Customer Journey Mapping and The Critical Incident Technique for Pay-TV in South Africa

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A research article submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

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DECLARATION

I, Hlulani Msimeki, declare that this research article is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Hlulani Msimeki

Signed at ……………………………………………………………

On the …………………………… day of …………………………… 20….
DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my parents; John Hasani Msimeki and Ruth Tinyiko Msimeki, in recognition of the tremendous sacrifices that they have made to ensure that I had an excellent education. For this and much more, I am forever in their debt.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a bittersweet moment for me that this journey, which started two years ago, has finally come to an end. First and foremost, I wish to thank Almighty God for giving me the ability, opportunity, knowledge and strength to undertake this study and to persevere and complete it satisfactorily. Without his blessings and favour, this achievement would not have been possible.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Sid Cohn, the Principal Consultant and Director at ServiceMIX (Pty) Ltd. His passion for the service industry made it possible for him to supervise me with a high level of enthusiasm, encouragement and support. His continuous optimism concerning this work made it possible for me to complete this study. I also express my warmest gratitude to Anthony Stacey, Associate Professor in Decision Sciences and Research Methodology at the Wits Business School, who assisted in clarifying my research topic and research problem. His guidance in developing the analytical framework was critical in this study.

I am very grateful to my employer, MultiChoice, for investing in my personal development by funding my studies; the company’s financial assistance made it possible for me to pursue my goals. This research will also benefit MultiChoice in enhancing and improving its Customer Experience Management. I am also forever indebted to my colleagues for their support. To Susan Keebine, you motivated for my funding even though I had only reported to you for two months. To Ruby Matloheloa, you believed in my potential before you even met me. To Renate Moodley, you made it possible for me to study part-time and work full-time. To my mentor, my friend and my sister from another mother, Zingisa Taho; your mentoring, guidance, words of encouragement and your enduring resilience to push me to realise my full potential are invaluable and I am forever grateful.

To my friends and family, thank you for understanding that I couldn’t attend every event you invited me to. I was not available when you needed me to comfort you and to share in the joy of your own milestones. Your messages of encouragement cheered me on and motivated me to keep going. To Let’s Edit and Jennifer Croll, thank you for editing and proofreading my paper. To my fellow MBA cohorts, thank you for sharing your experiences, ideas and, most importantly, the encouragement to see this through; we had a fun ride. Finally, I would like to thank Ndavhe Tshivashe for his endless support and encouragement throughout this entire journey, without whom I would have struggled to find the inspiration and motivation needed to complete this article.
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ABSTRACT

Managing customer experience is becoming increasingly complex. The numerous fragmented touchpoints that customers can use to interact with a company present both opportunities and major challenges in managing the end-to-end customer experience. The aim of this study is to identify and describe key differences between the outputs of Customer Journey Mapping and the Critical Incident Technique as they affect the practice of Customer Experience Management. Customer Journey Mapping and the Critical Incident Technique are methods used by practitioners and companies to manage and improve Customer Experience Management.

Critical Incident Technique is used to identify critical incidents from the customer’s point of view as it affects the Customer Experience. Customer Journey Mapping enables companies to understand end-to-end customer experiences from the customer’s point of view when he or she interacts with the company through its various multichannel touchpoints. Moments of Truth are part of the Customer Journey Mapping experience design. Theoretically, there should be no differences between the two; however, the characteristics of Critical Incident Technique are not necessarily lucid in Customer Journey Mapping literature. The differences between these two methods can be understood as follows: Customer Journey Mapping is a sequential process which highlights the various stages of a customer’s journey during his or her interaction with a company across various touchpoints and channels, whereas the Critical Incident Technique considers the discrete episode of a service interaction by measuring the service impact of said interaction, as described in the customer’s own words.

Keywords: Customer Experience Management, Customer Journey Mapping, Critical Incident Technique, Moments of Truth.
INTRODUCTION

There is a current trend towards Customer Experience Management (CEM) as a way for companies to build a competitive advantage Shaw and Ivens (2005). CEM or Customer Experience (CX) refers to the gathering of methods a company uses to track, oversee, analyse and organise every interaction that occurs between customers and the company throughout the customer lifecycle when they use its products and services Du Plessis and De Vries (2016). The goal of CEM is to improve interactions from the customer’s perspective and to enhance customer loyalty Frow and Payne (2007). Companies manage the CX by creating a strategy that covers all customer interactions.

Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) and the Critical Incidents Technique (CIT) are methods used by practitioners and companies to manage and improve the customer experience (Maklan, Antonetti, & Whitty, 2017). CJM enables companies to understand end-to-end customer experiences from the customer’s point of view when he or she interacts with the company through its various multichannel touchpoints, i.e. social media platforms, emails, call centres, branches, self-service, live chat on a company website or any other available channel that customers can utilise to interact or voice their concerns. CJM offers companies an opportunity to visualise the end-to-end customer experience; the customer experience model of performance empowers companies to take value-driven decisions Dhebar (2013). CJMs are an effective tool for picturing a holistic customer experience across channels and touchpoints (Voorhees et al., 2017). They add important insights into how a company should approach its customers. Journey maps tell the story of customer experience. They identify a customer’s key interactions with a service or product, including his or her expectations, goals and motivations. Journey maps envisage quickly and efficiently what it is like to be a customer (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

The CIT is a qualitative interview procedure which facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences (events, incidents, processes or issues) identified by the respondent, including the way they are managed and the outcomes in terms of perceived effects. The objective is to gain an understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual, considering cognitive, affective and behavioural elements (Chell & Pittaway, 1998).

CIT is used to identify critical incidents from the customer’s point of view as it affects the CX. Some researchers see critical incidents as the service itself (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). CIT is an adequate method used to establish the customer’s moments of truth (MOTs) for each service encounter. In effect, respondents are asked to tell their stories about events which significantly affected their satisfaction with the service encounter. Wong and Sohal
(2003, p. 248) state that positive critical incidents tend to foster customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions, while negative critical incidents lead to complaints, unfavourable customer behaviour, a reduced willingness to use the company, and the spread of negative word-of-mouth behaviour. CIT can be used as an input to improve CX within a company. The research problem is to identify and describe key differences between the outputs of CJM and CIT as they affect the practice of CEM.

