An Empirical Examination of Fan Value Co-Creation through SNS and its Consequences

Thiago Santos, Universidade de Lisboa
Abel Correia (Advisor), University of Lisbon
Rui Biscaia (Advisor), Coventry University
Tiago Ribeiro, University of Lisbon

Marketing - Consumer Behavior (Sport Clubs) Saturday, June 3, 2017
20-minute oral presentation (including questions) 4:00 PM
Abstract 2017-429 Room: Wilson

A great stream of research has been developed about consumers’ value co-creation (Pratpalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008). With development of social networking sites (SNS) consumers are increasingly active at analysing and evaluating their experiences with products and services. Kristensson et al. (2004) suggested that consumers engage with organizations via development of new products and ideas, while Rowley, Kupiec-Teahan and Leeminget (2007) mentioned that many consumers could create ideas as reliable as professional producers. In this sense, the value co-creation is defined as a creative process in which consumers have the function of contributing with organization, and serves as a source of information for the organization to create, develop and innovate its products and services (Vargo, 2008; Vernette & Hamdi-Kidar, 2013). In the sports context, fans' value co-creation materializes in their collaborative role through interaction with other fans sharing opinions about themes, products and services of the teams (Hedlund, 2014; Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa & Biscaia, 2014). It is often suggested that fans’ value co-creation tends to influence future fans behaviors towards brand products or services (e.g., Yoshida et al., 2014). Uhrich (2014) suggests that it is important to understand the fans' value co-creation through SNS because sports fans spend much of their time in online activities related to their teams. However, little empirical efforts have been developed on how to conceptualize fans’ value co-creation in the online context and its subsequent impact on future responses towards the team. Thus, the purpose of the current study is twofold. First, using the conceptualization proposed by Uhrich (2014) as basis, this study attempts to measure fans' value co-creation through SNS. Second, this study seeks to examine the effect of fans’ value co-creation through SNS on their behavioral intentions towards the team.

A scale for assessing fans' value co-creation through SNS was adapted from Uhrich (2014) including a total of 15 items distributed by five constructs: associating/dissociating (i.e., fans’ affiliation through associating and/or distinction towards groups of the rival teams), engaging and sharing (i.e., fans actively involving with other fans on sharing experiences related to the team), competing (i.e., involvement of fans’ to demonstrate the creative superiority of their teams), exchanging (i.e., sharing team contents in order to encourage other fans to perform concrete actions related to the teams), and intensifying (i.e., fans’ friendship or rivalry with fans of opponent teams to increase excitement). In a first step, these items were tested with a sample of sport sciences students from a mid-sized Portuguese university to check the appropriateness of the proposed multidimensional construct of fans' value co-creation. Data were collected through an online survey, and all items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=Not Likely at All, to 7=Strongly Agree). A total of 400 emails were sent to students that were randomly selected from the University's database. After data screening, 139 responses were deemed usable for data analysis. In the second step, data were collected from fans of a Portuguese team in Lisbon from the top professional soccer league through an online survey that included the measures of fans' value co-creation and behavioral intentions in both online and offline contexts. The construct of behavioral intentions online included four items adapted from Carlson and O’Cass (2012) while the offline measured was based on three items adapted from Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Marôco, and Ross (2012). These items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=Not Likely at All, to 7=Extremely Likely). Through a partnership with the team’s marketing department, a survey link was posted on the team’s official Facebook page inviting fans to participate in the study. The survey was available for three non-consecutive days with a total of 501 visitors responding. The IP address was recorded and further access from these IP addresses was denied to avoid redundant participants. After data screening, 425 responses were deemed usable. Data in both steps were submitted to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the measurement model using AMOS 23.0. A structural model estimation was performed in the second step to test the relationships between the proposed constructs.
The results of the CFA conducted for the step 1 showed a lack of discriminant validity among the constructs engaging and sharing, exchanging and competing (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). An analysis of items showed that these variables were possibly perceived as measures related to the engagement of fans in the creation and sharing of online content and aims to enhance the image of the team and their fans to rival fans (Uhrich, 2014). Based on this evidence, these constructs were grouped into a single construct called engaging and sharing and only the items with higher factor loading were selected to ensure the reliability and parsimony of the model. After these refinements, the measurement model indicated an acceptable fit to the data \( \chi^2(32)=83.40 \) (\( p<.01 \)); \( \chi^2/\text{df}=2.60 \); CFI = .97; GFI = .96; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .06]. Internal consistency of all constructs were above .70, and the AVE values were greater than the .50 standard indicating construct validity. Discriminant validity was accepted given that AVE for each construct was greater than the squared correlation between that construct and any other (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Regarding the second-order construct of fans' value co-creation through SNS, the model indicated an acceptable fit to the data \( \chi^2(32)=83.42 \) (\( p<.01 \)); \( \chi^2/\text{df}=2.60 \); CFI = .97; GFI = .96; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .06], the paths between fans' value co-creation and the three proposed constructs (associating/dissociating, intensifying, engaging and sharing) indicated that all relationships were positive and significant (\( p<.05 \)). In the second step, the results of both the measurement and structural models showed an acceptable fit to the data \( \chi^2(129)=287.54 \) (\( p<.001 \)); \( \chi^2/\text{df}=2.22 \); CFI = .96; GFI = .93; TLI = .95; RMSEA = .05]. The analysis of the path coefficients indicates that the construct of fans' value co-creation through SNS have a significant positive effect on both behavioral intentions online (\( \beta=.50, p<.001 \)) and behavioral intentions offline (\( \beta=.39, p<.001 \)). The ability of the hypothesized model to explain variation in the outcome variables was assessed by R2 values and approximately 25% of the variance of behavioral intentions online (R2=.25), and approximately 15% of the variance of behavioral intentions offline (R2=.15) was explain by fans’ co-creation through SNS.

These results indicate that fans' value co-creation through SNS could be measured having Uhrich’s (2014) proposal as basis, through following constructs: associating/dissociating, intensifying, engaging and sharing. In this sense, fans' perception of ‘associating and dissociating’ with the team, their engagement in sharing information, rituals and traditions and arising excitement of rivalry with fans of other teams. The implications of these results are that teams should strive to maintain interactions with fans in order to strengthen interpersonal bonds and strengthen the sense of association with the team. In addition, teams should provide fans with opportunities to share rituals and traditions that are part of the team history (e.g., photos, videos, songs) through SNS. These aspects could paramount for the development of more concrete behaviors of value co-creation (Devasagayam & Buff, 2008; McDonald & Karg, 2014). In addition, the results of the structural model supports previous studies suggesting that the fan value co-creation tends to enhance behavioral intentions toward the teams (Hedlund, 2014). This means that the more fans engage in co-creation behaviors, the more the maximization of team profits via future game attendance, recommendations of the games to other fans and purchases of products and services related to the team (Biscaia et al., 2012). Also, fans' value co-creation contributes to increase visits to team’s official SNS and to continue posting positive opinions of the team in these channels (Carlson & O'Cass, 2012). These findings should be considered by sport managers and provide opportunities to continue advancing our knowledge about how to manage fans’ co-creation through SNS.