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Convenience: A services perspective

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Abstract. This theoretical paper argues that the concept and construct of convenience is at the forefront of customer and user evaluation of service experiences and should play, therefore, a much more pivotal role in marketing theory than it does at present. With increasing evidence that convenience is important to customers, it is timely to

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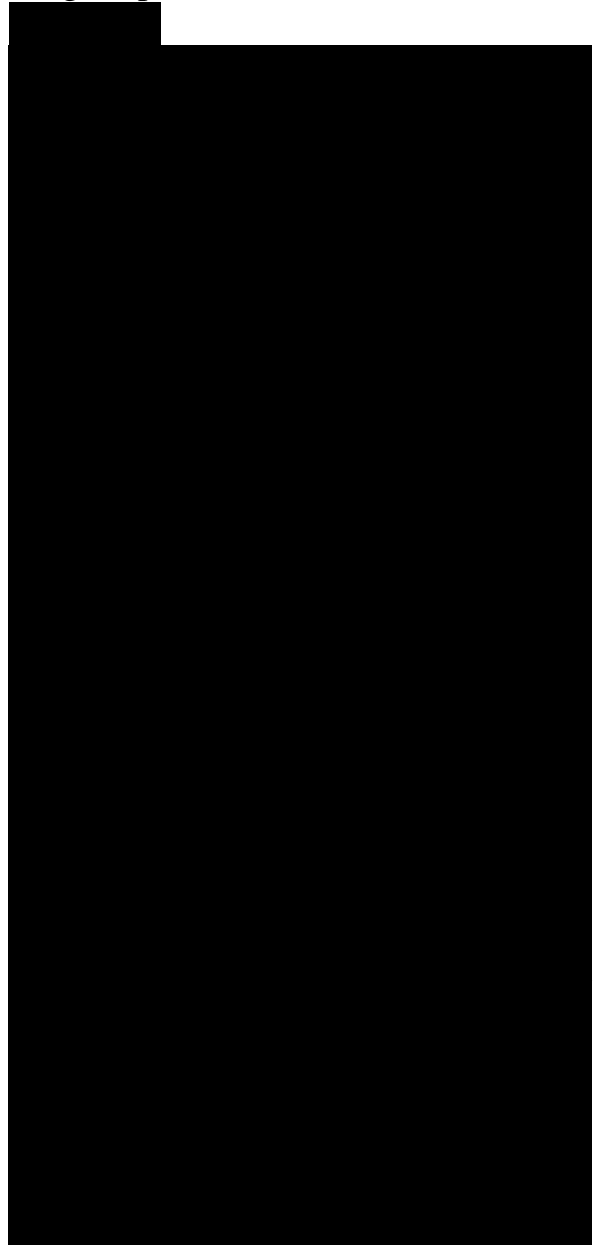
Tóm tắt Bài báo lý thuyết này đề cập đến khái niệm thuận tiện và cấu trúc của nó đóng vai trò quan trọng trong quá trình đánh giá trải nghiệm sử dụng dịch vụ của khách hàng và người dùng và do đó sẽ giữ vai trò then chốt trong lý thuyết tiếp thị trong tương lai. Ngày càng có nhiều bằng chứng cho thấy sự thuận tiện rất quan trọng đối với khách

revisit the concept with a view to developing a research agenda that delivers an improved understanding of the nature of convenience. Accordingly, the paper concludes by proposing a definition of convenience and offering questions for further research based on a critique of existing models of convenience, and on the positioning of convenience in relation to associated concepts such as customer value, co-production and experiential consumption. Key Words • convenience • co-production • customer value • services marketing

Introduction

Consideration of convenience for customers is long-standing, particularly in the retailing and consumer behaviour literatures (Anderson, 1972; Kelley, 1958). Equally, there is an acknowledgement of growing consumer demand for convenience brought about by socioeconomic change, technological progress and intensifying competition in business environments (Berry et al., 2002; Seiders et al., 2000; Seiders et al., 2007) whether in on- or offline environments. In particular, customer convenience is a frequently cited variable, dimension or aspect of consumer choice in a number of different contexts, for example multiple channels in marketing. In spite of the frequency of its mention, convenience has only been rarely considered as a dimension or construct in its own right, often subsumed to a single variable in a wider consumer choice set that has also included knowledge, risk and confidence (Black et al., 2002; Thornton and White, 2001). Many authors have argued that the concept of

hàng, đây chính là lúc cần xem xét lại khái niệm để xây dựng một chương trình nghiên cứu giúp chúng ta hiểu biết tốt hơn bản chất của sự thuận tiện. Do đó, qua phân tích chúng tôi đề xuất một định nghĩa về sự thuận tiện và đưa ra các vấn đề nghiên cứu trong tương lai dựa trên việc đánh giá các mô hình hiện tại, và đánh giá vai trò của khái niệm thuận tiện trong mối quan hệ với các khái niệm có liên quan chẳng hạn như giá trị khách hàng, đồng sản xuất và trải nghiệm tiêu dùng. Từ khóa Sự thuận tiện; đồng sản xuất; giá trị khách hàng; tiếp thị dịch vụ



convenience has been poorly developed, with the consequence that research findings in the area are ambiguous and sometimes contradictory (Carrigan and Szmigin, 2006; Darian and Cohen, 1995; Warde, 1999; Yale and Venkatesh, 1986).

