FROM COMPETENCE TO EXPERIENCE: EMPLOYEE-CENTRICITY IN THE CUSTOMER-CENTRIC WORLD

Abstract:

Customer experience management as the current peak in the area of modern customer-centric marketing is challenging companies to effectively manage factors influencing customer experience creation with the promise of achieving differentiation and competitive advantage. On the contrary, human resource management is currently embracing employee-centricity with increased focus on employee's competencies, their development and activities such as knowledge and talent management.

The aim of this research is to find touch points between the marketing approach of customer experience management and human resource theme of employee competencies, then to identify key aspects of competence for customer experience oriented front-line employees and potential avenues for further research.

The research is primarily based on the review of literature on competencies, and analysis and synthesis of 139 customer experience related research papers, complemented by the analysis of field notes from field research on customer experience.

1. Introduction

With the increasing focus on value creation and its perception by customers, companies are starting to be aware of the fact, that employees are key factor influencing the value, from its creation to its delivery to the customer, and besides customer-centric orientation, the employee-centric orientation starts to emerge. This approach encompasses not only focus on the cultural changes but also on employees' competencies. Job positions start to be defined by required competencies and competency models are created for ensuring the best match between applicant's strengths and job requirements, and for development of the personal development plans.

At the same time, customer-centric orientation, recently popularly projected through customer experience management, places considerable demand on the whole company and challenges all employees, from top level management to the operation level, to deliver the best possible results to improve all kinds of customer's interactions with a company.

In 2009, Verhoef et al. (2009) defined research question asking, how do employee capabilities influence the customer experience or moderate the effects of other factors. Six years later, McColl-Kennedy et al. (2015) asked in what ways can front-line employees enhance and shape the customer experience. And two years later, in 2017, Jain et al. (2017) stress the importance of investigating the roles of different types of resources, skills, competencies in management of total customer experience.

As customer experience is considered significant tool for differentiation, new area of competitive battles, but also the impulse for company's internal changes, it seems to be necessary to incorporate the effective approaches to employee management to exploit the real potential of this customer-

centric marketing approach. And one of these approaches might be the management of competencies.

2. Competencies

Prusak (2016), from the perspective of competencies, stress the importance of human capital in the company and defines it as a combination of characteristics such as knowledge, innovation, skills, experiences, creativity, social and personal skills, and employee motivation.

Through the years, many authors defined the term competence. McClelland (1973) claims that career competencies are more related with job-related abilities (attitude, knowledge, personality) rather than with individual's intelligence level. Klemp (1980) defines competence as a fundamental characteristic of a person that results in an efficient and excellent work performance. Boyatzis (1982) complements this view by more detailed statement that these characteristics may include motives, traits, skills, aspects of self-knowledge and social role, or basis of knowledge the person uses. McLagan & Bedrick (1983) state that job competencies include knowledge, ability, and skills needed for job performance. Woodruffe (1992), on the contrary, perceives competences as a set of behavioral patterns. Lawler (1994) points out that terms competence and skill are often interchanged, but that in reality skills are key elements of the competencies. Parry (1996) sees competencies as the set of interrelated knowledge, attitudes and skills, that significantly influence one's work, correlate with the performance, and can be improved through training and development. Klein (1996) refers to the observable difference between behavior of superior and average employees, where superior (more competent) ones deliver the desired behavior more consistently. Thompson et al. (1997) define competence as an integrated set of behaviors that can be directed to the successful goal accomplishment. Mirabile (1997) view competencies as a unique group of characteristics (skill, ability, knowledge) and other qualities (analytical thinking, leadership, problem solving) associated with successful performance in demanding tasks. Tett et al. (2000) see the competence as the identifiable aspect of one's work behavior. Brophy & Kiely (2002) define competencies similarly to the Parry (1996) – as skills, knowledge, behavior and attitudes needed to perform a certain job effectively. Kubeš (2004) defines basic competence as the disposition, influenced by personality variables, such as knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values, motives, to behave in a way that guarantees the desired accomplishment of the assigned tasks. Zopiatis (2010) claims that individual's talents and personal qualities translate into one's competencies and lead to job efficiency and effectiveness. Pitaš (2013) perceives competence as the set of knowledge, personal attitudes, skills, and related experiences that are needed for success in a particular job position.

