Research Article

Learning Co-Creation and Self-Determination: Lessons from Teaching Event Marketing

Raymond Allan G. Vergara[1]*, Kimberly Christie S. Vergara[2]

[1]Department of Marketing and Advertising, De La Salle University – Manila, Manila, Philippines
[2]Graduate School of Business, Holy Angel University, Angeles City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

The role of learners in the learning process has increasingly evolved in the learning process, leaning towards a more active and participatory role in the learning process. The article explores the value of co-creation of learning and proposes that this value-in-use in the co-creation process is the learner's intrinsic motivation. The study attempts to extend the self-determination theory by exploring learner experiences and presents a conceptual framework. The study finds that students that co-create their learning experiences in event marketing classes lead to self-motivation.

Keywords: *Event Marketing Education, Learning Co-creation, Self-Determination*

Introduction

The concept value of co-creation emerged from marketing and service management literature. Its premise is that value is co-created by enterprises with their consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000), giving consumers a more significant role in producing value. Academics and practitioners then adapted this co-creation view in teaching, affording students an active and more substantial role in the learning process. The extant literature on the value of co-creating the learning experience focused on the benefits of co-creation, including knowledge and content creation (Tsourela et al., 2014), learner regulation (Blau, 2017), student achievement (Kurucay & Inan, 2017), and student perceptions on collaboration and engagement (Kurucay & Inan, 2017; Siau et al., 2010), among others.

However, the learner's role in the learning process has been evolving even before the concept of value co-creation was introduced. In transformative learning literature, learners are not seen as passive recipients of knowledge but as active participants in the learning experience (Freire, 1970a; Freire, 1970b; Mezirow, 1978a; Mezirow, 1978b; Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow, 1996; Mezirow, 1997; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). Contemporary pedagogy and teaching principles have also promoted greater learner participation in the learning process, specifically in higher education. Experiential learning, for example, proposes creating a learning space to provide opportunities for learners to

experience concepts and subject matter, and to be an active participant in the learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), allowing them to develop important skill (Wurdinger & Allison, 2017). In challenged-based learning, the learner takes on a social role as it undergoes the learning process by collaborating with other members of society, including fellow learners, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders, to solve real-world problems (Nichols & Cator, 2008; Baloian et al., 2006; Conde et al., 2019; Leijon, 2022; Malmqvist et al., 2015). The challenge-based learning approach highlights the collaborative nature of learning, which benefits learners through enhanced engagement, learner motivation, and student achievement.

The criticism of co-creation research is that it focuses only on one of two dimensions of value co-creation (Ranjan & Read, 2016). There are two dimensions of co-creation: co-production or the "*participation in the development of the core offering*" and value-in-use or value as determined by the consumer (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). To distinguish between these two dimensions, Ranjan and Read (Ranjan & Read, 2016) created a conceptual framework to differentiate the two. According to the framework, co-production is organized into the following three categories: knowledge sharing, equity, and interaction, while value-in-use is categorized in the following three categories: experience, personalization, and relationship. Dollinger et al (2018) adapted this framework to understand co-creation in higher education and defined each construct as it applies to higher education. Table 1 summarizes this framework.

Table 1. Learning Co-Creation Framework

Co-creation Construct	Construct Category	Modification to higher education
Co-production	Knowledge	How does the student integrate their knowledge, experiences and/or other resources into the value proposition of higher education?
	Equity	Does the student have equal access to the development and design of the higher education value proposition?
	Interaction	What is the quality of the interactions between the student and the higher education institution to integrate resources and co-create the value proposition?
Value-in-use	Experience	How does value co-creation impact student experiences within higher education?
	Personalization	To what extent can students personalize their higher education value propositions?
	Relationship	How does value co-creation impact student relationships to their higher education institution?

Source: (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Dollinger et al., 2018)

In co-creation theory, firms cannot deliver value—they can only offer value propositions because the value is determined by the beneficiary (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In the same way, the locus of the value in learning does not come from the teacher but is determined by the learner. The learning co-creation model raises important questions in understanding the value in learning co-creation as perceived by learners that goes beyond just learning outcomes. Autonomy, competence, and relatedness are desired outcomes in learning theories experience (Freire, 1970a; Freire, 1970b; Mezirow, 1978a; Mezirow, 1978b; Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow, 1996; Mezirow, 1997; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012; Wurdinger & Allison, 2017;

Lucardie, 2014). According to the theory of self-determination, a person's intrinsic motivation is enhanced when the person's psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied or addressed (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

