	.370*	.271*	.259*	1																
Q17_13	.448*	.498*	.373*	.202**	.435*	.427**	.521*	.526*	.604*	.539*	.672*	.294*	1															
Q17_14	.430*	.509*	.497*	.236**	.464*	.492**	.554*	.624*	.519*	.584*	.557*	.301*	.572*	1														
Q17_15	.472*	.535*	.422*	.123*	.463*	.542**	.661*	.593*	.570*	.627*	.614*	.411*	.538*	.590*	1													
Q17_16	.468*	.529*	.411*	.205**	.373*	.526**	.606*	.554*	.629*	.700*	.618*	.325*	.616*	.500*	.590*	1												
Q17_17	.449*	.489*	.468*	.258**	.426*	.473**	.576*	.482*	.579*	.593*	.607*	.234*	.552*	.464*	.534*	.621*	1											
Q17_18	.193*	.282*	.253*	.130**	.446*	.240**	.342*	.298*	.252*	.286*	.351*	.387*	.272*	.242*	.391*	.236*	.255*	1										

Table 5.54: Correlation coefficients for Recommendation Factor in the Customer Survey

Correlations									
	Q20_1	Q20_2	Q20_3	Q20_4	Q20_5	Q20_6	Q20_7	Q20_8	Q20_9
Q20_1	1								
Q20_2	.607**	1							
Q20_3	.644**	.646**	1						
Q20_4	.478**	.514**	.477**	1					
Q20_5	.470**	.441**	.446**	.776**	1				
Q20_6	.313**	.296**	.291**	.592**	.770**	1			
Q20_7	.321**	.305**	.299**	.594**	.774**	.896**	1		
Q20_8	.622**	.620**	.631**	.512**	.486**	.366**	.368**	1	
Q20_9	.594**	.639**	.642**	.564**	.565**	.437**	.441**	.789**	1

Note. ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Appendix V

Table 5.69: *Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Items in the Customer Survey*

	Customer experience	People	Physical evidence	Place/ Distribution	Price	Process	Product	Promotion	Recommendation	Satisfaction
Q10 1				0.77						
Q10 2				0.80						
Q10 3				0.93						
Q10 4				0.90						
Q10 5				0.89						
Q10 6				0.91						
Q10 7				0.91						
Q10 8				0.95						
Q11 1					0.75					
Q11 10					0.75					
Q11 11					0.70					
Q11 12					0.74					
Q11 13					0.73					
Q11 14					0.73					
Q11 15					0.58					
Q11 2					0.72					
Q11 3					0.77					
Q11 4					0.79					
Q11 6					0.58					
Q11 7					0.77					
Q11 8					0.56					
Q11 9					0.72					
Q12 1								0.85		

Q12 10								0.80		
Q12 11								0.80		
Q12 12								0.66		
Q12 13								0.69		
Q12 2								0.73		
Q12 3								0.73		
Q12 4								0.84		
Q12 5								0.75		
Q12 6								0.80		
Q12 7								0.77		
Q12 8								0.76		
Q12 9								0.60		
Q13 1		0.80								
Q13 10		0.87								
Q13 11		0.80								
Q13 12		0.78								
Q13 13		0.84								
Q13 2		0.65								
Q13 3		0.72								
Q13 4		0.81								
Q13 6		0.82								
Q13 7		0.77								
Q13 8		0.80								
Q13 9		0.85								
Q14 1							0.70			
Q14 11							0.81			
Q14 2							0.64			
Q14 3							0.59			
Q14 4							0.73			

Q14 5						0.84				
Q14 6						0.84				
Q14 7						0.82				
Q14 8						0.85				
Q14 9						0.82				
Q15 1			0.85							
Q15 2			0.82							
Q15 3			0.84							
Q15 4			0.79							
Q15 5			0.81							
Q15 6			0.81							
Q15 7			0.75							
Q15 8			0.67							
Q16 10			0.53							
Q16 11			0.68							
Q16 12			0.69							
Q16 13			0.72							
Q16 9			0.53							
Q17 10	0.82									
Q17 11	0.80									
Q17 12	0.76									
Q17 13	0.73									
Q17 14	0.73									
Q17 15	0.79									
Q17 16	0.77									
Q17 17	0.73									
Q17 19	0.71									
Q17 2	0.71									
Q17 20	0.56									