Some authors define competence in more general or abstract way, some define it through particular aspects and some of these aspects can be found across literature sources. One such aspect, identified by Boyatzis (1982), Brophy & Kiely (2002), Kubeš (2004), McClelland (1973), Mirabile (1997), Parry (1996), Pitaš (2013), is knowledge. Another aspect, skills, was jointly identified by Boyatzis (1982), Brophy & Kiely (2002), Lawler (1994), McLagan & Bedrick (1983), Mirabile (1997), Parry (1996), Pitaš (2013). Third aspect, attitudes, can be find in the definitions by Brophy & Kiely (2002), Kubeš (2004), McClelland (1973), McLagan & Bedrick (1983), Parry (1996), Pitaš (2013). Boyatzis (1982) and Kubeš (2004) mention the aspect of motives. Authors McLagan & Bedrick (1983), Mirabile (1997) and Kubeš (2004) agree on the aspect of abilities. And significant number of researchers link competencies with the employee's behavior (Brophy & Kiely, 2002; Klein, 1996; Kubeš, 2004; Tett et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 1997; Woodruffe, 1992). At the same time, most of the authors cited above, link effective management of competencies to the more effective

work, increased performance and successful accomplishment of tasks and goals (Klemp, 1980; Klein, 1996; Parry, 1996; Tett et al.,2000; Kubeš, 2004; Pitaš, 2013).
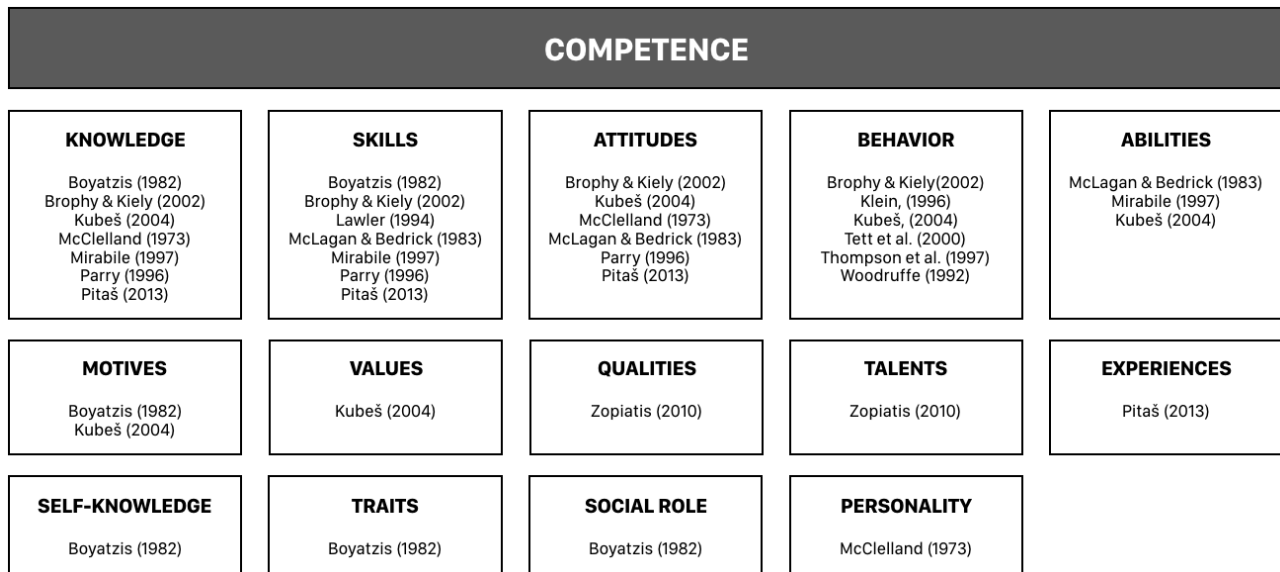
COMPETENCE

