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Service-dominant logic in the social media landscape

New perspectives on experience and value co-creation

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1. Introduction

Consumers are increasingly empowered, connected and engaged in the co-creation of their service and tourism experiences. Creating experiences together with consumers rather than for consumers has become a prominent notion in the recent services marketing literature. The service-dominant (S-D) logic has emerged as a theoretical lens that has re-defined how experiences and value are created. This development has gone hand in hand with the proliferation of ever-more social and mobile information and communication technologies (ICTs). Social media and mobile applications have become a catalyst of change which has enabled consumers to connect, engage, participate and co-create their own experiences and value on an unprecedented scale (Ramaswamy, 2011, Xiang and Gretzel, 2010).

With distinct advances in service and tourism marketing thought, consumer society and the field of technology alike, traditional roles and processes of experience creation have changed. In moving towards technology enhanced experience environments (Neuhofer et al., 2012), we are faced with new realities for academic discourses on and practical implementation of experience creation. For the tourism, travel and hospitality context this means that we need to revise existing approaches and identify new perspectives that allow for more contemporary, dynamic and consumer-driven experience and value creation. While the role of social media in

experience co-creation has been acknowledged, there is still a limited understanding how exactly these tools allow consumers to connect and co-create their tourist experiences.

It is with this premise in mind that the chapter aims to explore and discuss the S-D logic as a new perspective for experience and value co-creation in a social media enabled context. This discussion seeks to appraise current perspectives and practices for an understanding of contemporary experience and value creation in the wider service and tourism setting. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section provides a theoretical fundament by reviewing the evolution of services marketing and introducing the S-D logic perspective. The second section contextualises the key assumptions of the S-D logic in the context of social media and showcases, through the presentation of case studies, how these can be applied for co-creation creation practices. The third section offers theoretical and practical implications of this development for marketing and tourism research and practice and concludes with an outlook into the future. This chapter contributes by conceptualising the S-D logic in the social media landscape that shall offer a novel theoretical and practical starting point for experience and value co-creation.

2. Evolution from Product to Service and Experience Economy

Consumer empowerment and social media have not only brought major advances for consumer society but have also changed the way services and experiences are created (Frochot and Batat, 2013, Grönroos and Ravald, 2011, Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Conventional practices focusing on mere ‘service delivery’ and economically-driven ‘experience staging’ (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) have evolved. This has led to new theoretical and practical realities for service and tourism settings that have forced us to re-think the ways more consumer-driven, personalised and added-value experiences can be facilitated (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009, Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, Vargo and Akaka, 2012). This section reviews the theoretical perspectives underpinning experience and value co-creation. The S-D logic is grounded in a long evolution of services marketing, moving from the early product economy and ‘value-for-money’ to the S-D thinking logic and ‘value-in-use’ as the core concept that prevails to date.

Product Economy: Products, Goods and Value for Money

The roots of the service-dominant logic can be dated back to the early product economy in the late 18th century, in which agricultural, manufacturing and goods-centric thoughts centred the debate (Vargo et al., 2008). In this era, tangible goods (e.g. food and machines) were

considered as productive, while services (e.g. provided by doctors and lawyers) were predominantly seen as unproductive (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, Vargo et al., 2008). Towards the 20th centuries, the idea of selling and delivering tangible products to consumers became more prominent (Palmer et al., 2005). In this goods-dominant logic (G-D logic), as the main mode of thought, value was considered as embedded in goods and determined by the market price. The core tenet was ‘value for money’, created when money was exchanged for products and goods (Vargo and Lusch, 2006). The consumer society still played a minor role at the time and was primarily seen as the end of the production chain. The relationship between companies and consumers was distinct and marketing was introduced as a key tool to bridge this gap (Vargo et al., 2006). It fast became a strategic means create for creating and filling demand and emphasising the value of goods (e.g. cars and washing machines). While the GD-logic continued to prevail until the first half of the 20th century, the post-war economic prosperity induced a radical change in marketing practices, both academically and practically (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). With growing consumer purchasing power and demand, market competition experienced a rapid increase. Companies gradually shifted from simple product orientation towards a stronger focus on consumer behaviour (Sheth and Gross, 1988). These advances were primarily driven by the underlying premise to meet and satisfy consumer needs, while fostering consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Kotler et al., 2009) to increase the increasing the firm’s competitive advantage, profits and growth (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, Vargo et al., 2006).

