



## **Value Co-Creation In Consumer-Intensive Service Encounters: A Dyadic Perspective**

By: B. Yasanthi Perera, **Pia A. Albinsson**, and G. David Shows

### **Abstract**

Service-dominant (S-D) logic stresses the development of core competencies through shared participation of both the consumer and the producer in value creation. This article examines value co-creation in personal training, an extended consumer-intensive service. Based on in-depth interviews with personal trainers and clients, we explicate value co-creation in a fitness context from a dyadic perspective. We find that mutual understanding reached through negotiation between the client and provider regarding fitness and fitness goals enhances value creation and contributes to ultimate goal attainment.

Yasanthi Perera, B., **Albinsson, P. A.**, & David Shows, G. (2017). Value Co-creation in Consumer-intensive Service Encounters: A Dyadic Perspective. *Journal of Creating Value*, 3(1), 19–32. Publisher version of record available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2394964316684240>

# Value Co-creation in Consumer-intensive Service Encounters: A Dyadic Perspective

**B. Yasanthi Perera<sup>1</sup>**

**Pia A. Albinsson<sup>2</sup>**

**G. David Shows<sup>2</sup>**

## Abstract

Service-dominant (S-D) logic stresses the development of core competencies through shared participation of both the consumer and the producer in value creation. This article examines value co-creation in personal training, an extended consumer-intensive service. Based on in-depth interviews with personal trainers and clients, we explicate value co-creation in a fitness context from a dyadic perspective. We find that mutual understanding reached through negotiation between the client and provider regarding fitness and fitness goals enhances value creation and contributes to ultimate goal attainment.

## Keywords

Service-dominant logic, value co-creation, consumer-intensive service encounters, personal training, intersubjectivity, dyads

## Introduction

For some ‘consumer-intensive’ services (Fischer, Otnes, Winegard, Li & Wilner, 2009) such as weight loss, fitness pursuits and education, the consumer’s degree of participation and commitment to the process influences the success of the encounter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Brock University, Goodman School of Business, Department of Organizational Behaviour, Human Resources, Entrepreneurship and Ethics, St. Catharines, ON, Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Appalachian State University, The Walker College of Business, Department of Marketing, Boone, NC, USA.

---

### Corresponding author:

B. Yasanthi Perera, Brock University, Goodman School of Business, Department of Organizational Behaviour, Human Resources, Entrepreneurship and Ethics, 1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way, St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1, Canada.

E-mail: bperera@brocku.ca

---

Consumers' active involvement and participation in the success of a service firm is not a novel idea (Lovelock & Young, 1979). Bettencourt (1997) identifies clients' participation in consumer-intensive services as both required 'partial employee' behaviours and voluntary behaviours. His findings posit a firm's perceived support of clients' involvement as an antecedent in developing customer cooperation and participation. However, recent services research on service-dominant (S-D) logic discusses customer co-production, participation and involvement at a different level.

Service-dominant logic emphasizes that consumers co-create value when they consume, use or experience a product or service (value in use/value in context) instead of when products are manufactured and services are developed (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber (2010) further this discussion by positing that value must be 'understood as part of the collective social context' (p. 6) based upon social construction theories. With the new logic, companies have shifted focus from *operand resources* (i.e., tangible and inert assets) to *operant resources* (i.e., skills, information and knowledge) which are more dynamic assets that interact with the other assets (Vargo & Lusch, 2006). Thus, emphasis is placed on interactivity, connectivity and on-going relationships between the company and its customers. Arnould, Price and Malshe (2006) view the combination of consumers' goals, operant resources and operand resources as essential for the value enrichment of consumers. 'Since customers' life projects/goals are a configuration of operant resources, focus on these operant resources will enable firms to anticipate customers' desired values and help them create value in use' (Arnould et al., 2006, p. 93). Consumers' operant resources are made up of (i) social (e.g., brand communities, consumer tribes, family and commercial relationships), (ii) cultural (e.g., specialized knowledge and skills, life expectancy and history and imagination) and (iii) physical (e.g., sensorimotor endowment and energy, emotions and strength) influences and meanings within each individual. Meaning, according to Edvardsson et al. (2010), is connected to 'language and social interactions, as well as to roles and positions within a social system' (p. 7).