Q17 21	0.77									
Q17 22	0.79									
Q17 23	0.74									
Q17 24	0.74									
Q17 25	0.78									
Q17 26	0.75									
Q17 27	0.83									
Q17 3	0.59									
Q17 4	0.70									
Q17 5	0.66									
Q17 6	0.70									
Q17 7	0.79									
Q17 8	0.76									
Q17 9	0.77									
Q8 1							0.79			
Q8 10							0.81			
Q8 11							0.71			
Q8 12							0.65			
Q8 13							0.69			
Q8 14							0.75			
Q8 2							0.79			
Q8 3							0.63			
Q8 4							0.81			
Q8 5							0.81			
Q8 6							0.76			
Q8 7							0.79			
Q8 8							0.74			
Q8 9							0.72			
Q9 1				0.67						

Q9 2				0.72						
Q9 3				0.81						
Q9 4				0.79						
Q9 5				0.86						
Q9 6				0.80						
Q9 7				0.57						
Q18 1										0.69
Q18 2										0.66
Q18 3										0.54
Q18 4										0.59
Q18 5										0.71
Q20 1									0.765	
Q20 2									0.790	
Q20 3									0.80	
Q20 4									0.745	
Q20 5									0.732	
Q20 6									0.665	
Q20 7									0.720	
Q20 8									0.741	
Q20 9									0.837	

6. Please indicate the managerial level of your current position by marking (X or ✓) one of the following options:

[] Top Management level.

[] senior management level.

[] middle management level.

[] front-line management level.

7. The following are statements about your company's product activities. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Our range of brands helps the consumer to make better choices.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Our marketing strategy helps the consumer to develop an ongoing relationship with a product.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Our marketing strategy clearly differentiates our product from its competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. Our services do not always increase the attractiveness of our product offers to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. It is difficult to define our product's market position in terms of attributes that are important to the buyer.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. We conduct market research to know how our customers think about our products.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. We do not always use customer related data to plan our product strategy.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Our marketing strategy emphasizes on delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. Our products and services do not always meet the requirements of our customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. Our product strategy emphasized the benefits of the product to customers rather than the features of the product.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. We focus on the development of new markets relative to competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. We focus on offering 'specialized' services to our customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. We focus on providing unique services not offered by competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

14. We focus on serving more diverse segments of customer than our competitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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8. The following are statements about your company's distribution activities. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Our company cannot reach a wide geographic coverage of customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. It is difficult for our company to access the targeted segment of the market.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Our company can store, handle and display our products appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We take care of the movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from site to the customer's location.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Our company can provide necessary customer service pre- and post-sale.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Extensive geographic areas are served by our company efficiently and cost effectively through networks of warehouses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. We hold stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Please circle the corresponding number for each item that best describes how good your company is doing in each of the following items. Please circle **Only One Number for each item.**

<i>Evaluate how your company is performing regarding the following:</i>	<i>Extremely good.....Not good at all</i>				
1. Order processing	5	4	3	2	1
2. Stock availability	5	4	3	2	1
3. Speed of order fulfillment	5	4	3	2	1
4. Delivery time and reliability	5	4	3	2	1
5. Invoicing	5	4	3	2	1
6. Handling delivery problems	5	4	3	2	1

7. Handling maintenance problems	5	4	3	2	1
8. Handling complaints	5	4	3	2	1

10. The following are statements about your company's pricing activities. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Our prices reinforce the quality image of the product	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Our prices support the product and service package to increase customers' value for money.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Our prices emphasize the long-term cost savings coming from using our products compared with the cheaper competition.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. Our prices are consistently competitive.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Our prices cannot consider what a customer is prepared to pay for the product.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. Our prices are designed to achieve high market share and customer loyalty.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. The effect of our prices on the consumer's attitude and buying decision is negative.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. We set higher prices to differentiate our products from those of the competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. We cannot determine the price sensitivity of our customers in the market.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. Our pricing's messages is consistent with the rest of the marketing mix.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. Our prices cannot take into consideration differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. We expand our market share through lower pricing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. We reinforce our product's market position through appropriate pricing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14. We stimulate high volume sales through price reductions.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
15. It is very difficult for our company not to get drawn into price wars.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

