

Executive Summary

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

By *Lucas Pfisterer* and *Stefan Roth*

This paper analyses the specifications of the theoretical concepts value co-creation and value-in-use as well as their link, investigating them on an abstract macro level and a more concrete micro level. Value co-creation and value-in-use are extensively discussed concepts in marketing literature, specifically in the Service-dominant Logic (SDL). While their general theoretical description and definition are extensively described and used, both concepts lack clarity of what they mean in practice. After reviewing the SDL literature and specifically the ideas of value co-creation, value-in-use and usage processes, we discuss the literature on micro-foundations to introduce it as bridging theory between the abstract discussions of the concepts and empirical research that helps explaining them in detail. Finally, we elaborate on two empirical studies that analyse the value co-creation and value-in-use of customers in specific usage processes. The results of these studies are linked back to the theoretical ideas of value co-creation and value-in-use using the micro-foundational approach and support the specification of value creation during usage processes.

In this manuscript, we specifically line out a multi-method approach how to investigate the value creation of customers in processes when they use the offering of a provider and detail out the value-in-use that they create. This approach includes a detached observation to get to know the process, a semi-structured interview with customers to identify areas of value creation and a participant observation to support the interpretation of the results. Applying this research approach to the investigation of two very different usage processes in terms of resource integration, customer-provider-interaction and present actors provides deep insights in the areas of customer value creation during these processes. In detail, we found that customers in a usage process with high guidance and determination, high direct interaction with the provider and many other actors present particularly create value by having flexibility in the process, experiencing professionalism in the interaction with the provider and increase their well-being if the group of further present actors matches their preferences. In processes with low guidance and determination in the process, low direct interaction with the provider and only a few other actors being present, customers create value in simple and safe processes, by gaining an overview of the provider's portfolio of offerings and by the complementary information that other customers provide. On the one hand, our findings contribute to the theoretical discussion on value creation and value-in-use by illustrating the value creating aspects in usage processes with different specifications. On the other hand, our findings hold various managerial implications for the management of customer usage processes and the value creating aspects in these processes.