**Critical Incidents**

In the 1950s, researchers explored the notion that customers desired satisfying experiences, not just products (Abbott, 1956; Alderson, 1957). In the 1980s, researchers added the aspect of human behaviour and the role it plays in decision-making and experiences (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989). Pine and Gilmore (1998) defined “experiences” as something a customer purchases to spend, enjoy and engage in a personal way across various stages of the company, i.e. something which is different from goods and services. Service experience is the customer’s emotional feelings during a service encounter (Hui & Bateson, 1991). It covers any positive or negative experiences that individuals encounter and is a subjective matter as it differs between individuals Zainol and Lockwood (2014). Sandström, Edvardsson, Kristensson, and Magnusson (2008) define service experience as the entire functional and emotional value of a service encounter which originates through a combination of functional, humanic and mechanic clues (Berry, Wall, & Carbone, 2006).

The service encounter frequently is the service experience from the customer’s point of view (Bitner et al., 1990; Bitner, Brown, & Meuter, 2000). Service encounters are defined as “the dyadic interaction between a customer and a service provider” (Surprenant & Solomon, 1987, p. 87). Alternatively, this can be understood as the instances when a service company interacts with a customer. Shostack (1985, p. 245) defines it as “a duration where customers interact with service directly” (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994). According to scholars, it is a period where the customer interacts directly with the service company through its multiple touchpoints. The service encounter includes contacts that may occur in person, over the telephone, through the mail and even within companies (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2012). For every company, specific encounters are essential to enhance customer experience. Any encounter can potentially be critical in determining customer satisfaction and loyalty. Service encounters are critical incidents in which customers often develop indelible impressions of a company.
An incident is defined by Bitner et al. (1990) as a noticeable human activity that is complete enough to draw inferences and predictions about the person or company that is performing the act. An incident is critical if it deviates significantly from what is expected, either positively or negatively, when the respondent describes the event in detail (Bitner et al., 1990; Cope & Watts, 2000; Edvardsson & Roos, 2001; Flanagan, 1954; Grove & Fisk, 1997).

The CIT is defined as a systematic procedure for collecting events and behaviours which determine either the success or failure of a specific task (Bitner et al., 1990; Flanagan, 1954; Grove & Fisk, 1997; Ronan & Latham, 1974). Researchers have established the validity and reliability of the data collected through the CIT (Andersson & Nilsson, 1964; Bendtsen, Hensing, McKenzie, & Stridsman, 1999; Cormack, 1983; Housego & Boldt, 1985; Mallalieu, 1999; Massad & Crowston, 2003; Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree, & Bitner, 2000; Piercy, Moon, & Bischof, 1994; Placer & Dodds, 1988; Schmelzer, Schmelzer, Figler, & Brozo, 1987). The CIT can be used to collect data related to any service encounter.

In addition, the CIT has distinctive qualities which are well-suited to the resolution of the research problem outlined in this article. Furthermore, Walker and Truly (1992) stated that the CIT allows researchers to collect content-dependent data using a holistic approach which enables them to explore complicated service encounters between customers and service providers where the variables that affect customer experience are not readily determined. There is empirical evidence which suggests that satisfying or unsatisfying incidents are remembered more vividly by respondents than ordinary incidents (Flanagan, 1954; Stauss & Hentschel, 1992).

Considering the above literature review, the first proposition identified for this study is as follows.

**Table 1: Outputs of CIT**

P1: The outputs of critical incidents include the following:

| The service impact of discrete episodes; |
| Individual narrated stories; |
| Satisfying or dissatisfying service experiences; |
| Recollection of previous events |
| Direct observations of human behaviour; |
| The actions of the service company employee described and assessed; and |
| Discrete episodes. |
Customer Journey Map

Dhebar (2013) highlighted that most service researchers had recognised the importance of customer journeys and how critical they are in assisting companies to look at all service encounters that enhance customer experience holistically. Companies must establish the most critical link between the customer journey, which shows the steps that customers must follow to access products and services from a company perspective, and critical incidents, which detail what is vital to the customer at each service encounter from the customer’s point of view.

The customer journey is defined by Følstad, Kvale, and Halvorsrud (2013) as a process which a customer goes through to achieve a specific goal involving one or more service providers. Customer journeys concern CX and may include touchpoints, steps and actions. CJM is a technique that enables companies to better understand customer experiences when they interact with the steps involved in a service. CJM is used by companies to understand customer behaviour and, ultimately, how to serve them better (Bernard & Andritsos, 2017).

The challenge faced by many companies in the quest for being customer-centric is the effect of functional silos within the company (Temkin, Chu, Geller, & Beckers, 2009). In the era of “here and now,” customers can access the service offerings of a company and its competitors via Google while still in the store (N. Bolton, Gustafsson, McColl-Kennedy, J. Sirianni, & K. Tse, 2014). A company cannot afford to pass customers from one team to another when they require service. It is important for companies to map customer journeys to offer customers a seamless experience across all touchpoints. Customers expect companies to provide a seamless experience from initial contact to post-sale phases. Customers must never feel that they are dealing with different companies during their interaction with a company. Companies are presented with an opportunity to create a lasting good or bad customer experience whenever they interact with their customers. CJM is a tool that can assist with the enhancement of a customer’s experience (N. Bolton et al., 2014).

(Halvorsrud, Kvale, & Følstad, 2016) introduced the concept of a Customer Journey Framework (CJF) which is a conceptual framework for modelling customer journeys in terms of touchpoints. It depicts how a company plans to deliver service experiences to its customers. According to Holmlid and Evenson (2008), companies need to adopt a vicarious customer approach in order to understand the service experience and the customer journey as their customers would (Halvorsrud et al., 2016). Customer journey stages are displayed visually in sequential order and include customers’ emotional states. These stages show what happens from the customer’s point of view. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) established that
there is always a gap between the company’s plans to deliver service experience and the actual service delivery as experienced by the customer. Furthermore, Følstad et al. (2013) argue that there are two types of journeys. The first shows the expected journey as envisioned by the company while the second is the actual journey experienced by the customer.

(Halvorsrud et al., 2016) introduced five design principles that govern the mapping of the customer journey. According to the first principle, the journey must be mapped from the customer’s point of view. The second principle involves the clear definitions of the touchpoints and stages of the journey. The third principle stipulates that the journey must enable companies to identify gaps in distinguishing between the planned and actual service experience delivery. The fourth principle indicates that the objective and subjective customer experiences evoked during the journey should be shown. Principle 5 is concerned with the visual representation of journeys to illustrate the flow across company departments with the aim of eliminating silos.

