



Developing a tool to measure emotions towards services

IDE Design for Interaction MSc. Graduation Project

Topic

Development of a tool to measure emotions of customers in the field of experiential services design

Company

Susa Group - www.susagroup.com

Student

David Güiza Caicedo (1119532)

Supervisory team

Chairman: Pieter Desmet

Mentor: Marieke Sonneveld

Company Mentor: Lars Rengersen

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Company description

SusaGroup is a Dutch based research and consultancy company that enables and supports companies to 'create meaningful experiences'. The company combines scientific competence with market insights in the development and application of innovative, valid, and relevant tools and methods. Tools and methods are made available by offering research competence and education, engaging in partnerships with research agencies, corporate research institutes, and universities.

Experience design has added value in many areas. Emotions play an important role in almost every aspect of everyday life. SusaGroup continuously explores and validates new areas of application.

Work areas

SusaGroup currently focuses on:

Product design and development:

Having a proper functional design is an important basis for developing a good product. However, nowadays that is no longer enough. Their tools and methods enable you to really 'get under the skin' of customers.

Service design:

In terms of service design, it is even more difficult to distinguish yourself from competitors. Most features (functionalities) are often intangible and implicit. Furthermore, the perceived quality is highly subjective. Using experience and emotion design will allow you to connect with customers.

Web interface and interaction design:

On the web, contact with customers is even more volatile. Every visitor is only one click away from your competitor. An unpleasant interaction with your website can easily be ended by closing a browser. Building on experience and emotion design helps you to develop meaningful experiences even in dynamic environments.

Employee satisfaction:

In today's tight employee market more and more attention is being paid to attracting and maintaining the best people. Often internal measurements used require high levels of rationalization. By measuring satisfaction using emotions, a much more authentic level can be reached.



Background of the project

Design for emotion

Emotion is a central quality of human existence, and most of our behaviour, motivation, and thought is enriched with and influenced by emotions. Our relationship with the world is essentially affective, which means that all our interactions imply and involve emotions, whether these are interactions with the social world or with the material one. A product, or using a product, can elicit disappointment, attraction, shame; pride, disgust, contempt, admiration, satisfaction, fear, anger, and any other emotion a person may also experience in response to events, people, or actions of people. Ignoring the emotional side of product experience would be like denying that these products are designed, bought, and used by humans. Therefore it is important to study these emotions experienced in response to, or elicited by, seeing, using, owning, or thinking about consumer products.

A shift towards an “Experience Economy”

For centuries, the agrarian economy was based on *Commodities* (products grown, or extracted from the land), but in the wake of the industrial revolution *Goods* (manufactured or processed products) became the predominant economic offering. Yet in time these too were *commoditized*, meaning that people would not care anymore

who manufactures them but care more about price.

In order to differentiate themselves, businesses turned their heads towards services where goods would be delivered on demand, transforming the industrial economy into a service based economy. But in the last 2 decades and with a strong influence from the internet, services too have become *commoditized*.

In an effort to differentiate from the competition, in the last few years we have started to see a shift towards an economy where *experience* is becoming the new predominant economic offering where *experiential services* play the central role.

Experiential services are defined as services where the focus is on the experience of the customer when interacting with the organization, rather than just the functional benefits following from the products and services delivered (Voss & Zomerdijs, 2007).

These services can be perceived as a journey rather than a single product or transaction. It spans for a certain limited period of time and consists of multiple components and multiple *touch points* between the user and the products/services/staff. This journey perspective can also imply that the experience is built over an extended period of time starting before and ending after the actual sales experience or transaction has been made.



Emotional experiences

Until recently, the assessment of a service experience was done in terms of a single standard: “*Satisfaction*”, which can be defined as the gap between a consumer’s expectations and the performance of the provider (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). Yet, when consumers are asked about their experience with a service they always have a vivid emotional memory of things, where emotional words like anger, excitement or frustration can easily come into the conversation.