A significant difference between S-D logic and traditional marketing perspectives is the emphasis on consumer experiences compared to products and offerings. For example, many companies and service providers focus on the consumer's value-added experience through emotional intensity and interpersonal interactions (Arnould & Price, 1993). Therefore, S-D logic and its 'market with', value-co creation and resource-integration orientations present an interesting paradigm that is well suited for examining extended intimate service encounters including personal training, coaching and financial investment services. Studies of co-production and its impact on customer loyalty in financial and medical services indicate that clear expectations regarding the customers' role in value co-production foster more effective co-production efforts and greater customer loyalty to the firm (Auh, Bell, McLeod & Shih, 2007). However, although co-production has received some attention in the literature, limited research examines value co-creation process in consumer-intensive service encounters (e.g., Albinsson, Perera & Shows, 2017; Fischer et al., 2009).

---

In this article, we extend the research of Edvardsson et al. (2010) and Albinsson et al. (2017), which regard the customer as an intersubjective actor in the value-creation context through showcasing the value co-creation process in personal training. Borgerson (2005) notes that ‘the consumer self emerges in a context consisting in consumption practices and consumer culture’ (p. 440). This quote, which references intersubjectivity, indicates that meaning regarding a particular concept, for example fitness, is constructed by taking into account multiple perspectives. In the context of personal training we, like Edvardsson et al. (2010), regard the consumer as an intersubjective actor and a ‘resource integrator’ (Vargo, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2006) meaning that the individual extracts unique, co-created value from the service encounter. Furthermore, we enrich Vargo and Lusch’s (2004, 2008) fundamental proposition 10 that the actors phenomenologically determine value by proposing that in certain contexts the actor negotiates the understanding of value with the aid of others; in this instance, the trainer as fitness is a culturally created concept.

While we regard a single personal training session as an event based on the work of Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a), to reach meaningful outcomes, our informants scheduled on-going sessions which entail an extended service encounter. During these service encounters, the client–trainer dyads seek to progress towards the clients’ fitness goals and value co-creation is an important component of this process. Thus, this research contributes to the literature by explicating the connection between goal pursuit in extended service encounters and value co-creation. Additionally, as extant research on personal training is largely presented from the perspective of one party, this research contributes through examining value co-creation from the trainer–client dyad perspective.

## **Personal Fitness Training**

The fitness industry has experienced tremendous growth over the past few decades. According to International Health, Racquet, & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) globally, the fitness gym industry generates approximately US\$75 billion from 165,000 gyms worldwide that cater to 114.68 million members (www.statista.com). Moreover, by 2020, the fitness equipment industry is expected to reach US\$11.9 billion (Allied Market Research Report, n.d.). While personal training statistics are unavailable, between 2001 and 2011, the number of personal trainers in the United States increased by 44 per cent to 231,500 (Rampell, 2012). This trend is expected to continue as more consumers engage service experts to aid them in their fitness pursuits.

Within this context, personal trainers constitute a unique class of front-line service providers ‘involved in the production of the fitness site’s symbolic value and personality’ (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 187). Their occupation is hybridized; it comprises ‘skills, autonomy, and flexibility within the varying demand of emotional service work’ (Smith Maguire, 2001, p. 389). Personal trainers must

---

manage consumers and cultivate sufficient authority based upon their unique mix of professional and interpersonal skills while, in certain cases, representing their respective fitness facility (Smith Maguire, 2001). Thus, they differ from many front-line service providers in that their authority is partially based upon specified educational credentials (Smith Maguire, 2001, 2008).