CXs are interactions which provoke a reaction between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its company (LaSalle & Britton, 2003; Shaw & Ivens, 2005). This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer’s involvement at different levels – rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual (LaSalle & Britton, 2003; Schmitt, 1999). The emotions evoked determine the evaluation of the experience during a service encounter to establish if customer expectations have been met (LaSalle & Britton, 2003; Shaw & Ivens, 2005). (Maklan et al., 2017) assert that CX is broadly defined and, consequently, difficult to implement and measure. Experience includes all service encounters from the time that the customer is aware of the company to post-purchases across all company touchpoints (Voorhees et al., 2017).

However, Schmitt, Brakus, and Zarantonello (2015) argue that every service exchange between a customer and a company leads to a CX. CX includes customer behaviours, every aspect of a company offering, and its touchpoints (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007; Lemke, Clark, & Wilson, 2011; Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2009).

In the study of the Royal Bank of Scotland by Maklan et al. (2017), they initially defined the customer journeys from the bank’s existing product and service offering. Thereafter, they analysed the critical incidents at each touchpoint to determine how customers feel, how well the company delivers at each step of the journey, and the cost of the service delivery state (Maklan et al., 2017).

According to Rawson, Duncan, and Jones (2013), companies perform exceptionally well in individual interactions with customers but fail to address the entire customer experience from pre-purchase to post-sale. Furthermore, Temkin et al. (2009) state that poor customer
experience delivery is influenced by a lack of alignment to customer needs organisationally. Employees lack a deep understanding of their customers; internal politics take centre stage and a lack of customer-centric approaches results in companies delivering a poor customer experience. To overcome these obstacles, they recommend that companies map customer journeys to examine service encounters from the customer’s point of view.

According to Richardson (2010), there is no standard framework that outlines how companies can map their CJM. Companies map their journey based on what will work for them and fits their situation. However, practitioners at the Temkin Group outlined eight elements which have become a standard practice for companies to map and customise their customer journey: (1) identify the persona embarking on the journey; (2) determine the scenario to be examined; (3) organise stages of the journey into the major stages; (4) define customer expectations and goals; (5) define customer actions, which include their interaction points; (6) include customer thoughts and feelings in the different phases of the journey to understand them; (7) map quantitative data metrics on to the journey to show the relationship to the qualitative information; and (8) identify opportunities for innovation and improvement, or those that require more research to create a future state journey.

Du Plessis and De Vries (2016) identified nine themes that a company can use to successfully implement and manage customer experience as shown in figure 1; this study observes two of these themes. They describe these themes as part of the customer experience design and implementation process. The themes in question are Customer Experience understanding and Customer Experience design. These themes align with the standard practice that the Temkin Group has outlined above.
Considering the literature review, the following second and third propositions were identified for the study.

**Table 2: Outputs of CJM**

P2: The outputs of CJM are:

- A visual map that provides a single view of service experiences delivered by a company across various touchpoints and channels;
- Defined customer segments – designed with the goals or objectives of a specific customer in mind;
- Understanding customer needs and expectations;
- Every touchpoint or channel a customer interacted with;
- A sequential structure
- Cognitive, emotional, and behavioural drive;
- The gaps between desired and current performance; and
- Every stage has an owner.
Table 3: Differences between CJM and CIT

P3: The differences between CJM and CIT are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CJM</th>
<th>CIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A visual map that provides a single view of service experiences</td>
<td>Investigate method of service impact;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delivered by a company across various touchpoints and channels;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defined customer segments - designed with the goals or objectives</td>
<td>Narrative analysis of service impact of discrete episodes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of a specific customer in mind;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding customer needs and expectations;</td>
<td>Satisfying or dissatisfying service experiences;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every touchpoint or channel a customer interacts with;</td>
<td>Recollection of previous events;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sequential structure;</td>
<td>Direct observations of human behaviour; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive, emotional, and behavioural drive;</td>
<td>The actions of the service company employee described and assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gaps between desired and current performance; and</td>
<td>Discrete episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every stage has an owner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Managing customer experience is becoming increasingly complex. The numerous fragmented touchpoints that customers can use to interact with a company present opportunities and major challenges in managing the end-to-end customer experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Voorhees et al., 2017). Companies spend a considerable amount of their budget gaining insights into customer behaviours, emotional motivations, and mindsets when they interact with their products and services across various touchpoints. These insights assist companies
to understand how to serve their customers better. CJMs reflect the various scenarios through which a customer can interact with a company. Companies need to anticipate and have strategies, based on these various potential scenarios. However, when mapping the customer journeys, many companies tend to assume what the journey of the customer looks like without involving the customer, with the input to journey mapping being primarily from their internal operational sources where the maps are used to broaden the management of the customer experiences to adequately address customer value.

CIT enables companies to analyse people’s rich stories about their satisfying or dissatisfying experiences. The respondents use their language and terms to describe their experiences that are related to a specific event. As a result, companies are able to get an indication of how their customers think. Nyquist and Booms (1987) describe the critical incidents collected through the CIT method as “pure” customer data which is obtained without leading respondents into a given direction or framework.

This study identified and described the key differences between the outputs of CJM and CIT by comparing the existing customer journeys of a Pay-TV company in South Africa to customer MOTs as collected by Maklan et al. (2017) from Pay-TV customers using the CIT methodology. Moreover, this study also explores whether the customer expectations mapped in the customer journey stage for touchpoints match, overlap, or do not match the MOTs as described by Pay-TV customers in their own words. Thus, the following considerations have guided this research: to establish (1) what CJM evaluates and describes, (2) what the CIT evaluates and describes, and (3) how these tools differ in terms of material aspects.
ANALYTICAL MODEL

The analytical model (Figure 3) below was used for this study to show the differences and overlaps between CJM and CIT as observed from the above literature review. This helps to understand how both CJM and CIT contribute to the management of customer experience yet are different. This is accomplished by demonstrating how customer expectations as mapped in a company’s existing CJM match up against the critical incidents of a customer’s service encounter with a company in his or her own words. The existing customer expectations from the CJM of a Pay-TV company in South Africa are compared to the critical incidents collected from Pay-TV customers who described these incidents in their own words.

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**Customer Experience Management**

**Customer Journey Map (CJM)**
- A visual map that provides a single view of service experiences delivered by a company across various touchpoints and channels;
- Defined customer segments - designed with the goals or objectives of a specific customer in mind;
- Understanding of customer needs and expectations;
- Involves every touchpoint or channel a customer interacts with;
- A sequential structure;
- Cognitive, emotional, and behavioural drive
- It's a sequential structure.
- Identify service improvements

**Critical Incidents Technique (CIT)**
- Narrative analysis
- Key incidents
- Events reporting
- Service quality
- The service impact of discrete episodes;
- Individual narrated stories;
- Satisfying or dissatisfying service experiences;
- Recollection of previous events;
- Direct observations of human behaviour;
- The actions of the service company employee described and assessed

**Overlaps**
- Service Encounter
- Customer’s perception
- Emotions
- Moments of Truth

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**Figure 2: Analytical Model**
METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The study population was identified as Pay-TV customers who had a service encounter with a Pay-TV company using either the call centre, branch or self-service touchpoints. Twenty-one respondents were interviewed using telephone interviews. They all consented to participate in the study and stated that they recently had had a service encounter.

