

## Customer-to-customer interaction in service eco-systems – measuring its contribution to customer value and the customers' willingness-to-pay for in case of a sport event provision

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### Abstract keywords

services marketing, customer-to-customer interaction, crowding, value co-creation, service-dominant logic

### Aim of abstract/paper - research question

A lot of services offered, so-called collective services, are used by a group simultaneously, e.g., public transport, a theatre play etc. In these cases (and a lot of others, of course,) customers usually interact with each other – and therefore they can one another disturb and/or enhance the service quality perceived (e.g. Grove & Fisk, 1997).

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

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

### Theoretical background

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, Vargo & Tanniru, 2010). Resources can also be people, e.g. friends, family members or strangers – or, as in our case, visitors of a sport event: They interact and produce jointly the atmosphere at the location. Firms are well-advised to try to manage such service eco-systems.

According to Feehan (2006), in case of a sport event, the customer value due to CCI is the result of what he calls 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" (p. 95).

### Methodology, research design and data analysis

As object for investigation we chose matches of a club of the first German football league, a collective service that on average 50,000 customers consume simultaneously. We interviewed football fans in the region of the club 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 customer value and to estimate the willingness-to-pay we analysed the data by applying a conjoint analysis (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006; Jedidi & Zhang, 2002).

### Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

Companies offering service eco-systems might be able to commercialize CCI: 21% of customer value is according to our findings due to CCI. The club's customers are up to pay – on average – additional 10 Euro for the best level of CCI, i.e. for a match that is expected to be a sold out.

The paper offers a conceptual as well as methodological basis for the measurement of co-created value in all forms of spectator sport.

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