Personal trainers must understand the culturally defined concept of fitness. Fitness is partly defined by the society in which one lives. At some point in history, fitness has been associated with corpulence, thinness, muscular development, endurance, shape, tone, physical beauty and other concepts. When a client comes with the aim of becoming fit, the trainer must translate his or her desires to the desired norm and negotiate the proper tasks to create this culturally defined form. Whether these tasks are considered successful may be regarded as being in the realm of the phenomenological concept of intersubjectivity, which entails the development of shared understanding (see Borgerson, 2010).

In our sample, a personal training event ranged from 30 to 60 minutes, and the dyads met at least once per week. During a session, the client executed specific sets of exercises under the trainer's supervision (see Table 1 for sample plan). In most cases, clients reported establishing a rapport with their trainer to the extent that, during the sessions, they shared personal information about their lives including various struggles with the trainer. The trainers often provided guidance beyond the training sessions in the form of suggested meal plans and additional exercises.

**Table 1.** Sample Workout by Trainer Kenneth for Client Susanna (30 minutes)

---

Set 1: Leg press (225 lbs, 275 lbs, 315 lbs) × 12 --> squat to shoulder press with 15 lb dumb bells × 10 --> Bent over row (lawnmowers) w/ 20 lbs × 12 each side --> 30 s skydiver

Set 2: planks 60 s --> flat bench dumb bell chest press with 20 lbs × 8–10 --> bicep curl with 15lbs × 10 --> side planks 30 s each side --> step ups with 12 lbs in each hand on box × 16.

---

**Source:** Kenneth (pseudonym).

**Note:** Complete each set in order 3 times.

## Method

Thirty in-depth interviews were conducted with 14 personal trainers and 16 clients in two large southwestern US cities and one small southeastern US town. The personal trainer sample comprised 10 males and 4 females ranging in the age from 23 to 65 years (Table 2). The clients consisted of 3 males and 13 females between the ages of 24 and 74 years (Table 2).

**Table 2. Informant Profiles**

<b>Servicescape</b>	<b>Personal Trainer</b>	<b>Client</b>	<b>Time Engaged in PT</b>	<b>Service Encounters/Week</b>	<b>Number of Previous Trainers</b>
National gym chain	Matt, 31, Caucasian PT/Former Fitness/Body Builder	Justin, 33, Caucasian Accountant	3 months	2-3	None
Own facility	Lenny, 65, Hispanic PT/ Olympic Weight Lifting Coach/retired Police Officer	Rebecca, 55, Caucasian Nurse Technician	>2 years	1	2
Local gym and in-home	Betty, 51, Caucasian PT/ Nutritionist	Liz, 53, Caucasian Homemaker	2 years	1	None
Local gym	Jason, 30, Caucasian PT/Firefighter	Peter, 29, Hispanic Retail Manager	5 months	2-3	None
Local gym	Ginny, 36, Caucasian, PT/Group Fitness Instructor	Lynn, 27, Caucasian Project Manager	1.5 years	2	Limited
Own facility	Josh, 31, Hispanic PT/Nutritionist	Jessica, 38, Caucasian, Realtor	2.5 years	3-5	1
		Maria, 36, Hispanic Soldier	6 weeks	5-7	2
University gym for faculty/ staff	Tom, 23, Caucasian PT/Graduate Student in Exercise Science	Pam, 57, Caucasian, Director, College preparatory programme	1.5 years	2	1 and 1 Figure skating coach
		Daniel, 42, Caucasian, Professor	5 years	2	3

*(Table 2 Continued)*

(Table 2 Continued)

