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Value curve and customer journey map: The case of Uniplaces and Zizabi

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Shuang Xu

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Prof. Doutor Ricardo Morais

Católica Porto Business School

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Resumo

Hoje em dia, a natureza da economia de serviços passou da natureza transacional para relacionamentos baseados na experiência. As pessoas trabalham em todos os tipos de indústria e em diferentes áreas, todos eles querem oferecer experiências aos seus clientes. A experiência do cliente tem recebido uma atenção significativa mais do que nunca. As empresas começam a perceber que oferecer uma experiência bem desenhada aos clientes pode aumentar a satisfação do cliente e eventualmente afetar o desempenho dos seus negócios. A empresa utiliza o mapa de viagem do cliente para descrever o processo através do qual o cliente percorre um conjunto de pontos de contato para melhorar o seu serviço. No entanto, argumentamos que a curva de valor em que se situa a proposta de valor de uma empresa também afeta a tomada de decisões dos clientes em determinadas fases do mapa de viagem do cliente.

Neste estudo, tendemos a explorar como a curva de valor de uma empresa pode influenciar o seu mapa de viagem do cliente através das duas empresas de plataformas portuguesas. Achamos que o mapa de viagem do cliente pode ser influenciado diretamente e fortemente pela curva de valor. Além disso, descobrimos a partir desses dois casos que uma forte parceria e recurso humanos valiosos também podem afetar o sucesso da empresa no seu mercado-alvo.

Palavras-chave: curva de valor; mapa de viagem do cliente; estudo de caso; Portugal; setor imobiliário.

Abstract

Today, the nature of service economy has shifted from transactional nature to experience-based relationships. Everyone from different industries and sectors wants to provide experiences. Customer experience has received significant attention, more than ever before. Companies start to realize that delivering a well-designed experience to customers can increase customer satisfaction and eventually affect their business performance. Company employs customer journey map which describes the process where customer flow through a set of touch points during the service encounter to help them improve its service. However, we argue that the value curve where lies value proposition of a company also affects customers' decision-making during certain phases of customer journey map.

In this following study, we explore how value curve of a company can influence its customer journey map by studying two Portuguese platform companies. We find that customer journey map can be influenced directly and strongly by value curve. Furthermore, we discovered from these two cases that a strong partnership and valuable human resources can also affect company's success in its target market.

Keywords: value curve; customer journey map; case study; Portugal; real estate sector.

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Introduction

Since 60s there have been a lot of academics talk about service economy. In the year of 1973 American sociologist Daniel Bell in his book "The coming of the Post-Industrial Society" forecasted a fundamental shift from goods to services in terms of economic order. Today, without any doubt service plays a dominant role as the major driver of economic growth. Along with this transformation process from traditional manufacturing-based economy into service economy, at the same time there has been a fundamental paradigm shift through it from goods-dominant logic towards service-dominant logic. Service-dominant logic was mentioned by Vargo and Lusch (2004) whose central idea is that service is the basis for value creation and value is co-created between service provider and customer. Furthermore, value is realized and determined by the customer. According to (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), in the service-dominant logic world, the relationship the company engages with customers whether in short term or in long term as well as exchange process and intangibility is much more important than transactions. This also suggests that the transactional service economy has moved towards an experience-based relationship economy.

In the new experience economy era, providing a great experience to customers during service encounter has become critical more than ever because even emotions are at a subconscious level, they have a powerful influence on individual's rational decision-making (Brooks, 2010). Furthermore, the experiences customers receive during the service delivery process will influence their loyal behaviors which consequently will affect company's business performance (Gilmore & Pine II, 1998; Godin & Gladwell, 2001; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Heskett *et al.*, 1997).

Thus, there is a necessity to design a structured customer experience from customer perspective in which customer can flow smoothly through the service

delivery process (Gilmore & Pine, 2000; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Pine II & Gilmore, 2011; Johnston *et al.,* 2012). Customer journey map is one of the most fundamental tool to help service provider to design and improve their customers' journey. It is the process of capturing the series of touch points that customer encounter during a service.

On the other hand, we argue that during certain phases of customer journey map, except experience, the intrinsic value of product or service of company also affect customer decision-making since customers make their decision based on their perceived value (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991). It is important for company to be able to demonstrate the value of their product or services and to ensure they are delivering a superior customer value to their customers comparing to its rivals. Company can approach a competing as well as compelling value proposition by value curve which developed by (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005) and shows how company invest in the key success factor of competition.

However, we haven't found any author that connected customer journey map with value curve together. That is, there are no study talked about how value curve of a company influence its customer journey map and eventually the impact of this two on company's success in target market. Therefore, the objective of this study is try to investigate how value curve can influence customer journey map.

Like this, in this study we employ two platform company cases to do the research. We elaborate their customer journey map and value curve separately and compare their business performance together. In this way, we find that customer journey map is strongly and directly influenced by company's value curve. Furthermore, we discover that establishing a strong partnership and having valuable human resources can also affect the business performance of company through these two cases.

The structure of this work is divided by five parts. In the first part, we did a literature review about related subjects. After that, we elaborate a theoretical model to try to answer our research question. In the second part, we described our research methods. In the third part, we presented two cases. Subsequently we analyzed the two cases and elaborated a new framework. At last, we drew

the conclusion of our study and its limitations as well as suggestions for future research.

Chapter 1
Literature Review

1. Fundamental Shift in Dominant Paradigm

There is no doubt that nowadays the advancing service economy is thriving more than ever. According to the data from The World Bank, the Services, etc., value added (%of GDP) globally is 68% in the year of 2014 and 74% at EU level. In the case of Portugal, the service industry comprises 76% of its total GDP (Source: The World Bank, 2017). All of these statistics suggest that service plays a dominant role as the preeminent driver of economic growth.

However, during the transformation process from traditional manufacturing-based economy into service-oriented economy, there has been a fundamental paradigm shift.

1.1 Goods-Dominant Logic

Throughout the past several decades, the traditional goods-centered paradigm has been rooted in the economic philosophy. In economic activities, goods or manufactured output is the unit for which people exchange. And, these goods must be embedded with value-the utility during their manufacturing process. The customer only plays a role as the recipient of those goods. Who eventually defines the value of goods always be the producer.

In the Goods-Dominant logic, outputs are always tangible and should be standardized for the sake of maximizing efficiency and profit and can be inventoried until be sold. This goods-centered perspective started to be developed from the work of Adam Smith-The Wealth of Nations in 1776 in which he postulated his political-economic views on the efficiency of division of labor and the idea of the necessity of exchange. In his opinion, the real value is the exchange value which is the price paid for goods in the market. It also can be called value-in-exchange.

However, the objective of his book was to explain how England or any other

countries could become wealthy by means of international trade in the background of 18th Century in which information and communication technologies had not been developed. Due to this fact, those applied knowledge and skills couldn't be exchanged. So, they were considered be not "productive" in the sense of contribution to exchange value through manufacturing and distribution of tangible goods. (Vargo & Akaka, 2009)

Subsequently, there was a desire to turn economics into an economic science in terms of the Newtonian tradition permeated most economic scholars (Vargo, Maglio, & Akaka, 2008). Ultimately, the product embedded with utility-the exchange value and represented by price became the foundation for marginal utility theory and neo-classical economics (Marshall, 1927). Then, the goods-centered view became the dominant logic for almost every business-related discipline such as, management, marketing, operation, etc.(Vargo & Morgan, 2005).

However, as the big context has changed, there is a necessity to expand and revise our understanding toward a new dominant logic.

1.2 Service-Dominant Logic

According to (Malthus, 1798), "resources" are natural resources that are static and with continued geometric population growth, resources could be consumed and run out quickly. At that time, resources are considered be a kind of tangible static stuff. During the last half century, resources have been viewed not only as tangible stuffs, but also as intangible and dynamic functions of human intelligence which are not static. (Constantin & Lusch, 1994) define *operand resources* are those must be acted upon by an operation to produce an effect. In other words, they are tangible assets such as, natural resources or raw materials. In their work, they also compared operand resources with *operant resources*, which are employed to act on operand resources and other operant resources. They are intangibles and invisible, like skills and knowledge. In goods-dominant logic, operand resources were considered as primary. For companies, everything is viewed as operand resource included customers who became inputs to be segmented as well.

On the other hand, service-dominant logic represents a paradigm shift from a focus on the exchange of operand resources to a focus on operant resources (Lush & Vargo, 2006).

(Vargo & Lusch, 2004) first mentioned the service-dominant logic which suggests that service which they defined as the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills) for the benefit of another through exchange process, rather than goods is fundamental basis of value creation. This new logic perceives operant resources as primary. And, if goods are involved in the economic exchange process, they are just the delivery vehicles for service provision.

In this case, value derives from the application of operant resource. Furthermore, they are transmitted through operand resources or goods (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). From this point of view, value is co-created between producers and customers through the integration of resources and application of competences(Vargo *et al*., 2008). Moreover, value is realized and determined by the customer on the basis of "value in use" as they start to gain their experience and perception about the offering by using it.

There are ten foundational premises of service-dominant logic.

	Premise	Explanation/Justification
FP1	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange.	The application of operant resources (knowledge and skills), "service," is the basis for all exchange. Service is exchanged for service.
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange.	Goods, money, and institutions mask the service-for-service nature of exchange.
FP3	Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision.	Goods (both durable and non-durable) derive their value through use – the service they provide.
FP4	Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage.	The comparative ability to cause desired change drives competition.
FP5	All economies are service economies.	Service (singular) is only now becoming more apparent with increased specialization and outsourcing.
FP6	The customer is always a cocreator of value.	Implies value creation is interactional.
FP7	The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions.	The firm can offer its applied resources and collaboratively (interactively) create value following acceptance, but can not create/deliver value alone.
FP8	A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational.	Service is customer-determined and cocreated; thus, it is inherently customer oriented and relational.
FP9	All economic and social actors are resource integrators.	Implies the context of value creation is networks of networks (resource-integrators).
FP10	Value is always uniquely and phenomenological determined by the beneficiary.	Value is idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaning laden.

(Source: Adapted from Vargo and Lusch 2008)

Figure 1: Foundational Premises of Service-Dominant Logic

Sources: Adapted from Vargo and Lusch (2008).

As stated in the foundational premises, we can conclude that in the service-dominant logic, service is considered as a process rather than an alternative form of goods or an intangible unit of output. It is the application of competencies for the benefit of another entity through exchange process. The process of value creation always has its intermediary medium, such as internet in the age of e-commerce in order to facilitate the exchange process. Since value is co-created with the customer, then every service activity implies an interactive relationship. Like (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, P.12) have argued "Even relatively discrete transactions come with social, if not legal, contracts (often relatively extended) and implied, if not expressed, warranties. They are promises and assurances that the exchange relationship will yield valuable service provision, often for extended periods." In fact, the relationship the firm engages with customers whether in short term or in long term is much more critical than the transaction (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Moreover, due to the fact that firms can only provide service as inputs to its realization, the orientation has shifted from the producer to the customer. Thus,

relationships and exchange processes become very imperative in the service-centered view.