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES	BEHAVIOR	ABILITIES
Boyatzis (1982) Brophy & Kiely (2002) Kubeš (2004) McClelland (1973) Mirabile (1997) Parry (1996) Pitaš (2013)	Boyatzis (1982) Brophy & Kiely (2002) Lawler (1994) McLagan & Bedrick (1983) Mirabile (1997) Parry (1996) Pitaš (2013)	Brophy & Kiely (2002) Kubeš (2004) McClelland (1973) McLagan & Bedrick (1983) Parry (1996) Pitaš (2013)	Brophy & Kiely(2002) Klein, (1996) Kubeš, (2004) Tett et al. (2000) Thompson et al. (1997) Woodruffe (1992)	McLagan & Bedrick (1983) Mirabile (1997) Kubeš (2004)
MOTIVES Boyatzis (1982) Kubeš (2004)	**VALUES** Kubeš (2004)	**QUALITIES** Zopiatis (2010)	**TALENTS** Zopiatis (2010)	**EXPERIENCES** Pitaš (2013)
SELF-KNOWLEDGE Boyatzis (1982)	**TRAITS** Boyatzis (1982)	**SOCIAL ROLE** Boyatzis (1982)	**PERSONALITY** McClelland (1973)	

Figure 1   Aspects of the competence
          Sources: Boyatzis (1982), Brophy & Kiely (2002), Klein (1996), Kubeš (2004), Lawler (1994), McClelland (1973), McLagan & Bedrick (1983), Mirabile (1997), Parry (1996), Pitaš (2013), Tett et al. (2000), Thompson et al. (1997), Woodruffe, (1992), Zopiatis (2010)

As management of competencies increased in popularity, several approaches to classify these competencies were developed. The most general classification is on hard (functional, technical) and soft (personal, behavioral, social, interpersonal, human) competencies (Lišková & Tomšík, 2013). Carroll & McCrackin (1998) divide competencies in more detail into four categories – key competencies, team competencies, functional competencies, and managerial competencies. Key competencies are those that directly influence the performance of the individual and thus the entire organization (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998). Category of team competencies contains skills and abilities in relation to the teamwork, relationships, and effective team performance (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998). Functional competencies are technical and professional competencies necessary for effective resolution of specific tasks in given working environment (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998). And managerial competencies are, according to Carroll & McCrackin (1998), those necessary for leadership and team building in the dynamic business environment.
Ital & Knöferl (2001) look at the competencies from the perspective of three categories: professional, personal, and social. Professional competencies are necessary for the right choice of methods and techniques chosen to support responses to the changes and development of company resources (Ital & Knöferl, 2001). Personal competencies encompass own initiatives, ethical attitudes, self-assessment and supporting of others (Ital & Knöferl, 2001). And to the social competencies, according to Ital & Knöferl (2001), belong social values, conflict resolution capabilities, and building and maintaining relationships.
Hroník (2006) also divides competencies into three main categories. The first category, called problem-solving competencies, groups abilities, skills and attitudes to solving complex problems and tasks during work activities (Hroník, 2006). The second category, relational competencies, are defined by the goal of building and maintaining relationships within the team, organization and with

other stakeholders (Hroník, 2006). The last category is called self-management competencies and contains competences related to self-control and control of own emotions.

Vodák & Kucharčíková (2011) divide competencies into managerial, interpersonal and technical. Managerial competencies are leadership abilities related to the fulfilling of company's strategic goals (Vodák & Kucharčíková, 2011). Interpersonal competencies are abilities and skills of effective communication and relationship building in the company (Vodák & Kucharčíková, 2011). And technical competencies are those focused on specific tasks requiring technical knowledge and skills (Vodák & Kucharčíková, 2011). Wu et al. (2015) defined two categories of competencies, interpersonal competencies related to the interactions among employees and customers, and professional competencies related to the knowledge/expertise and technical skills.