Data Collection

The critical incidents were collected through telephone interviews with the aid of semi-structured interview questions. A semi-structured interview is suitable for studies where the researcher explores the perceptions and opinions of respondents (Louise Barriball & While, 1994). Respondents were asked to recall a time when they had a satisfying or unsatisfying service encounter with a Pay-TV company using the call centre, branch or self-service touchpoints with the aim of collecting critical incidents. Respondents were asked to answer the questions below, as adopted from Bitner et al. (1990).

A) Think of a time when, as a customer, you had a particularly satisfying (dissatisfying) interaction with a Pay-TV company.
B) When did the incident happen’?
C) What specific circumstances led up to this situation?
D) Exactly what did the employee say or do?
E) What resulted that made you feel the interaction was satisfying (dissatisfying)?

The answers were written down on the interview sheet that the researcher had; see appendix for interview transcripts.

Data Analysis

From the literature review, the outputs and differences of both CJM and CIT which relate to the practice of CEM were identified. The CIT approach was used to collect the critical incidents that were analysed using the analytical framework introduced by Miles and Huberman (1994) to identify the stage of the customer journey and touchpoint into which the collected critical incidents fit. In this section, the method and the results of the analytical framework of CIT approaches are discussed.
Critical Incidents Classification

The critical incidents were identified and classified into one of the seven customer journey stages of the Pay-TV company based on the customer needs and expectations of each stage; furthermore, the critical incidents were also classified into one of the three touchpoints that were identified for this study. The classification into the customer journey stages was as follows:

Table 4: Critical Incidents Classifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Journey Stage No</th>
<th>Customer Journey Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>This category contains all incidents that are related to how the current and prospective customers of a Pay-TV company become aware of the products and services of the said company. This includes word-of-mouth and advertisements (print, media and social media).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Join</td>
<td>This category contains all incidents which are related to how a prospective customer becomes a Pay-TV subscriber. It includes the hardware purchase process – either from the Pay-TV company directly or from retailers and third parties – and the installation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Watch</td>
<td>This category contains all incidents which are related to how the Pay-TV customers use their hardware to view their favourite shows on television.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>This category contains all incidents which are related to how the Pay-TV customers pay for their subscriptions. It includes the payments made directly to the Pay-TV company, banks and third-party payment vendors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 5  Help  This category contains all incidents which are related to how the Pay-TV customers are serviced regarding all queries they have in concern of the Pay-TV products and services.

Stage 6  Retain  This category contains all incidents which are related to how the Pay-TV company retains and rewards its loyal customers. This includes competitions, discount offers, free subscriptions and loyalty rewards.

Stage 7  Disconnect  This category contains all incidents which are related to how Pay-TV customers disconnected their subscriptions when they are either dissatisfied or no longer interested in the Pay-TV products and services.

Table 5: Touchpoints Classification

The classification into touchpoints was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Touchpoints</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>This category contained all the critical incidents that Pay-TV customers experienced when they contacted the call centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call Center</td>
<td>This category contained all the critical incidents that Pay-TV customers experienced when they contacted the call centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Service</td>
<td>This category contained all the critical incidents that Pay-TV customers experienced when they interacted with the Pay-TV company using the self-service platforms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the above classification, a qualitative analysis followed, which is discussed below.
RESULTS

A total of 30 critical incidents were described by 21 interviewed respondents. Of the 30 critical incidents that were analysed, 16 were perceived by Pay-TV customers to be satisfactory while the other 14 were dissatisfactory. Table 1 shows the number of critical incidents, sorted into each stage of the Pay-TV CJM. The critical incidents reported by Pay-TV customers are summarised, based on the frequency and the percentage of incidents per stage. The respondents describe one to two incidents that they had during a service encounter with the Pay-TV company.

Table 6: Critical Incidents Classification by Customer Journey Stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Journey Stage</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Dissatisfactory</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Sample Critical Incident per Customer Journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Stage</th>
<th>Journey</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Dissatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td></td>
<td>I saw a TV advert for Hardware, I was impressed with the features that it had, I immediately contact the call centre to inquire more about the Hardware.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch</td>
<td></td>
<td>I enjoy the nonstop entertainment and there is always something to watch. Be it series which are my favourite and the many reality shows especially on new Channels. it has great shows that the time-space of a month is full of no dull moment.</td>
<td>The hardware lost signal, I tried to remove the smart card and disconnect the hardware from the plug, I still didn’t get the signal back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td></td>
<td>My subscriptions were disconnected after missing payment due date, I made a payment 2 days later using the Pay-TV app my services were reconnected within minutes of making the payment.</td>
<td>So, disappointing it takes more than 18 hours before being reconnected after someone has paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td></td>
<td>I received prompt assistance and all my requests were successfully applied the first time around.</td>
<td>I was not able to update my passport number which I use my primary number of identification and authentication when interacting with Pay-TV because of lost documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retain</td>
<td></td>
<td>I have been a subscriber to a lower package for a couple of years now, one day I received an SMS notifying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When Pay-TV customers were asked to recall their service encounters with the Pay-TV company using either the call centre, self-service or branch touchpoints, they exhibited a tendency to describe the critical incidents which are related to core service delivery stages. The main customer journey stages that had the most critical incidents were Watch, Pay and Help. These three stages are those with the highest impact since they are related to Pay-TV’s core service delivery. From the critical incidents collected and identified, these three customer journey stages seemed to be of key importance to the Pay-TV customers.

The incidents were classified into the seven customer journey stages of the Pay-TV company and the results are as follows:

**Stage 1: Aware**

There is only one critical incident that was described as satisfactory at 6.3%. This result is not surprising as most of the Pay-TV hardware is sold and distributed through well-known retailers in Johannesburg, South Africa. Potential customers are more likely to become aware of the products and services of the Pay-TV company through the retailers.

