

Co-creation of value or value destruction? Examples from Swedish elite football

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Aim of paper and research questions

This paper aims to increase our understanding of the concept of co-creation and how interaction among different actors may lead to positive outcomes or negative outcomes. The negative side of co-creation is rarely discussed; rather, the dominating perspective is how values are co-created. By using thoughts of Normann (2001) this paper discusses how the co-producers can have two different functions; the co-producer can be viewed as a value creator or a value destroyer. This is further elaborated upon by studying Swedish Elite football showing how diverse actors together co-create outcomes in relation to the football experience. The football experience is a shared co-creation process that regularly results in negative outcomes mainly through disturbance by supporter groups.

The following research questions are addressed:

1. How do actors interact in the shared co-creation process?
2. What could the possible outcomes be of this shared situation?

Literature review

Co-creation of value can be viewed from several perspectives. A lot of work has been conducted in the service management perspective, for example Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008), Grönroos (2006), Ballentyne and Varey (2006; 2008), Brodie et al. (2006), Gummesson (2007) and Etgar (2008). Their works differs to some extent, however the general belief is that the customer is a co-creator of value and that value is actualized through value-in-use. Furthermore, a lot of work has been done discussing customer co-created value from an experiential view previous to the debate within service literature. Consumer researchers have done a lot of work on how consumers co-create in the market. Early work argues that value inheres in the consumption experience and that marketing needs to focus on experiences that creates meanings for consumers (e.g. Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Fournier, 1998; Cova, 1996; Holbrook, 2000). More recently, consumer meanings and experiences are elaborated upon in relation to co-creation (e.g. Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006; Cova & Cova, 2002). Reviewing literature within the service research stream the general belief is that value is co-created. This provides inspiration for further research regarding outcomes rather than values in shared co-creation situations.

Research design and proposed data analysis

In this study, in-depth interviews with football clubs were conducted using a combined network and case approach. A framework is developed (by inspiration from Fyrberg & Juriado, 2009) based on key actors involved in the co-creation of the football experience. This framework consists of the following actors: Clubs – football clubs including teams performing at the arena, Service Providers -local providers of services at the arena, Consumers- audiences include supporter groups and Regulators – regulating football bodies.

Discussion of progress

At this initial stage, the outcomes of the shared co-creation process are analysed by studying the interaction among involved actors; so far it is confirmed that actors do not always co-create value. Within this the supporter groups are of particular interest, as they are important co-creators of the football experience and since they create the atmosphere at the arena. By this they also create dependence towards them as they 'control' the experience by contributing to the stadium atmosphere. This is further facilitated by the fact that the context for sports is highly uncertain and requires adequate behaviour of involved actors.

The complexity within the co-creation process will be further analysed by looking into social network theory as a complement to service literature. Social network theory is useful since it explains social relations, interactions and norms. In addition, further data analysis will be conducted.

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