Across above mentioned approaches to the classification of competencies, we can again identify common themes – hard competencies encompassing professional, technical or functional aspects related to the accomplishment of the job-related tasks (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998; Ital & Knöferl, 2001; Vodák a Kucharčíková, 2011; Wu et al., 2015), soft interpersonal competencies related to the interaction, communication, relationship, team building and management (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998; Hroník, 2006; Ital & Knöferl, 2001; Vodák & Kucharčíková, 2011; Wu et al., 2015), and soft personal competencies including self-control, problem-solving, attitudes or self-assessment (Hroník, 2006; Ital & Knöferl, 2001).

3.   Customer experience

With globalization, rapid technological innovations, subsequent commoditization of the goods and services, it has started to be necessary to move from the focus on the product, service, and transactional data about customers to the new area of differentiation. Customer experience is considered to be the next step in marketing efforts to differentiate itself from competition and even build competitive advantage (Schmitt, 2003). Importance of customer experience management lays in the potential to increase of customers' satisfaction, loyalty, retention, and relationship between the customer and the brand (Kumar et al., 2013).

Customer experience is defined as the holistic in nature, consequence of all customer's interactions through the whole customer lifecycle (Klaus & Maklan, 2013; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015; Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Reinartz & Ulaga, 2008). These interactions may be with the product, service, advertisement, packaging, customer support, staff members and wide variety of other factors, making customer experience complex and multidisciplinary phenomenon (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). But it has one unequivocal and crucial prerequisite – company's ability to adopt the perspective of a customer – that companies are still struggling to meet because of their inability to leave their business process view.

Among the most popular techniques to understand customer and subsequently to manage customer experience is the customer journey mapping. This technique may be realized in many ways, with different levels of granularity, but the main principles and process remain basically the same: definition of typical customer personna, creation of most common customer scenario, splitting scenario into several stages, identifying customer's typical interactions with experience forming factors within each stage and comparing actual state with desired state based on company's goals and customer's expectations (Pennington, 2016).

4.   Methodology

Methodology of this paper is based on methodology triangulation and data triangulation consisting of three components – field research in the field of customer experience in the city transportation

(axi, Uber); and modified framework for systematic literature review developed by vom Brocke et al. (2009). Outputs from these sources were content analyzed, synthesized and associated with acquired theoretical knowledge from the area of competencies.

4.1. Literature synthesis and content analysis

The first method, comprehensive literature review based on systematic literature review developed by vom Brocke et al. (2009), was extended by the final step of thorough content analysis process to reveal detailed information about factors influencing customer experience across eight different industries. Original framework consists of following stages: 1. definition of review scope; 2. conceptualization of topic; 3. literature search; 4. literature analysis and synthesis; 5. research agenda. The main goal, when following this approach, is to identify gaps in the particular research field and to define research questions and agenda as the solid starting point for further research. Since documented systematic approach provides transparency to the research, this framework was selected and modified to the actual need of this research – stage of literature search and synthesis, otherwise recommended to be based on, for example, Webster & Watson's (2002) concept matrix, was built upon content analysis process to reveal major factors influencing customer experience where connection with employees' competencies could be found.

Scope of the review can be characterized by the characteristics-categories pairs from Cooper's taxonomy matrix as follows: focus – theories and research outcomes; goal – integration; organization – conceptual; perspective – neutral approach; audience – general scholars and practitioners; coverage – exhaustive (Cooper, 1988).

Conceptualization of topic was done through citation chaining starting with twenty most active authors in the customer experience fields indexed in Web of Science and Scopus databases, resulting in set of keywords related to the nature of customer experience (e.g. holistic, customer-centric, sensorial, emotional), customer journey mapping (e.g. customer journey, touchpoint), models (e.g. SERVQUAL), outcomes (e.g. loyalty, satisfaction, retention), and experience influencing factors (e.g. atmosphere, assortment, social environment). After this initial exploration, the area of factors seemed to have potential link to the employee's competencies with the subsequent influence on the customer experience.