**Stage 2: Join**

No critical incidents were identified at this stage and the results were unexpected. This stage focuses on the installation and connection of Pay-TV hardware to customers’ TVs at their homes. This stage is critical for customers to gain access to Pay-TV services. Companies or people who perform the task of installing Pay-TV hardware are independent contractors and are not employed by the Pay-TV company. There tends to be a practice or partnership between retailers and contractors. When retailers sell the Pay-TV hardware, they provide their customers with recommendations on which installers to use by referring them to their preferred contractor. Alternatively, when customers buy the Pay-TV hardware, they either know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disconnect</th>
<th>I contacted the call centre to cancel my subscription I have been their customer for more than 8 years but if the expiration of the payment is passed by one minute they disconnect the service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>me that I have been upgraded to a package higher than my current one.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
someone from the community who performs Pay-TV hardware installations or will be referred to such individuals by friends, family members or colleagues. Due to the nature of the installation process, it is likely that when a customer has issues related to installation, they will return to the person who conducted the initial installation so that said issues might be resolved.

**Stage 3: Watch**

Pay-TV customers described six critical incidents with four at 25% being satisfactory and two at 14.3% being dissatisfactory. The customers who were dissatisfied had issues with lost signal. This resulted in their viewing experience being interrupted due to their hardware either losing signal or restarting. Those who were satisfied were delighted because their old hardware was replaced with a newer equivalent when it malfunctioned, or they were happy with the variety of the content and choices available to them. This is a core service for the Pay-TV company as customers join them for watching their favourite shows on TV. This stage is integral to the services that the Pay-TV company offers to customers. If this stage is not delivered effectively, the Pay-TV company would have failed to deliver on its customer promise.

**Stage 4: Pay**

The Pay-TV customers described nine critical incidents with four being satisfactory at 25% and five being dissatisfactory at 35.7%. The Pay customer journey stage is a core service delivery stage as Pay-TV customers can only access Pay-TV services once they have paid. The results were expected. The Pay-TV companies have various methods of payments; customers can pay via well-known supermarkets, banks (direct deposits and EFTs), Pay-TV branches and other payment wallets. Payments made via third-party payment vendors have an impact on the overall customer experience; if the payments are remitted late after the payment due date, the customer may end up being disconnected even if they paid on time. The critical incidents which led to Pay-TV customers being dissatisfied had to do with being disconnected despite making their payments on time. On the contrary, customers who were satisfied were pleased with being reconnected immediately after making payment.

**Stage 5: Help**

A total of 11 critical incidents were described for this customer journey stage. Five critical incidents were described at 31.3% as satisfactory while six critical incidents at 42.9% were described as dissatisfactory. The customers who were satisfied had their issues resolved at the first point of contact, regardless of whether they used the call centre, self-service or branch. Those who expressed dissatisfaction used the self-service touchpoints first and their issues were not resolved; as a result, they were compelled to either visit the branch or contact the
call centre for issue resolution. The other dissatisfying critical incidents had to do with issues taking longer to be resolved. The Help stage is also part of the core service. The results were expected due to the fragmented nature of how the Pay-TV company delivers its services. Sales, distribution, installation and payments are conducted with various third parties.

Stage 6: Retain

The satisfactory results of two described critical incidents at 12.5% were unexpected. With the first incident, Pay-TV customers seemed to be taken by surprise when they were rewarded with an upgrade to a package which was higher than their current option. They sought assurance that there were no additional costs involved due to an error on the Pay-TV company’s part. Regarding the second incident, the customers felt that they “couldn’t live without Pay-TV” as it is an integral part of their entertainment.

Stage 7: Disconnect

A single dissatisfactory critical incident was described at 7.1%. The customer was frustrated and felt that it was necessary to end his or her relationship with the Pay-TV company. The individual in question had been a loyal customer for many years and could not understand why the Pay-TV company did not have a grace period to ensure that the customer had adequate time to finalise payment before being disconnected after the payment due date.

Table 7: Critical Incidents Classification by Touchpoint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Touchpoint</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Dissatisfactory</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call Centre</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self - Service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touchpoint</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Dissatisfactory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>During the Highveld thunderstorm, the hardware that I bought 3 months ago, was struck by lightning, I visited the Pay-TV branch to get my hardware fixed. The Pay-TV company replaced the damaged hardware with a new one at no cost because it was still under warranty which I didn’t know.</td>
<td>I made payment two days before my subscriptions expired at a third-party vendor, however, I was disconnected and TV shows were not showing for 2 days after I had made prompt payment before old package got expired. I visited the branch after having no joy with the call centre to inquire about my payment; the Branch Agent advised me that sometimes the payments from third-party vendors take longer to reflect. I gave them my proof of payment and they reconnected me but when I got home I was still disconnected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call Centre</td>
<td>I contacted the call centre. The call centre agent, Judith, assisted me with excellent service. She was patient, professional, prompt and very well knowledgeable about the products.</td>
<td>My hardware lost its signal; I contacted the call centre; their agent seems to have a rehearsed script on how I should try and resolved the issue after 10 minutes of trying to resolve the issue, she advised me to contact a technician who ended up charging me for his service to resolve the issue.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self - Service</td>
<td>I wanted to check my balances due before making a payment, so I used the USSD option because this was cheaper for me to interact with the Pay-TV. I was pleased in less than a minute I got my balance and additional information regarding where I can go make a payment before due date. I find the self-</td>
<td>I came back from work and turn on my TV to view a soccer game that started at 10:30 pm. My TV had an error, I log in to the Pay-TV app to clear the error, and I was unable to clear it. The self-service was not working. I had to wait for the next day to contact the call centre and the error cleared. It was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 21 respondents were equally divided into three touchpoints which Pay-TV customers interact with during a service encounter. The touchpoints are a branch, call centre and self-service. The 30 critical incidents were classified per each touchpoint to assess which touchpoints Pay-TV customers were mainly satisfied or dissatisfied with during their service encounter with the Pay-TV company.

**Branch**

Of the nine critical incidents that were collected from the Pay-TV customers who had a service encounter using the branch, six were satisfactory at 37.5% and three were unsatisfactory at 21.4%. The results were not surprising as when people walk into a branch and have an interpersonal interaction with the Pay-TV service employee, they have the expectation that since they are talking to another human being, all their issues will be resolved as they are there in person to explain the challenges they are currently experiencing.

**Call Centre**

Half of the satisfactory critical incidents that were described by respondent were collected from the call centre. Eight of the critical incidents at 50% were noted as satisfactory with five of the dissatisfactory critical incidents at 35.7%. Most of the critical incidents collected for this study originated from the call centre. This is the touchpoints with the most critical incidents at 43.3% overall. The results were expected as the call centre is the most popular touchpoint preferred mainly by Pay–TV customers.