16. Our prices help to differentiate our product through positioning it in a different price level from the competition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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11. The following are statements about your company's promotion activities. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. We use promotional methods to motivate potential new customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We do not use our website to give information and advice to customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. We do not usually use social media to get customers' feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the popularity or fashionability of different media channels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the popularity or fashionability of different communication techniques and promotional methods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. In our communication with customers, we take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Our promotion activities are giving the consumer a clear reason for 'buying' from our company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Our promotion activities are positively affecting our reputation and standing with various publics.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Our company keeps an eye on how the competition is communicating with their customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. We give customers a scope for price negotiation, to let them feel they are gaining value when dealing with us.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. We use discounts to encourage prompt payment from customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Our promotion activities do not emphasize product benefits to customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Our promotion activities target old customers who have bought from us before.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. The following are statements about your company's people activities. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Customers are expected to be treated well in this company.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. There is a great deal of interaction between our staff and customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. The appearance and manners of our staff are not always professional.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. Our employees are expected to give customers personal attention.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Continues recruitment and training of staff are very important activities in our company.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. It is not realistic to expect prompt service to customers from our employees.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. The majority of our employees are well-educated and knowledgeable.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Our employees are not always self-motivated to help customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. The recommendations from our employees are trusted and considered.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. Our staff plays a key role in anticipating customers' needs.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. Our staff build personalized relationships with customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. The top management is not always committed to develop high quality customer service delivery teams.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. We appoint team leaders according to their experience and strong people skills.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14. We have strong measurement systems and staff appraisals to monitor staff performance in our company.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

13. The following are statements about your company's processes. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. We have more advanced systems and technology than our competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

2. Most of the communications between our staff and customers are automated or computerized.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. We have a strong and up-to-date database of customer information in our company.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. We are very innovative in-service delivery compared to competition.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. We analyze customer data from our database to plan our offers to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. We can anticipate customers' needs and wants in the market in an accurate way through market research.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. We are efficient in order processing and reducing customers' waiting time.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. The process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. It is not easy for customers to give us feedback about our performance.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. We have lots of processes and procedures but they are not followed.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. Only certain employees know how to do certain tasks, and if they leave, we're in big trouble.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

14. The following are statements about your company's physical appearance. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Our company has up-to-date facilities and equipment.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. The outdoor facilities of our company are not visually appealing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Our informative materials (website, advertisements, brochures, etc.) are visually appealing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. Our staff takes very good care of their appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Our office décor and design positively influence customer's expectations of the service.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. As our services cannot be displayed, our firm creates the right office environment to communicate our high-quality service standards to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

7. Our buildings, furnishings and layout are not reflective of customers' service quality expectations.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. It is difficult to keep our machines and service delivery equipment consistently clean.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

15. Please circle the corresponding number for each item that best describes how good your company is doing in each of the following items. Please circle **Only One Number for each item.**

<i>Evaluate how your company is performing regarding the following:</i>	<i>Extremely good.....Not good at all</i>				
9. Cleanliness of cars and machines	5	4	3	2	1
10. Headquarters newness and location	5	4	3	2	1
11. Office Furniture and atmosphere	5	4	3	2	1
12. Professional look of staff	5	4	3	2	1
13. The professional look of our business cards and brochures	5	4	3	2	1

16. The following are statements about your company's customer orientation. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. We have routine or regular measures of customer service.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Our product and service development are based on good market and customer information.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. We know our competitors well.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. We have a good sense of how our customers value our products and services.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. We are more customers focused than our competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. We compete primarily based on product or service differentiation.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. The customer's interest should always come first, ahead of the owners.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Our products and services are the best in the business.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. I believe this business exists primarily to serve customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