This study proposes that the value-in-use in learning co-creation is the learner's intrinsic motivation that results from learning co-production. This extends the theory of self-determination into learning co-creation. Figure 1 illustrates this study's conceptual framework.
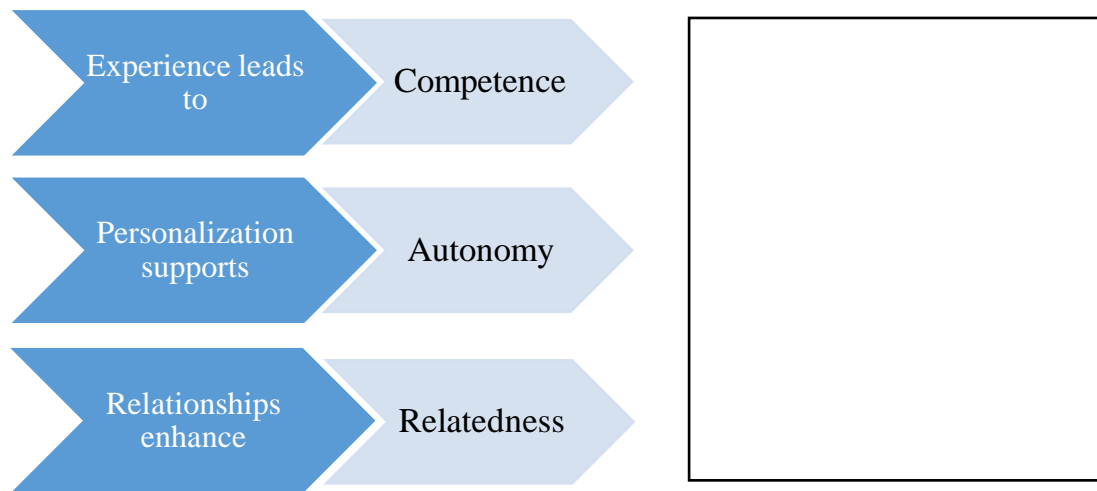
Figure 1. Value-in-Use in Learning Co-Creation

Since this study focuses on the learning co-creation within a specific class and not co-creation within higher education, it modifies Dollinger et al's (Dollinger et al., 2018) learning co-creation framework to suit a course or a class. Table 2 shows the question modification to suit a course or class.

Table 2. Defining Value-in-Use in undergraduate classes or courses

Co-creation Construct	Construct Category	Modification to undergraduate classes or course
Value-in-use	Experience	How does value co-creation impact student experiences within the course or class?
	Personalization	To what extent can students personalize their course or class value propositions?
	Relationship	How does value co-creation impact student relationships within the course or class?

Methods
This study explores the value-in-use of learning co-creation using an exploratory qualitative methodology. It examines 5 cohort classes enrolled in an event marketing course taught in three consecutive terms during the pandemic. These classes were conducted using the online distance learning modality. Participation in the study is voluntary. A total of 188 students participated in this study.

Students from each cohort were asked to answer two survey questions: a pre-course survey accomplished at the beginning of the term and a post-course assessment at its conclusion. In the pre-course survey, students were asked about their learning expectations and how they define succeeding in the course. In the post-course evaluation, students were asked to describe their experience and assess their performance in the course. In both questionnaires,

students were asked open-ended questions. Their responses were coded and analyzed.

Results and Discussions
Event marketing pedagogy

I use an experiential, collaborative, and challenge-based learning approach in teaching the event marketing course. Students are required to accomplish two group projects: a midterm group project and a final group project. The experiential projects are aimed at helping students master event marketing principles and concepts and develop skills.

[1] Midterm Group Project
A project group is required to activate an online event based on a teacher-determined event concept. Project groups are randomly assigned event themes or concepts, which serve as project event briefs. Students choose who to work with on the project and how they execute the event concept.

[2] Finals Group Project
A project group is required to activate an online event to help raise funds for a cause-based organization or an individual beneficiary. Students work with the same midterm project group. Students conceptualize the event, plan and organize around this concept, promote the event, and execute the plans.

To what extent can students personalize the value proposition of the course?

Students are challenged to activate events based on set criteria. They are given the autonomy to choose how to approach the challenge and accomplish the goals and objectives, provided they adhere to course guidelines. Students who enroll in the class look forward to these challenge-based projects because it personalizes their learning experience. They choose who they work with, what they work on, and how they accomplish the requirements. This affords students agency over how they learn in the course and how they experience the subject matter.

The challenged-based, collaborative, and experiential approach aligns with student expectations and learning objectives. Students who enroll in the course have expectations about the learning experience. When asked what they look forward to learning or performing in the course, many expressed the desire to organize and activate their event. They have ideas on how learning takes place within the context of the course and expressed excitement in bringing to fruition these ideas, specifically activating their events, while carrying out the course requirements.

They want to enjoy the experience, explore their creativity, perform challenging projects, and engage with others meaningfully.

This course can benefit me through providing me with experiences that I can learn from and use in the future.

I am interested in knowing what goes on behind the scenes in the brainstorming and planning stages of an event. As event attendees, we only get to see one side of the story, which is the event proper. I'd like to find out what considerations and factors should be assessed to plan a successful event.