**Self - Service**

This touchpoint had the least satisfactory critical incidents which were two and 12.5% and the highest numbers of six dissatisfactory critical incidents at 42.9%. This result was not expected as the functionalities that are made available on the self-service platforms are expected to work most of the time and the main purpose of the self-service platform is to reduce the number of calls made to the call centre and cut down on the number of visits that customers make to the branch by providing a platform where customers can assist themselves when and where they want.
DISCUSSION

The Critical Incidents Technique

Critical incidents described in the study are subjective to the individuals interviewed (Zainol & Lockwood, 2014). Pay-TV customers described either a positive or negative service encounter that they had recently experienced. The results show that the critical incidents described which are related to the Watch, Pay and Help customer journey stages tend to be similar or somehow related, even though the experiences are subjective and personal. The three customer journey stages with the most critical incidents as described by the respondents are related to the core service encounter, which is mainly focused on how a company provides its primary service offering at the point where a customer is interacting with the company (Voorhees et al., 2017). At a point of contact, a company has an opportunity to either meet or exceed or not meet the customer needs and expectations (LaSalle & Britton, 2003).

The critical incident data collected shows that the customer journey stages which represent the core service delivery are what matters most to customers. There are no vast differences between the number of satisfactory and dissatisfactory incidents. One cannot confidently conclude that the Pay-TV company is meeting customer expectations. Both satisfactory and dissatisfactory incidents present an opportunity for the Pay-TV company to improve and manage its customer experience. As stated by researchers (Gilmore & Pine, 2007) that customers do not desire products but experiences; respondents showed that the incidents which are related to the core service are important to them. While the goal of CEM is to manage the holistic customer experience, the Pay-TV company needs to ensure that it improves its core service delivery.

The Help stage of the customer journey stages has the most critical incidents. These results are consistent because the touchpoints which were examined reflect that the study is primarily used by Pay-TV customers to initiate service encounters when they require clarity or assistance with Pay-TV services or products. Critical incidents are originating issues that interrupt the availability of core service. For example, when the viewing experience is interrupted, and Pay-TV customers are unable to view Pay-TV services. This is due to a variety of issues such as faulty hardware, lost signal, late payment or delayed reconnection of services despite having paid on time. The issues that interrupt the availability of service can be caused by the Pay-TV company or the customers. When customers described the critical incidents, they pay attention to how the service employees with whom they interacted, using the call centre or the branch touchpoints, react to incidents that were caused by the Pay-TV
itself and the one that the customers caused for themselves. In the instances where the service encounter was because of unavailable service due to either system maintenance by the Pay-TV or late payment remittance from the Pay-TV third-party payment vendors, the customers have some expectations that their issues will be resolved quickly as the Pay-TV is the one at fault, and not them. In the case where the Pay-TV customers are at fault by making their subscription payment late, they still expect the Pay-TV to be lenient with them and not to immediately disconnect them, and for them to be given a grace period to be able to make payment. Pay-TV customers vividly remember the service encounter where the Pay-TV service employee went beyond the call of duty to ensure that the customers issues were resolved when one customer made a call to the call centre and they were not at home closer to their TV and the Pay-TV hardware, the call center agent took their contact details and contacted them when they were home to ensure that the issue was resolved to the customer expectations.

The results of critical incidents classified per touchpoint showed that Pay-TV customers who used the self-service touchpoint for their interaction with a Pay-TV company are more likely to use the call centre or branch if their issue is not resolved. When customers opt to use the self-service touchpoint and their issues are not resolved, they end up contacting the call centre or visiting the branch. Companies, while managing their limited resources, introduced self-service touchpoints to enable customers to assist themselves without having to walk into the branch or call the call centre at a cost to the customer. Among the benefits to customers when they use self-service, as identified by Meuter et al. (2000), is the access to services when and where they want with the ability to save money for the customers as there will not be any need for the customer to use other touchpoints, such as the branch or call centre. The Pay-TV customers who were satisfied with the self-service touchpoint are more likely to use it again than the customers who were not. They will prefer to use the touchpoints that give them interpersonal communication with the Pay-TV service employees. The Pay-TV company can use the branch and call centre as mechanisms for service recovery as the call centre and branch agent can identify that the customers tried to use another touchpoint to resolve an issue before contacting them; this will ensure that they speed up the issue resolutions whilst enhancing customer satisfaction.

From the critical incidents described by customers, it can be determined that Pay-TV services are akin to a pay-per-view business model where customers are required to make payments first before they can view. If Pay-TV customers do not make their payments on time, their services are disconnected and are only restored once they have paid. In addition to making
their subscription payment, they are charged a reconnection fee for restoration of services. In the quest for managing and improving the customer experience, the Pay-TV Company has an opportunity to improve how disconnections are handled when payment is not received on time from their customers. In the quest for companies to improve CX, the CIT method can also be used to guide the company to understand with which stages within the macro stages their customers interact and what the critical incidents are that lead to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Customer Journey Mapping

The CJMs used in this study were obtained from the Pay-TV company. From the results, one can clearly see that not all customer journey stages are important to customers. The three journey stages that customers deemed important were Watch, Pay and Help as they are related to core service delivery. Similarly, in the case of the Royal Bank of Scotland (Maklan et al., 2017), they identified how their business operates and identified touchpoints and service encounters that are more important than others. When companies are mapping customer journey stages, they need to understand that not all journeys matter; i.e. not all service encounters are critical incidents or MOTs and company resources are insufficient to cover all customer journeys (Maklan et al., 2017).

The CJMs of the Pay-TV company are mapped according to Temkin (2010) and do contain the goals and objectives of the journey. The customer journey is defined for a specified customer across various touchpoints. Each stage has customer expectations, an owner, and opportunities which are presented to the company to improve customer expectations. However, the Pay-TV customer journey map only focuses on the micro journey and not micro journeys as suggested by Du Plessis (2015, 2016) and De Vries, (2016). The Aware, Join, Retain and Disconnect customer journey stages had the least critical incidents observed in this study. The first stage with the most CJMs is Aware, where a specifically targeted market segment becomes aware of a company’s products and services. The Pay-TV customers become aware of the Pay-TV company through the company’s and its partners’ adverts or word-of-mouth or promotions. In this study, the Aware stage is owned by the Pay-TV sales and marketing department. This department has partnered with well-known retailers who assist the Pay-TV company with the sale and distribution of its hardware.