In summary, because times have changed, our focus is shifting away from operand resource toward operant resource, from tangible inert stuff toward intangible things like competences and information, and toward interactivity and connectivity.

More importantly, based on service-dominant logic an experience-based relationship has become the nature of service economy instead of the transactional nature of services.

2. The Experience Economy

It seems like that today, everyone from different industries and sectors is sharing a common goal together to provide experiences, from travel agency, event planner to shopping mall, marketers and gallery curators. Experience has become such a hot topic and has begun to receive significant attention more than ever before. Furthermore, considering the successful cases of Starbucks and Disney World, there is no doubt that the importance of providing satisfactory experience in the process of delivering service to client can affect business performance.

2.1 The Notion of Experience and Experience Economy

2.1.1 The Notion of Experience

According to (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013), in English 'experience' means lived experience as well as the knowledge and proficiency acquired over long time as a result of lived experience. In German, the word refers both to the moment by moment lived experience(*Erlebnis*) and to the evaluated experience(*Erfahrung*) which is subject to reflection of what people has

experienced (Highmore, 2002). Additionally, experiences are suggested to be subjective, intangible, continuous , and highly personal (O'dell, 2007). In fact, the meaning of experience varies in consonance with different contexts and disciplines, from objective experience in the life science to subjective experience in the social science (Carù & Cova, 2003; Culter & Carmichael, 2010). Nevertheless, (Otto & Ritchie, 1996, p.166) define "experience" as "a subjective mental state felt by visitors during a service encounter".

2.1.2 The Experience Economy

At the end of 20th century, (Gilmore & Pine II, 1998) first proposed the experience economy concept. They argued that the experience is a distinct economic offering than commodities, goods and service and can create competitive advantages for company in fierce competition among companies. They also suggested that experience economy is the latest stage of the progression of economic value. In other words, value created by market has evolved from natural commodities to tangible and standardized goods, followed by intangible and customized service, and lately succeeded by personal experience.
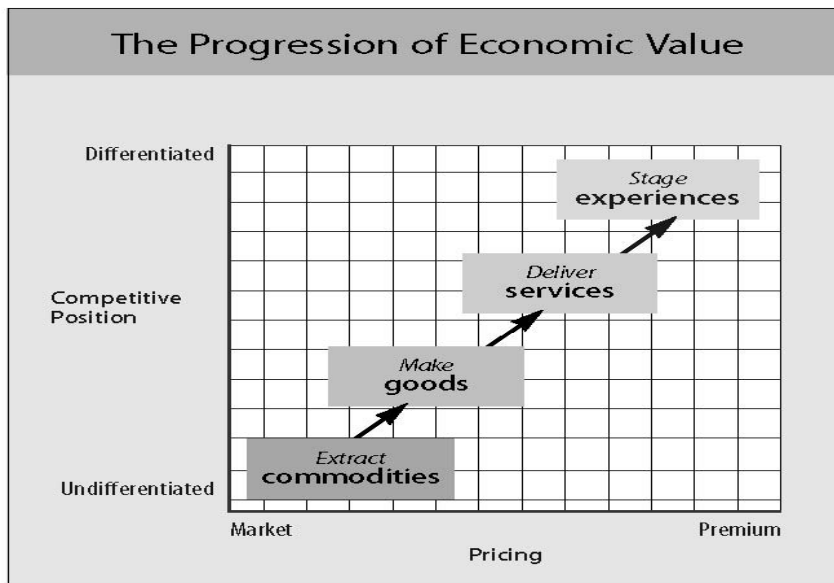
The Progression of Economic Value

Differentiated

Competitive Position

Undifferentiated

Stage **experiences**

Deliver **services**

Make **goods**

Extract **commodities**

Market

Premium

Pricing

Figure 2: The Progression of Economic Value

Source: Adapted from Gilmore and Pine II (1998).

In sharp contrast to other economic offerings like commodities, goods and services which are external to the consumer, experience are inherently personal and existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level(Gilmore & Pine II, 1998). In addition to this, (Gilmore & Pine II, 1998, p.98) said "an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses service as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event."

On the other hand, the emergence of experience economy is not accidental but an inevitable trend (Zhang, 2010). (Knutson & Beck, 2004)suggested that in experience economy, there are three converging factors: technology, more sophisticated consumers and increasing competition. Latterly, (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999; Pine II & Gilmore, 2011) pointed out that with the objective to avoid commodification and decreasing returns, companies need to find ways of "experientalizing" their offers.

Furthermore, the framework of experience economy from Gilmore and Pine II is considered as the cornerstone of customer experience.

2.2 The Customer Experience

Because experience has received increased attention from various industries, there are a lot of scholars from a wide range of fields have defined 'experience' in diverse ways, which causing a variety of definitions. However, in experience economy, as stated in service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Vargo *et al.*, 2008), today customers pay a lot of attention on relationship with service provider and on value creation through the interaction process, thus, the term 'customer experience' has become an important focus among companies.

(Schmitt, 2011)argued that 'customer experience' can be defined as perceptions, feelings and reflections that customer have when they engage in consumption activities along with memory of such experience with products and brands they meet in the marketplace. For (Johnston & Kong, 2011), a 'service' is an activity or process in which service provider needs to deal with customer while 'customer experience' is customer's personal interpretation of the service process and their interaction and involvement with it during their journey through a series of touch points. Alternatively, (Johnston, Clark, & Shulver, 2012, p.7) defined customer experience more precisely, "the customer's direct and personal interpretation of, and response to, their interaction and participation in the service process and its outputs, involving their journey through a series of touch points."

Although in practice, many business owners and managers believe that their customers make decisions based on rational logic, in fact, most decisions are driven by their emotional response to situations. (Brooks, 2010) suggested that even emotions are at a subconscious level, they have a powerful influence on 'rational' decision-making. Moreover, according to script theory (Tomkins, 1978), after customers receive experiences during the service delivery process, they store this script knowledge in their memory and that will influence customers' loyal behavior (Manthiou, (Ally) Lee, (Rebecca) Tang, & Chiang, 2014).Thus, the successful delivery of appropriate and satisfactory experience is critical for the long-term competitiveness of a firm.

Since experience derives from an individual's emotional response to the stimulus during service delivery process and are always hinged on physical contextual factors, organizations face a big challenge to manage customer experience and their emotions. Nevertheless, for the sake of achieving

competitive advantage, differentiating from competitors and creating value, companies must learn how to design, create and manage customer experiences (Ferreira & Teixeira, 2013).

2.3 Designing the Customer Experience with Customer Journey Map

Experience design have always predominantly to do with the connection between the affective or emotional nature of customer reaction to a service encounter and the customer loyalty behaviors (Davenport & Beck, 2001; Schmitt, 1999; Zaltman, 2003). Loyal customers can help the company to promote its brand by word of mouth (Godin & Gladwell, 2001). Customers defections have an incredible powerful impact on the bottom line of company and if the relationship between customer and company lengthens, the profits of company can rocket up (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990).

According to(Gilmore & Pine II, 1998; Pine II & Gilmore, 2011), experiences provided by the company must meet a customer need just as the way goods and services do and if companies can not only satisfy customers' needs but also make the interaction process enjoyable, customers tend to stay loyal, even when a mistake happens. (Rossman & Ellis, 2012) argued that coproduced and engaged experience is the best experience for customers, promoting their authentic happiness. (Zaltman, 2003) also pointed out that the tangible characteristics of a product or service have much less impact on consumer preference than the emotional attributes acquired during the service delivery process. Our responses to feelings are extremely strong, positive response can create powerful emotional bond between customer and organization and negative response can create contrarily persistent emotional scars in customers (Pullman & Gross, 2004). Hence, it is utterly important for company to ensure their service is designed to attempt to create the right emotions in customers.

There are a lot of authors who talked about structured experience and the subject of how to stage and co-create experiences in real and virtual context, such

as (Boswijk, Peele, & Olthof, 2012; Gilmore & Pine, 2000; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Pine II & Korn, 2011).

As an illustration, in the leisure field, (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966) tried to identify the structure of leisure experience in a five-phase model. Latterly, (Rossman & Schlatter, 2015) suggested a three-phase structure with anticipation, participation and reflection. They noted that the majority of service providers ignore the anticipation and reflection phases. However, as (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p.2) suggested, today, we are living in a service-dominant logic world where "intangibility, exchange processes and relationships are central". Thus, well-designed experiences are a co-creation production (Rossman & Schlatter, 2015).

More importantly, during the total chain of processes, customers should experience no discontinuous point and move smoothly through the service (Johnston *et al*., 2012). Furthermore, the best way to make a good service design is to do it from the customer perspective, taking customer outside-in (Johnston *et al*., 2012). Customer Journey Map is one of fundamental tools to help service providers to design and improve their customers' journey and influence their experiences.

Customer Journey Map is defined as "the process of capturing the series of touch points that customer encounter during a service or set of services" (Johnston et al., 2012, p.177). The structure of Customer Journey Map is chronological. It typically starts from recognizing a need, becoming aware, through purchasing to leaving a company and returning. However, the customer journey is non-linear, integrating online and offline touchpoints. Touchpoints contain a set of things, such as TV ads, brochures, e-newsletters, website, apps, phone calls, service encounter and physical objects and so on. With Customer Journey Map, managers can visualize how touch points come together into a unified whole and deal with them more effectively (Kalbach, 2016).

Additionally, Customer Journey Map focuses on the relationship of an individual as a customer of an organization as well as cognitive and emotional states of customer, including moment of truth and satisfaction. It also draws attention on the decision-making process, allowing service providers to understand customer loyalty more competently and to improve existing customer experiences.

Point of view	Individual as a consumer
Structure	Chronological
Scope	End-to-end experience, from recognizing a need to ending the relationship
	Often centered on a single person's journey, but can also show a holistic, aggregate map across personas and touchpoints.
Focus	Focus primarily on the consumer experience, with very little on backstage processes
Uses	Used for touchpoint analysis and optimization
	Strategic planning for customer experience management, marketing, and branding initiatives
Strengths	Simple to understand
	Widespread use
	Suitable for co-creation with teams and stakeholders
Weaknesses	Typically view individuals as consumers
	Often leave out internal processes and actors

Figure 3: Defining aspects of customer journey maps

Source: Adapted from Kalbach (2016).

3. Improving Customer Value Proposition by Value Curve Analysis

One of the business magnate Warren Buffett's favorite old admonitions is "Price is what you pay, value is what you get." This reveals that customers only pay for a product or service if that product or service can bring them value that they want.

In dictionary, value is defined as: "The regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/value)." According to (Sheth et al., 1991), customers make their decisions hinged on their perceived utilitarian and hedonic assessment of those products and services, more exactly, on the customer perceived value. Additionally, from a customer-driven view, customer value is defined as "a customer's perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attributes performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goal and purpose in use situations (Woodruff, 1997, p.142)."

In other words, value is the main determinant whether an individual decides to become the customer of one organization or not. And, it has great impact on

the   phase of consideration and the core-touch moment when customers start to engage with company during the customer journey.

