



Exploring the relationship between co-creation and satisfaction using QCA[☆]



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ABSTRACT

Customer behavior is one of the key components of value co-creation. Several authors believe that co-creation generates satisfaction. However, few studies exist that focus on that relationship. This study explores the relationship between value co-creation and customer satisfaction in spa services through a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). QCA analysis allows exploring the relations between the variables. The main contribution of this article is going beyond identifying the concrete co-creation variables that relate to satisfaction. The sample consists of hotel clients that use the spa service.

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1. Introduction

In value co-creation, the customer has an active role as a co-creator and thus, businesses can offer their applied resources for value creation. Firms collaboratively create value by following value propositions, but they cannot independently create value. Interaction becomes the way through which firms develop a joint process of value creation. Therefore, the customer is not a simple recipient but is instead a collaborative partner who “creates value with the firm” (Lusch, Vargo, & O'Brien, 2007, p. 6). Literature goes beyond revealing a strong link between generated value, customer satisfaction, and business results (Dabholkar & Sheng, 2012; Guenzi & Troilo, 2007; Wu, 2011). Customer satisfaction is essential for companies' success. Thus, customers are active participants in the value co-creation process (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) and interact with the company in order to reach a greater satisfaction (Grönroos, 2008).

Although several studies analyze co-creation and satisfaction (Cossio-Silva, Camacho, & Vázquez, 2013; Grisseman & Stockburger-Sauer, 2012; Vega-Vazquez, Revilla-Camacho, & Cossio-Silva, 2013), these studies do not address the relationship between these variables. This, this study explores the relationship between co-creation variables (specifically those variables relating to

customer behavior), and global satisfaction variables using fsQCA on a sample of hotel clients that use the spa service. Only a few instruments are valid to measure value co-creation in services. This study draws on Cossio-Silva et al. (2013), who combine the following two instruments: (1) Yi and Gong's scale (2013), that measures value co-creation through the analysis of 29 variables from the customer's perspective and distinguishes two types of consumer behavior, participation behavior and citizenship behavior; (2) a set of variables that reflects the evaluation of global satisfaction with firms.

Furthermore, this study uses fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). QCA allows exploring the relations between the variables used. This method has some strong advantages for analyzing co-creation because this method allows studying how factors combine into configurations of necessary and sufficient conditions that underlie outcomes (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

The main contribution of this study is going a step ahead by identifying the concrete co-creation variables that relate to satisfaction.

2. Analytical framework and explanatory factors

Yi and Gong's scale (2013) groups its 29 items in 8 constructs and divides these constructs in two blocks: 4 constructs relate to *customer participation behavior* (variables C1–C4), and 4 constructs relate to *customer citizenship behavior* (variables C5–C8).

C1: Information seeking: Information enables customers to understand and control their co-creation environments and master their role as value co-creators. C2: Information sharing: Through sharing information, customers can ensure that employees provide the service that meets their particular needs (Ennew & Binks, 1999).

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C3: Responsible behavior: For successful value co-creation, customers need to be cooperative, to observe rules and policies, and to accept directions from employees (Bettencourt, 1997). C4: Personal interaction: Refers to interpersonal relations between customers and employees, which are necessary for successful value co-creation (Ennew & Binks, 1999). C5: Feedback: Customers are in a unique position to offer guidance and suggestions to employees because they have considerable experience with the service (Bettencourt, 1997). C6: Advocacy: In this context, advocacy indicates recommending the service. Advocacy must be voluntary for successful value co-creation. C7: Helping: Customers usually help other customers instead of helping employees because customers may need help behaving in ways consistent with their expected roles (Groth, Mertens, & Murphy, 2004). C8: Tolerance: Refers to customers' willingness to be patient when the service delivery does not meet the customer's expectations (Lengnick-Hall, Claycomb, & Inks, 2000).

This study uses Suárez, Vázquez, and Díaz's (2007) scale to measure customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction refers to a global evaluation based on the experience throughout time (Anderson, Hakansson, & Johanson, 1994). Customer satisfaction also accumulates satisfaction with products or services and overall satisfaction with the company (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994; Czepiel, Rosemberg, & Suprenant, 1980).

2.1. Internal reliability analysis

Building on Ying and Gong's model (2013), this study calculates the internal reliability of each of the model's constructs. Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's alpha values of the variables C2 to C8 exceed the cut-off value of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1994). However, the internal reliability of the construct information seeking fails this test.

This study tests whether the internal reliabilities of the constructs improve when eliminating an item from the questionnaire. Table 2 shows that none of the eliminations substantially improve the reliability of the results. Thus, this study considers constructs C2 to C8 as valid.

