



# Efficacy of co-creation and mastering on perceived value and satisfaction in tourists' consumption



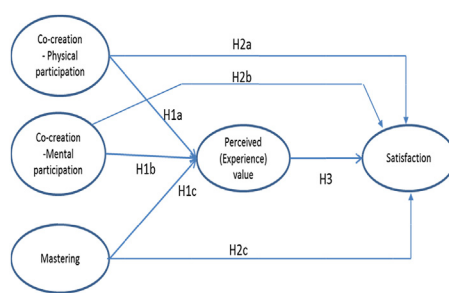
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## HIGHLIGHTS

- The importance of including the mastering and co-creation dimensions in acknowledging consumers as resource integrators for value creation in experiences.
- Consumers' psychological participation is more important than physical participation in consumers' value perception.
- Value perception mediates the relation between participation and satisfaction.
- Satisfaction in experiential consumption evolves through consumers' participation in creating value.
- In adventure tourism, spiritual or psychosocial value is more important than the conventional economic value and functional value.

## GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



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## ABSTRACT

This study explores effects of participation, namely co-creation and mastering, on the perceived value of consumers' experience and satisfaction. Co-creation comprises both physical and psychological (mental) participation, and mastering represents consumers' self-perceived knowledge and skills in taking part in experiential activities. Adventure tourism is chosen as the setting. A logit model is used to test the hypothesis. The study results reveal that tourists' mastering and psychological co-creation are significant for value perception. Further, value perception is found to mediate the relation between participation and satisfaction. Consequently, tourists' participation augments satisfaction by creating value in the experience. This study contributes to the theory in two ways. First, it reveals the importance of including the mastering and co-creation dimensions in acknowledging tourists' as resource integrators for value creation in experiences. Second, satisfaction in tourism consumption evolves through tourists' participation in creating value of the experience.

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## 1. Introduction

Consumers' role as resource integrators in value creation

processes has received increased attention in the recent literature (e.g., Baron & Harris, 2008; Navarro, Andreu, & Cervera, 2014; Prebensen, Kim, & Uysal, 2016; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). According to these scholars, research reveals that consumers partake in co-creating value with employees, other consumers, and the setting (e.g., Carù & Cova, 2003; Grisseman & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Prebensen & Foss, 2011; Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft, 2010). Consumers who participate in creating value in the consumption process are shown to be more satisfied than passive agents (e.g., Navarro, Llinares, & Garzon, 2016; Prebensen et al., 2016; Troye & Supphellen, 2012). Although the literature exposes the vital role of consumers in value creation processes, more knowledge regarding how and where value is created in the consumption processes is required (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital, & Gouthro, 2015). Hence, this article explores the process of value co-creation by studying the direct effects of participation on value perception and satisfaction and the indirect effects of participation on satisfaction through value perception (mediating effect) in a setting of adventure tourism consumption. Researchers delineate active participation in consumption in both physical and psychological terms (Bertella, 2014; Minkiewicz, Evans, & Bridson, 2014; Prebensen & Foss, 2011). Physical participation includes body movements (Campos, Mendes, Oom do Valle, & Scott, 2016), whereas psychological participation concerns a person's cognitive actions, such as learning, collecting, and sharing information and knowledge acquisition (Kolb, 1984; Yi & Gong, 2013). Both co-creation patterns are suggested to result in feelings such as fun, happiness, and contentment (Holbrook, 2000).

In the process of value co-creation, consumers make efforts to use competence or skills, delineated as operant resources (see Constantin & Lusch, 1994; for a discussion), in their chosen activities. Consumers' perception of their own competence and skills can be denoted as self-perceived mastering, that is, as the ability to perform a certain experiential activity or task, such as hiking, canoeing, or dogsledding. Previous experience, knowledge, and personal skills in performing an activity are subsequently important aspects regarding self-perceived mastering. The present work adopts this perspective and includes self-perceived mastering (i.e., how consumers perceive their knowledge and skills regarding the performance of a certain activity) as an antecedent of perceived experience value.