For this reason, in the business world, it is very critical for companies to be able to demonstrate the value of their products and services. Furthermore, they need to be sure that they are delivering a superior customer value which is defined as a positive trade-off between benefits derived and price paid (Smith, 2016) by their customers, comparing to their rivals in order to gain competitive advantage in the fierce business competition.

Above all, advanced technologies of the digital revolution have swung power back towards customers from companies. Today, customers have unlimited options for purchasing products or services virtually. E-commerce created an environment where there was no switching cost to buy from one company or another. As a result, for companies, delivering superior customer value to customers is imperative now than ever before.

3.1 Value Proposition

Company delivers value to customers through its value proposition which states all the values or customer benefits that its product or service promises to deliver to its customer consistently. That is, how does the company resolve customers' problems and how does the company satisfy its customers' needs. And, it is the reason why customer chooses a particular company over its competitors. It also addresses the question of: How does the company can develop a competing as well as compelling value proposition over its rivals? (Kaplan, 2005) identified eight elements of customer value proposition and grouped them in product and service attributes (price, quality, availability, selection and functionality), relationship attributes (service, partnership) and image attribute (brand). (Sheehan & Bruni-bossio, 2015) suggested that companies can design an offering by integrating every attribute that their customers value and best satisfy their needs together profitably.

However, most of companies usually face the slow top line growth problem. That is, their revenue grows slower because they may poorly deliver a poor customer value proposition. Due to this fact, the value curve analysis is needed to help company to pinpoint what attributes require improvement in order to

design a compelling as well as competitive value proposition to attract more customers and improve the firm's top line growth.

3.2 Value Curve Analysis

In the strategy field, searching for sustainable competitive advantage has always been a constant pursuit since Michael E. Porter launched his book *Competitive Strategy* in 1980. Because competitive advantage allows company to outperform its competitors, being in a privileged position in the industry. According to (Porter, 1985), there are two types of competitive advantage: cost leadership and differentiation. He also defined three generic strategies to achieve it: cost leadership, differentiation and focus. In Porter's view, optimization of the company's value chain is fundamental to those three types of strategy. However, in his concept of optimization of value chain, customers are always placed at the end of the value chain.

Nowadays, as circumstances changed, companies need to do distinctive to place customers ahead of competition. The value curve is central to create competing and compelling value proposition because it is customer-centric. It shows every attribute that customers value of a product, service and delivery, which enable us to determine which product or service characteristics have the potential to create value for customers. Like this, customers are placed in the central stage instead of companies.

Value curve is the basic component of the strategy canvas which was developed by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne (2005) in their book *Blue Ocean Strategy*.

During the last decade, the creation of blue ocean has captured the utmost attention amongst scholars. According to(Kim & Mauborgne, 2005), red oceans represent all the existing industries today, which is the known market space. That is where scholars strive to find the sources of sustainable competitive advantage, such as (Barney, 1991) and (Porter, 1985). Nonetheless, as the market space start to be cramped, the prospects for profits and growth are reduced. The zero-sum game competition turns the red ocean bloody. Conversely, blue ocean is all about untapped market space, demand creation and the opportunity for highly

profitable growth. The cornerstone of blue ocean strategy is value innovation because rather than struggle to beat the competition, you focus on developing a compelling value proposition that can make the competition irrelevant by creating a leap in value for both customers and your company. In other words, value innovation seeks driving costs down to company while driving value up for buyers at the same time(Leavy, 2005). It focuses on the key commonalities in what customers value and deals with the total solution customers seek(Kim & Mauborgne, 2004).

The strategy canvas reflects the key dynamics in the blue ocean strategy approach. It is a strategic visual tool to provide a rich description of the company's competitive landscape. As stated in (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005), the unique strategy canvas is both a diagnostic and action framework. It demonstrates three things in one picture. First, the factors an industry competes on in products and in service. Second, the factors current and potential competitors are investing in. Third, the company's value curve shows how it invests in the key success factors of competition.
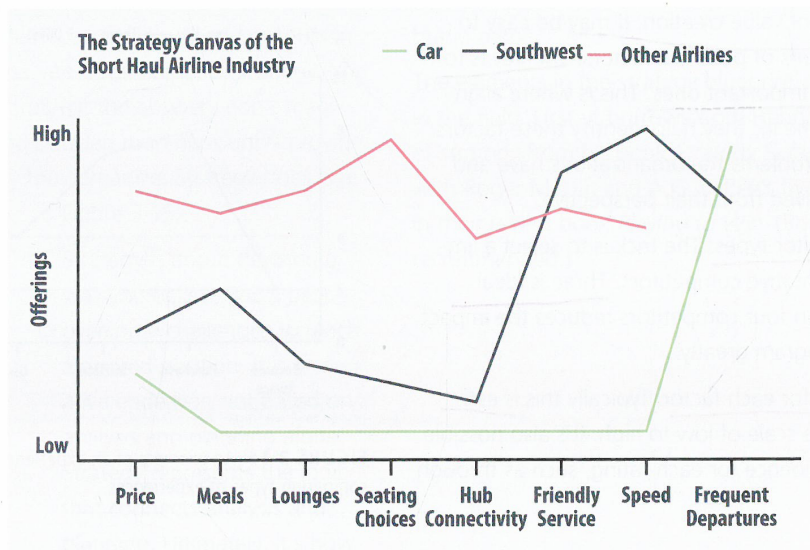

FIGURE 3-13. An example of a strategy canvas for Southwest Airlines reveals competitive differentiators.

Figure 4: An example of a strategy canvas for Southwest Airlines

Source: Adapted from Kalbach (2016).

As illustrated in the example, in the horizontal axis are the primary factors of competition that create value to the customers. Furthermore, they are the attributes that company's target customers use to make their purchase decision. Those attributes should be listed in order of importance. The vertical axis of the strategy canvas indicates relative performance of each attribute from low to high. And, this is the offering level that customers receive across all key competing factors.

Value curve analysis can help companies to identify which attributes they should invest and improve with the objective to make their value proposition better and more compelling to their customers.

In sum, we theorize that in the service-dominant logic world, customers pay more attention to the relationship with the service provider and to value creation through interaction process. A well-designed customer journey in which customers can flow smoothly and experience no discontinuity is thus central to the success of company in the market. However, companies also need to deal with its value curve where lies its value proposition and can influence potential customers' decision during their customer journey. Hence to be successful, companies need to manage its customer journey map and its value curve together.

We also elaborated an ex ante theoretical framework which is composed of two boxes. On the left side is the value curve box which represents value proposition of a company and shows how it competes in each key attribute of competition. On the right side is the box of customer journey map which describes the process where customers flow through a set of touch points during the service encounter. As we can see, the value curve of a company is influenced by key attributes that customers value and by performances of industry as well as competitors on each attribute. The customer journey map of a company is influenced by the number of interaction phases and the touchpoints in respective phase. However, it also is influenced by those key attributes consisted of value curve which drive customers' decision making.

Value Curve	Customer Journey Map
1.The key attributes that customers value of product or service of a company in order to make their decision. 2.The industry's performance in relation to those key attributes as well as current and potential competitors' performance on them.	1. Phases of interaction. 2.Exisiting touchpoints in each phase. 3. The key attributes in value curve of the company that customers consider making their decision.

Figure 5: Ex ante theoretical framework

Source: Own elaboration

Chapter 2
Research Methods

As illustrated in (Jan & Bartjan, 2010)'s research pyramid, research is a step by step process.
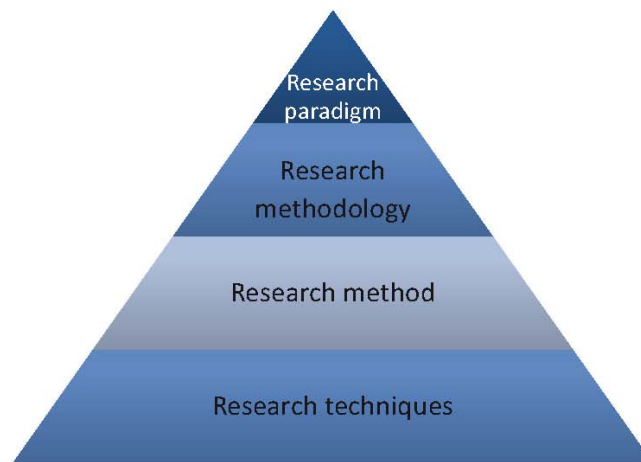
Source: Illustration based on Jonker/Pennink (2010), p. 23.

Figure 6: Research Pyramid

Source: Adapted from Jan and Bartjan (2010).

In accordance with the research pyramid, conducting a research begins by positioning one's research philosophy which is also referred as research paradigm. It is described as individual's understanding of the nature of the world and how it should be studied (Moses & Knutsen, 2012; Corbetta, 2003). As stated in (Gog, 2015), a researcher's research philosophy is inherent and it cannot be chosen. But, probably it can change and evolve over time. As a result, the research approach, the choice among quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, the research techniques and the standard to assess the research quality are all depended on each researcher's philosophy. Additionally, research philosophies distinguish between epistemology and ontology. Epistemology deals with required knowledge to solve the research question, whereas ontology focuses on the nature and form of social entities and the perception of reality(Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The term methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It can be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically(Kothari, 2004). (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012) also defined methodology as theory and basis or philosophical assumption which build the foundation of how research should be conducted. And, the research methods emerged from methodology are those methods that used in performing research operations (Kothari, 2004) which can be broken down into research techniques which are considered as tools and instruments.

However, today, the researcher's philosophy and therefore his or her choices for the research method should differ depending on the specific context, as well as the research question (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). (Yin, 2014) suggest that research method is also determined by the extent of control the researcher has over the actual behavioral events as well as the degree of focus on the contemporary as opposed to the entire historical events.

Considering the specific context in which this present work emerged, for the sake of answering the research question in this work, we adopt the qualitative research approach, case study research.

Qualitative research can get at the 'how' and 'why' and 'what' of the story, rather than 'how many' or 'how much' that answered by quantitative research (Yates & Leggett, 2016).

Case study research has been viewed as one of qualitative research approaches and defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident"(Yin, 2014, p.16). The phenomenon or case can be a group, an organization, a person. (Yin, 2014) also pointed out that case studies are preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed and the researcher has little control over events. (Hak & Dul, 2008)indicated that the main characteristic of the differentiation of case study comparing to experiment is that case study does not manipulate the object of study. Moreover, (Yin, 2014) distinguishes case study between exploratory, descriptive and explanatory types.

The case study research like other qualitative research methods, also embodies comprehensive procedures, which includes research design, data collection and data analysis.

A research design is "the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions"(Yin, 2014, p.28). It always involves the consideration of various factors, such as the means of obtaining information, required skill, the objective and nature of the problem to be studied and the financial and time availability for the research work(Kothari, 2004). In the case of case study research, first, is to determine whether a single case or multiple cases. According to (Yin, 2014), the use of single case study is an appropriate design when the case represents a critical case to test theory, an unusual or unique case , a common case that can capture an understanding of usual circumstance, a revelatory case that before has been inaccessible or a longitudinal case. However, multiple case design is used when two or more cases are chosen to examine complementary components of the research question. Furthermore, more cases in a multiple case study can achieve greater confidence and certainty in findings. Both single and multiple case studies can use holistic or embedded designs. A holistic design examines a case or cases, whereas an embedded design analyzes subunits associated with the case or cases as well. Moreover, the validity and reliability must be ensured.

