

(Co-)Destruction of value in the bike-sharing industry – Phenomenon and implications for sharing services

Pick Doreen

Purpose: Bike-sharing organizations face growing difficulties in doing their business efficiently because of several negative consequences of their business model on public place. In particular, bikes are parked at wrong places, thus blocking sidewalks, bicycle lanes and even roads that is consequently reducing the security of the traffic (e.g., Fatucchi, 2017; Lazo, 2017). It further seems to be a worldwide phenomenon; some people even speak of “a wave of misbehavior” (Hernandez, 2017). Several sharing firms therefore started to set-up and communicate strict rules to their users. However, not only customers might misuse the offered bikes, also non-customers (thus, bystanders) did behave unethically by throwing bikes into lakes and copses to prevent others from using it or to simply boycott this idea of sharing. One consequence of these types of behaviors might be the reduction or even a co-destruction of value for other users of the bike-sharing industry, the bike sharing companies themselves and even the public, hence citizens of a community (Camilleri & Neuhofer, 2017; Echeverri & Skålén, 2011). Despite the practical relevance of consumer and bystander misbehavior in the bike-sharing industry, research on this behavior is fairly absent. Thus, we focus on the following research questions:

- What **types of consumer misbehavior** can be observed in the bike-sharing industry? What and how strong is the potential negative impact of consumer misbehavior for other bike-sharing customers (i.e., co-destruction potential)?
- What **communication** bike-sharing firms initiated to motivate customers of their offerings to behaving properly, for example parking in marked zones?

Design/methodology/approach: We review the literature on the common types of consumer misbehavior (e.g., Harris & Reynolds, 2004; Schaefers et al., 2015) and collect secondary data from newspapers to identify consumer misbehavior and perceived (co-)destruction of value in the bike-sharing industry. Finally, we analyze intervening communications of key bike-sharing organizations such as Mobike, Limebike and Donkey Republic by examining their Facebook profiles as the key communication tool.

Findings: There is a variety of customer and bystander misbehavior in the bike-sharing industry. Consequently, bike-sharing firms started to communicate rule to use bikes to maintain value for their users.

Originality/value: The paper is the first to examine the customer and bystander misbehavior in the bike sharing industry and its marketing implications for firms.

Keywords: Bike sharing, sharing economy, customer misbehavior

Paper type: Original work

References

- Camilleri, J., & Neuhofer, B. (2017). Value co-creation and co-destruction in the Airbnb sharing economy. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(9), 2322-2340.
- Echeverri, P., & Skålén, P. (2011). Co-creation and co-destruction: a practice-theory based study of interactive value formation. *Marketing Theory*, 11(3), 351-373.
- Fatucchi, M. (2017). Bike sharing, sarà invasione a Firenze. Ottomila parcheggi cercasi, in: *Corriere della Sera/Corriere Fiorentino* from 8 October 2017, available at: https://corrierefiorentino.corriere.it/firenze/notizie/cronaca/17_ottobre_07/bike-sharing-sara-invasione-firenze-ac60c0f8-ab8b-11e7-8c11-4be2a2b38e52.shtml#, last accessed on 4 September, 2018.
- Harris, L.C., & Reynolds, K.L. (2004). Jaycustomer behavior: an exploration of types and motives in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 18(5), 339-357.
- Hernandez, J.C. (2017). As Bike-Sharing Brings Out Bad Manners, China Asks, What's Wrong With Us?, in: *The New York Times* from 2 September 2017, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/02/world/asia/china-beijing-dockless-bike-share.html>, last accessed on 4 September 2018.
- Lazo, L. (2017). Hey, you can't park there! Dockless bike-share bikes ending up in inappropriate places, in: *The Washington Post* from 5 October 2017, available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2017/10/05/abandoned-vandalized-and-illegally-parked-bike-share-bikes-now-a-d-c-problem/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.088474391fa4, last assessed on 7 June, 2018.
- Schaefers, T., Wittkowski, K., Benoit, S. & Ferraro, R. (2015). Contagious Effects of Customer Misbehavior in Access-Based Services. *Journal of Service Research*, 19(1), 3-21.