17. The following are statements about your company's use of market research. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Without the information from market research, our marketing strategy would have been very different.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. No marketing decision can be made in our company without market research information.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. The majority of the market research information that we have is not used by our managers for decision making.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. In my opinion, conducting market research is not really necessary to compete in the market.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

18. The following are statements about your company's market orientation. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Our salespeople regularly share information within our business concerning competitors' strategies.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Our business objectives are driven primarily by customer satisfaction.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. We rapidly respond to competitive actions that threaten us.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. We constantly monitor our level of commitment and orientation to serving customer's needs.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Our top managers regularly visit our current and prospective customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. We freely communicate information about our successful and unsuccessful customer experiences across all departments.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. Our strategy for competitive advantage is based on our understanding of customers' needs.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. All of our departments are integrated in serving the needs of our target markets.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. Our company is driven by the belief that we should create greater value for customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

10. We measure customer satisfaction systematically and frequently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. We give close attention to after-sales service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Our top management regularly discusses competitors' strengths and strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. All of our managers understand how everyone in our company should contribute to creating customer value.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. We target customers where we have an opportunity for competitive advantage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. We share market information with other departments in the company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(B) Questionnaire for customers of construction companies in the four selected countries in Arabian Gulf

1. Please indicate your state by marking (X or ✓) one of the following options:

I am an individual customer

I am an employee of a customer company

2. Please indicate your gender by marking (X or ✓) one of the following options:

Male

Female

3. Please indicate your educational level by marking (X or ✓) one of the following options:

Less than high school.

High school degree.

University degree.

Masters' degree.

PhD degree.

4. Please indicate your age by marking (X or ✓) one of the following options:

Less than 25 years old.

25 to less than 35 years old.

35 to less than 45 years old.

45 to less than 55 years old.

55 to less than 65 years old.

65 years old or more.

5. Please indicate your years of experience **in your industry** by marking (X or ✓) one of the following options
(if you are an individual customer please ignore this question):

- Less than four years.
- Four to less than eight years.
- Eight to less than twelve years.
- Twelve to less than sixteen years.
- Sixteen to less than twenty years.
- Twenty years or more.

6. Please indicate your years of experience **in your current company** by marking (X or ✓) one of the following options **(if you are an individual customer please ignore this question):**

- Less than four years.
- Four to less than eight years.
- Eight to less than twelve years.
- Twelve to less than sixteen years.
- Sixteen to less than twenty years.
- Twenty years or more.

7. Please indicate the managerial level of your current position by marking (X or ✓) one of the following options **(if you are an individual customer please ignore this question):**

- Top Management level.
- senior management level.
- middle management level.
- front-line management level.

8. The following are statements about the product activities of the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Their range of brands helps me to make better choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Their marketing strategy helps me to develop an ongoing relationship with their products and services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Their marketing strategy clearly differentiates their products and services from their competitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Their services do not always increase the attractiveness of their offers to me.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Their product's offer does not emphasize the attributes that are important to me.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. Construction companies conduct market research to know how we think about their products.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. The product strategy of the construction companies does not respond to our needs and wants as customers in the market.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Construction companies marketing strategy emphasizes on delivering the 'right' quality of products to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. Their products and services do not always meet the requirements of customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. Their strategy emphasized the benefits of their products to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. They attract more new customers than their competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. They focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. They focus on providing unique services not offered by competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14. They focus on serving more diverse segments of customer than their competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

9. The following are statements about the distribution activities of the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Construction companies cannot reach a wide geographic coverage of customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. It is difficult for them to access their customers in the market.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. They can store, handle and display their products appropriately.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. They take care of the movement and handling of goods and materials outwards from their place to customer's location.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. They can provide necessary customer service pre- and post-sale.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

6. Extensive geographic areas are served by construction companies efficiently and cost effectively through networks of warehouses.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. They hold stocks under controlled conditions in terms of temperature, humidity	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