<b>Servicescape</b>	<b>Personal Trainer</b>	<b>Client</b>	<b>Time Engaged in PT</b>	<b>Service Encounters/Week</b>	<b>Number of Previous Trainers</b>
University gym for faculty/ staff	Trevor, 25, Caucasian, Personal Trainer, student in Exercise Science, Kinesiology	Tammy, 66, Caucasian, Librarian	3.5 years	2-3	4
University gym for faculty/staff	Kenneth, 22, Caucasian, PT Exercise Science	Susanna, 40, Caucasian, Professor	8 years	2-3	7
Own facility	Duane, 50 Caucasian, PT/ Nutritionist	Amy, 72, African American, Retired	3 years	3	None
National gym chain	Stephanie, 23, Caucasian, PT/ Dancer (aspiring police officer)	Barbara, 40, Caucasian, Motivational Speaker	6 months	3-5	2
National gym chain	Bobby, 25, African American, PT, Bartender	Ana, 24, Caucasian, Graduate Student	2 months	2-3	Multiple swim coaches
National gym and private lessons	Michelle, 40, Caucasian, PT/ Running coach, Group fitness instructor/ Nutritionist	Laura 53, Caucasian, Career coach	> 1 years	1	1 additional cycling coach
Local gym and private lessons	David 32, Caucasian, Personal Trainer, Swimming coach	Theresa, 28, Hispanic, Investment banker	2 months	2-3	None

**Source:** Albinsson, Perera, & Shows (2017).

---

The second author conducted interviews, lasting from 30 to 120 minutes, at personal training studios, gyms, in clients' homes or public spaces such as cafés. Once transcribed, the three authors analyzed the data independently through iterative readings. Emerging themes focusing on value co-creation were coded separately by each author and results compared and contrasted until clear patterns were identified. We sought a dyadic perspective from both the trainer and the client as previous research indicates it to be a fruitful method with which to obtain more accurate understandings of the research phenomena (Andreu, Sanchez & Mele, 2010; Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). The findings represent both the clients' and the trainers' perspectives; however, due to space limitations, we focus on accounts that represent value co-creation. Pseudonyms are used for confidentiality purposes.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### *The Initial Assessment*

In successful service outcomes, the client and personal trainer collaborate to create a worthwhile, personalized experience for the client. The dyads develop and pursue fitness goals that are important to the client and deemed feasible by the trainer. Such goals provide direction and a means with which to assess progress. At the time of training commencement, the clients vary in their level of physical and mental fitness, the operant resources that drive the consumers' goal pursuit and influences goal attainment (Arnould et al., 2006). For instance, Maria, an Army reservist, had 'let herself go' and gained 40 pounds since leaving active service 2 years prior. As a result, she had lost her strength and endurance and expressed fear upon being redeployed into a war zone. Despite training with the military, Maria determined that she needed additional guidance to reach her fitness goals in time for deployment. Maria was motivated by the desire to return home alive and to avoid letting another soldier down due to her poor physical condition. She conveyed her dedication to her work and her respect for life to her trainer, Josh, during their first meeting:

I told him...I am getting deployed...I refuse to go to war knowing that I have to defend a soldier, be a soldier, and fight for my life in the condition I am in. There is no way I can go to war like this...It's a life or death situation for me...He took it seriously...he owned it...He has a passion for my life and not just for my fitness and that made a big difference in regards to my goals and expectations of the training. That is how he got to my mind, if he is that passionate about my life, he is going to pour himself into me and get me where I need to go so I can come back alive, and do the things I need to do.

As Josh became invested in Maria's goals, her goals became their shared goals and he designed a plan that would best help her succeed.

From a S-D logic perspective, positing the consumer as a value co-creator calls for service providers to maximize consumers' interest in customizing services to better meet their needs (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2006). All trainers interviewed explicitly or implicitly referenced the importance of personalizing

---

training experiences to ‘fit’ the uniqueness of the client. As trainer Josh noted in Albinsson et al. (2017):

Everything is relative. What if you are a track athlete? I have a person who wants to go into SWAT, I have a lady that is a captain in the military...she is well ahead of over 90% of the people who want in my door...Genetics is different, inspiration is different, people’s enthusiasm and their dedication is different. You have to formulate training towards the person that is actually coming in and asking for it. It would be irresponsible to say that everyone should go through the same training.