Given the long-standing concern about the benefits or value that customers derive from a service or product, the centrality of the concept of exchange to marketing theory and the recognition that convenience, or the lack of it, is associated with the non-monetary cost of the exchange to the customer, it is surprising that the concept of convenience has not received more attention in marketing theory. Furthermore, as will be explored later, convenience sits comfortably with other important concepts, such as co-production and experiential consumption. A fuller appreciation of convenience, both in terms of exploring its dimensions and considering its theoretical context appears to be long overdue. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to review existing conceptualizations and models of convenience and to develop a theoretical representation of convenience within the context of services.

This paper opens with a review of the existing conceptualizations of convenience, including proposals on the dimensions of convenience. This is followed by an examination of the occurrence of convenience as a variable in research into services and consumer behaviour. The paper

concludes by proposing a definition of convenience, and by offering questions for further research. These questions are developed from a critique of existing models, and by considering convenience in relation to associated concepts such as customer value, co-production and experiential consumption.

Conceptualizing convenience

This section reviews the concept of convenience in marketing since early references by Kelley in 1958 and by Kotler and Zaltman in 1971, and seeks to identify, discuss and integrate perspectives on the nature of convenience and a related concept of convenience orientation into more recent contributions to marketing.

An early application of the notion of convenience can be found in the term 'convenience goods', where convenience relates to savings in time and effort by consumers in the purchase of a product (Yale and Venkatesh, 1986). Time and effort, as dimensions of convenience, remain consistent in convenience research, and developing this focus on these consumer resources, which are expended in buying goods and services, led to the notion of convenience as an attribute of a product or good that reduces its non-monetary price (Kelley, 1958; Kotler and Zaltman, 1971). This reduction in one price is counterbalanced by the monetary price of convenience goods, which is often relatively high, leading to the notion that convenience comes at a financial cost to the consumer; in other words reducing time and effort entails a

greater financial expenditure. 'Paying for convenience' is another way of phrasing this proposition.

Research into convenience has long been concerned with consumer expenditure of time and effort. People differ in their temporal orientation, including perceived time scarcity, the degree to which they value time, and their sensitivity to time-related issues. For example, when individuals experience high levels of time scarcity, they are likely to have certain ways of thinking about and using time that may reinforce their experience of time shortage (Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist, 2003) and which may then impact on ideas about what constitutes convenience. Effort, or energy expenditure, is acknowledged as a distinct type of non-monetary cost that is associated with perceptions of convenience, and influences satisfaction where the dimensions of such effort may be physical, cognitive and emotional. While there has been limited research on effort (Alba et al., 1997), it has been suggested that consumers generally prefer to conserve effort but that they may be hindered by the difficulty in estimating how much effort will be required to complete a task. It was also recognized that convenience may operate at two levels: first, at product attribute level (Yale and Venkatesh, 1986), and second, at consumer segmentation level.

Consideration of the product attribute level returns to the initial views of goods and services in which convenience is an integral part of the offering, such as the bundling together

of ingredients in a ready meal. As far as the second level of consumer segmentation is concerned, the role of influencing variables is introduced as increasing or decreasing a consumer's preference for convenience as a consumption strategy. The variables that might generate the convenience segments (phân khúc chú ý đến sự tiện lợi, phân khúc tiện lợi) are cited by Yale and Venkatesh (1986), and in addition to time, are spatial, psychological, sociological, situational and philosophical. Within these variables, tradition, espousal of various causes or even exercise routines would seem to be highly influential on how convenience is not only understood but also enacted and, as the authors argue, 'convenience is many things to many people' (Yale and Venkatesh, 1986: 405).

Brown and McEnally (1993) hypothesized a direct relationship between a lack of time/energy and a desire for convenience, which has probably contributed to a reoccurring theme in the convenience literature, which is the notion of a consumer's convenience orientation. Convenience orientation is a term that refers to a person's general preference for convenient goods and services (Anderson, 1972; Yale and Venkatesh, 1986). Morganosky (1986), for example, defines a convenience-oriented customer as one who seeks to 'accomplish a task in the shortest time with the least expenditure of human energy' (1986: 37). It may be tempting to try and develop a segment of customers who are convenience-

oriented but it rapidly becomes clear that there is such a difference in perceptions of time and energy expenditure that such a grouping would be difficult to achieve. Different sets of consumer values, moreover, will produce different customer convenience profiles and such factors as employment status and family life stage will all influence decisions about convenience (Brown and McEnally, 1993). Consumers, therefore, are not in fact convenience-oriented per se but their orientations will vary in degree according to these factors.