Consumers who partake in co-creation in consumption processes expect various types of benefits, such as hedonic, cognitive (i.e., information), social, and personal benefits (Nambisan & Baron, 2009). These benefits are delineated as the perceived consumer value by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991). The existing literature clearly identifies consumers' perceived value as an important antecedent to their satisfaction in experiential consumption, such as the consumption of culture, heritage, leisure, sports, and tourism (e.g., Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Prebensen et al., 2016; Williams & Soutar, 2009).

The study described in this paper tests the effects of co-creation and mastering on the perceived value of consumers' experience and satisfaction. To test the model in experiential consumption, adventure tourism is chosen as a study case. In a review of adventure tourism, Sung, Morrison, and O'Leary (1996) identify six major components of the notion of adventure – activity, environment, experience, motivation, performance, and risk – and find that activity is the most important variable for defining adventure travel. Martin and Priest (1986) characterize adventure tourism as residing in the interplay of competence and risk. Walle (1997), however, suggests viewing adventure in terms of a quest for insight and knowledge rather than risk in adventure tourism. Despite their different views, these scholars show that adventure tourists hold various motivations for engaging in such endeavours.

In experiential consumption adventure tourists travel because they want to partake in both the production and the consumption of such experiences. Our assumption is that, since consumers in experiential settings are resource providers and participants in value creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), co-creation and mastering will enhance their perceived value and subsequently increase their satisfaction. We also assume perceived value to function as a mediating variable in experiential consumption.

The theoretical underpinning of the present work is based on the service-dominant logic perspective, in which the consumer is imperative in the value creation process (e.g., Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Vargo & Lush, 2004; 2006). Additionally, this work takes the stand that a consumer in experiential consumption may search for various experiences producing different kinds of feelings (e.g., Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook, 1987, 2000, 2006), namely hedonic and eudaimonic feelings. While hedonic feelings are described in the literature as experiences during behaviour that is familiar or easily managed, eudaimonic feelings include emotions such as interest, immersion, and engagement (Vittersø, 2011). Eudaimonic feelings are typically experienced during the pursuit of important goals and in attempts to overcome obstacles (Panksepp, 2005; Vittersø, 2011).

The present work contributes in several ways. First, it provides detailed insights into co-creation, mastering, and dimensions of the value creation process as consumers take part in activities to create value and satisfaction for themselves. Thus, the paper enriches the theoretical and empirical perspectives of value co-creation. Second, it identifies how co-creation and mastering can increase different dimensions of experience value in adventure tourism. Third, following the lead of Grisseman and Stokburger-Sauer (2012) the study provides insights regarding the process of consumers' participation in generating valuable experiences and satisfaction through the process of co-creating value. The study thus provides tourism managers with knowledge in terms of what- and how to facilitate for tourist to participate in augmenting experience value and satisfaction for themselves and others. The present research subsequently fills a void in the research regarding the process of co-creating value in experiential consumption (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

The paper is structured as follows. The next section presents a summary of the relevant literature on perceived value and satisfaction and the relationship between the two constructs. Next, co-creation and mastering are delineated and hypotheses regarding the relationships between physical co-creation, psychological co-creation, mastering, and value perception and satisfaction are suggested. The data and research methods are then presented, followed by a discussion of the results from the model. The paper concludes with the main findings and recommendations for further research.

## 2. Literature review and hypothesis development

### 2.1. Perceived experience value and satisfaction

Consumer perceived value in experiential consumption is about 'value-in-use', because the consumer is personally present in the situation in which the experience value is co-created (Grönroos, 2011). Consumer perceived value as a theoretical and empirical construct has received increasing attention in marketing and tourism research in the last three decades (e.g., Holbrook, 1987, 2000, 2006; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Williams & Soutar, 2009). Holbrook (1987, p. 128) states that "ideas, events, or any other entities that can be acquired, used, or disposed in ways that potentially provide value" are important when a consumer is experiencing a product or a service. The much-cited view of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 132) – "consumption experience

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