Similarly, clients echo the importance of personalization either through recognizing their current trainer’s efforts or recalling their dissatisfaction with a former trainer. Maria expresses her appreciation of her trainer considering her uniqueness when developing the training experience by noting:

He...molds you, and molds until you become this beautiful vase. But, you and I are different, you are molded one way, and I am molded one way.

Maria compared her current experience with working with a former trainer who ‘threw’ her on the machines during their first session without ‘calibrating’ her. Calibrating, a term and process she learned from another trainer, partly entails the trainer assessing the client’s physical condition, including body fat percentage, to determine the exercises and the weights the individual could manage in his or her current physical state. She recalls thinking, ‘Wait a minute. How do you know what I need?’ Thus, successful personal training experiences entail personalization; the one-size-fits-all mentality is infeasible and inconsistent with value co-creation.

### *Co-creating Value in Personal Training*

In personal training, the client and trainer co-create value through undertaking specific responsibilities. The trainer negotiates with the client as to what ‘fitness’ means, manages the client’s expectations and provides extras. Based on Vargo and Lusch’s assertion (2008, FP9) that value co-creation entails resource integration, we regard the trainer as a resource integrator who support clients in co-creating value. The trainer goes further by negotiating the intersubjective understanding of fitness with the consumer. In turn, to reach a positive outcome in the extended service encounter, the client engages in a moment of release (Albinsson et al., 2017) and commits to the negotiated, now shared, vision of fitness.

### *Role of Trainer: Negotiating a Shared Understanding and Vision*

Open sharing of information, while critical to developing an understanding between the dyad, helps the trainer take the client’s unique characteristics into consideration which facilitates value co-creation. Trainer Bobby, while noting that ‘there is no

---

way you can generalize among your clients', emphasize that the initial conversation with clients entails him being 'as realistic as possible and telling them what is needed to reach their goals'. Being honest and open with clients regarding what is realistic and what is not was a recurring theme as Betty, another trainer, notes:

Sometimes you get a client that is way out there in terms of expectations and you kind of have to sit them down and explain how things work. It is not easy but some people think that they will get into Hollywood shape in two days just because they have a PT.

Through negotiating a shared understanding, the trainers aim to generate feasible individualized fitness regimens for their clients while maintaining or even enhancing their motivation to adopt fitness-oriented lifestyles. As such, the trainers sometimes integrate fitness and health promotion into their clients' daily lives through the provision of 'extras' (Price, Arnould & Deibler, 1995).

### *Role of Trainer: Providing Extras*

Extras include anything beyond regular services offered by a trainer to the clients. Examples include extra exercise time, sessions outside normal hours and nutritional tips. Though the core work personal training work occurs during the sessions, training extends beyond these sessions as the rapport between the two parties deepens. Ginny, a trainer, offers nutritional advice and asks clients to maintain 'a food diary to better assess their lifestyle and to get them to realize that there are things they can change...to get better and faster results'. Maria's trainer met her at the track to support her sprinting efforts. Thus, he embraced Maria's lifeworld embedded goals, understood her driving motivation of wanting to be fully prepared for deployment and responded by going 'beyond the call of duty' to assist Maria in her goal pursuit efforts. Another client, Jessica, report that her trainer of 2.5 years helped her purchase detoxification foods by alerting her of various produce sales. Thus, personal training is personalized in multiple ways to suit the needs of specific clients. Providing extras emphasize the personal aspect of the trainers' services, and integrate a fitness/health mentality into the client's life which can further motivate the client in adhering to a healthy lifestyle beyond PT sessions. They also demonstrate the trainer's respect for the client and signify the trainer's desire to support the client in the goal pursuit process. This further develops the dyad's relationship which often leads to the client reciprocating the trainer's regard through exerting additional effort during training sessions. In essence, this rapport develops a partnership within the dyad which, beyond additional support, entails the client feeling as if he or she has a partner. Ideally, this sense of partnership leads to greater client engagement and involvement which is critical to personal training outcomes.