Next, literature search in the Web of Science database was conducted. For ensuring feasibility of the research based on manual content analysis, limitations on the search results were placed in the form of keyword "customer experience", year of publication „2017–2019", and document type „article, proceedings paper". This search brought 442 results (36 for 2019, 203 for 2018, and 203 for 2017). This set was expanded by 18 research papers on customer experience collected for the purpose of previous research. All these papers where further subjected to the scanning and skimming for the selection of the research papers relevant to the aim of this research – containing direct and indirect links to employees' competencies.

Selected papers were then subjected to the content analysis process, where parts containing links to employee's competencies were extracted, coded and categorized, following content analysis recommendations by Mason (1996) and Erlingsson & Brysiewicz (2017). Explicit descriptions of each item and data examples from the examined research paper were taken into account during the coding process, as well as additional descriptions acquired through the process of backward and forward searching.
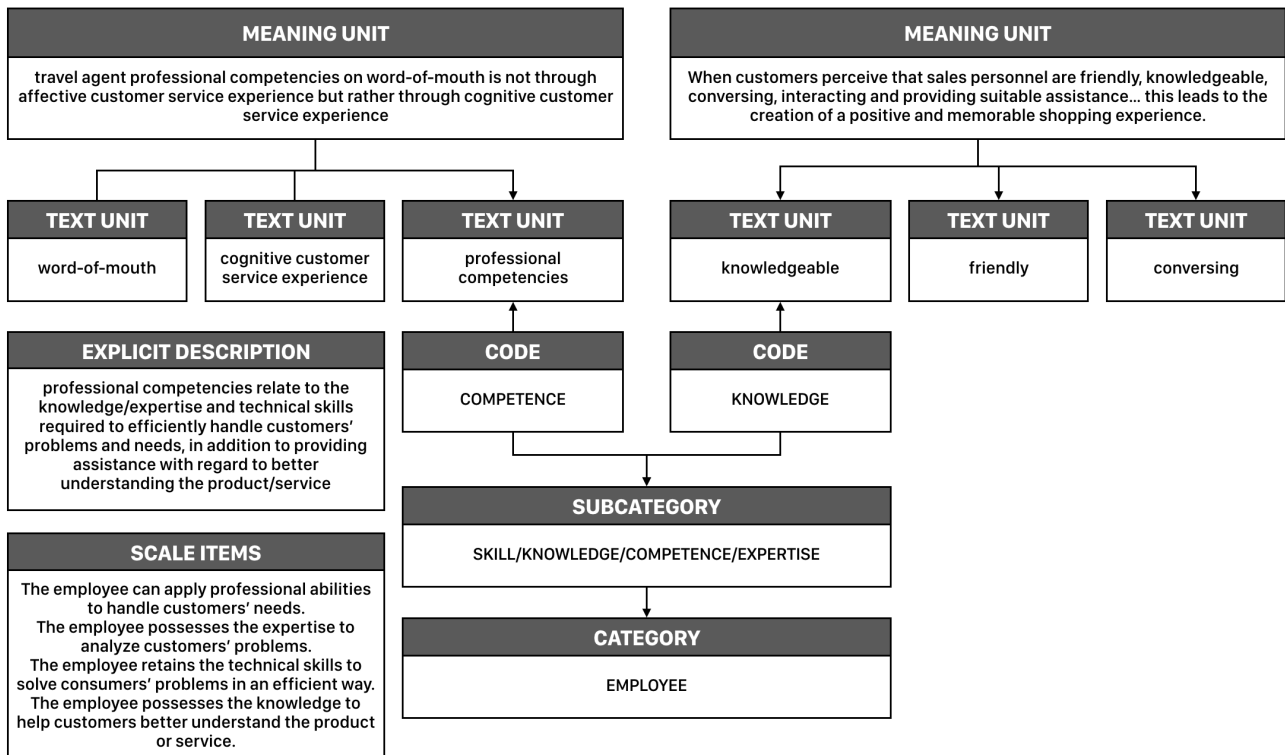
Figure 1   **Example data sources and content analysis process**
Sources: (Backstrom & Johansson, 2017; Wu et al., 2018)

4.2. Primary data collection

Field research, conducted in November 2018 was based on experiencing 24 customer journeys with different city transportation providers in the capital city of Prague. During the research, field notes related to the perception of customer experience factors were captured and then content analyzed to identify most influential factors of customer experience in this area (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017; Mason, 1996).