Other investigations into the influences on a convenience orientation or a predisposition to convenience consumption found that total household income correlated consistently with convenience consumption (Berry et al., 2002). Moreover, other demographic variables, for example age, occupation, working hours; education and lifestyle variables, such as time pressure, role overload; emphasis on leisure, hedonism, and devotion to work have all been shown to influence convenience orientation. Although the notion of a consumer's convenience orientation may initially be appealing, there is little to suggest that this is a characteristic restricted to a particular group of customers. Instead, calculations about how to optimize expenditure of time and effort will be influenced by individual values, demographic and social factors. The creation of convenience goods may have generated the idea that there is a convenience-oriented consumer who

buys them, but the conceptual and empirical work cited above suggests that consumers' perception of convenience is much more elaborate. Describing or even segmenting customers according to convenience-orientation may not be useful in marketing terms as evaluations of what constitutes convenience in services appear to be individually derived.

The proposition that working women purchase more convenient, time-saving products and services than women who do not work has not been supported (Brown and McEnally, 1993; Madill-Marshall et al., 1995; Reilly, 1982). More recent work has hinted at convenience as a lifestyle choice that enhances or facilitates a fragmented and demanding mothering role (Carrigan and Szmigin, 2006).

This view takes the construct of convenience above and beyond a notion of the choice of a product or a decision-making process into preferences for actions that complement and support a particular lifestyle, thus marking a shift to understanding convenience in the context of experiential consumption. Other contributions have considered convenience as a sociocultural concept, where they emphasize that food-related practices are both constitutive of and constituted by social and cultural systems (Boztepe, 2005; Carrigan and Szmigin, 2006). Boztepe (2005) sees convenience as a sociocultural construct where the organization of the social system, ritual, traditions and other social and cultural practice

influence what is perceived as being convenient. Convenience can be seen as part of a wider consumer choice set derived from new perspectives on marketing which argue that an organization can only make value propositions to consumers (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), rather than convenience being an attribute of a good or service or, indeed, as a variable for grouping customers.

Convenience and service consumption
Apart from the earliest research, convenience has often been considered within the context of services, and the recent empirical work has generated a SERVCON scale (Seiders et al., 2007). Additionally, the emergence of the service-dominant logic (SD-L) (for example Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Vargo and Lusch, 2008) and the Nordic school of services (for example Gronroos, 2006) argues that value is central to marketing, importantly substituting interactions for exchanges, which emphasizes the consumer role in the service experience.

The consumer as co-creator

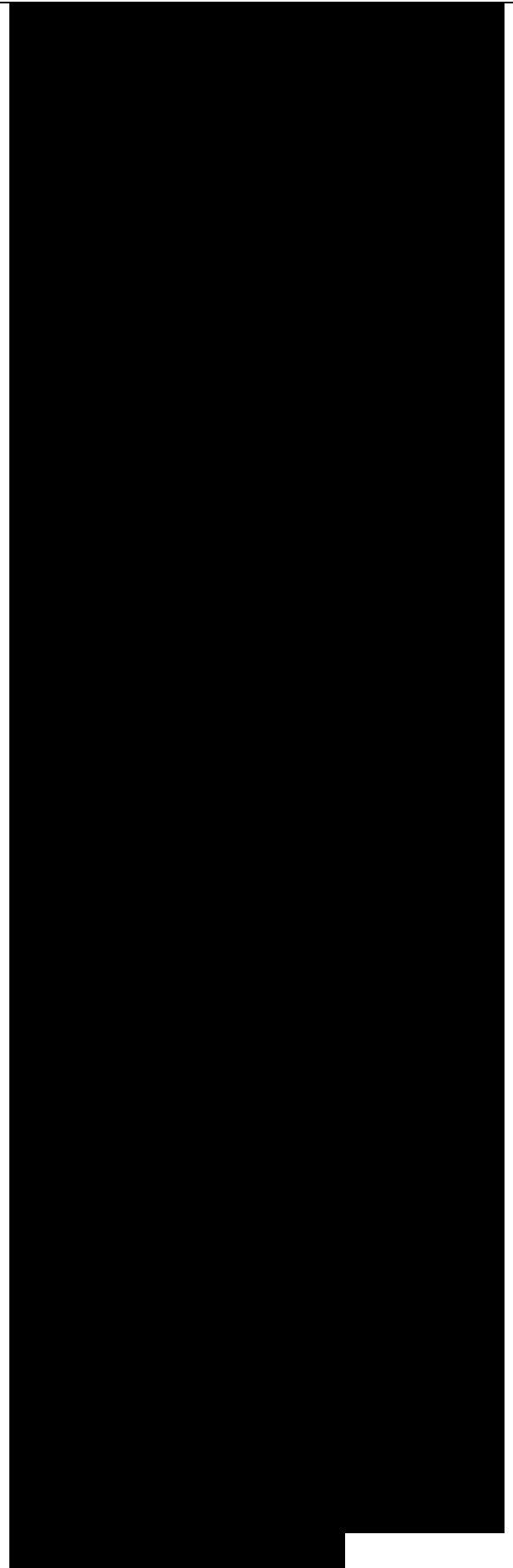
The customer has long been acknowledged as playing a role in the production and consumption of the service itself and, in recent contributions to marketing, is now being portrayed as co-creator of value (for example Vargo, 2008). In using the service (and this now includes goods in the SD-L school of thought), the customer creates his/her own value according to how they actually use that service. The view of marketing,