This is because we are dealing with experiential consumption, and as Edwardson (1998) very clearly puts it “We don’t ski to be satisfied, we want exhilaration. We feel serenity in the peacefulness and beauty of a wilderness area. We feel doses of terror and amazement from the latest blockbuster movie, or can be moved to tears by an opera”. Thus, trying to describe a consumer’s experience by the single, not very descriptive standard of *satisfaction* seems to be an underestimation of the real dimensions of the customer’s experience, and its real perceived value.

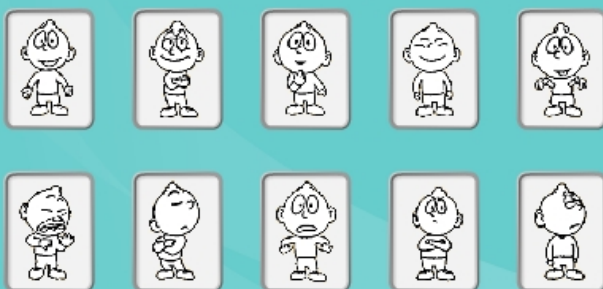
The consumer world is starting to realize that the human is by nature an emotional being, and that it is important to start addressing this in many different levels in order to improve sales, develop better and more personal products and services and in general to evaluate the effect that all of these may have in our life. Therefore, there is a need for

tools that help in the process of measuring emotional reactions so that we can help understand the true dimension of user experience.

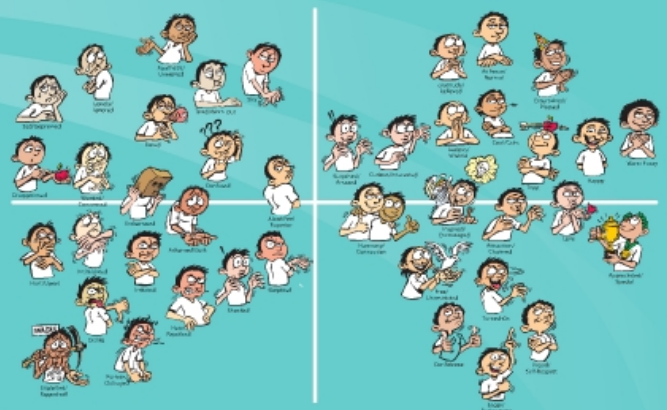
Measuring emotions

After being a subject of psychological, social and even anthropological studies for many years, the nature of emotions and their measurement has become a popular target for research in recent times in fields such as advertising and design. Conferences and similar events that have been held around the world (e.g. Overbeeke & Hekkert, 1999), and the growing number of studies being conducted by experts from fields other than the social sciences in search for better and more reliable ways to measure emotions, are just but a mere reflection of the fact that emotions are gaining an important spot in other fields as well.

Many attempts have been made in order to develop tools to measure emotional reactions and in very different approaches. Semantical self assessment tools such as the Geneva Emotions Wheel (Scherer, 2005) and graphical self assessment tools such as PrEmo (Desmet, 2003) and Emoti*Scape (Developed by Ipsos-ASI, an advertising research company) have been developed over the years. Other approaches such as face recognition (EMFACS – Elkman & Friesen) and the measurement of physiological changes (skin conductivity, heart beat rate, etc) have also been tried.



prEmo



Emoti*Scape™

Project description

Assignment

Various methods are available for measuring emotional responses elicited by product (design) or human-product interaction. Currently, however, no instrument is available that can be used to measure emotional service experiences. The aim of the project is to extend the possibilities of measuring emotions to the realm of experiential service design.

The goal of the project is to design a tool that can be used by designers to measure and map the overall emotional experiences of a user towards a specific experiential design.

Case Study

As a case study for the project, it was chosen that the focus will be laid on the '*hotel experience*', that is, the experience of a guest staying at a hotel.

The instrument should be able to measure the emotional responses of the guest towards the various *touch points* (user-service interaction points) he encounters along his *journey* as a hotel guest.

Deliverables

- Prototype of the tool
- Tool validation study
- Project report
- Project Poster
- Oral presentation

References

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