### *Role of Client*

A personal trainer cannot create a successful outcome solely by herself; clients must assume personal responsibility for goal attainment. A trainer, Ginny, notes the

---

difficulty with pushing a client who is not willing or is uncommitted to his or her own fitness goals:

They [must] have the commitment it takes to reach their individual goals. It is important to have this from both parties. I can't do wonders or transform someone else's body unless they are engaged in their own motivation and goals.

As this quote illustrates, it is critical for the client to assume personal responsibility. However, the trainer plays a role in garnering commitment as indicated by Maria's quote below:

I don't know if I would have gotten as far as I have now without him. The determination and push that another person can give you is amazing. His passion is my motivation, not that he tells me to 'do fifteen more', 'come on just three more', 'you can do it'. It is the passion that he has for my well-being, for the gym, and for life itself.

Maria's experience illustrates how personal trainers can help clients assume personal responsibility and push themselves beyond their comfort zones. Knowing of her needs, Josh, her trainer designed a unique plan to prepare his client for deployment. The above quote highlights that a shared understanding and vision, as well as motivation is key in persevering with personal training.

### *Role of Client: Acceptance of Trainer Expertise*

In the process of value co-creation and goal pursuit, trainers encourage clients to share information about their ideal self and their fitness-related desires. For some consumers, this information is sensitive as it represents long-held desires. However, consumers enter personal training because they recognize that they need an external party to direct their efforts. For example, a client, Tammy, notes that she was 'more effective' in executing her exercise routine under the guidance of her trainer simply because he kept a close eye on everything she did during the session.

Despite the benefits of engaging a trainer, some clients reported difficulty in relinquishing control and accepting trainer expertise. For example, a 42-year-old client, Daniel, states that 'it is kind of weird having a twenty something year old telling me what to do. That has been a bit of an adjustment for me.' Bateson (1985) notes that though the consumer decides to enter a service encounter and has control over certain aspects of it, he or she partially releases autonomy to the service provider. This is certainly the case with personal training services. Consumers choose to enter the service arrangement; however, to attain satisfactory outcomes, clients must partially surrender control to the trainer in the process of developing an intersubjectively defined understanding of fitness. In this process, they negotiate fitness goals which might markedly differ from the initial goals with which the client enter the service relationship (Albinsson et al., 2017).

Beyond the fitness vision and goal negotiation, the client also relinquishes control to a certain extent by choosing to follow the personalized plan set forth by the trainer. In referencing the trainer's plan, Tammy notes 'There is a give

---

and take with the trainer, but if you are to be successful you have to be compliant.' However, even in this, there is a choice as the trainer told her, 'You have reached a plateau and you need to break that plateau. I cannot break it for you.' Thus, to attain desired outcomes, the client must relinquish some measure of control in this extended service encounter.

The co-creation of value concept is central to consumers' goal pursuits. While the consumer can co-create value with the provider, the level of effort she expends and the degree of activity undertaken are based upon the integration of the trainer's resources (Vargo, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2006) such as expertise, control, physical capital, risk taking, psychic benefits and economic benefits (Lusch, Vargo & O'Brien, 2007). More specifically, the trainer's expertise as well as the degree of physical and mental benefits the client gleans from exercising is particularly important since the service requires substantial investments of money and time. The benefits the client gleans, however, is a function of two actions: (i) the trainer intersubjectively defining the consumer's understanding of fitness and its phenomenological relationship to the consumer, and (ii) the trainer's ability to negotiate the consumer goals into actions that contribute to the client intersubjectively negotiated understanding of fitness. Thus, personal training is a context where personalization of experiences might serve as an effective strategy for value co-creation.