Since case study research is flexible, it can use multiple sources of data whether qualitative or quantitative data sources which can enhance the confidence in study's findings. In accordance with (Yin, 2014, p.102), there are six

sources to collect data for a case study: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artefacts.

Regarding data analysis, researchers often do it inductively and they must work directly and intimately with their data. In the case study research, (Yin, 2014) recommended that after categorizing the data, we can organize the data by four techniques-pattern matching, explanation building, program logic models, and time-series analysis. In the case of multiple case studies, it may include cross-case synthesis to search for any repetition in the case.

Consequently, the final composition of case study research is a storytelling report that enables the reader to understand the case from the narrative fully(Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015).

In this present study, multiple case study design was used. Through data collection process, we have gathered information from multiple sources. We conducted semi-structured interviews in two Portuguese platform companies with marketing manager of Uniplaces and founder of Zizabi. Semi-structured interviews are great to find 'why' question and involve in-depth conversations between the researcher and interviewee. The flexibility of semi-structured interview allows interviewee to feel suited to answer those questions. This type of interview has an overall purpose prompted by the research purposes, but are strongly guided by the interviewee's perceptions, opinions and experiences(Fylan, 2005). We also consulted documents like newspaper articles and reports, official website and other related websites and videos. In order to ensure study rigor, we describe case study by illustrating a constant comparative process of data analysis. We provide readers with a detailed and narrative composition of the impact of value curve on customer journey map in these two companies.

Chapter 3
Cases

3.1 The Case of Uniplaces

The idea to create a platform like Uniplaces which facilitates the process of finding accommodation for students was born from the own experience of three co-founders (Miguel Santo Amaro, Ben Grech e Mariano Kostelec) in which they had great difficulties to find accommodation when they were studying in England. A year after graduating from their respective universities- Miguel and Ben from Nottingham University, and Mariano from King's College in London, they came back to Oporto and started to plan to do something together.

At that time, one friend of Miguel-Francisco Silva, president of Student Association of Faculdade de Medicina de Lisboa asked him to help students who couldn't find a place to stay. They saw that there were many people, instead of studying, lost a lot of time to help other students to find accommodation. Hence, the three men realized that there was a gap in the market that they could fill. "It was a market with more than 160 million of consumers around the world and every year they spend about $ 500 thousands million (€450 thousands million)." More than 1/3 of the amount were accommodation cost. Only in Portugal, the business valued close to €250 million. At European level, it valued more than €19 thousand million. It is a significant value pie. "Until that moment, it didn't exist any global brand that had dominated that sector." –Miguel (Marques & Miranda, 2016).

What's more, the number of interchanging students has increased exponentially, because of the initiative of Erasmus program. In 2009, 3,4 million of students participated in international mobility program. The number of students is expected to increase to 7,6 million in 2025 according to Uniplaces (Marques & Miranda, 2016).

Consequently, they came up with a plan to create an online marketplace matching students with accommodation. "It was clear that people were doing more online and that marketplaces such as Airbnb were a great solution for travel, but finding accommodation was such a problem for students around the world." – Ben "We want to resolve a real problem for 163 million of students in the world."-Miguel

Thus, in 2011 the three started working on their business and website. The trio invested around £50,000 - a sum whipped up from their savings, student loans and help from parents. In December of 2011 Uniplaces was born as an online accommodation listing website(Marques & Miranda, 2016).

Later that year they won first round funding of 200,000 euros ($215,000; £172,534) led by the founder of UK property website Zoopla. From there it was down to business, getting a permanent office in Lisbon, and wooing landlords to join the site and checking properties. In the same year, they won the 4th edition of Serralves Industrias Criativas Award(Correia Pinto, 2012).

At the same time, they realized that to become a global player their product cannot be a classified website where the landlord pays some money to put an advertising on it. They needed to make an innovative product such as Airbnb, which can manage every transaction.

For this reason, in 2013 the official Uniplaces website was launched which is in multi-language that permits everyone to understand the content of the site and is completely optimized for students in terms of user experience since their major client (68%) is students from interchanging program like Erasmus. Students don't need to visit the property they would like to book. Because Uniplaces does everything for them from verifying properties to ensure their conditions to taking pictures and video of properties, from drawing the floor plan to writing description and doing payment process. At this moment, Uniplaces is testing a new technology like virtual reality in order to offer the best user experience to students and to increase the level of confidence, convenience, and safety when they make the reservation on the site of Uniplaces. In this manner, students can find Uniplaces is reliable by using the platform.

In the beginning, Uniplaces gained its first 200 properties in Lisbon on their site by virtue of its partnership with Faculdade de Medicina de Lisboa. In consideration of the demand from the student side has already existed, from there Uniplaces started to gain traction among landlords and students. At the end of 2012, Uniplaces did a partnership with 25 universities and got 18,000 listing on its site. Landlords can achieve more highlight for their properties through the utilization of Uniplaces platform, meanwhile, students get more chance to find the ideal place to stay.

Uniplaces employs a commission-based business model. Students using Uniplaces pay one month's rent upfront via the website, and the sum goes through to the landlord 24 hours after they move in. Thereafter they pay directly to the landlord. Uniplaces takes a service fee of 20%-25% of the student's first month's rent, and then a commission of 5-12% of the total value of the contract from the landlord.

Since it was born, Uniplaces has evolved very quickly. In 2013, it started to go international. It has opened its office in London, Madrid, Barcelona, Milano and Berlin in 3 years. In particular, the rate of its growth in 2014 was 1000%(www.heroispme.pt). The number one reason for its significant growth is because that Uniplaces has established a strong partnership with ESN-Erasmus Student Network which supports and develops student exchange at 430 higher education institutions in 37 countries. It is the biggest student association in Europe. ESN helps Uniplaces to promote its brand and product in its enormous student community. On the other hand, it also facilitates Uniplaces's market research and analysis work when Uniplaces decides to expand to other cities and countries since before expanding to other places it will always require profound knowledge about the capacity of student exchange in each place.

Uniplaces works with Google Adwords, SEO, Facebook, referral program (invite.uniplaces.com) as well as traditional email, SMS and discount campaign with the intention to promote its brand and gain more users.

Additionally, Uniplaces has done a lot of offline activities to communicate its brand with its target audience. For example, Uniplaces Academy Ambassador Program(academy.uniplaces.com) encourages students to represent Uniplaces on their campus and around their city. Creation of Uniplaces rooms in universities. Uniplaces replicates some representative elements from its office such as blue walls with tagline, fixtures and light to their rooms in universities and sets some other entertainment infrastructure there as well in order to build a familiar and relaxed environment for students so that they can socialize with their friends and at the same time obtain useful information about accommodation from Uniplaces's ambassador considering that it still has necessity to grow domestic students segment which now occupies 30% of Uniplaces's clients(Ribeiro, 2017). Uniplaces also has its scholarship program which stimulates students to win a free rent for one semester by helping other

students from mobility program around the world("Uniplaces oferece bolsa a quem for generoso," 2016).

Furthermore, Uniplaces are trying to offer a wide diversity of new services to its clients besides matching students with accommodation. Uniplaces just launched its first self-service platform for landlords (rent.uniplaces.com) where any landlord can make his own listing and has access to innovative tools provided by Uniplaces for managing properties. Except this, it also launched one platform to share every information and knowledge in terms of the lease in Portugal (portal.uniplaces.com) in the beginning of 2017. In addition to this, Uniplaces is planning a buddy program now whose focus is on Erasmus students with the objective to help them integrate into society. For instance, it will help students plan the trip to the destination, pick them up at the airport and accompany them to the house, buy course material, open bank account, acquire mobile numbers and so on.

To ensure the satisfying interactions that Uniplaces' users experience, Uniplaces applies rigorous metric to track activity on its platform, such as NPS (Net Promoter Score), capture rate, review system which permits students to rate the property where they stay as well as curation mechanism which improves its ability to match students with good and high-quality accommodation. Property that receives extremely negative feedback will disappear from the platform. Besides, Uniplaces has a customer supporting team to help resolve every problem faced by its clients 24 hours.

The year of 2015 was very generous with Uniplaces. It established a presence in 6 cities, 4 countries and was planning to expand in 39 cities, 9 countries in Europe. Its revenue grew three-fold compared to 2014. It got more than 100,000 fans on Facebook. In November of 2015, Uniplaces received €22 million investment from Atomico Venture Capital to help its expansion plan. In 2015, Uniplaces became a 100-person team from 40 persons in 2014(Marques & Miranda, 2016).

Another reason to explain its significant growth is its world class talent team. Today, Uniplaces has 135 collaborators and 40% of them are foreigner people. A lot of them are from Google, Facebook, Blabla car and other big companies. This allows creating a global culture in the company which helps every people think globally and creatively and create trust among people. Hence, it will enhance the

internal cohesion in the company because the company's internal culture attracts and retains people. Everyone works in Uniplaces feels motivated by the company's objective that they want to turn Uniplaces to a "Lovebrand" with which every student around the world can connect. They want to be a top-of-mind company for student accommodation.

However, in 2016, Uniplaces suffered collateral effects due to its explosive growth although its revenue grew four-fold compared to 2015. They found difficulties in controlling company's internal culture, recruiting process and strategy planning(www.heroispme.pt) They learned that they needed to first consolidate its position in the six major cities. They need to test if its business model is viable since the business, for now, is only profitable in Portugal.

One key challenge they faced is that the existing supply can't match the demand. For example, in Oporto city landlords prefer leasing their properties on Airbnb to Uniplaces in order to earn more money in the high season. So, Uniplaces are trying to persuade those landlords to lease their property in low season for students on Uniplaces.

At this moment, there are 45,000 rooms available on Uniplaces' listing. The number of visits to the site of Uniplaces per month is more than 2 million. In 2016, there were one million and a half nights when people slept in rooms reserved from Uniplaces. It has done collaborations with more than 80 universities in Europe. It provides accommodation options to students with 165 nationalities.

For 2017, Uniplaces' objective is to become profitable in every city where it is present and to consolidate its business model by figuring out an optimal supply-demand fit. In the meantime, Uniplaces is organizing offline activities to landlords and is planning awards for the best landlords, too.

3.2 The Case of Zizabi

When Hugo Vieira started to lease apartments in 2012, he found that people always want to know not only the condition of the apartment but also information about the neighborhood of that apartment, such as public transportation condition, supermarket, butcher shop, schools. When he did such search work before presented to the potential tenant, he had far more chance to

get the deal done. After that, according to his own experience, the original idea to create a platform to offer information about local area and help people make the decision on the process of buying or renting property was born.

In the beginning, this project was built specially for one type of customer segmentation in the tourism industry-- retired people and want to live abroad. For example, at that time 10% of retired people in the United Kingdom wanted to live in another country. In the meantime, the government of Portugal launched a new policy of golden visa in order to attract foreign investments. What's more, the Portuguese government have lowered tax for foreign retired people who choose Portugal to live. Hugo and his partners saw this as an opportunity for them. Because it's those people who need all useful information about the neighborhood where they want to live in Portugal.