Service Economy: Services and Value Exchange

With the shift in consumer behaviour, society became increasingly characterised as a service-driven economy (Vargo et al., 2006). While the academic practical interest in services has experienced a peak within the S-D logic most recently, the concept has entered the marketing discourses as early as the late 20th century (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). In the 1980s, thinking logic advanced from marketing management towards marketing as a social and economic process (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Several seminal concepts shaped the discourses that current knowledge builds on, including services marketing (Grönroos, 2000), relationship marketing (Palmer et al., 2005), value, resource and network oriented views (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). The sum of these concepts contributed to an inherently service-centric orientation that recognised products as merely functional means to assist the purpose of service and value exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, Vargo et al., 2008). In this era, Kotler et al. (1996, p.588) captured services as “*any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is*

essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product’.

Experience Economy: Experiences and Economic Value Progression

The advances of the service-oriented economy have fostered new thinking logics, emphasising the increased provision of services and experiences. In this changing mindset, consumers did no longer want to simply buy services, but instead, buy into experiences obtained through the consumption of services (Morgan et al., 2010). At the end of the 1990s, several theoretical concepts emerged, conceptualising this trend within the frame of the dream society (Jensen, 1999), the entertainment economy (Wolf, 1999) and the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Pine and Gilmore (1999), shaped the term experience economy, which has subsequently become one of the most significant concepts for marketing to date. In a market characterised by global competitiveness and use of technology, it has become more critical than ever before for companies to differentiate their services and create unique experiences that stand out from the competition (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). The experience economy suggests that consumers pursue memorable experiences and companies need to stage such experiences for the progression of economic value. The underlying principles propose that while products are tangible and services are intangible, experiences have the potential to become memorable. Despite its popularity in theory and practice over more than two decades, the experience economy has evolved as its businesses-oriented approach of staging became increasingly challenged (Boswijk et al., 2007).

3. A New Theoretical Perspective for Experience and Value Creation: S-D Logic

With the proliferation of social ICTs, consumers have become more active, powerful and involved in the experience production and consumption processes (Ramaswamy, 2009a). This development has fostered a change of relationship between companies and consumers and advanced our understanding of *how* and *by whom* experiences and value are created (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, Vargo et al., 2006, Sfandla and Björk, 2013). As consumers adopt a bigger role as connected and socially-engaged ‘prosumers’, the orchestrated design and staging of experiences (as prevalent in the experience economy), is considered no longer suitable to reflect the needs, wants and roles of today’s consumers. This has led to a main paradigm change in the services marketing field, introducing the S-D logic.

Vargo and Lusch (2004) and Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) were among the first scholars to recognise this change and to establish the S-D perspective. The S-D logic can be understood as a “*convergence of contemporary marketing thought*” (Vargo et al., 2006, p.40) that offers a new starting point for experience and value creation. In contrast to previous paradigms, this new logic regards the consumer not merely as a consumer, but as a central actor participating in the own creation of experiences. This has led to a redefined interaction between companies and consumers. Companies no longer design and deliver experiences, but instead facilitate the necessary prerequisites and value propositions that allows consumers to get involved and co-create and generate their own value (Vargo et al., 2008). Particularly driven by the developments in the ICTs sector, this has implied that the role of the consumer has expanded significantly (Neuhofner and Buhalis, 2013). Consumers embody multiple roles as:

- the active co-creators of the experience and value
- the co-creators of the extended physical offline and virtual online experience space
- the extractors and judges of the value.

Based on the assumption that consumers essentially co-create value, the concept of value-in-use has emerged. Compared to previous paradigms, it postulates that value is a phenomenological construct (Helkkula et al., 2012) and hence does not pre-exist in products and services, but needs to be co-created by the consumer situations of use. In other words, “*value can only be created with and determined by the user in the ‘consumption’ process and through use*” (Vargo and Lusch, 2006, p.284). This presents businesses with a changed reality that value cannot be simply delivered, but consumers are needed to integrate their own resources (e.g. social media) to co-create experiences and value (Ramaswamy, 2009a, Grönroos and Ravald, 2011, Wieland et al., 2012). Through the use of ICTs, the collaborative process of co-creation has reached a new level, as it no longer occurs only between companies and consumers (B2C), but also in a wider customer-to-customer (C2C) (Baron and Warnaby, 2011) and actor-to-actor (A2A) network (Vargo and Lusch, 2011). Table 3.1 summarises the theoretical evolution and highlights the main shift in assumptions from the product, service and experience economy towards the S-D logic for a changed experience and value co-creation.

