

Customer-to-customer interaction in service eco-systems – measuring its relative contribution to value-in use and the willingness-to-pay for it in case of sport event provision

<Value co-creation and changing role of customers and suppliers>

ABSTRACT (max 400 words)

Purpose –

A lot of services offered, so-called collective services, are used by a group simultaneously, e.g. public transport, entertainment performances etc. In these cases (and a lot of others, of course,) customers usually interact – and therefore they can one another disturb and/or enhance the service quality perceived (e.g. Grove/Fisk 1997; Pons et al. 2006).

Following Service-Dominant Logic the users of a collective service form a service eco-system – understood as a specific arrangement of resources that interact to co-create value (Lusch et al. 2009). Resources can also be people, e.g. friends, family members or strangers. Companies are well-advised to try to manage such service eco-systems.

The purpose of this paper is to open up customer-to-customer-interaction (CCI) for a specific service eco-system: sport event provision. We focused on the positive side of CCI and, therefore, on answering the following two research questions:

1. How much is the contribution to value-in-use that stems from CCI?
2. What is a customer willing to pay for it?

Methodology/approach –

As object for investigation we chose the visit of a Fußballbundesliga match, a collective service that on average 40,000 customers consume simultaneously. In this case the value-in-use that comes from CCI is called the “crowding-in effect”: Crowding-in effects “assume that consumer utility depends upon how full the stadium is (that is, capacity utilization) in that a capacity crowd improves the atmosphere at the game and adds to the sense of occasion” (Feehan 2006, p. 95). We interviewed football fans in the region of the Fußballbundesligist we cooperated with (n = 781). The survey form, ten pages in length, included demographic information, questions about the respondent’s sport consumption and the task to evaluate nine offerings (four attributes with each three levels including a measure for expected degree of capacity utilization). To determine the (relative) contribution of CCI to value-in-use and to estimate the willingness-to-pay we analysed the data by applying conjoint analysis (Hair et al. 2006; Jedidi/Zhang 2002).

Findings –

21% of consumer value is according to our findings due to CCI. The customers are up to pay – on average – additional 11 Euro for the best level of CCI in case of a Fußballbundesliga match, i.e. for a match that is expected to be sold out.

Research implications –

The paper offers a conceptual as well as a methodological basis for the measurement of co-created value.

Practical implications –

Companies offering service eco-systems might be able to commercialize CCI.

Originality/value –

We measured the value – non-monetary and monetary – that stems from CCI in a specific service eco-system.

Key words (max 5) –

services marketing; customer-to-customer interaction; crowding; sport marketing

Paper type –
Research paper

References (max 1 page)

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