Hence, they did the first version of Zizabi site which only included an attractive map with essential neighborhood information in each residential area, such as the number of schools, health service, the number of parks, restaurant and cultural space. Additionally, there are information about the profile of neighbors like age, gender, and profession as well as rainfall on the site. With this map prototype, Zizabi became one of six finalists of Premio Nacional das Industrias Criativas 2013(Maria Henriques, 2013).

Later that year, they became one member in UPTEC (Science and Technology Park of University of Porto) incubator and started to test if their idea was viable. At the same time, they also acquired in-depth understanding about other areas like marketing, finance, brand registration since they are all information engineers. The time they spent in UPTEC permitted them to exchange ideas with other teams and learn from other people's experiences.

However, they found great difficulties in spreading the Zizabi brand outside Portugal. So, they switched their focus to the domestic market. People went to their site but they didn't feel satisfied due to the lack of properties on the site. Thus, Hugo and his partners started to think how can collect pictures of properties from each area to put on their site for the sake of attracting more users. At that moment, they did this project as a part-time activity. Meanwhile, in 2014 they received financing from Passaporte para o Empreendedorismo for their project. In this way, they got two people to work on this project at full time.

Subsequently, they created a Crawler software to collect and index property information from other real estate websites to put on the site of Zizabi, but only with some small pictures and a link to go to another real estate site. Like this, they got links to properties in addition to the map on their site. As a result, the site was still less user-friendly because every time people went to their site they could not find the product page and they had to go to another site to see the overall information about the property. In addition to this, the number of visits to the site was only 1500 monthly.

Therefore, in 2015 they began to contact with companies who already have properties. The first ones were real estate CRM software companies, such as hcPro, IMOMarketing, Improxy, and X-IMO. Those companies help real estate firms to public proper ties on their site and to spread their properties on other sites. As a result, Zizabi started to have listings on its site. At the same time, they upgraded their site to have more functions. For instance, the map can show price level of each residential area, opinions from users about every neighborhood and appraisal online service. Since then, the number of visit to their site has demonstrated a great difference. It increased to 8000 monthly. But, their site still was less user-friendly according to their users since Zizabi always received complaints from them because they found difficulties in navigating on the site of Zizabi.

In the same year, they also received support from IEFP (Instituto do Emprego e Formacao professional) to have someone from marketing and communication area work with them. And afterward, they gained opportunities to present their site on the TVI and RTP channel which consequently helped them attract and acquire more audience(Zizabi, 2014).

Simultaneously, they began to work with Facebook and Google AdWords to do remarketing in order to spread the Zizabi brand. Moreover, they have bought advertising on other real estate platforms like Trovit, Mitula, and Nuroa. In this way, Zizabi started to have customers from both sides. On one hand, it gained some individual users. On the other hand, there are professional customers who would like to put their listing on the site of Zizabi. Thus, they contacted with several real estate agencies and wooed them to use Zizabi to promote their properties. However, things didn't go well. For individual users, Zizabi is not a

well-known site yet. So, it couldn't gain traction among individuals. Those big real estate agencies prefer using other big platforms, such as OLX, Idealista, Imovirtual to Zizabi because comparing to other platforms Zizabi still is a platform with a small dimension.

For this reason, Hugo and his partners realized that real estate agencies only work with Zizabi if the latter can provide to them qualified information about the profile of its clients. For example, which kind of property they would like to buy? In which area? What are the requisites? This kind of information will facilitate real estate agents' work and will increase the possibility of getting business done. On the other hand, it will help its users to find the ideal property as soon as possible. At the same time, individual clients feel comfortable with personalized assistance in process of looking for new home. Thus, in 2016 Zizabi started to offer this premium service to its customers for free by asking their criteria in looking for a house or apartment. And then, they sell that information to a few real estate agencies who did the partnership with Zizabi.

Zizabi employs a success fee -based business model. Once a deal gets finished from those clients that Zizabi presented, Zizabi can receive a portion of the commission according to the total value of the contract.

According to the feedback from people who utilized this premium service, 65% of them like this service. In order to ensure the service quality, Zizabi contacted with those clients who are received by real estate agent through SMS and phone call to ask their opinion about their meeting with real estate agent. One of the challenges Zizabi faced is that clients have a good follow-up service from real estate agent. Sometimes, the agent is sent by real estate agency does not match the profile of the client.

To guarantee the core value of the platform, Zizabi has improved its curation mechanism. Now, there are more than 100,000 properties on its site and all properties are real. And, the number of visits today is 250,000 per month. Although Zizabi has evolved a lot of from the outset, it still faces several challenges. It has difficulty in growing brand awareness despite it has invested in social media like Facebook and in the traditional email, SMS campaign. In addition to this, a severe challenge for Zizabi is that the company cannot attract qualified people since human resource plays an important role in the development process of an organization.

At the time of writing this work, due to the fact that business did not go well, Zizabi was closed by its founders.

Chapter 4
Cases Discussions

After data collection, case discussions are a necessary stage in the investigation process which allows us to highlight important data presented in the cases and to compare them with our literature and ex ante theoretical framework. We executed within-case data analysis to develop an in-depth understanding and description of each case(Eisenhardt, 2007). We performed cross-case analysis as well, which suggests comparing cases and searching for differences and similarities.

4.1 The Case Discussion of Uniplaces

4.1.1 Customer Journey Map of Uniplaces

Since (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Vargo *et al.,* 2008)postulated the service-dominant logic, customers' focus has switched to intangibility, interactivity and connectivity when dealing with product or service providers. We entered in an experience-economy era, besides we are living in a hyper-connected society thanks to the advanced information and communication technology. Today, every customer is connected in most of their waking hours by various touch points. Such technology has fractured the customer journey into hundreds of real-time micro moments. Under such circumstances, delivering a beautiful customer experience to customers has become a key to achieve success in the business world, considering the role of customer emotional response to a service encounter and the role of their loyalty behaviors (Pullman & Gross, 2004; Davenport & Beck, 2001; Zaltman, 2003; Godin & Gladwell, 2001; Reichheld &

Sasser, 1990; Heskett *et al.,* 1997). However, making this kind of multi-channel experience properly is a huge challenge because customers need to flow smoothly with no discontinuous point during their journey. Like this, the customer journey map is needed.

The customer journey map of Uniplaces as illustrated in figure 7 is divided into eight phases according to chronological order from awareness, research, consideration, become a customer to booking, sign contract and pay, check-in and the last after moving-in.
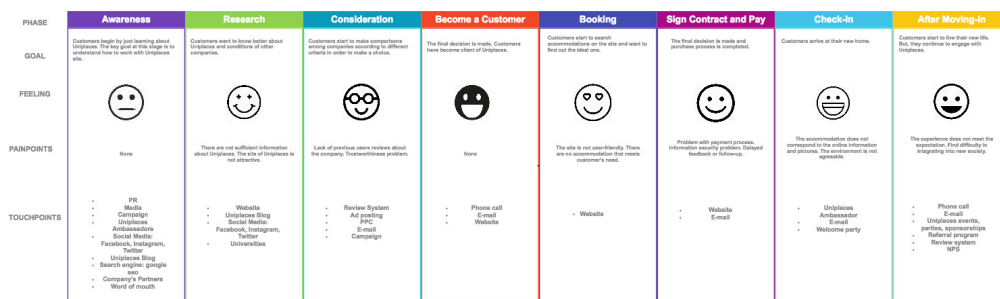

Figure 7: Customer journey map of Uniplaces
Source: Own elaboration.

In the phase of awareness, customers begin by just learning about Uniplaces and they want to know how to work with Uniplaces. At this phase, it does not occur any emotional change in the customers. This is the phase in which the company should invest promoting brand awareness to ensure the consistency of information about the company across different channels.

Uniplaces has done well in this phase. It invested both in digital and in non-digital touch points. Regarding online touch points, Uniplaces does search engine optimization with Google. It works with Google Adwords and social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as well as its own blog, besides traditional email and SMS. Uniplaces also does online campaign such as its scholarship program and other discount campaign.

Additionally, it organizes a lot of offline activities. As an illustration, Uniplaces Academy Ambassador Program encourages students to represent Uniplaces on

their campus and their city around Europe. Creation of Uniplaces rooms in universities allows Uniplaces to communicate its brand with students day after day. Uniplaces also has its own DJs to participate in a lot of academic parties in order to offer a unique contact experience to its target with its brand. On the other hand, Uniplaces has established partnership with various associations like ESN-Erasmus Student Network which can help it to promote its brand awareness.

In the research phase, customers start to educate themselves about Uniplaces and conditions of other companies. During this stage, it always invokes emotional change. If customers can get every information they needed and find the Uniplaces site is well designed they feel more satisfied and consequently produce positive emotions towards Uniplaces and vice versa. Uniplaces communicates with potential customers at this phase through its site, blog, social media and universities where it is present.

The next phase is consideration where customers make comparisons among different companies according to different criteria so as to make a final choice. This is a key phase which determines if the company can get a new customer. At this stage, offering previous user reviews is critical to show the company is trustworthy. Uniplaces uses its review system, ad-posting and email as well as PPC-pay-per-click and various campaigns to reinforce its brand in the mind of customers.

After making the final decision, customers feel happy to start engaging with Uniplaces. At this phase, the principal touch points are e-mail, website and phone call.

Subsequently, customers start searching accommodations on the site of Uniplaces and they want to find out the ideal one. This is a core-touch moment. The only touch point with customers is the site of Uniplaces. It is important for Uniplaces to ensure that their site is user-friendly which facilitates the users' searching process. Furthermore, the site should match customers with high-quality accommodations by a powerful curation mechanism. If customers don't get a great experience with the site at this phase, there is always a possibility for Uniplaces to lose those customers.

When come to the sign contract and pay phase, customers want to feel secure during the payment process and receive immediate feedback about their questions. Touchpoints at this phase is website and email. Uniplaces does great

work in its customer service. There are a group of people who can speak various languages to help customers from different countries 24 hours.

Afterwards, customers flow to another important phase-check-in. They finally arrive at their new home. In this phase, Uniplaces organizes welcome party for their customers to make them feel comfortable. Additionally, Uniplaces ambassadors are there to help them. For example, pick them up at airport, take them to the new home and so on. Uniplaces also communicates with customer via email to ensure that their accommodation condition corresponds to the online information and pictures. If not, Uniplaces is responsible for helping them find another place.

The final phase is after moving-in where customers are embracing their new experiences in life. It is critical for the company to keep engaging with them to provide them with ongoing value. In this stage, Uniplaces contacts with its customers by phone call and email to know if everything goes well with them. It also organizes different events and parties to reunite their customers. Above all, Uniplaces employs referral program to encourage their customers to promote its brand to potential ones. Uniplaces further asks its customers to write review about their experience with Uniplaces in order to improve its service and attract more customers. At this moment, this phase is the one Uniplaces strives to improve its service.

In summary, this platform company dedicates to delivering pleasant experience to its customers and constantly to improving its service. However, the customer journey map of Uniplaces also shows that those features involved in the customer journey which lie in its value curve can affect customers' decision making.