As with any business function, the sales and marketing department has goals and objectives to meet. This department is driven to meet sales targets which impact the sales commission received by salespeople when they successfully close a deal. When mapping customer
journeys, companies need to be aware of pitfalls where the operational and departmental targets of making sustainable profits supersede the priority of managing customer experience (Du Plessis, 2015; Du Plessis & De Vries, 2016). Based on this study, once the sales and marketing department has closed the sales deal, they move on to the next sales deal and all critical incidents related to the purchase of the Pay-TV hardware seems to be addressed by the retailers.

The Pay-TV company is focusing most of the resources on servicing the customer in terms of their payments and reconnection questions. This can be addressed by the sales team at the initial stage of awareness by educating the customers on the processes to pay and stay connected. Customers do not seem to understand when and how to make payments, even when they use the self-service touchpoint as an entry. The company’s operational objectives can override the objectives of the CEM department; this finding aligns with the study by Rawson et al. (2013) which stated that the Pay-TV company’s salespeople are focused on closing new sales and helping the customer choose subscription packages. They are not concerned with post-sale processes; i.e. installations and how the customer will be serviced. Du Plessis (2015) further stated that companies fail to implement CEM successfully because the company’s operational targets of making sustainable profits supersede the priority of managing the customer experience. Dhebar (2013) alluded that companies can achieve financial rewards through the management of customer experience. The company sets CX as a company strategic objective, yet the organisational culture is not conducive to customer-centric initiatives. The company lacks an understanding of what CX is about or fails to adopt the framework or standard that can assist the organisation with the implementation of CX. The knowledge gap on how to make CX operational and ensure that information is gained through the management of CX is filtered through the business to drive business change.

The retain and the disconnect stage had the least critical incidents. Research has argued that when the organisation maps the customer journey, they need to map it from the customer’s point of view. The incidents that were described, pertaining to this study, show that these stages are the least important to the customer as the customer feels that the Pay-TV has no loyalty programme that they offer to them and when customers were rewarded they felt they need to contact the Pay-TV to ensure that they do not get charged for any errors that may have been made by the Pay-TV company at their expense. As this journey was mapped by the Pay-TV, this is an indication that they Pay-TV is not doing enough to offer value for money to customers and when customers described the other core service delivery incidents, they feel like Pay-TV company implements punitive measures when they do not make their
payments on time and they are immediately disconnected and they must pay additional fees to get reconnected, regardless of how long they have been subscribers.

**The Differences between Customer Journey Mapping and the Critical Incidents Technique**

The study has demonstrated that both CJM and CIT are concerned with service encounters that evoke emotion from customers and inform their perceptions about the interactions they had with a company. These interactions determine whether the company with which a customer is interacting is either meeting or exceeding the customer’s expectations. The point of contact is the MOT for customers; their emotional state will determine their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the company. Service encounters, evoked emotions, customer perceptions and MOTs are the only qualities that CJM and CIT have in common.

This study has also shown that CJM is a sequential process which shows the journey stages that customers go through when they are interacting with a company across various touchpoints and channels. By contrast, the CIT looks into the discrete episode of a service interaction and measures the service impact of the interaction as described in the customer’s own words. CIT is concerned with the impact a service encounter has on customers as it will inform their perceptions about a company, based on how they felt when the company rendered its services to them. What is pertinent to note is that the service encounter has already taken place with the effect that customers are narrating their experiences as they remember them and in terms of how they felt. Customers have a recollection of events; they remember their experiences, whether satisfactory or dissatisfactory, as such experiences are important to them.

CJMs anticipate how a service encounter will happen by outlining the journey stages that customers go through and how customers will be serviced at a specific stage within a touchpoint while taking customer needs and expectations into account. Each journey owner is aware of the customer needs and expectations that he or she needs to meet to satisfy the customer. This research has shown that the critical incidents which were collected and described in the customers’ own words demonstrate that three out of seven customer journey stages (Watch, Pay and Help) are critical to customers. These insights can be used by the Pay-TV company to map its micro-journey stages for the Watch, Pay and Help stages. The CEM framework that was outlined by Du Plessis and De Vries (2016) stipulates that companies need to map the macro and micro journeys during the implementation of CX. Regarding the Pay-TV study, the macro CJM was used and this showed the strategic high-
level interaction of the journey whilst the micro journey stages show the operational level on what exactly the customer goes through to get service from the Pay-TV company. To fully understand why these journey stages are those with high impact, the Pay-TV company needs to drill down to the micro journey stages to understand why their customers have issues with their core service delivery stages. The research has shown that critical incidents can be used as an input to be mapping micro journey maps that will pinpoint exactly what are the operational challenges that customers are facing at each micro journey stage.

The Pay–TV company is in the infancy stages of implementing CEM. The customer journey maps have owners; however, the challenge is that the organisation is yet to develop a culture of customer experience as certain functions still operate within their traditional mandate of that business function. From the results, the Pay-TV organisation experienced more critical incidents that had to do with a core service offering. From this, one can deduce that the traditional nature of a Pay-TV organisation is some sales driven organisation where the business performances are measured based on the total number of active subscribers it has, total number of hardware sales and the financials. The customer is not at the centre of company objectives. The high number of incidents that must do with the core service delivery remains an area of concern for the Pay-TV as it shows that currently, those are the pain points with which their customers have issues.

CONTRIBUTION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this study was to enhance CEM understanding through identifying the outputs and key differences of CJM and CIT as both affect the management of CEM. The study has clearly indicated the value of MOTs in both CJM and CIT. The critical incidents can pinpoint exactly what stages of the customer journey are most important to them. The critical incidents can help managers who are tasked with the implementation and management of CEM to focus on the stages that are important. As stated by Maklan et al. (2017), not all stages are important to customers; therefore, companies must focus on the stages that are important as customer needs and expectations are not static and change regularly. Companies can use the CIT as a complementary method to input into CJMs as their customers will describe their experiences in their own words. As with the challenges that are highlighted by several authors (Du Plessis, 2015; Du Plessis & De Vries, 2016), MOTs are part of the CJM experience design. The initial assumption about CJM and CIT is that these methods should exhibit no differences. However,
the characteristics of CIT are not plainly elaborated upon in CJM literature. Theoretically, there should be no differences between the two; however, the characteristics of CIT are not necessarily lucid in CJM literature. The differences between these two methods can be understood as follows: CJM is a sequential process which highlights the various stages of a customer’s journey during his or her interaction with a company across various touchpoints and channels, whereas the CIT considers the discrete episode of a service interaction by measuring the service impact of said interaction as described in the customer’s own words.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was limited to Pay-TV customers in Johannesburg, South Africa, who had recently experienced a service encounter with a Pay-TV company using either the call centre, branch or self-service touchpoints. One fundamental restraint is the small sample size because of the exploratory in-company nature of the research that was conducted. The reported results of this research cannot be generalised. It is therefore recommended that future studies include service encounters from all touchpoints for Pay-TV customers in South Africa. The CIT used is a relatively old methodology (Bitner et al., 1990). It should be retested to confirm that the questions that were designed 28 years ago are still relevant for the extraction of critical incidents. If retesting indicates that said questions are no longer relevant, they should be updated accordingly.