Table 3.1 Evolution of Experience and Value Co-Creation

Assumption	From			To
	Product Economy	Service Economy	Experience Economy	Experience and Value Co-Creation (S-D Logic)
Driver of Economy	Product	Service	Experience	Experience

Economic Function	Make	Deliver	Stage	Co-Create
Nature of Offer	Tangible	Intangible	Memorable	Meaningful
Key Attribute	Standardised	Customised	Personalised	Individualised
Method of Supply	Inventoried after production	Delivered on demand	Revealed over duration	Co-created in-use/context
Role of Company	Manufacturer	Seller	Stager	Facilitator and co-creator
Role of Consumer	User	Client	Guest	Co-Creator
Interaction	B2C	B2C	B2C	A2A
Role of Goods	Main output	Means for services	Means for experiences	Basis for operant resources
Resources	Operand resources	Operand resources	Operand resources	Operand resources
Factor on Demand	Features	Benefits	Sensations	Value
Role of Value	Value-for-money	Value-in-exchange	Economic value	Value-in-use

Source: After Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Neuhofer and Buhalis, 2013;

4. Conceptualising the S-D Logic in the Social Media Landscape

Due to the proliferation of the Web 2.0 and social media, it has become evident that consumer empowerment and co-creation have been inextricably linked to one factor, namely technology (Neuhofer et al., 2012). The significance of ICTs is not only prevalent in society but especially critical across the service, tourism and hospitality sectors. With a plethora of ICTs available, tourists are always connected, which unfolds new possibilities to proactively co-create experiences and value in every step of the consumption (Neuhofer et al., 2014, Wang et al., 2012). Subsequently, it has been of particular for academia and practice to understand how to exploit the full potential of ICTs to enable, facilitate and enhance experience and value creation. In interlinking S-D logic and social media, this chapter now takes a closer look at conceptualising its synergies for theory and practice.

Social Media: A Game Changer for Tourism

ICTs have caused a drastic impact, by changing not only consumer society and various industries (Buhalis and Law, 2008), but also by transforming the nature of how tourist experiences are created (Lamsfus et al., 2013, Tussyadiah and Zach, 2011, Yovcheva et al., 2013). In particular, with the advances of the Internet from the Web 1.0 to the Web 2.0, one of the most transformative technological developments has occurred (Dwivedi et al., 2012, Fotis et al., 2011, Leung et al., 2013, Sigala, 2011, Xiang et al., 2014). The Web 2.0 and social media have turned the Internet into an immense space of networking and collaboration (Sigala, 2009). Unlike any other medium before, social media have embraced different people, technologies and new practices, which support consumers and their experiences (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). The variety of tools available, comprising blogs, videos, wikis, chat rooms, folksonomies and podcasts have empowered individuals to connect, interact and generate user-

content on an unprecedented scale (Sigala, 2011, Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009). In addition, social media have paved the way for new ways of collaboration that have caused a transformation of traditional service design, production and marketing (Sigala, 2009), consumer behaviour and tourism (Fotis et al., 2011).

Empowered by the interactive nature of the Web 2.0, consumers have taken an active part in designing services with companies. Through a variety of applications, they have not only altered how services are consumed on the Internet, but also changed how consumers locate, share, read, create and produce information (Sigala, 2009, Sigala, 2011). By enabling connectivity, mass collaboration and networking, social media have thus become key tools for tourism businesses and tourists to dynamically engage, interact, comment and create experiences with each other (Dwivedi et al., 2012, Hays et al., 2012, Leung et al., 2013). These developments have enabled consumers to become “*co-marketers, co-producers and co-designers of their service experiences by providing them a wide spectrum of values*” (Sigala, 2009, p.1345). With this potential for collaboration, the key question is how can social media become an effective resource for experience and value co-creation?