5.   Results

5.1. Employees' competencies in customer experience field

Tracey (2014) states that human resources affect many organizational outcomes, which, in the end, affect customer experience. Kandampully et al. (2018) also identify human resources as the important part of customer experience management, with its function as the source of creativity, innovations and energy. Thomas (2017) conclude his research with statement, that humanistic customer journey touchpoints are, among others, directly impacted by the staff competence. Wu et al. (2018) found out that travel agents interpersonal competencies influence mainly affective customer experience, while professional competencies influence mainly cognitive dimension of customer experience and argue that demonstration of these competencies is important in creation of positive customer experience. Chahal & Dutta (2015), based on the research in banking sector, state that knowledge and competence of employees relate to the cognitive aspect of customer experience. Wasan (2018) found that employees' competencies are critical customer experience factor influencing customers' purchase intentions and recommendation to others. Bäcktröm & Johansson (2017), based on the empirical data, point to the increasing level of customer's knowledge and

related need to develop and use staff competence to match this trend. Importance of this development also lies in the crucial role of personnel in store (Bäckström & Johansson, 2017).

According to Reilly (2018) companies should focus on talent-management to deliver positive customer experience. Nguyen & Leclerc (2011) state that training and expertise are the foundation of service employees' competencies. Frow & Payne (2007) suggest to focus on intensification of the motivation of employees to deliver as perfect as possible customer experience. Kuppelwieser et al. (2018) warn that it is not enough to hire the right, motivated and service-oriented people, but that they then also need to perceive that they are treated fairly by the company to deliver the best customer experience. They also assume that through training and development, some competencies and knowledge can be attained to influence the employee's performance related to customer experience delivery (Kuppelwieser et al., 2018).

Sirapracha & Tocquer (2012) conclude their research on customer experience in telecommunication industry with statement, that company, to deliver an overall compelling customer experience, should have all managerial functions and departments aligned towards achieving this goal, stressing the importance on competences of top and middle level management. Frow & Payne (2007) are of the same opinion and recommend ensuring collaboration across all staff and departments.

5.2. Customer experience factors and their relation with employees' competencies

The main part of the research, literature analysis and synthesis, revealed 71 items directly linked to the factor of employee, that were further categorized into following categories: general staff/ provider/employee/personnel category; skill/knowledge/competence/expertise category; attitude/ behavior/action category; company-related category; service-related category; and relational category.

Table 1   Categorized employee related items

Category	Subcategory	Item
Staff/ provider/ employee/ personnel	-	Service personnel (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2017) Personnel (Koivisto & Mattila, 2018) Service providers (Chang & Horng, 2010; Fernandes & Cruz, 2016) Employees (Barari & Furrer, 2018; Garg et al., 2014) Employee (Cachero-Martinez & Vazquez-Casielles, 2018; Wasan, 2018) Host (Brochado et al., 2017) Interaction with staff (Ali et al., 2018; Terblanche, 2018)
Skill/ knowledge/ competence/ expertise	Competence	Interpersonal competencies (Wu et al., 2018) Professional competencies (Wu et al., 2018) Competence (Paul & Ponnam, 2018; Wasan, 2018) Competence of staff (Sirapracha & Tocquer, 2012) Personnel's competence (Bäckström & Johansson, 2017)
	Knowledge	Knowledge (Bäckström & Johansson, 2017) Knowledgeable (Ogruk et al., 2018)
	Skill	Interpersonal skills (Klaus & Maklan, 2013; Milman et al., 2017) Skills (Bäckström & Johansson, 2017)
	Expertise	Expertise-related experiential attributes (Izogo & Jayawardhena, 2018) Staff professionalism (Izogo & Jayawardhena, 2018)