4.1.2 Value Curve of Uniplaces

Customers make their decisions based on their perceived value of those product or service attributes from functional and economic aspects to more emotional aspects(Woodruff, 1997; Sheth *et al.,* 1991; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). A company should design its offerings by integrating all attributes that customers value together(Sheehan & Bruni-bossio, 2015). The value proposition

of a company can affect customers' decision during their customer journey. For example, in the case of Uniplaces, in the consideration phase and the core-touch moment-booking phase, the intrinsic value of the site such as, the ease of use, website attractiveness, trustworthiness can easily affect customers' decision.

In this way, value curve–the key component of strategy canvas which demonstrates how the company invest in key competing factors of competition-is the best means to help company to make the compelling and competitive value proposition(Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).

As exhibited in the figure 8 the value curve of Uniplaces, the most important attributes of the student accommodation platform industry are ease of use, website attractiveness, trustworthiness, responsiveness, number of property choices and accuracy.

Specifically, ease of use focuses on the user-friendly aspect that allows users to navigate on the site with no difficulty. Website attractiveness relates to the aesthetic feature of the site which can in the beginning influence the customer decisions. Trustworthiness concentrates on the security issue which connects to the payment process and customer data. Responsiveness has to do with the customer support who can respond to customers' requirements immediately. Number of property choices is another key competition factor because it increases the probability of finding an ideal accommodation. Additionally, the accuracy attribute ensures that the real condition of accommodation corresponds to the online information and picture.
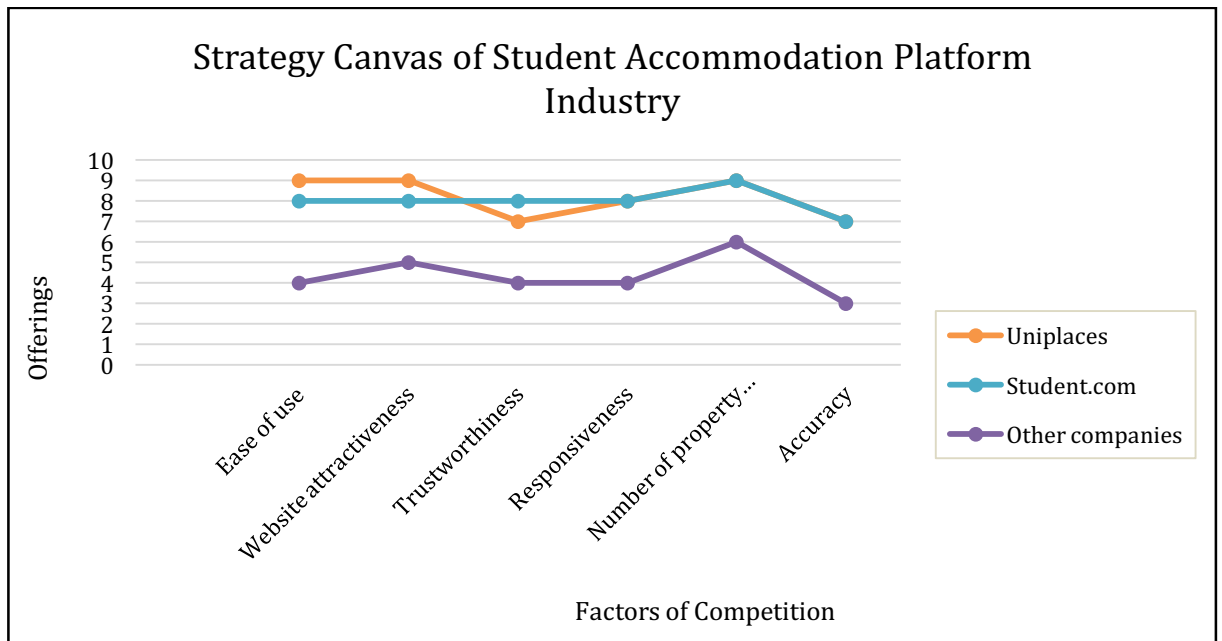
Figure 8: Value curve of Uniplaces

Source: Own elaboration

As we can see, Uniplaces presents a high level of offering across all the key competing factors comparing with the level of industry. What's more, in terms of ease of use, website attractiveness which are major determinants during the customer journey map, Uniplaces is in the leadership position in the industry. Comparing to its strongest competitor, Uniplaces presents the same level of offering in the responsiveness, number of property choices and accuracy except trustworthiness.

Since Uniplaces launched its site, it has strived to improve its quality. It is planning to offer virtual reality experience to its users. It created a self-service site for landlords to help them make their own listing. It also launched one platform in order to share information and knowledge about leasing market in Portugal.

Consequently, due to its well-designed customer journey map and value curve, Uniplaces is growing explosively.

We elaborated an ex post theoretical framework for Uniplaces in which we integrate human resources and partnership as other two key factors that influence value curve of a company and its customer journey map. A company's value curve can be influenced by its human resources because valuable human

resources can help company to get great ideas and required competencies to conceive a good product or service with better value proposition to its customers. In the same way, during the customer journey, customers can feel the quality of human resources that the company has since the beginning by using its product or by contacting its customer service team. If they feel that the company with who they want to engage is not professional or is not prepared for offering a good service, they will stop to engage with that company in the decision-making process. On the other hand, partnership of a company also has importance in its customer journey map because such partnership can help to promote company's brand and latterly, has big impact on the awareness phase of customer journey map. Once company gains its brand awareness in the market, customers are more confident in engaging with the company.

Value Curve	Customer journey Map
1.The key attributes that customers value of product or service of a company in order to make their decision. 2.The industry's performance in relation to those key attributes as well as current and potential competitors' performance on them. 3.Human resources that can help company to conceive an offer to its customers with better value proposition.	1. Phases of interaction. 2.Exisiting touchpoints in each phase. 3. The key attributes in value curve of the company that customers consider making their decision. 4. Human resources of company can affect interaction phase with customers. 5. Partnership has big impact on awareness phase of customer journey map.

Figure 9: Ex post theoretical framework in the case of Uniplaces
Source: Own elaboration

4.2 The Case Discussion of Zizabi

4.2.1 Customer Journey Map of Zizabi

As exhibited in figure 10 the customer journey map of Zizabi is also divided into eight phases: from awareness, research, consideration, become a customer to receive feedback, financial analysis, visit and sign contract.
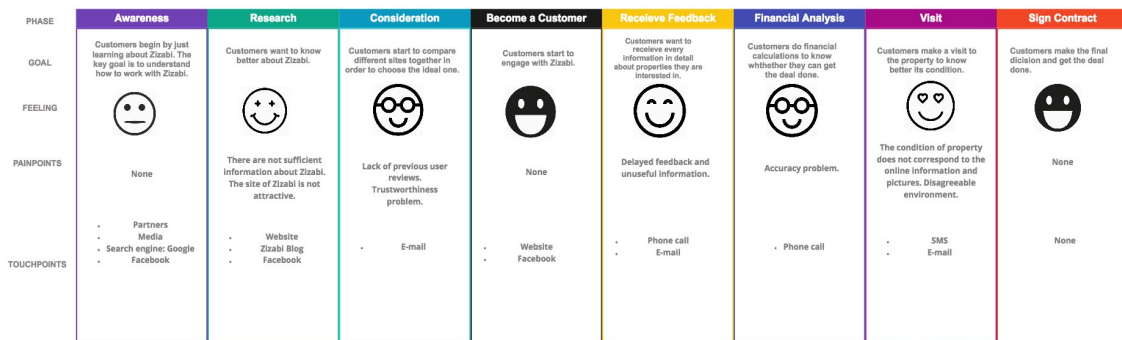

Figure 10: Customer journey map of Zizabi
Source: Own elaboration

In the phase of awareness, customers begin by just learning about Zizabi. It does not occur any emotional change in the customers during this phase. Touch points at this stage are Google, Facebook, Media like TVI and RTP which presented Zizabi during their news program on television, and the site of Trovit, Mitula and Nuroa with whom Zizabi did partnership.

At the research phase, the principal touch points are the site of Zizabi, Facebook and its own blog. Customers feel more convinced if they are attracted by the site of Zizabi and can find enough information about Zizabi.

During the consideration phase, customers start to compare different sites together in order to choose the ideal one with whom they want to engage. It is important at this phase for the company to reinforce its brand in the mind of customers by various means. The touch point of this phase in the case of Zizabi is email.

After becoming customer of Zizabi, customers engage with Zizabi by its site and Facebook account. Subsequently, they will receive feedback about detailed

information of those properties they are interested in by phone call or email. Customers feel more satisfied if they can receive immediate answer to their requirements. Zizabi does not participate in the financial analysis phase. However, before doing financial analysis, Zizabi will call customers to remind them. In the like manner, Zizabi does not participate in the phase of visit either. Customers are accompanied by a real estate agent. But, after doing the visit, Zizabi contacts customers by email or SMS to know if everything went well. Similarly, Zizabi is not involved in the final phase-sign contract either.

To conclude, Zizabi didn't work enough to deliver a great experience to its customers through touch points during the customer journey. The challenge of Zizabi is to seamlessly integrate an increasing number of different touch points. It has limited touch points during the total customer journey which restricts its capacity to interact with customers and to gain brand awareness. Besides, the features of its site also affect customers' decision during key phases of customer journey such as consideration and becoming a customer.

4.2.2 Value Curve of Zizabi

Since Zizabi is a platform company like Uniplace, we choose the same attributes to design its value curve according to the level of importance.

As illustrated in figure 9, we can see that in terms of responsiveness and number of property choices Zizabi presents a high level of offering. But, it does not have good performance in ease of use which is determinant during the core-touch moment. In relation to website attractiveness, trustworthiness and accuracy, Zizabi presents the same level of offering comparing with its competitors.

