Co-Creation: The More We Contribute – The More We Value

Shulga Lenna, Busser James A.

Purpose: In goods-dominant logic, value, as a positive comparison of benefits over costs, led to a widespread understanding that consumers are mainly concerned with spending as little as possible and receiving as much as possible in added benefits from purchases (Zeithaml, 1988; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Yet, according to Service-Dominant Logic (SD-Logic), when social-economic actors contribute and integrate their resources, the co-created value, as a service outcome, should emerge improving the service system’s well-being, understood not only as macro-level eco-systems well-being, but also as well-being for all actors involved (Vargo & Lusch, 2016; Vargo et al., 2017). Thus, this study’s purpose is to examine whether when co-creation participants contribute more resources to the process they value the outcomes more.

Study design/methodology/approach: A two-study experimental scenario-based design was utilized. Study 1 (n=460) used a co-creation contest managed by a popular US-based coffee-brand. Participants were equally and randomly assigned as active contributors or simple observers ( manipulation: $M_{\text{contributors}}=5.68$, $M_{\text{observers}}=4.73$, $t=3.20$, $p<0.001$ ). Study 2 (n=960) used a destination resort setting, where participants co-created their resort-stay. Participants, active resource integrators, were equally and randomly assigned to strong or weak resource contribution conditions ( manipulation: $M_{\text{strong}}=8.51$, $M_{\text{weak}}=4.49$, $t=11.72$, $p<0.001$ )

Findings: In Study 1, ANOVA demonstrated that contributors appraised resource integration significantly higher than observers: $F(1, 458)=15.13$, $p<0.001$, and subjective well-being as co-creation outcome: $F(1,458)=4.16$, $p<0.05$. In Study 2, MANOVA revealed that participants with strong contribution, appraised value and outcomes higher: co-created value $F(1,958)=309.44$, $p<0.001$; perceived value $F(1,958)=318.34$, $p<0.001$, subjective well-being $F(1,958)=267.43$, $p<0.001$.

Originality/value: Theoretically, the results support SD-Logic’s integration of resources premise (Vargo & Lusch, 2016) and bring forward a new understanding of value. Following SD-Logic, the more co-creation actors contribute their operant resources to co-creation, the more they value the well-being outcomes.