Attitude/ behavior/ action	Behavior	Employee-customer interaction elements (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016) Need identification (Song et al., 2018) Service manner (Song et al., 2018) Social interactions with employees (Song et al., 2018) Employee actions (Rosenbaum et al., 2017) Level of interaction (Ogruk et al., 2018) Backstage employee actions (Lim & Kim, 2018) Frontstage employee actions (Lim & Kim, 2018) Interpersonal care activity (Kumar et al., 2018) Interaction Activity (Kumar et al., 2018) Behavioral experience (Izogo & Jayawardhena, 2018) Personnel's behavior (Bäcktröm & Johansson, 2017) Way of treating customers (Bäcktröm & Johansson, 2017) Employee interaction (Astrom, 2017)
	Recognition	Customer recognition (Paul & Ponnam, 2018) Recognition (Chauhan & Manhas, 2014)
	Social/ relationship	Compassion (Wasan, 2018) Social Characteristics (Triantafillidou et al., 2017) Employee Politeness (Triantafillidou et al., 2017) Friendly greeting (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016) Friendliness (Ogruk et al., 2018) Relationship versus transaction (Milman et al., 2017) Empathy (McLean & Osei-Frimpong, 2017)
	Attitude	Argumentative employee (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016) Employee's attitude (Sharma et al., 2016) Attitude (Bäcktröm & Johansson, 2017)
	Help	Helpful employee (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016) Helpfulness (Ogruk et al., 2018; Paul & Ponnam, 2018) Problem resolving (Paul & Ponnam, 2018) Game-master guide (Kolar & Čater, 2018) Willingness to help (Bäcktröm & Johansson, 2017)
	Engagement	Staff engagement (Loureiro & Sarmento, 2017; Loureiro & Sarmento, 2018)
	Communication	Communication (Klaus, 2013)
Company-related	-	Satisfaction of employees (Wijaithammarit & Taechamaneestit, 2012) Look of employees (Ogruk et al., 2018) Employees role (Kandampully et al., 2018) Autonomy information (Shank & Robinson, 2019)
Service-related	-	Employee support (Rosenbaum et al., 2017) Employee service (Bravo et al., 2019) Customer service/Social (Ogruk et al., 2018) Account management (Milman et al., 2017)
Relational	-	Relationship Activity (Kumar et al., 2018) Guest-host relationship (Lyu et al., 2019) Customer–employee relationships (Kandampully et al., 2018) Employee-customer engagement (Mbama & Ezepue, 2018; Mbama et al., 2018)

Besides items directly linked to the factor of employee, there were also items related to the overall social aspect of experience – social factor (13 items), social environment (4 items), social value (10 items), and social experience (45 items). It should be noted that these more general social aspects also encompass and result from customer's interactions with other factors, such as other customers,

external experts, and customer's companions. Social experience is considered to be special dimension of customer experience resulting from other experiential dimensions (sensory, cognitive, affective, behavioral) in social context, placing the considerable demands on different classes of employee's competence (Schmitt, 1999).

It can be expected that different industries will have different demands in regard to employee's competencies and that they will have different degrees of influence on resulting overall customer experience, primary at the operational level. But as long as human capital is present, employees' competences will play an important role.

Table 3   Overview of the examined industries and presence of the employee factor

Industry	Research papers recognizing factor of employee	Number of collected research papers
Transportation and Warehousing	2	5
Accommodation and Food Services	5	22
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9	21
Information	1	10
Retail Trade	13	46
Health Care and Social Assistance	1	3
Finance and Insurance	9	13
Wholesale Trade	–	2
multiple/universal	2	17

5.3. Service providers' competencies in the city transportation industry

Content analysis of field notes from the field research revealed following major themes related to the employee's/service provider's characteristics and his behavior: communicativeness, look, attitude, assurance behavior, professionalism, skill, knowledge, adaptation, and friendliness.