The existing researchers (e.g. (Følstad, Kvale, & Halvorsrud, 2014; Temkin, 2010) argued that there is no definite framework that practitioners and researchers can use to map customers’ journeys, however, a CEM framework that has been proposed by some authors (Du Plessis, 2015); Du Plessis and De Vries (2016) can be used to study how organisations can successfully implement CEM.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to Du Plessis (2015), there is a gap between the theoretical framework on how companies should implement their CEM strategy and how it is actually implemented. The reason for this is that companies who make CEM a strategic goal set up dedicated focus teams whose primary focus is to implement the CEM strategy in the organisation. This has unintended consequences: rather than being a company issue, CEM will instead be perceived as the responsibility of a department. This can be attributed to the widespread practice that
various departments are responsible for implementing their departmental goals and objectives which, in turn, feed into the company-wide goals. For example, the finance department is responsible for managing the finances of the company and the operations department is responsible for managing the day-to-day operation of the company. Similarly, the CEM department will be viewed as the department that is responsible for customer experience. The aforementioned goes against the standards on how to successfully implement CEM as customers expect a seamless customer experience. This involves their issues, customer needs and expectations being met or even exceeded during company interactions.

It seems that both CJM and CIT have a critical role to play in the CEM. The results show that not all CJMs are important to the customer. In this study, Pay-TV customers described the stages related to core service delivery that was critical to them. CIT can also be used by companies as a complementary tool to validate the stages and MOTs that are of importance to customers. In the mapping of CJM, researchers (Du Plessis, 2015; Du Plessis & De Vries, 2016; Maklan et al., 2017; Richardson, 2010) stress that companies must include MOTs from the customer’s point of view.

In Proposition 1, the outcome of CIT is supported as the critical incidents described by customers in their own words when they recall the discrete episode of their service encounter. In instances where customers were satisfied with the service encounter, they could vividly recall the name of the service representative with whom they interacted. The incidents described by customers were MOTs that were important to them. The critical incidents that were described were either due to the Pay-TV company’s unavailability of service or they were caused by the customer’s fault. In both instances, customers had expectations that the Pay-TV had to meet.

The second proposition regarding CJM outcomes was also supported. The customer journey stages were represented by a visual map which showed the journey stages that a customer goes through when interacting with the Pay-TV company. The journey was designed with a specific customer in mind and the customer expectations and journey stage owners were also identified. However, the study also showed that not all journeys are important to customers as outlined in the study by Maklan et al. (2017). It is critical that companies focus their resources and time on understanding the journeys that their customers deem important. The management of CEM is all about managing customer experience from the customer’s point of view and understanding of all points of contact where customers interact with the organisation. This is done to identify the points of high impact so that exceptional service can be prioritised.
without neglecting the points with minimal impact as customer expectations and needs change on an intermittent basis.

Proposition 3 showed that the key differences between CJM and CIT are also supported. CJM is a sequential process which shows the stages that customers go through during their interactions with a company across various touchpoints and channels. CIT looks into the discrete episode of a service interaction and measures the service impact of the interaction as described in a customer’s own words.

The study has shown that CIT can be an input framework into mapping micro journey stages as the critical incidents, as described by the customers in their own words, spell out the customers’ MOTs and a company can use this information to ensure that each micro journeys stage is important to the customer and is indeed addressing the customer needs and meeting their expectations. Classifying critical incidents into the three touchpoints that Pay-TV customers mainly use to interact with the Pay-TV company has highlighted which touchpoints are the customers’ mainly satisfied with; this finding is critical as it shows which touchpoint is more effective in meeting the customer needs and expectations. From this, service recovery strategies can be devised to ensure the seamless customer experience is achieved by having a single customer view by enabling service employees to be prompted about the recent service interaction that a customer had, and to recover from service failure in the current interaction.

**Recommendations for Companies**

To successfully implement and support the CEM initiatives, companies must follow the fundamental building blocks recommended by authors (Du Plessis, 2015; Du Plessis & De Vries, 2016). Firstly, the company must define the customer experience strategy, which outlines the company vision and plans on how the company is going to offer exceptional customer experience. The strategy must be communicated and cascaded to all employees in the company to obtain their buy-in and to rally behind the strategy. Secondly, leadership buy-in must be created to ensure that customer experience is also afforded the same status as chief financial officers and chief operating officers to enhance the role the discipline plays in contributing to the company’s operational targets; i.e. every department is aware that they need to manage the departmental budget and to ensure that they do not spend resources where the return on investment is not feasible; the same principle should be applied to customer experience as a happy customer equates to a loyal customer through repeat purchases which contribute to meeting financial targets. Thirdly, a customer experience
culture should be implemented where company employees and their partners understand how the job functions impact the customer experience and are motivated to deliver on the customer experience strategy. Fourthly, organisational functions should be aligned with customer segments to enable the company to have capabilities and structures that will dismantle functional silos and ensure a seamless end-to-end customer experience across the value chain without breakage. Lastly, company technology, processes and systems should align with the customer experience strategy to ensure the following: (1) technological application is customer-centric, (2) processes and systems are standardised, and (3) customers should not feel as though they are dealing with different companies during their interactions with the company across various touchpoints and channels. Furthermore, some authors (Du Plessis, 2015; Du Plessis & De Vries, 2016) have indicated that these fundamentals need not be adhered to in any sequential order; depending on the company’s maturity and strategic objectives, it can decide how to support and successfully implement CEM. Companies need to focus on CEM as customer choice is the only differentiator in the age of the customer (Manning & Bodine, 2012).
REFERENCES


Chell, E., & Pittaway, L. (1998). A study of entrepreneurship in the restaurant and café industry: exploratory work using the critical incident technique as a methodology: Prize-winning Paper from the IAHMS Conference at Sheffield Hallam University, England, November 199711Over fifty papers were presented at the IAHMS Conference at Sheffield Hallam University in November 1997. A panel of judges, chaired by Conrad Lashley of Nottingham Trent University, decided that the best paper from a strong field was that by Elizabeth Chell and Luke Pittaway. The authors have been awarded the prize of one year’s free subscription to the International Journal of Hospitality Management. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 17*(1), 23-32.