In summary, the client-trainer dyad collaborates in creating enhanced value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a, 2004b; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2006). From a S-D logic perspective, positing the consumer as a value co-creator calls for service providers to maximize consumers' interest in customizing services to better meet their needs (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2006). In terms of personal training, having initially negotiated the goals and the plan for their enactment with their trainers, clients are more committed to attain these goals. As personal training is a social structure where the client learns how to perform various body movements, the activities within these encounters are shaped by both the trainer and the consumer (Crossley, 2004). As the client adapts to training, she learns of her body's capabilities and, with her trainer's guidance, shapes her body and mind through learning and practice. Thus, personal training becomes a highly co-created and willful activity that provides value to both the trainer and the client.

## **Conclusion**

The global marketplace is increasingly becoming more service oriented (Edvardsson, Gustafsson, Sanden & Johnson, 2000). Thus, examining value creation in consumer-intensive service encounters (Fischer et al., 2009) aids providers in delivering quality offerings that meets consumers' needs. Within the S-D logic landscape, value co-creation has come to the forefront. Vargo, Maglio and Akaka (2008), in comparing goods dominant and S-D approaches, note that the latter entails the collaboration of multiple parties, including customers. Similarly, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004b) note that co-creation entails joint value

---

creation between the company and the consumer, which entails the latter constructing her preferred experience to suit unique needs.

We provide insight as to how successful co-creation encounters can occur. In the value co-creation process, the producer is genuinely concerned with the customer and desires to fulfil her needs. Thus, as the producer customizes the experience to maximize the personalization of the service being consumed, the end result fully fits the individual. Clients and trainers co-create value through intersubjectively defining what fitness entails (Albinsson et al., 2017), committing to this vision and pursuing the fitness goals. Trainers influence the shaping of clients' minds towards attaining success by providing them with a vision of the expected possibilities and they also provide them with realizable goals. Finally, service providers promote the learning process through practice and guidance. Our findings indicate that, in this interaction between the trainer and the client, experience personalization enhances the value created (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). Overall, this research supports that, consistent with S-D logic, the highest value is created when it is co-created.

Our research broadens Vargo and Lusch's (2004, 2008) fundamental propositions 9 and 10 which define service providers and consumers as resource integrators (FP9) and state that value is determined phenomenologically by the actors. There are situations where consumers lack the knowledge to translate their desires into action. In this research, the consumer has a desire (fitness) but cannot create this without the help of a resource integrator (the personal trainer). The trainer not only provides the necessary knowledge but may also redefine the very concept of fitness for the consumer. Thus, the negotiated understanding of fitness is an intersubjective concept reached by the acceptance of the trainer as a resource integrator capable of translating clients' goals into actions. In this occurrence, without the active help of personal trainer, the co-creation of value would be minimized or perhaps unable to reach fruition.

While research in co-creation emphasizes the importance of the customer in the process, this research indicates that, in some situations, value co-creation is not possible without the active support of the service provider because, while the consumer has a phenomenological understanding of a goal, she lacks the expertise to create value.

Future research could examine these observations in other consumer-intensive encounters such as teaching, coaching, mentoring or any other activity that requires the close interaction between service provider and consumer. Additionally, future research could consider contextual constraints that limit value co-creation and experience personalization and how this might offer insights on service improvements.

## References

- Albinsson, P.A., Perera, B.Y., & Shows, G.D. (2017). Pursuing fitness: How Dialectic Goal Striving and Intersubjectivity Influence Consumer Outcomes. *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 20(1), 35–38. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2016.1172213>