Social Media: A Resource for Experience and Value Co-Creation

One of the foundational premises of the S-D logic is the integration and use of so-called resources. Consumers integrate a wide range of operand and operant resources in experience and value creation processes (Vargo and Lusch, 2011). The role of IT as a resource has been discussed as early as in the 1990s. However previous studies have only provided an incomplete picture of technology, which predominantly portrayed IT as an artefact and outcome of human action (Orlikowski, 1992). Only most recently, scholarship has started to investigate ICTs in service systems, value co-creation propositions and innovation (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015, Maglio et al., 2009), while a deeper knowledge of ICTs, and particularly social media, remains missing. By drawing upon the structurational model of technology by Orlikowski (1992), social media could be conceptualised as an operant resource. If we suggest that they have the capability to act upon other resources and influence human action (e.g. tourist behaviour and experiential activities), social media can ultimately create value for its user (Akaka and Vargo, 2014). As such, they can act “*as a means of satisfying higher-order needs (i.e. enhancing the customers’ own operant resources)*” (Cantone and Testa, 2014, p.507).

In their role of operant resources, social media have enabled a massive space of online collaboration (Sigala, 2009), allowing for a myriad of actor-to-actor relations. Tourists have become inter-connected individuals who interact in a physical and virtual technology-enabled experience environment extended to the pre/during/post stages of travel (Neuhofer et al., 2012). They use social media to connect, communicate, generate content, share their experiences and in turn co-create and co-live their experiences with others more than ever before (Ramaswamy, 2009b). As a result, it has become evident that the Web 2.0 and social media have been instrumental to foster actor-to-actor interactions to explode on “*an unprecedented scale everywhere in the value creation system*” (Ramaswamy, 2009b, p.17). In fact, recent studies confirm that ICTs support co-creation experiences in a number of different ways (Gretzel and Jamal, 2009, Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2007, Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009).

For instance, tourists might engage in traditional B2C co-creation in the pre/during/post tourist experience for hotel booking, information exchange at destination, relationship building and experience sharing post-travel. Beyond this dyadic relationship, consumers also seek to engage with their close and extended social networks and engage in C2C co-creation on all levels (e.g. sharing experiences, asking for advice and opinions, examining rankings and reviews). With new forms of social applications emerging over the past few years, tourists are now able to connect to a wider A2A network more than ever before. For instance, tourists are able to use latest social platforms and applications (e.g. AirBnB, Eatwith, Uber) to connect with locals and get expert insights and co-create services with a private local peer rather than an official service provider. To get a better understanding of the ‘new generation’ of co-creation, Table 3.2 offers an outline of social media application in the tourist value creation system. By bringing together S-D logic theory and social media practice, it provides an overview of how different types of social media (resources) are applied (integrated) for different purposes (use context) by different actors in the value creation system (travel process).

Table 3.2 Social Media for Experience and Value Co-Creation

Travel Process (Value Creation System)	Tourist Activities (Context of Use)	Social Media Type (Resource)	Interaction (Actors)	Application / Example (Resource Integration)
Pre-Travel Stage	Inspiration Information search Planning Comparison Decision-making Booking	Social networks UGC review sites Video-sharing sites Blogs Virtual worlds	Multi-level engagement: Companies Consumers Friends Locals	TripAdvisor reviews Pinterest picture inspiration Facebook posts YouTube videos Travel blogs

			Service providers	AirBnB site booking
During Travel Stage	Experience consumption Accommodation Transport Visitor attractions Information search Experience sharing Navigation Sharing	Recommender systems LBS-apps UGC review sites Social networks Social augmented reality games and apps	Multi-level engagement: Companies Friends Locals Consumers Service providers	Facebook sharing Real-time Twitter information retrieval Social gaming TripAdvisor reviews Real-time social sharing
Post-Travel Stage	Post-experience engagement Sharing Reviews Interaction Experience re-living	Blogs Social provider networks UGC review sites Text/video/photo sharing sites	Multi-level engagement: Companies Friends Locals Consumers Service providers	TripAdvisor review writing Facebook experience and album posts Travel blog entries

Social Media: Best-Practice Cases In Travel, Tourism And Hospitality

The understanding and application of co-creation in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry is still scarce (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009) and even more rare with ICTs in place (Neuhofer et al., 2012). Several firms have pioneered the industry by recognising the new marketing paradigm and putting the principles of the S-D logic into practice. To provide a better understanding of how co-creation can be realized in practice, valuable insights can be gained by analysing current industry best-practice cases. Table 3.3 offers an overview of examples that shall assist other tourism practitioners as a reference guide of how social media could be successfully applied for experience and value co-creation. The five presented industry cases underline the potential in travel, tourism and hospitality environments to allow engaging, personalising, building with relationships and co-creating experiences together with empowered consumers.