therefore, that emerges from the Nordic school is that marketing has to design and manage the experience to achieve 'value-in-use'; in other words, the value of the offering arises from the way in which the user/consumer uses it. This new perspective argues that service has become the dominant component of any offering through the application of specialized skills and knowledge where the customer is always the co-producer (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Marketers can only make a value proposition to customers and customers will deconstruct these propositions according to individual perceptions. These writers also suggest that customers be considered as resources in terms of co-production. The implications of this assertion are a further shift away from convenience being a product attribute to its being a consumer activity that is enacted during the consumption process or 'value in use'. For example, the classic 'convenience' meal can be consumed in a number of ways: as it is, as a base for a more elaborate meal, or put in the freezer for emergencies. To explore these questions further, this discussion of convenience now moves onto the construct of convenience.

Classes of convenience

In a relatively early evaluation of convenience, six classes or categories of convenience were identified. The first two classes of convenience in this proposal relate to time- and effort-saving aspects of convenience (Yale and Venkatesh, 1986), already familiar to convenience researchers. A third

class of convenience was considered to be 'appropriateness', which refers to how well the product (and it is generally products that these writers consider) fits a consumer's specific needs. It is the use of this word 'specific' that is a reminder that the final judgement about convenience rests with the user, who may or may not be the purchaser. 'Portability' literally means the ability to consume the product in any given location and there does seem to be some support for this category in terms of many convenience foods. This class was later thought to have little to do with convenience (Gehrt and Yale, 1993) in spite of its apparent applications to the fast-food industry. The fifth class of convenience is 'avoidance of unpleasantness', which the writers believe allows consumers to avoid a task that they prefer not to perform and is similar to an assertion that total convenience consists of outsourcing a task (Brown, 1990). The final class is 'accessibility', which is considered to be especially important by the writers and includes proximity, availability and flexibility. Supermarkets provide considerable support for this class of convenience in their decisions about location, opening hours and product ranges. This evaluation is a valuable contribution to the convenience literature in supporting the time/effort aspects of convenience and identifying a further possible four classes. The importance of this work is also that it emphasizes the consumer perspective of convenience, particularly as a service rather than the product attribute view.



Unravelling convenience

The task of understanding convenience can be facilitated through an examination of the research into its elements or dimensions, and here there is some overlap between the classes mentioned above and what other writers have interpreted as dimensions. Although it has been recognized that convenience consists of a number of dimensions, there is not necessarily agreement on what are these dimensions. Brown (1990), for example, proposes five dimensions to convenience as follows: Time - product may be provided at a time that is more convenient for the customer; Place - product may be provided at a place that is more convenient for the customer. Time and place here are interpreted as dimensions. He then moves on to propose: Acquisition - firms may make it easier for the customer, financially and otherwise, to purchase their products; Use - product may be made more convenient for the customer to use; and Execution - possibly having someone provide the product for the consumer. It is difficult to separate execution from use, although Brown (1990) sees execution as contracting out the job and hypothesizes that DIY (Do-it-Yourself) and outsourcing are at opposing ends of a convenience continuum. This model translates into a view that inconvenience is maximum expenditure of personal time and effort, but does not take into account perceptions of time and effort involved in the selection of outsourcing, transportation and access to the provider in terms of opening hours and parking.

In spite of the numerous calls for

empirical investigation into convenience, it is only very recently that any studies have taken place. A study into computing provides insight into convenience dimensions where the dimensions of acquisition and use were not considered relevant to the use of technology; but the three dimensions of time, place and execution were supported (Yoon and Kim, 2007), providing some support for the notion of the generalizability of convenience dimensions. Rewording the definitions for a more general application gives: Time dimension - the degree of perception held by someone that they can use a channel to accomplish their job at a time that is more convenient for them; is important to note that this does not relate to time-saving. Place dimension - the degree of perception held by someone that they can use a channel to accomplish their task in a place that is more convenient for them. Execution dimension - the degree of perception held by someone that the channel is convenient in the process of accomplishing a task.

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The contribution of this particular model to convenience research is an appreciation that convenience consists of a number of classes or dimensions. Measuring or researching convenience and its role in other aspects of consumer behaviour, therefore, has long been recognized as investigating a construct that consists of a number of dimensions. Convenience envisaged as a uni-dimensional construct, which appears in channel research (for example Thornton and White, 2001), fails to capture its complexity.