- 
- Allied Market Research Report. (n.d.). *World fitness equipment market—opportunities and forecasts, 2014–2020*. Retrieved 18 April 2016, from <https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/fitness-equipment-market>
- Andreu, L., Sanchez, I., & Mele, C. (2010). Value co-creation among retailers and consumers: New insights into the furniture market. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 17*(4), 241–250.
- Arnould, E.J., & Price, L.L. (1993). River magic: Extraordinary experience and the extended service encounter. *Journal of Consumer Research, 20*(1), 24–45.
- Arnould, E.J., Price, L.L., & Malshe, A. (2006). Toward a cultural resource-based theory of the consumer. In R. Lusch & S. Vargo (Eds), *The service dominant logic of marketing: Dialog, debate and directions* (pp. 91–104). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Auh, S., Bell, S.J., McLeod, C.S., & Shih, E. (2007). Co-production and customer loyalty in financial services. *Journal of Retailing, 83*(3), 359–370.
- Bateson, John E.G. 1985. Perceived control and the service encounter. In Czepiel, J.A. Solomon, M.R. & Surprenant, C.F. (Eds), *The Service Encounter: Managing Employee/ Customer Interaction in Services Businesses* (pp. 67–82). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Bettencourt, L.A. (1997). Customer voluntary performance: Customers as partners in service delivery. *Journal of Retailing, 73*(3), 383–406.
- Borgerson, J.L. (2005). Materiality, agency, and the constitution of consuming subjects: Insights for consumer research. In Geeta Menon & Akshay R. Rao (Eds), *NA - Advances in Consumer Research* (vol. 32, pp. 439–443). Duluth, MN: Association for Consumer Research.
- . (2010). Witnessing and organization: Existential phenomenological reflections on intersubjectivity. *Philosophy Today, 54*(1), 78–87.
- Crossley, N. (2004). The circuit trainer's habitus: Reflexive body techniques and the sociality of the workout. *Body and Society, 10*(1), 37–69.
- Edvardsson, B., Gustafsson, A., Sanden, B., & Johnson, M.D. (2000). *New service development and innovation in the new economy*. Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.
- Edvardsson, B., Tronvoll, B., & Gruber, T. (2010). Expanding understanding of service exchange and value co-creation: A social construction approach. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science, 39*(2), 327–339. doi:10.1007/s11747-010-0200-y
- Fischer, E., Otnes, C.C., Winegard, B., Li, E.P.H., & Wilner, S.J.S. (2009). Are we there yet? Co-producing success and failure in a 'consumer-intensive' service context. In J.F. Sherry & E. Fischer (Eds), *Consumer culture theory* (pp. 101–113). London: Routledge.
- Lovelock, C.F., & Young, R.F. (1979). Look to consumers to increase productivity. *Harvard Business Review, 57*(May/June), 168–176.
- Lusch, R.F., Vargo, S.L., & O'Brien, M. (2007). Competing through service: Insights from service-dominant logic. *Journal of Retailing, 83*(1), 5–18.
- Penaloza, L., & Venkatesh, A. (2006). Further evolving the new dominant logic of marketing: From service to the social construction of markets. *Marketing Theory, 6*(3), 299–316.
- Prahalad, C.K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004a). *The future of competition: Co-creating unique value with customers*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- . (2004b). Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 18*(3), 5–14.
- Price, L., Arnould, E.J., & Deibler, S.L. (1995). Consumers' emotional responses to service encounters: The influence of the service provider. *International Journal of Service Industry, 6*(3), 34–63.

- 
- Rampell, C. (2012, June 30). A jobs boom built on sweat in an age of belt tightening. *The New York Times*, p. A1.
- Smith Maguire, J. (2001). Fit and flexible: The fitness industry, PTs and emotional service Labor. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 18(4), 379–402.
- . (2008). *Fit for consumption: Sociology and the business of fitness*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Vargo, S.L. (2008). Customer integration and value creation: Paradigmatic traps and perspectives. *Journal of Service Research*, 11(2), 211–215.
- Vargo, S.L., & Lusch, R.F. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(1), 1–17.
- . (2006). Service-dominant logic: What it is, what it is not, what it might be. In R.F. Lusch & S.L. Vargo (Eds), *The service-dominant logic of marketing: Dialog, debate and directions* (pp. 43–64). New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc.
- . (2008). Service dominant logic: Continuing the evolution. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Sciences*, 36(1), 1–10.
- Vargo, S.L., Maglio, P.P., & Akaka, M.A. (2008). On value and value co-creation: A service systems and service logic perspective. *European Management Journal*, 26(3), 145–152.