Table 3.3 Industry Best-Practice: Social media for experience and value co-creation

Industry Best-Practice (Sector)	Social Media Resource Integration (Application)
Marriott Travel Brilliantly (Hospitality)	Co-creation initiative based on crowdsourcing. Individuals can submit innovative ideas through social platform with the potential to enhance the hotel and experience environment for fellow co-travellers.
Hotel Lugano Dante (Hospitality)	Social media engagement and co-creation through a smart mobile customer-relationship platform, enabling enhanced engagement, opportunities for co-creation through hotel experience personalisation.
Sol Melia's Sol Wave House (Hospitality)	The world's first Twitter hotel. Innovative use of social media (Twitter) throughout the hotel environment to foster B2C and C2C co-creation, communication and engagement in the experience environment on-site.
KLM Social Seating Initiative	KLM introduced a KLM social seating initiative called 'Meet and Seat'.

(Travel)	It tested the idea to connect people, allow C2C interaction and facilitate a more socially-rich in-flight experience.
EatWith (Tourism)	Based on the idea of the sharing economy, EatWith is a social platform allowing for A2A engagement as tourists and locals connect and co-create eating experiences, replacing traditional B2C service provision.

5. Outlook, Implications and Future Perspectives

The proliferation of social media and the arrival of the SD-logic as a marketing paradigm have offered new starting points and realities for experience and value creation practices in tourism service settings and beyond. This chapter had the aim to discuss the S-D logic as a novel theoretical perspective for experience and value co-creation in the social media landscape. It first presented the theoretical advances that underpin services marketing and management, leading from the early product economy to experiential and S-D logics, which are recognised as the state-of-the-art thinking for contemporary experience and value creation debates and practices today. The chapter also has shown that with the empowerment of consumers and the widespread use of modern digital technologies, in particular social media, consumers have turned into active prosumers who connect, engage and co-create experiences in wide network of connected actors and service contexts. For tourism academia and practice, this has implied the need for re-conceptualisation and re-thinking of how experiences and value can be facilitated. While several principles of the experience economy undoubtedly still apply, the main challenge for businesses will pose the notion of ‘letting go’, as companies are no longer the unique and primary experience creator, but rather are a mere facilitator, or an ‘invited participator’ who tourists might seek to co-create experiences. As a myriad of interactions occur outside the company domain, businesses should facilitate resources and social platforms that allow tourists to connect and collectively co-create experiences and value in a network of actors in the wider service eco-system. Practitioners will thus need to develop strategies that:

- adopt a S-D logic driven approach to experience and value creation
- facilitate the resources and environments to create a compelling value proposition
- offer social media tools and platforms as a key resource for enhanced co-creation

To innovate co-creation practices in the long-term, an agenda is necessary that synergises theoretical, technological and practical advances for competitive experience creation. As ICTs continue to emerge and evolve at a fast pace, we can foresee several key areas that will shape experience and value creation in the near future. Smart tourism and technology, SoCoMo

(social, context and mobile) marketing and the peer-to-peer sharing economy (Boes et al., 2015, Buhalis and Foerste, 2015, Gretzel et al., 2015, Neuhofer et al., 2015) are only three exemplary areas in which we will see radical change and major opportunities for co-creation to happen. As these developments gain further momentum, we enter an unprecedented era of social collaboration, smartness, massive resource and data integration, and situation- and context-aware systems that put consumer-centric experience and value extraction at the centre stage. While these fields only provide a fragment of possibilities, it can be expected that the application of the S-D logic in this context will become magnified. This will open a dynamic area to investigate through further research and tap into in tourism marketing and practice.

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