Embedding convenience

As well as attempting to unravel convenience into its various elements or dimensions, there has been research into how convenience 'sits' in models of consumer behaviour. A three-stage structure modelled convenience into acquisition, consumption and disposal in which time and energy considerations were envisaged at each of these stages (Brown and McEnally, 1993). The disposal phase is particularly interesting to contemporary researchers as it describes time and energy expenditure in terms of recycling. The familiar five-stage model of consumer decision-making has been used as the basis for a conceptual exploration of convenience (Berry et al., 2002). In this model, the consumer's perceived time and effort costs relating to each type of service convenience affect an overall convenience evaluation of a service. This model of service convenience is as follows: Decision convenience relates to consumers' received time and effort associated with the decision as to whether to use a service or not, and to make choices between competing services. Access convenience relates to consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to initiate service delivery; it involves actions to request a service and to be available to receive it. Transaction convenience relates to consumers' perceived expenditures of time and effort to effect a transaction or exchange that typically involves payment. Benefit convenience relates to consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to experience the service's core benefit, once the transaction stage has been completed.

Post-benefit convenience relates to consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures when re-initiating contact with a firm after the benefit stage of the service. At each of these stages, the familiar dimensions or classes of convenience play a role.

Berry et al.'s (2002) conceptual study was developed into an empirical study from which a 17-item scale called SERVCON emerged. The data were generated from an online survey with customers of a retail chain and the scale was strengthened by considering the antecedents (involvement) and the consequences (re-purchase) of convenience. Although the researchers provided great detail about the validity of the model, in particular its nomological validity, some reservations are attached to this study. First, data are lacking for the final stage of post-benefit convenience for which the authors provide a statistically derived substitute; and second, the access dimension is measured with three items that include the word 'convenience', suggesting a circularity in the item generation for this study. Nonetheless, this study represents the first rigorous empirical investigation into convenience. A study following the same model was conducted into cell phones and internet provision with a different list of items (Colwell et al., 2008). These investigators found that neither access nor transaction convenience were related to overall satisfaction and suggest that the remaining three dimensions of service convenience - decision, benefit and post-benefit - are the more important

aspects of satisfaction with the

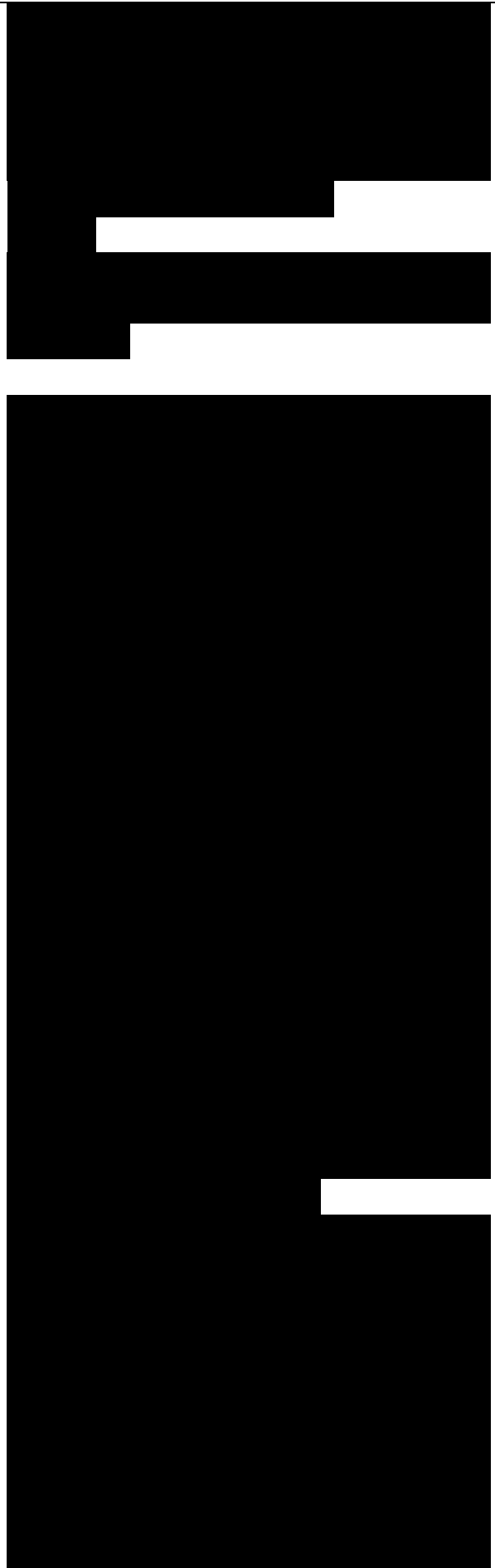
Table 1

Mapping the dimensions of convenience into stages of consumer behaviour service provider and their offering.