Table 4   Categories and examples of data collected (field notes)

Category	Data
Communicativeness	I'd expect him to be more communicative; at least he greeted us, not like the one before; he said nothing; once he said some dirty word and then I thought he would drive like a crazy; it was good that he said goodbye to us, not like the others; at least he greeted and said goodbye; he was not unnecessarily eloquent; when I wasn't communicative, he didn't talk anymore; she tried to communicate; so we chatted in a cool way;

Look	he looked normal; he looked a bit like an extremist; he looked like a manager; he looked younger; the driver did not look representative; I didn't like the driver much; he wasn't as cool as the others; he looked pretty unprofessional;
Attitude	the driver was weird; he was nice; he seemed so bored; he tried to cheat his company; he came to me as a nice driver; the driver looked nice, calm, cool;
Assurance behavior	he interacted with us and informed us about what he would do; there was a lot of reassurance; he said basic information; he told us that we would turn; he asked where I wanted to go; she confirmed where we were going; he confirmed where we were going; he told us there was a traffic jam if we didn't know what was going on;
Professionalism	I think the approach was absolutely unprofessional; he asked where we were going and dropped us right in front of the entrance; I'd expect him to tell us which way to go then; he picked up the phone for a moment and checked the messages there, that wasn't very good; his cell phone rang, but he didn't pick it up; she was still holding the phone and doing something on it; he talked to a friend over the phone while driving; it was all incredibly unprofessional;
Skill	sometimes it seemed to me that his driving was a little worse; he drove in a terrible way; he drove terribly wrong;
Knowledge	I learned something; he drove more from what he knew from everyday practice; I think if I tell him, he should know where I want to go; it was strange that he asked me about the route; when they ask me which way we want to go, it always makes me; uncomfortable when I don't know it;
Adaptation	as we needed to hurry, he hurried too; it was good that he switched from radio to cd in the tunnel;
Friendliness	and he also laughed at what you said; I had fun; it was obvious he wasn't very friendly; it was like driving with a friend; it was more pleasant; he said good-bye in a nice way, which is quite exceptional;

6. Conclusion and discussion

If we take into account knowledge acquired from the field of competencies, where competence is, by many authors, defined as the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motives, we can find connection with employees aspects defined by the categories and subcategories established during

the literature content analysis process. If we go further, competencies are considered to be manifested through behavior, next identified characteristic examined in relation to the customer experience factor of employee. And the subsequent claim, that competencies influence performance, effectiveness and accomplishment of the given task, goes hand in hand with customer experience management recommendations – that to deliver exceptional customer experience, that will lead to differentiation and competitive advantage, companies should take into account all customer experience dimensions (sensory, cognitive, affective, behavioral, social) and thus manage all factors influencing those dimensions.

From the perspective of classification of competencies on hard competencies (professional, technical, functional), soft relational competencies (communication, relationship, team building, team management), and soft personal competencies (self-control, problem-solving, attitudes, self-assessment), we can also find match with employee factor characteristics for all three mentioned categories, primarily however to relational competencies. Therefore, it can be concluded that all these competencies affect the quality of delivered customer experience with behavior the most frequently defined aspect.

Based on the additional evaluation of the results from the field research, we can conclude that competencies played significant role in perception of the customer experience quality during the field research.

Results from literature synthesis and field research share employees' aspect of friendliness and professionalism and point to the aspects of knowledge, skill, attitude, behavior – key components of competence – supporting the theory of importance of management of competencies within customer experience management.

An important fact is, that this research was limited on explicit and direct connection between the data with front-line employees' competence, but there are several other factors (e.g. peripheral service, core product/service, brand, marketing, real/virtual environment) influencing customer experience that are influenced by employees' competencies but can't be explicitly found in the data. Another limitation is the focus just on the area of city transportation in case of primary research and possible subjectivity resulting from the involvement of one researcher.

Further research should focus on more thorough and deeper research on the role of employee's competencies on perceived customer experience quality in more industries. Further research should also expand from the front-line employees to other types of employees and positions across company at different levels to identify key competencies for each key job positions influencing customer experience quality.

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