After checking the syllabus, I'm excited for each component, but I'm most excited about the practical aspects of event productions. I'm also excited to know how event organizers handle any mishaps that occur during and after the event itself and how the organizers communicate and advertise the event to the public.

(I look forward to) creating a pitch.

For some, they want to experience conceptualizing and activating events because learning the principles of events management contributes to their future careers, particularly in marketing and experience management.

(At the end of this course) I should be able to understand the process of events marketing and be able to apply the knowledge that I will have learned by the end of the term in a corporate setting in the future.

I personally believe that one of the keys to a successful business is the experience they offer to their customers, and this course could give me insights on just how to achieve that.

I am really excited about the projects and events we will (activate) and learn from (because) I will be able to use (what I have learned when) I enter the marketing and advertising industry.

This desire for experiential learning through the practical application of concepts translates to how they view succeeding in the course. Students have expressed clearly how they define success and the benefit of taking the course. To them, success means achieving their learning objectives of:

- Applying what they have learned through the activation an event
  In my opinion, success can be measured obviously through the grades. However, another (measure of success) is that full application of the lessons (as seen in how) the event was executed and the audience … experience.

- Developing or enhancing skills
  I hope to improve my communication and organizational skills.

- Making a difference
  (Success to me means) applying all the learnings from the discussions to our required outputs, especially the online event and fundraising. I consider (the event) successful if they make a positive impact on the stakeholders.

- Becoming a better person
  I measure success through personal and communal development. If, after this course, (we experience) some kind of paradigm shift or have better perspectives when it comes to events marketing, I would say we will have succeeded.

- Having fun while learning
  My success is always measured (by) how much fun I have while learning.

When students have agency over the learning process, meaning they can make learning-related decisions that impact what and how they learn, they are more engaged and have more control over learning outcomes. In this case, the personalization of the learning experience supports the learner's need for autonomy, which becomes the value proposition of taking the course.

I enjoyed that the professor gave us the freedom to do what we have to do. He guided us but was able to trust us with the events.

(I think the curriculum) is good … it gives the students freedom to be creative.

Thank you … for this course … the lessons (are) so engaging, and you gave us the freedom to (activate) our events.

How does value co-creation impact student experiences within the course?

As a result of learner autonomy, students find that the most enjoyable, challenging, and impactful learning experiences come from the experience of activating their events. These activities and challenges make the learning experience fun, engaging, and meaningful. They provide opportunities for students to not only master concepts but also explore their creativity and develop skills.

We were assigned to do Charades for the classroom event, and it was honestly challenging. My group and I had to think of fun and interactive twists to such a classic game to ensure that everyone gets to participate and enjoy.

The collaborative projects provide vicarious learning opportunities for the class. Students learn from each other's experiences and learn together when they go through the same experiences.

I genuinely enjoyed a lot of activities in this course, from the class games hosted by (the teacher), to participating in the online events of my classmates. Not only did I learn from what I've experienced in the activities, but I also had fun.

As a result of a fun, engaging, and meaningful co-created learning experience, students develop competence and self-efficacy.

I think I succeeded in this course because I did my best in making the event a success. Moreover, we exceeded the goal of our fundraising event (even if we only exceeded it a little).

I believe that I succeeded in this course because I am now a better person and leader. This course helped improve my skills and provided me important lessons that I will always bring with me. I also believe that I succeed in this course because my group and I successfully executed both our events and I was satisfied and fulfilled.

Even if I don't think I'll get a high grade, I learned so much and gained confidence in myself.

I believe that it made me a better student, shaped my character, and (made) me a (better) human being.

How does value co-creation impact student relationships to their co-learners?

Students who collaborate develop a working relationship with each other and feel that they are part of something engaging and meaningful. They find value in making connections with other learners and the people they deal with when activating events.

I really enjoyed the midterm events because we got a chance to learn from each other and get closer to our groups through all the different events.

(I enjoyed the) finals activity! It was my first time (to be) part of an organizing

team for a donation drive. It was very fulfilling and eye opening for me.

We were able to implement and execute our fundraising campaign and have people benefit from it. It's really worth the time and effort considering how we were able to help a few people out in these trying times.

Conclusion

Allowing students to become active participants or co-creators in the learning experience affords them autonomy. Their performance and participation in class aligns with their learning goals and objectives, which means they have more control over their learning outcomes. Information is not merely passed on from teacher to student. Instead, learners experience the subject matter and learn concepts in a way that taps into their previous experiences, their interests, and their goals. Learners collaborate with and learn from each other, further deepening learning and allowing them to nurture meaningful connections not just with the subject matter but also with co-learners. The learning experience leads to competence and self-efficacy. More important, the co-creation of learning leads to students who are self-motivated to learn.

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