These studies generate much-needed empirical research into convenience but have so far adhered to a single perspective of consumer behaviour, that is, the classical, sequential model.

In Table 1, we draw together the various strands of convenience that the literature has so far proposed by mapping its dimensions and following the sequential decision-making model as several of the authors above have suggested. From the six classes of convenience (Yale and Venkatesh, 1986), portability and avoidance of unpleasantness have been omitted, as there seems to have been little corroboration for these classes. The table also shows the type of study that has supported these dimensions, underlining the limited empirical research into the topic.

The classical model of consumer decision-making that posits five or six stages in decision-making in a sequence has been adopted in these explanations of convenience. However, convenience has been constructed from the earliest investigations based on savings in time and effort, therefore this sequenced model of decision-making may not



necessarily be the most appropriate for capturing convenience but, to date it is the only one that has been considered. There would appear to be therefore scope for considering convenience from alternative perspectives to the way in which consumers 'behave', especially since these alternative perspectives refer to irrational and unpredictable consumer behaviour (Gabriel and Lang, 1995). In particular, does emotion play a role in perceptions of convenience? Are there hedonic services where convenience is a consideration, as currently the emphasis appears to be on utilitarian consumer needs?

When weighing convenience, it is possible that consumers use various heuristics to arrive at a satisfactory outcome, thus saving effort. Further considerations related to the construct of convenience are concerned with goals (Brown and McEnally, 1993), which may affect how consumers interpret convenience. Research into product categories, for example revealed that judgements about category similarities were influenced by salient personal and situational goals (Ratneshwar et al., 2001). Although these authors acknowledge the role of convenience in situational goals, their work also points to the impact of personal goals in convenience, consistent with the proposition about values made by Brown and McEnally (1993), suggesting that goals play a valuable role in understanding convenience. Indeed, a hierarchy of goals as suggested by Bagozzi and Dholakia (1999) of super-ordinate, focal and

subordinate, provides further support for integrating consumer goals into models of convenience. The subordinate goals, according to this proposed hierarchy, ask how the higher order goals can be achieved and which might involve evaluations about the convenience of a particular path in achieving the goal.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper argues that the concept and construct of convenience is at the forefront of customer and user evaluations of service experiences and it should play, therefore, a much more pivotal role in marketing theory than it does at present. Despite early applications of the concept in the context of convenience goods and locational convenience (especially in retailing), the concept of convenience has attracted surprisingly little research until recently. This lack of interest is hard to explain since even 'traditional' marketing exchange theory recognized convenience or lack of it to be associated with the non-monetary cost borne by the consumer in the exchange. More recently, there is evidence that convenience is becoming ever more important to as consumption pervades consumers' lives, experiences and identities, and recent perspectives in marketing stress the co-production or co-creation of services. Furthermore, consumers of both sexes feel less constrained by moral imperatives that state that convenience equates with laziness (Carrigan and Szmigin, 2006).

Accordingly, we, as authors, are

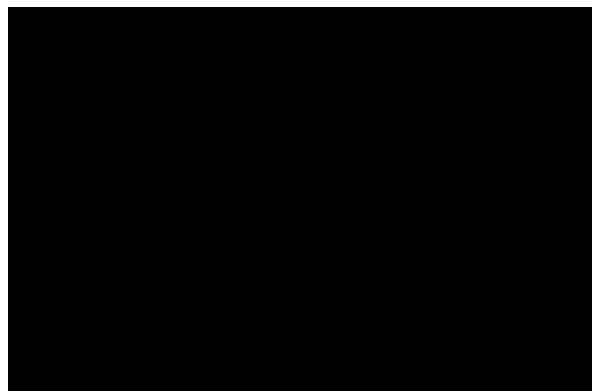
concerned about the implications of convenience for marketing theory, and suggest that convenience sits well with growing interest in capitalizing on consumer resources through self-service and co-production (Gronroos, 2006; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo and Lusch, 2004), and experiential consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

The first step towards a better understanding of the concept of convenience, and development and application of a convenience construct, is to seek a contemporary definition. On the basis of the definitions and perspectives reviewed in this paper, the following definition is proposed:

The convenience of a service is a judgement made by consumers according to their sense of control over the management, utilization and conversion of their time and effort in achieving their goals associated with access to and use of the service.

This definition argues that perceived convenience is not an inherent characteristic of a service and that understanding convenience requires understanding of consumer decision-making or consumption and achievement of goals.

For service providers, it is important to appreciate that convenience needs to be understood across a range of service sectors, such as health, education, retailing and banking, and applied to different units of analysis, such as stores, retail centres, foods and channels. Paraphrasing Gronroos's (2006: 400) statement on customer



value, we propose that:

Suppliers do not deliver convenience to customers, but rather they support customer's convenience creation through the provision of resources.