Because the construct C1 information seeking exceeds the threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1994), the study eliminates this construct from the model. This construct includes questions about information seeking prior to the spa service delivery (e.g., by consulting other customers or by other means). However, this study focuses on a service that the hotel provides; therefore, the client does not look for information from the spa, but from the hotel itself, which may justify the removal of this construct.

Next, the study analyzes the internal reliability of the satisfaction scale by using Suárez et al.'s (2007) questionnaire. In this case, the value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.962, which confirms the reliability of the satisfaction construct. Fig. 1 shows the conceptual model that this study proposes. In this model, and after the removal of the C1 variable, the set of variables C2–C8 arises as causal of satisfaction.

From this model, this study examines the relationship between value co-creation and customer satisfaction in spa services by using fsQCA.

Table 2
Item–total statistics variables for constructs.

	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item–total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
C1 – Information seeking				
<i>Iseeking1</i>	7.280	11.812	0.479	0.523
<i>Iseeking2</i>	6.880	10.437	0.509	0.478
<i>Iseeking3</i>	7.500	13.076	0.393	0.635
C2 – Information sharing				
<i>Isharing1</i>	12.170	19.296	0.533	0.716
<i>Isharing2</i>	11.440	14.739	0.759	0.577
<i>Isharing3</i>	11.830	15.714	0.717	0.607
<i>Isharing4</i>	9.780	23.979	0.260	0.834
C3 – Responsible Behavior				
<i>Respbehav1</i>	17.660	19.442	0.866	0.942
<i>Respbehav2</i>	17.390	18.436	0.943	0.918
<i>Respbehav3</i>	17.140	21.511	0.834	0.952
<i>Respbehav4</i>	17.430	18.580	0.900	0.932
C4 – Personal interaction				
<i>Persinterac1</i>	23.730	25.847	0.873	0.919
<i>Persinterac2</i>	23.580	25.559	0.929	0.910
<i>Persinterac3</i>	23.510	26.037	0.928	0.911
<i>Persinterac4</i>	23.760	26.146	0.820	0.929
<i>Persinterac5</i>	23.590	26.263	0.681	0.959
C5 – Feedback				
<i>Feedback1</i>	10.610	7.691	0.520	0.701
<i>Feedback2</i>	9.330	9.400	0.633	0.552
<i>Feedback3</i>	9.260	9.980	0.521	0.669
C6 – Advocacy				
<i>Advocacy1</i>	10.730	9.239	0.852	0.940
<i>Advocacy2</i>	10.590	8.734	0.904	0.899
<i>Advocacy3</i>	10.620	9.492	0.891	0.911
C7 – Helping				
<i>Helping1</i>	13.140	16.923	0.727	0.801
<i>Helping2</i>	13.040	17.920	0.726	0.805
<i>Helping3</i>	14.500	16.939	0.695	0.815
<i>Helping4</i>	14.930	17.142	0.645	0.837
C8 – Tolerance				
<i>Tolerance1</i>	9.010	8.108	0.538	0.732
<i>Tolerance2</i>	7.370	8.372	0.561	0.708
<i>Tolerance3</i>	8.260	6.470	0.678	0.567

Table 1
Constructs and reliabilities.

Construct	Composite reliability
C1 – Information seeking	0.648
C2 – Information sharing	0.760
C3 – Responsible behavior	0.952
C4 – Personal Interaction	0.940
C5 – Feedback	0.725
C6 – Advocacy	0.943
C7 – Helping	0.854
C8 – Tolerance	0.758

3. Method of analysis

To verify the study's hypothesis, the clients of the hotel spa answered the questionnaire after the spa experience. The questionnaire contained 29 items (Yi & Gong, 2013) and 6 satisfaction variables (Suárez et al., 2007). Interviewers collected information between September and November 2014. Data collection finished with 103 complete questionnaires. The study used fsQCA through the computer software fsQCA 2.5 (Ragin & Davey, 2014) to analyze the relationship

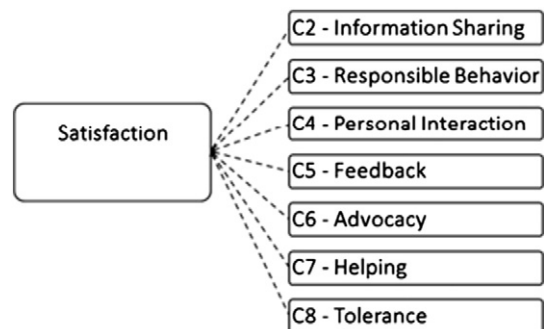


Fig. 1. Conceptual model proposal (adapted from Yi & Gong, 2013).

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