10. Please circle the corresponding number for each item that best describes how good construction companies are doing in each of the following items. Please circle **Only One Number for each item.**

<i>Evaluate how construction companies are performing regarding the following:</i>					
		<i>Extremely good</i>			<i>Not good at all</i>
1. Order processing	5	4	3	2	1
2. Stock availability	5	4	3	2	1
3. Speed of order fulfillment	5	4	3	2	1
4. Delivery time and reliability	5	4	3	2	1
5. Invoicing	5	4	3	2	1
6. Handling delivery problems	5	4	3	2	1
7. Handling maintenance problems	5	4	3	2	1
8. Handling complaints	5	4	3	2	1

11. The following are statements about the pricing activities of the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Their prices reinforce the quality image of their products	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Their prices increase customers' value for money.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Their prices emphasize the better cost savings compared with the competition.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

4.	Their prices are consistent with their competitive prices.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5.	Their prices do not match what the customer is prepared to pay for the product.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6.	Their prices are helping them to achieve high market share and customer loyalty.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7.	The effect of their prices on consumer's attitude and buying decisions is negative.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8.	They set higher prices to differentiate their products from those of the competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9.	Their prices do not respond to the price sensitivity of customers in the market.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10.	Their pricing messages is consistent with the rest of their marketing mix.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11.	Their prices do not take into consideration the differences in lifestyles and price perceptions among consumers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12.	They expand their market share through lower pricing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13.	They support their product image through appropriate pricing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14.	They stimulate high volume sales through price reductions.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
15.	They usually get into price wars with the competition.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
16.	Their prices help to differentiate their product from that of the competition.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

12. The following are statements about the promotion activities of the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	
1.	They use promotion to motivate to new customers to buy from them.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2.	They do not use their website to give information and advice to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3.	They do not use their social media to get customers' feedback.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4.	When communicating with customers, they take into consideration the	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

popularity or trending of different media channels.					
5. When communicating with customers, they take into consideration the popularity or trending of different communication techniques and promotional methods.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. When communicating with customers, they take into consideration the acceptability of certain approaches to advertising.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. Their promotion activities provide the consumer a clear reason for 'buying' from them.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Their promotion activities are positively affecting their reputation among consumers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. They keep an eye on how the competition is communicating with their customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. They give customers a scope for price negotiation, to let them feel they are gaining value when dealing with the company.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. They use discounts to encourage prompt payment from customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. Their promotion activities do not emphasize product benefits to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. Their promotion activities target old customers who have bought from them before.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

13. The following are statements about the employees and staff of the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. Customers are treated well in these companies.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. There is a great deal of interaction between the staff and customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. The appearance and manners of the staff are not always professional.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. The construction company employees are giving customers personal attention.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. These companies always recruit and train their staff.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

6. Employees of these companies always provide prompt service to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. The majority of the employees are well educated and knowledgeable.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. The employees are not always self-motivated to help customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. Employee recommendations are trusted and considered in these companies.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. The staff play a key role in anticipating customers' needs,	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. The staff build personalized relationships with customers,	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. The top management is not always committed to develop high quality customer service delivery teams.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. Staff team leaders have great experience and strong people skills.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14. The company has strong measurement systems and staff appraisals to monitor staff performance.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

14. The following are statements about the processes of the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. They have more advanced systems and technology than our competitors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Most of the communications between their staff and customers are automated or computerized.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. They have a strong and up-to-date database of customer information in the company.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. They are very innovative in-service delivery compared to competition.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Their offers match customers' needs in the market.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. They can anticipate customers' needs and wants in the market in an accurate way.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

7. They are efficient in order processing and reducing customers' waiting time.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. The process of handling customer complaints effectively is clear to employees when they address service failures.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. It is not easy for customers to give them feedback about their performance.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. They have plenty of processes and procedures, but they are not followed.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. Only certain employees know how to do certain tasks, if they leave the company is in big trouble.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