Although Zizabi has improved its curation mechanism to have more than 100,000 real properties in its platform, it didn't improve the quality of its site. Its users always find difficulty in navigating through the site to find useful information. Since customers can't get great experience during their journey, consequently, they give up from using Zizabi.
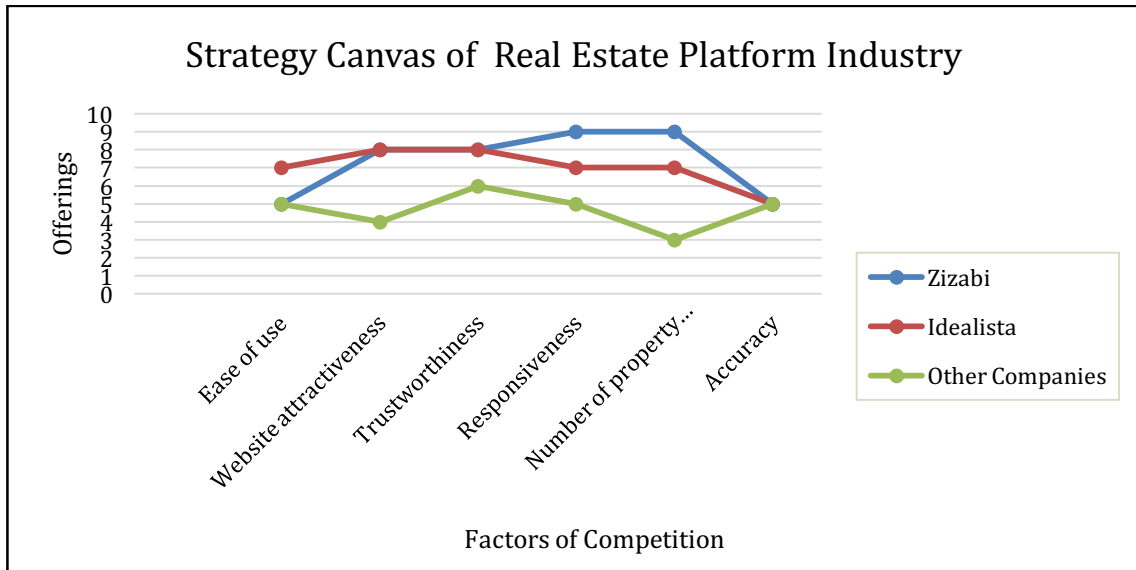
Figure11: Value curve of Zizabi

Source: Own elaboration

After comparing these two cases, we find that the company's customer journey map is strongly and directly influenced by its value curve. Nonetheless, there are other two important attributes that also have incredible influence on it.

The first one is strong partnership. Considering the case of Uniplaces, in the beginning of its business, due to the partnership it did with Faculdade de Medicina de Lisboa, Uniplaces fast gained traction among landlords and students. This partnership rapidly resolved the chicken-or-egg problem every platform company face. Latterly, Uniplaces did another strong partnership with ESN-Erasmus Student Network which helps Uniplaces to promote its brand and its product-the site in the enormous student community since ESN is the biggest student association that supports and develops student exchange program in 37 countries. This partnership brought Uniplaces the opportunity to go international. Today, Uniplaces is present in Lisbon, Madrid, Barcelona, Milano, Roma and Berlin. In addition to this, Uniplaces has done collaborations with more than 80 universities in Europe for the purpose of promoting its brand awareness.

The second one is human resources of the company. The team of Uniplaces has grown fast. Today, Uniplaces has 135 collaborators and 40% of them are not Portuguese. There are a lot of people in this team who came from top companies

like Google, Facebook, Blabla car. Such world class talent team permits creating an open and global culture in this company which helps its collaborators to think creatively and globally. Such internal culture attracts and retains qualified people. It also makes people feel motivated to work in Uniplaces and encouraged by company's objective to be a top-of mind company for student accommodation.

In contrast, we did not find these two attributes in Zizabi. On the one hand, Zizabi did not establish a strong partnership to help it gain brand awareness. Thus, it suffered a lot with chicken-or-egg problem because it couldn't attract enough customers neither from supply side nor from demand side. On the other hand, since Zizabi couldn't attract qualified and competent people, it always found difficulty to improve its service and product. As a consequence, the founder of Zizabi had to close down the company, although the site of Zizabi will be online until October according to the founder.

Based on this we suggest that the ex-ante theoretical framework needs to be extended to integrate two more elements.

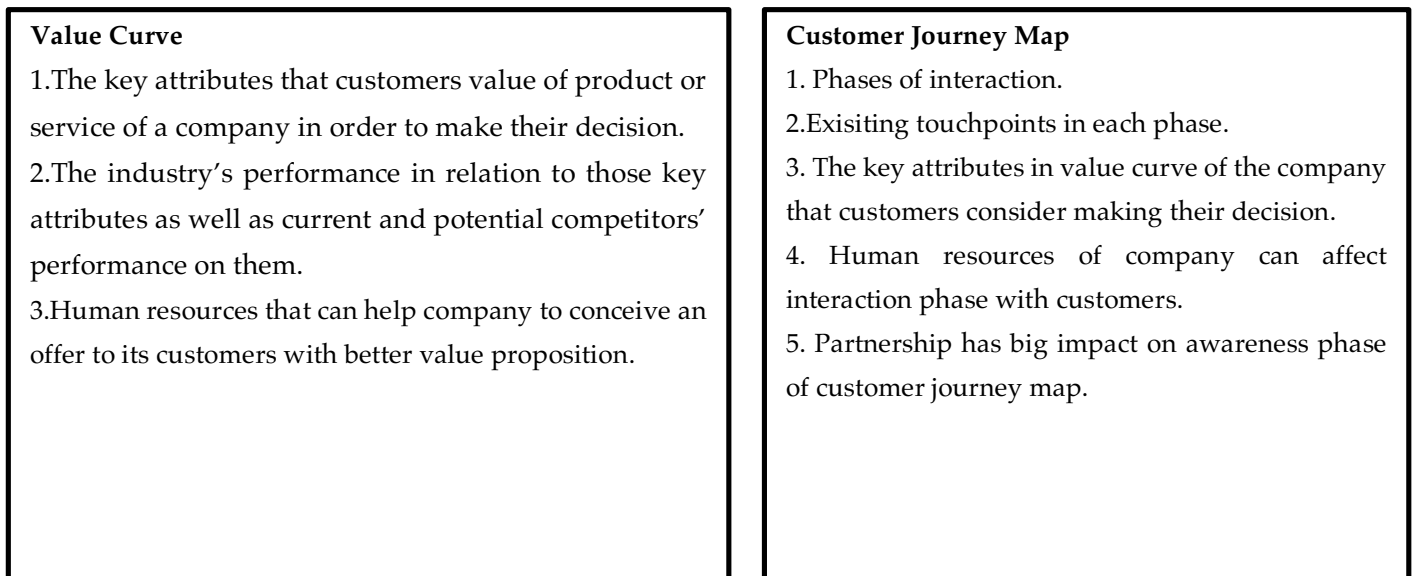| Value Curve	Customer Journey Map
1.The key attributes that customers value of product or service of a company in order to make their decision. 2.The industry's performance in relation to those key attributes as well as current and potential competitors' performance on them. 3.Human resources that can help company to conceive an offer to its customers with better value proposition.	1. Phases of interaction. 2.Exisiting touchpoints in each phase. 3. The key attributes in value curve of the company that customers consider making their decision. 4. Human resources of company can affect interaction phase with customers. 5. Partnership has big impact on awareness phase of customer journey map.

Figure12: Ex post theoretical framework
Source: Own elaboration

Chapter 5
Conclusion

Our presented study represents an attempt to explore how value curve influence customer journey map. We reviewed a fundamental shift from good-dominant logic to service dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) in which relationships, intangibility and exchange process is imperative. We also reviewed the significance of well-designed customer experience (Davenport & Beck, 2001; Schmitt, 1999; Zaltman, 2003; Gilmore & Pine, 2000; Gilmore & Pine II, 1998) as well as creation and importance of company's value proposition(Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). However, those authors talked about customer experience and value proposition separately. Our work makes an important contribution by bringing customer journey map and value curve together into one framework.

We theorize that for a company to achieve success in its target market a well-designed customer journey in which customers can flow smoothly and experience no discontinuity is critical. However, at the same time companies need to deal with its value curve where lies its value proposition which can affect customers' decision during their customer journey. We developed our theoretical framework from two cases of online platform company. The cases suggest that value curve can directly and strongly influence the customer journey map, and provide interesting new insights about how company approach succeeds in target market. We discovered that establishment of a strong partnership and having valuable human resources can both help company externally and internally achieving it. Therefore, we identify four key concepts (customer journey map, value curve, partnership and human resources) that affect company's business performance. Thus, we help develop a complete framework for business success and improve our knowledge about customer experience design and creation of value proposition.

5.1 Limitations and Recommendations

Our study has several limitations. First, we relied on case studies to develop our ex-post theoretical framework. Although the number of cases was enough for the objective of this study and those two cases provided rich insights into how to achieve business success, the number was too low to capture the relationship between customer journey map and value curve. Future research can add to our knowledge of value curve and customer journey map by using quantitative methods and identifying relationships between them and the outcome measures of their combination such as sales or number of visits in the case of platform companies.

Moreover, we restricted our sample to platform companies based in Portugal. This may ignore potential specific market-based factors and particular company types that could influence company's strategic action in doing business. Other types of company from different countries might behave differently from platform companies. Future studies can look for other types of company to test the relationship between value curve and customer journey map.

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Annex

Annex I- Interview of Marketing Manager of Uniplaces

Lisboa, 09/03/2017

Interview

Gender: Male
Occupation: Marketing Manager
Type of Interview: face-to-face

As 39 cidades onde a Uniplaces está presente, são todas dentro da Europa?

Sim, basicamente é mais ou menos isso. Só que isto foi até 2016 mais ou menos. No final de 2016 começamos a focar-nos apenas em 6 cidades. Porquê? Para por certa forma consolidar a nossa marca. Sermos alto foment em demanding e supply. E por outro lado também definimos o modelo, escalável e operacional bastante bom para depois replicamos mais rápido. Em vez de crescermos para todas as cidades sem uma base sólida, voltamos a estratégia e decidimos o que vamos focar, ser profitable nestas cidades. Para provar que funcionamos com este modelo. Basicamente isto é o estado onde estamos. Não é propriamente estamos focados no crescimento. Porque a longo prazo estaremos a gastar muitos recursos, e isso envolve muito investimento, depois o retorno pode não ser muito apelativo. É melhor fazer bem o que estamos a desenvolver.

Então, vamos voltar para o início. Como funciona vosso Business Model?

É bastante simples. Nós como marketplace, recebemos revenue a partir dos estudantes e dos senhorios. Estudante paga 25% de renda do primeiro mês. É booking fee. E o senhorio paga comissão mais ou menos 4% ou 8% tem 2 tipo de senhorio sobre total valor do contrato. É bastante semelhante à Airbnb. Isto é nosso modelo financeiro.

Além disso, vocês envolvem terceira parte para funcionamento do vosso site?

Nós não temos mais nenhum modelo de revenue para além deste. Porque estamos a fazer por exemplo para alguns projetos dentro da empresa. são projetos para estudantes ou para senhorios. São ator sustentáveis na medida em que com estes projetos tivemos algum revenue que permite estes projetos ser sustentável. Nós temos por exemplo projeto de scholarship. Nós pagamos um semestre da renda dos estudantes para responsabilidade social. Aí basicamente tentamos ter parceiros ajuda pagar esta bolsa para não termos que investir os revenue dos booking.

Qualquer plataforma resulta duma ideia original. Qual é o problema que esta plataforma tenta resolver? Quais são os clientes principais que vocês têm? Como vocês entregam a proposta de valor para ambas as partes dos clientes?

