
VALUE CO-CREATION CONCEPT AND ITS DIMENSIONS: A STUDY REGARDING THE SPORT SERVICE PROCESSES

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Type: Scientific
Category: 5: Marketing In and Through Sport

Abstract

AIM OF THE PAPER

Many years ago, Lovelock and Young (1979) discussed the importance of customers' contributions to firms' productivity. According to Rod et al. (2014), customers can contribute to organisations through creating value by different ways such as co-production of value, value facilitation, and transaction-based value or value-in-exchange. In addition, Moller (2006) specifies three levels of value creation: a) proprietary value, where a firm creates value for its own benefit, rather than for customers; b) exchange value, which a supplier develops an offering and a customer consumes it; and c) relational value, where value is created through relationships. The aim of this paper is to introduce value co-creation concept and its dimensions through relationships.

VALUE CO-CREATION CONCEPT

Customer value co-creation behaviours through relationships are becoming more and more popular in the recent years (Gustafsson et al., 2012), because customers' collaboration and participation in the service encounter are necessary in order to accomplish value creation (Moeller et al., 2013). Grönroos (2012) defines value co-creation as "joint activities by parties involved in direct interactions, aiming at contributing to the value that emerges for one or both parties" (p.1520). Value co-creation studies reflect Service-dominant Logic and the Nordic School of Service Marketing (Moeller et al., 2013). Sport activities need a high level of customer coproduction (Buettgen et al., 2012), and customer participation (Bitner et al., 1997) in service delivery in order to meet the needs and benefits. As a result, value co-creation is important in the health and sport services. However, value co creation is not well documented in the sport marketing literature.

VALUE CO-CREATION DIMENSIONS

A number of value co-creation dimensions, particularly applicable is the

sport and health clubs, have been suggested in this article. These dimensions have been identified through searching in databases such as Web of Knowledge and EBSCO.

COMPLIANCE

Guo et al. (2013) mention compliance refers to “consumers’ adherence to a service provider’s requests, policies, or procedures” (p.551). Yi and Gong (2013) operationalize this variable as responsible behaviours. Customers, as responsible value co-creators, need to cooperate with the sport clubs, observe rules, accept directives, and perform instructions and required tasks. Compliance is considered as a value co-creation component because many people simply do not comply with the rules and policies of relevant organisations (Verleye et al., 2014).

INFORMATION SEEKING

According to uncertainty reduction theory, people seek information in organisations in order to reduce uncertainty and create predictable environments. To do so, individuals try to obtain information via channels such as social interactions with superiors and peers (Bauer et al., 2007). People need to seek information in order to direct, evaluate, and adjust their efforts. The reason is that individuals’ roles are often dynamic. Lee (2014) points out individuals, both experts and novices, seek information not only to resolve deficiencies, but also to obtain more benefits from possession of more information.

INFORMATION SHARING

Yi and Gong (2013) define information sharing as “providing resources such as information for use in value co-creation processes” (p.1281). In health and sport clubs, it is important that customers share their essential information with employees, because it helps employees to do their duties. It also reduces employees’ workload. In addition, sharing required information helps employees to provide the services which meet customers’ needs.

GIVING FEEDBACK

Verleye et al. (2014) point out an important way of interactions with firms and their employees is giving suggestion/feedback in order to improve services. Yi and Gong (2013) define feedback as “solicited and unsolicited information that customers provide to the employee, which helps employees and the firm to improve the service creation process in the long run” (p.1281). Customers can be a very good source of suggestions and feedback, because they have remarkable experiences with services in the sport clubs.

HELPING OTHER CUSTOMERS

Yoo et al. (2012) specify three types of roles that a customer is able to act in service engagement, including help seeker, proactive helper, and reactive helper. As a help seeker, a customer actively searches information from others in order to obtain service goals. A proactive helper is eager to give advice to others. Lastly, reactive helper advice others when they ask him/her.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is defined as “recommending the business- whether the firm or

the employee- to others such as friends or family” (Yi and Gong, 2013, p.1281). Sport club customers can advocate health and sport clubs through positive word of mouth.

TOLERANCE

Tolerance is “customer willingness to be patient when the service delivery does not meet the customer's expectations of adequate service, as in the case of delays or equipment shortages” (Yi and Gong, 2013, p.1281). It is obvious that, in service delivery, nobody can claim 100 percent error free service (Dong et al., 2008). Therefore, having patient customers is important in service organisations.

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

The current essay has tried to introduce value co-creation concept, and to explain some important dimensions of the concept in the service delivery processes. Introduction of value co-creation dimensions can help scholars to better understanding of the concept.

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EASM 2014