15. The following are about the appearances of the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. The company has up-to-date facilities and equipment.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. The outdoor facilities of the company are not visually appealing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Their informative materials (website, advertisements, brochures, etc.) are visually appealing.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. Their staff takes very good care of their appearance to positively affect customer's satisfaction.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Their offices' décor and design positively influence customer's expectations of the service.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. They create the right office environment to communicate their high-quality service standards to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. Their buildings, furnishings and layout are not reflective of customers' service quality expectations.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Their machines and service delivery equipment's are always dirty.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

16. Please circle the corresponding number for each item that best describes how good the construction companies you have previously dealt with are doing in each of the following items. Please circle **Only One Number for each item.**

<i>Evaluate how the construction companies you have previously dealt with are performing regarding the following:</i>	<i>Extremely good.....Not good at all</i>				
9. Cleanliness of cars and machines	5	4	3	2	1
10. Headquarters newness and location	5	4	3	2	1
11. Office Furniture and atmosphere	5	4	3	2	1
12. Professional look of staff	5	4	3	2	1
13. The professional look of business cards and brochures	5	4	3	2	1

17. The following are statements about your experience with the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. They have a good reputation in the market.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. I am confident in their expertise.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. They give independent advice on which product or service can best suit my needs.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. I choose my construction company not because of the price alone.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. The people who work at these companies represent their own brand well.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. The offer of company that I have chosen has the best quality.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. The offer of company that I have chosen is superior to the competition.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. My construction company advised me throughout the process.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. Dealing with my construction company is easy.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. My construction company keeps me informed.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. My construction company demonstrates flexibility in dealing with me.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

12. I always deal with the same forms and same people inside these companies.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. My construction company personnel relate to my wishes and concerns.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14. The people I am dealing with at these companies have good people skills.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
15. They deliver good customer service.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
16. I have built a personal relationship with the people at these companies.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
17. They focus on offering 'specialized' services to customers.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
18. Their facilities are better designed to fulfill my needs than their competitors'.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
19. Their online facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
20. Their offline facilities are designed to be as efficient as possible.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
21. I stay with my construction companies because they know me.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
22. They know exactly what I want.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
23. They keep me up-to-date.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
24. They will look after me whenever I need their services.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
25. They have dealt well with me when things went wrong.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
26. I am happy with my current construction company as my service provider.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
27. Being a customer of my current construction company gives me social prestige.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

18. The following are statements about your satisfaction with the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. I am satisfied with the products and services of the construction company I dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. I am happy with the results I got from the construction company I dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. I would recommend the construction company I dealt with to my friends and associates.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. I am satisfied with the customer service I received from the construction company I dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

5. I am happy about my decision to deal with the construction company I have chosen.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
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19. Please circle the corresponding number for each item that best describes your opinion about the construction companies you have previously dealt with according to each of the following items. Please circle **Only One Number for each item**.

<i>The construction companies I have previously dealt with are:</i>	<i>Extremely</i>	<i>Not at all</i>			
1. Unpleasant	5	4	3	2	1
2. Useful	5	4	3	2	1
3. Favorable	5	4	3	2	1
4. Worthless	5	4	3	2	1
5. Valuable	5	4	3	2	1
6. Not effective	5	4	3	2	1
7. Unprofessional	5	4	3	2	1
8. A waste of money	5	4	3	2	1
9. Helpful	5	4	3	2	1
10. Not necessary	5	4	3	2	1

20. The following are statements about your willingness to recommend to others the services of the construction companies you have previously dealt with. Please indicate your opinion about these statements by marking (X or ✓) **only one option** that corresponds to your level of agreement, or disagreement, **with each of the statements** below:

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. I would recommend the construction company I have previously dealt with to my friends	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. If my friends were looking for construction companies, I would tell them to try the construction company I have previously dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. I would advise my friends to buy from the construction company I have previously dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. I spread negative word-of-mouth about the construction company I have previously dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. I bad-mouthed against the construction company I have previously dealt with to my friends.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

6. I tell people around me about my positive experience with the construction company I have previously dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. I tell my colleagues about my satisfaction with the construction company I have previously dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. I openly criticize the construction company I have previously dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. I tell others about how bad was the construction company I have previously dealt with.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]