In other words, we challenge traditional use of the 'convenience' construct as a customer segmentation variable or a product attribute. While recognizing that the use of 'convenience' for such purposes may reflect an organizations' aspirations, to, for example deliver a product that is more convenient than another product, whether or not that product delivers relative convenience, depends on the other options available to the consumer/user and a range of other aspects of the consumption/user experience. Accordingly, the notion of convenience orientation as based on the consumption of 'convenience' products needs to be treated with caution. Our definition recognizes that convenience is not, as suggested by many researchers, simply about saving time and effort. Consumers are, rather, interested in services that give them control over their expenditure of their resources and that allow them to gain value in use of the services in achieving goals.

Gronroos's (2006) list of resources which suppliers can offer to the customer in supporting the development of customer value could equally well be applied in the context of convenience (since convenience is part of the way in which a customer construes value): services, ideas, information, call centre advice, service

recovery and complaint handling, payment and invoicing procedures. Convenience, then, as an aspect of customer value, is co-produced.

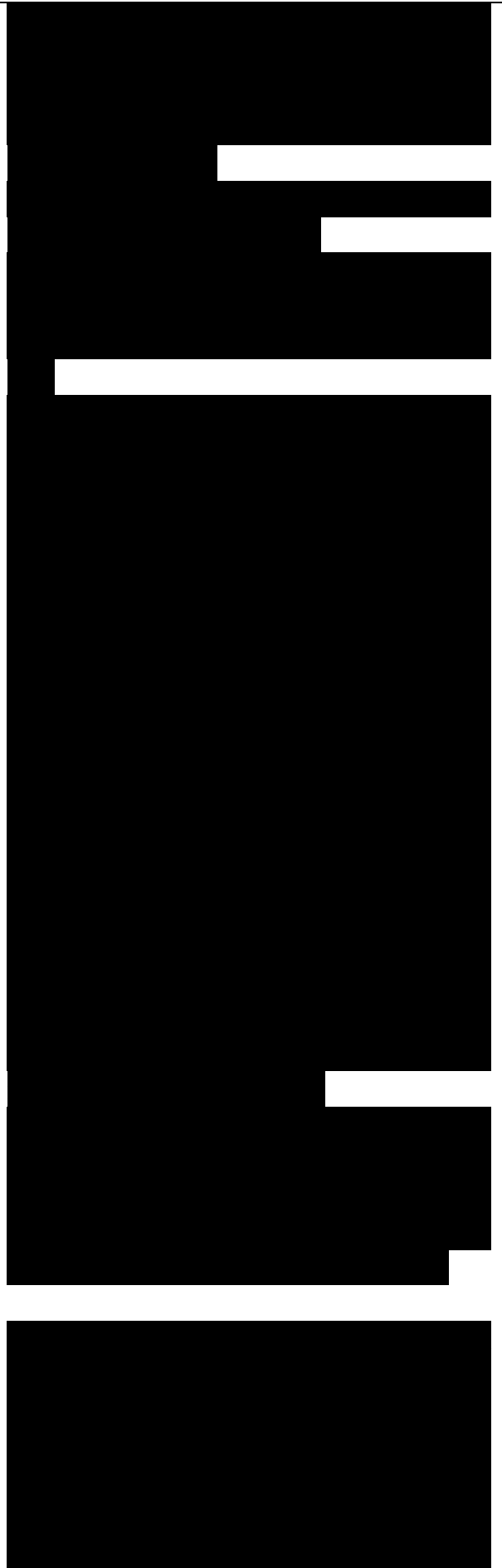
A key question for managers and researchers is:

RQ1: How can organizational resources be best organised to empower customers in the co-production of convenience?

It is also important to recognize that value can be created at different levels of abstraction and to differentiate between concrete attributes, such as a 24-hour theatre ticket service and the more abstract customer's goals, which could be becoming more cultured. Making this distinction requires more theoretical and empirical consideration of the dimensions of the customer's super-ordinate goals. We propose that customers seek convenience, control, confidence and consistency, and that in their engagements with suppliers they 'trade-off' anticipated benefits under one of these dimensions against those under another (Costa et al., 2007; Warde, 1999). This leads to the question:

RQ2: What is the consideration set associated with customers' super-ordinate goals and how do they trade off between convenience and other items in the set in achieving this goal?

In pursuit of the operationalization of convenience, there have been a number of proposals regarding either the classes or dimensions of convenience. This paper summarizes these in Table 1, using a framework based on the dominant approach adopted by



convenience researchers, the notion that the dimensions of convenience can be mapped onto the stages in the consumption process. While such models are an important contribution to a topic that has otherwise been overlooked, we would argue that future research on convenience does not pursue this path, as such an approach has a number of potential weaknesses that need further exploration:

1 There is no consensus on the stages in the consumption process.

2 Consumers do not always go through all stages of the consumption process moving in a linear manner from one stage to the next; the relevance of such models may depend on service context, consumption category, and consumer characteristics and goals.