Basicamente nossos principais clientes são estudante de mobilidade. Estudante de Erasmus que está a fazer semester change. São 60%- 80%. Quanto à oferta, oferecemos uma plataforma que é multilíngue. Podem compreender plataforma seja em Português seja em Inglês, Italiano, etc. É uma plataforma está otimizada para estudantes. É focado nos estudantes, não para pessoas mais velhas ou pessoas idosas, ou queiram comprar casas. É uma plataforma só para rendimento de estudantes. As línguas que temos na plataforma, user experience, parceria, etc. está tudo otimizada para estudantes. Para além disso, nós temos a verificação das propriedades. Aqui entramos a questão de safty. Plataforma tenta ser trsustworthiness. Ou seja, confiança. Permitem que os estudantes venham por exemplo da Turquia para Portugal ou Alemanha estejam confiante e sentir seguro que está a fazer uma reserva e que vai correr tudo bem. Acima de tudo, estamos a facilitar este processo. No senhorio, trabalhamos oficialmente como chamada key-account. Ou seja, senhorios têm residência na zona universitária ou bastantes quartos em Lisboa ou Porto por exemplo. E senhorios escolhem trabalhar connosco porque fazemos todo o processo por eles. Ou seja, diariamente eles tinham muitas chamadas ou recebiam muitos e-mails. Nós agora fazemos isto tudo para eles.

A maior parte dos senhorios são individuais ou vocês fazem alguma parceria com agência imobiliária?

São principalmente individuais. E muito deles são profissionais para arrendamento de casas. Por exemplo, no Porto nós queremos trabalhar com mais associações, agências ou eventualmente com vosso start up etc.

Este value pie é suficiente para todos stakeholder dentro ecossistema?

Um desafio é na high season. Senhorios locais preferem usar Airbnb para turistas porque revenue é muito maior, então, isto às vezes é um struggle. O mercado começa a ficar saturado neste sentido. Mas pronto, nós tentamos fazer e estamos a trabalhar com isso. Para persuadir que eles arrendem aos estudantes no low season. Normalmente arrenda 6 meses para estudantes.

Vocês neste momento só estão a focar no estudante estrangeiro ou também doméstico?

Sim, neste momento nós estamos a trabalhar bastante com estudantes domésticos. Quase 30%. Porque chaga a um ponto, estudante internacional também satura. Então queremos acrescentar o segmento doméstico. E já estamos a crescer bastante. Para crescer nesse segmento, ações offline na universidade, programa de embaixador, etc. temos todas estratégias e táticas para atingir as pessoas.

Todas plataformas têm dois lados, producer e consumer. Como vocês conseguem colocar estes dois lados na vossa plataforma e até quando a interação começa a funcionar?

Primeiro que tudo uma das coisas mais importantes para este tipo de plataforma é automação. Ou seja, tentamos fazer com tudo seja automático para que haja mínimo contacto possível entre pessoas. Por exemplo, entro na plataforma, faço

uma reserva e essa reserva, senhorio vai receber um aviso. Se estudante tiver alguma dúvida, nós temos um bot não é humano. Por tanto, tentamos fazer tudo automático. O próprio senhorio também pode fazer on-boarding na plataforma. Para além disso, temos sempre customer support. Às vezes, estudante quer fazer pergunta ao senhorio, então passa para esta equipa.

No início tivemos sortes, porque quando começamos, conseguimos logo colocar 200 senhorios na plataforma. 200 ofertas. Dentro de mão, a procura já existia e era muito grande. Então foi relativamente fácil depois ocupar estes offers com existente demanding. Foi especialmente através da parceria com Universidade Medicina. Basicamente conseguimos logo ativar estes 200 senhorios trabalhar connosco. Conseguimos logo ter estudante interagir com senhorio. E depois começou a ganhar tração. Depois também começamos a ter ronda de investimento financeiro que nos permitiu crescer mais em termos de demanding e supply com investimento. Investimento em campanha de Facebook, campanha de e-mail. Campanha de SMS. A partir daí, foi tudo mais fácil. Porque com isso, podemos provar ao investidor que este modelo funciona. Basicamente crescemos numa base construída.

Acima de tudo, para crescer nós trabalhamos com parcerias. Uma grande parceria é ESN. ESN é Erasmus Student Network que está contacto com todos os estudantes erasmus europeus. Ele promove e divulga bastante a marca Uniplaces entre estudantes. Quem não conhece Uniplaces, vai conhecer através do ESN. Porque é um canal que eles vão sempre ter contactos. Para além disso, trabalhamos muito bem seo, Google adwords, todos desses performance tools que permite depois ganhar outra vez tração. Quando alguém está a fazer search. Fazemos também depois algumas companhas por exemplo, referral program. Assim também ganhamos tração. Acima de tudo, é com um parceiro. A forma tu cresceres mais rápido é com uma base já está criada. Crescer com uma organização já tem estudante. É ser smart. Tentar fazer cooperation com estes stakeholders.

Qual é o critério para vocês escolher o próximo destino para expandir?

Acima de tudo, tentamos perceber como a cidade funciona em termos de estudantes. Ou seja, recebe muitos estudantes ou poucos. Se recebe quais os tipos de estudantes. Erasmus estudantes, domésticos estudantes, etc. depois também estudante de concorrência lá.

Qual é principal desafio vocês confrontam quando fazer expansão internacional?

É sempre supplyer.

Para estudantes já comprou vosso serviço, como eles podem divulgar vossa marca?

Além de Review System, temos referral programa com portal.

Vocês têm alguma forma para avaliar a interação entre senhorio e estudantes?

Sim, temos NPS etc, para avaliar satisfação

E em termos de curation mechanism? Match quality.

Sim temos com base na data que nós temos capturate, mps, reviews. Quando alguém faz uma pesquisa, o que são maus, não aparecem.

Em Portugal, o mercado eu trabalho, existe muito demanding, pouco supply. Porque o supply já está muito ocupada com Airbnb.

Como vocês evitam os estudantes diretamente contactam com senhorios?

Não partilhamos contactos com senhorios. Não permitimos a vistas nem contactos.

Se calhar, há pessoas que não confiam tanto. Gostam de ir ver casa presencialmente. Como resolvem esta situação?

Temos fotografias, vídeos e também descrptions, depois temos uma onboarding team de verificação das casas. Vão lá casa, falam com senhorios, e agora estamos a explorar tecnologia para permitir ver a distancia. Vitual Reality.

Temos customer support team está 24h online, por e-mail, por telephone ajuda os nossos clientes. Temos garantias para estudantes e para os senhorios. Se estudante entrar na casa, nos primeiros 24h confirmar que a casa não corresponde ao offer no site, recebe refunds, encontramos outra casa. No caso de senhorio, se estudante saia de casa antes de contrato, Uniplaces paga de resto no contrato. Ou arranjamos outro estudante para lá. São garanties que damos.

Acha que Uniplaces aproveitou first-mover advantage?

Sim, nós aproveitamos. Mas crescemos demasiado rápido. Agora queremos consolidar antes de crescer.

Nós temos melhorado bastante o nosso site. Seo, titile,fliter. HTML.

Estratégia da divulgação da marca? **Marketing digital, offline, parcerias.**

Estamos a trabalhar bastante offline para Brand awareness. Ou seja, digital marketing, for performance, for booking, supply. Offline, Brand awareness. Ainda estamos a desenvolver a App.

A empresa é lucrativa neste momento?

Neste momento, é profitable em Portugal, outros mercados ainda não.

Qual é o objetivo seguinte?

O objetivo é ser profitable em nessas 6 cidades. Depois de ser profitable em seis cidades, expandir.

Na sua opinião, o que está por trás deste crescimento tão rápido da Uniplaces?

São 4 fatores. First é timing. Timing de desenvolver a plataforma. Second one is resources. Money and infrastructure. Third one is people. Temos pessoas da Google, Facebook, Blabla car. Trazem conhecimento para nossa empresa. The Fourth one is internal culture. Temos pensamento global. Temos trust, temos passion. Temos cooperation. Que nos permite atrair talento e reter talentos.

Além da facilita o processo de procurar casa, vocês têm mais serviço para oferecer? E como?

Temos um buddy programe. Ajuda estrangeiras para integrar na sociedade. Para senhorios, temos self serviço tools para eles e temos apps.

Annex II- Interview of founder of Zizabi

Oporto, 21/04/2017

<div align="center">

Interview

</div>

Gender: Male
Occupation: Manager
Type of Interview: face-to-face

Como surgiu a ideia para construir uma plataforma como Zizabi?

Quando eu quis pôr arrendar o meu apartamento em 2012, percebi que os clientes ficavam mais interessados porque eu lhes dava informações sobre as condições do apartamento, mas também o estilo da vida naquela área como por exemplo, os transportes públicos, lojas de conveniências escolas e universidades. Percebi

que estas informações de detalhe sobre vizinhança atrairia um grupo potencial de clientes. Sendo útil para mim, também é útil para outras pessoas.

Como chegar a ter casas no vosso site?

No princípio, o nosso projecto foi criar uma plataforma aonde os clientes reformados estrangeiros pudessem saber acerca de zonas residenciais em Portugal e suas valências. Desta forma, surgiu a primeira versão do nosso site onde só tinha o mapa descritivo de todas as informações sobre zona residenciais, tal como serviço de saúde, restaurantes e jardins. Também oferecíamos os dados dos habitantes daqueles freguesias e estilo de vida. Tendo encontrado muita dificuldade de fazer passar esta informação da nossa marca no exterior, mudámos o nosso foco para marcado nacional. Mesmo assim, as pessoas que visitavam o nosso site não ficavam satisfeitos porque não tinha fotos e informações sobre o arrendamento local no nosso site. Por isso, criámos um Crawler software para introduzir uma listagem de propriedades de outros sites imobiliários no nosso site. Mesmo assim, aqueles que nos visitavam no site, não sentiram conveniente em ter que consultar o outro website para arrendamento. E nós decidimos começar a contactar as empresas que já tinham informações sobre propriedades e imobiliárias. As primeiras empresas que fomos contactar foram as companhias de software CRM na área imobiliária, como por exemplo, hcPro, IMOMarketing. E desta forma, conseguimos completar a informação no nosso site.

Como divulga a vossa marca?

Naquela altura, começámos a utilizar as plataformas mais usadas como Facebook, Google AdWords para promover a nossa marca. Além disso, nós também comprámos o espaço publicitários nas plataformas como Trovit, Mitula e Nuroa para divulgar a nossa marca. Entretanto, também contactámos com várias agências imobiliárias para tentar persuadir que usassem o nosso site. Uma das oportunidades que tivemos para promover a nossa marca foi através dos

programas de TVI e RTP. Mas, mesmo assim, o nosso site não tinha alcançado os clientes individuais como marca Zizabi.

Qual é o vosso modelo de negócio?

Começando a perceber que as agências imobiliárias não colaboravam connosco devido à nossa dimensão ser pequena, porque para agências imobiliárias só têm interesse se nós partilhássemos com eles as informações dos nossos clientes. Por exemplo, que estilo de propriedade eles procuravam, qual orçamento eles tinham, e os requisitos para fechar negócios com mais facilidade. Sendo assim, negociamos o success fee para nas condições de negócio a Zizabi ter uma comissão de todos os clientes utilizassem o nosso serviço.

Quais são principais desafios vocês confrontam?

Em primeiro, foi divulgar a nossa marca como credível no mercado imobiliário tendo nós que investir nas redes sociais para abranger o maior número de visitas no nosso website.
A seguir, a nossa preocupação foi que todos os nossos clientes tivessem um serviço de qualidade prestado pelas nossas parcerias imobiliárias.