

## Executive Summary

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### **Value Creation in Usage Processes – Investigating the Micro-foundations of Value-in-Use**

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The Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), the Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) and recent elaborations on value-in-use dimensions build the theoretical foundation of this article. It illustrates the evolving conceptualization of value-in-use, which has become an established notion in marketing. However, despite researchers' broadly positive reception of the value-in-use concept, considerable ambiguity about its meaning and definitional problems persist. Particularly, knowledge is scarce on how individuals precisely assess value-in-use. We follow Macdonald et al.'s (2016) conceptualization, which emphasizes an offering's perceived capacity to facilitate or hinder achievement of goals as foundational for value-in-use. We extend this conceptualization and define value-in-use assessment as users' judgement of the achievement of goals that underlie value-in-use.

In a qualitative, exploratory study in the context of smartphone usage, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to explore how individuals come to a decision regarding the assessment of value-in-use and how they verify their judgement for a specific usage process. The findings show that individuals can articulate the achievement of goal dimensions and their perceptions on the emergence of value-in-use. Our research leads us to propose ten distinct modes of assessment the user applies to judge perceived value-in-use. We also suggest a more universal applicability for our findings by summarizing the ten assessment modes into five generalized indications for value-in-use.

This represents a conceptual contribution, as it provides the assessment perspective of value-in-use, which has been mostly missing in literature so far. We also make an empirical contribution, in that the research extends the heretofore-limited number of empirical studies pertaining to SDL. In so doing, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of individuals' mechanisms related to the perception of value-in-use.

Regarding practical relevance, the identified assessment modes lead to the following implications. The first concerns the issue that the often-implicit nature of value-in-use requires explicit efforts to make it noticeable and visible. Therefore, this study recommends implementing value auditing, in which suppliers and customers jointly undertake activities in order to identify and recapitulate the extent to which products and services create value-in-use.

As the second major implication, the identified assessment modes also reveal the necessity for suppliers to introduce integrated communication strategies with special emphasis on value perception. The assessment modes could be addressed concretely in communication highlighting the beneficial components of the individual's usage process. Rather than only implementing a standardized communication strategy based on general value dimensions, taking the goal

achievement perspective of value into account leads, in line with SDL and CDL, to a more customer-centric communication strategy. This results in a more effective and interactive communication between providers and consumers.