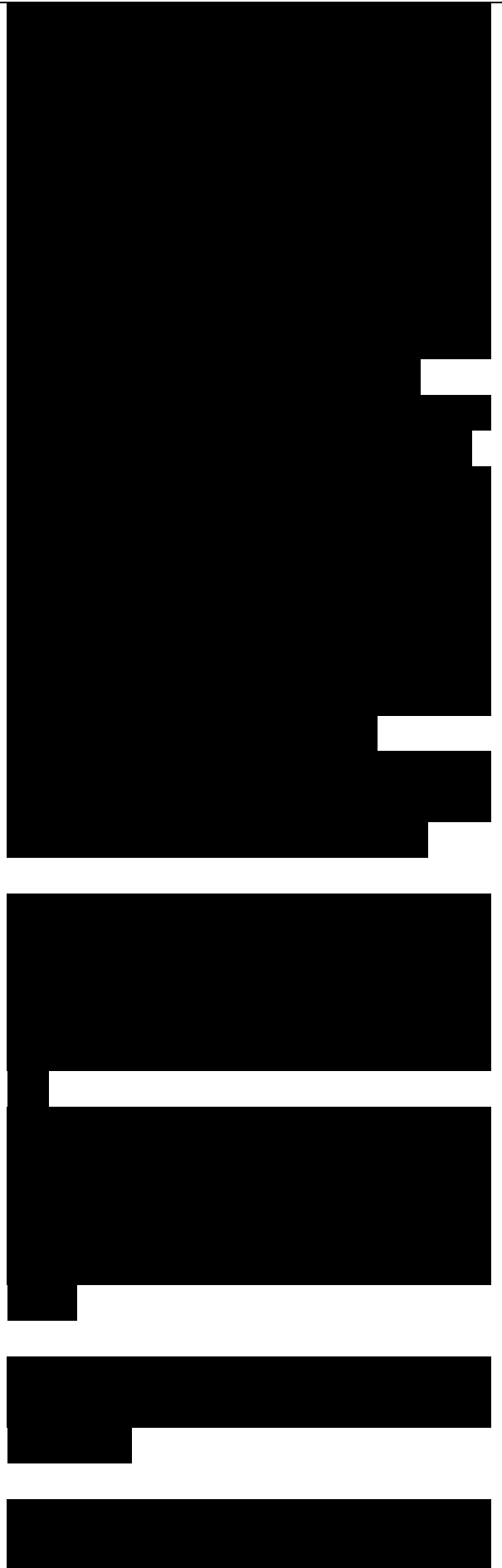
3 The way in which judgements of convenience cumulate across stages in the consumption process has yet to be fully explored.

4 Such models tend to focus on the timing of convenience approach and do not consider the type of convenience approach to the essential nature of convenience.

5 Such models of convenience offer little insight into the essential nature of convenience judgements and how they relate to consumer contexts and goals.

We propose, therefore, that the fundamental question regarding convenience still requires further attention:

RQ3: Is convenience a multi-dimensional construct and, if so, what



are the dimensions?

Next, convenience or lack of it (inconvenience) is indisputably an aspect of the consumer experience. Perceptions of inconvenience are likely to arise in contexts where they are alienated by aggressive and unnecessary procedures and personnel, confused with too many options, and feel manipulated into compromises that do suit their own goals. The overarching question is:

RQ4: How does the post-modern consumer formulate their judgements of perceived convenience and perceived inconvenience in different contexts, and what are the key antecedents in the formation of such judgements?

Inconvenience is a concept that has received even less attention than convenience. Yet, experience suggests that in many circumstances, consumers do not so much make judgements of convenience but rather judgements of inconvenience. One of the reasons that the concept of inconvenience has received almost no attention is that marketing theory has taken the producer perspective, and it would be a brave producer who sought to design products or services that were acknowledged to be inconvenient! Nevertheless, inconvenience is a common experience of customers when they engage with services, and understanding of inconvenience has considerable potential as a basis for learning and improvement on the part of service providers. We do not know the extent to which people make

judgements of 'inconvenience' rather than judgements of 'convenience' Also, are the dimensions of inconvenience consistent with those of convenience? Additional research into inconvenience could provide a useful way forward into an understanding of convenience. So, another research question is:

RQ5: What is the relationship between convenience and inconvenience as constructs?

Finally, while we advocate careful distinctions between perceived convenience and 'convenience' as used to describe products, services or groups of customers, there is nevertheless considerable research in the areas of convenience foods and other goods and service from a sociocultural perspective that leads to the question:

RQ6: What is the role of 'convenience' products and services in shaping and evolving self-identity and cultural and social systems?

In conclusion, this paper has argued that both researchers and service providers need to develop a better understanding of the notion of convenience. Empirical research into convenience in a variety of different service contexts with different user groups would be an important step towards a better understanding of the benefits that customers demand from products, services and brands.