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Co-creation impacts on student behavior

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Abstract

Co-creation is a new trend in business context aimed at fusing all the stakeholders, specially customers in different phase of creation and production of products and services (Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010; Bowonder et al.; Muñiz & Schau, 2011; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Within this paper, the effects of co-creation approach at the university context are analyzed through a literature review. The objective is to examine the existing relationship among different variables which are present at co-creation process in higher education institutions. The studied variables are communicative participation, co-creation and satisfaction. The results show a positive impact of students' collaborations (as customers) on value co-creation; in addition of a high impact of co-creation on students' satisfaction. Finally, as a future research, it is suggested to carry out, using quantitative techniques, to bolster co-creation implications on scholar behavior.

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Keywords: Co-creation; communicative participation; satisfaction; higher education.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the level of information demanded by consumers is increasingly high while requiring higher value added services (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Value co-creation, due to customers' involvement since the initial phases of ideation of services and/or products creation, has been modifying the traditional concept of business

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(Gustafsson et al., 2012). Co-creation can offer strategic advantage providing unique services designed by the customers (Bolton & Saxena-Iyer, 2009; Witell et al., 2011). In order to implement this perspective, companies shape their channels to create solid links with stakeholders, being active customer participation and collaboration one of the primary functions (Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010).

The main aim of this piece of research is to analyse co-creation approach within higher education (HE) institutions, while studying existing models in order to understand the relationship among the most commonly studied variables, such as communicative participation, co-creation and satisfaction. Since these relationships are present during the co-creation of value, it is important to know the real effect that this concept have on customers' behaviour, in order to foster the student's satisfaction. Some of the co-creation's benefits are the promotion of communication among the stakeholders involved, the productivity growth (Rexfelt et al., 2011), or the organizations' cost reduction (Auh et al., 2007).

In the particular case of higher education institutions, one of the challenges to be faced is to make the necessary transition from traditional methods professor-centered, to a new perspective focused on students which implies higher levels of collaboration. At this point, co-creation is analyzed as a new innovative approach, which helps modify the current procedures and also provides students of better opportunities on the labour market powers (Velasco, 2014).

2. Methodology

The methodology applied was systematic literature review, in order to validate and confirm the relationship existing between communicative participation and co-creation, and co-creation and satisfaction. The review included published papers since 2004 to the present. The review process followed 7 decision-steps:

- Initial search in ISI Web of Knowledge, EBSCO and ABI/INFORM ProQuest databases to find the most suitable journals related to the issue.
- Selection of the keywords: Co-creation or cocreation, co-production or coproduction.
- Determination of the data range: 2004-2015
- Selection of papers published only in peer-reviewed journals.
- Until this phase, there were found 373 papers from ISI ISI, 47 from EBSCO, 5 from ProQuest.
- Search for a combination of secondary keywords: communicative participation, satisfaction, higher education institutions.
- Abstracts reading.
- Removing redundancies, remaining only the relevant papers to the study.

The final result of the process included 47 papers from ISI, 3 from EBSCO and 4 from ProQuest. Finally, a hand-searching was conducted and 22 extra relevant papers were included.

The reference manager software used was the Mendeley. The principal journals included were: *Journal of Marketing*, *Advances in Consumer Research*, *Research in Higher Education*, *Business Horizons*, *Computers and Education*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Strategy & Leadership*, *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, *International Journal of Educational Management*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Research in Higher Education*.

3. Findings of the study

Co-creation approach with direct collaboration and customer engagement, both in the service and production sectors, allows final product/service to be obtained according with consumer requirements. Throughout the literature review, factors and concepts involved in the co-creation process has been found. The most commonly used factors in literature are customer participation and involvement, precise communication and transparent feedback. There other issues, also quite frequent: quality of product-service provided, and the influence of the aforementioned factors on customers' satisfaction and loyalty.

Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) created the DART model (dialog, access, risk and transparency), considering what they labeled as the most important elements of co-creation process. In their study, Berthon et al. (2009) also

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