

CONSUMER CO-CREATION IN THE BEVERAGE SECTOR IN BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The beverage industry in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, faces challenges in adapting to rapidly changing consumer preferences in a competitive market. Traditional product development methods are no longer sufficient, and consumer value co-creation, where consumers actively participate in product development, has emerged as a solution. However, there is limited research on its application in the Yenagoa beverage sector. This study investigates the role of customer value co-creation in new product development among beverage firms in Yenagoa, focusing on idea generation, product design participation, and testing and trial involvement. Findings indicate that consumer participation in ideation enhances product relevance and innovation. Involvement in product design improves satisfaction and loyalty by reducing market risks, while testing ensures products meet consumer expectations, boosting acceptance. Co-creation also streamlines the development cycle, improving competitiveness and reducing time to market. The study highlights the importance of consumer insights for product quality, brand perception, and customer satisfaction. However, challenges such as limited infrastructure and cultural factors hinder full adoption of co-creation practices. In conclusion, consumer value co-creation is crucial for driving innovation and fostering loyalty. Beverage firms in Yenagoa can better align their products with consumer expectations by involving consumers in the development process, though tailored strategies are needed to address local challenges. Recommendations include adopting digital collaboration platforms, engaging lead users, enhancing transparency, fostering trust, investing in employee training, leveraging technology, and ensuring cultural sensitivity.

Keywords: Beverage industry; Consumer participation; Innovation; New product development; Value co-creation

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape, consumer co-creation has emerged as a pivotal strategy, particularly in the realm of new product development. This collaborative approach involves actively engaging consumers in the design and innovation processes, allowing firms to leverage the insights and preferences of their target audience. By fostering a partnership with consumers, beverage firms can develop products that are not only innovative but also closely aligned with market demands. This is especially critical in the beverage industry, where consumer tastes are rapidly evolving due to factors such as health consciousness, lifestyle changes, and cultural influences. In Bayelsa State, where the beverage market is burgeoning, understanding the dynamics of consumer co-creation can provide firms with a competitive edge, enabling them to create products that resonate with local preferences and trends.

As beverage firms in Bayelsa State embrace consumer co-creation, they unlock opportunities for deeper market insights and enhanced brand loyalty. Engaging consumers in the product development process fosters a sense of ownership and connection, which can translate into increased customer retention and advocacy. Moreover, co-creation allows companies to identify emerging trends and adapt their offerings accordingly, ensuring that they remain relevant in a fast-paced market. However, the implementation of co-creation is not without its challenges. Firms must navigate the complexities of managing diverse consumer expectations, ensuring the quality and

consistency of co-created products, and addressing potential intellectual property concerns. These challenges highlight the necessity for a strategic framework that balances consumer involvement with effective product management to maximize the benefits of co-creation.

This research aims to investigate the role of consumer co-creation in new product development within beverage firms in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study will explore how these firms currently engage consumers in the development process, the perceived benefits and challenges associated with co-creation, and its influence on the success of new product launches. Despite the growing interest in co-creation, there remains a significant gap in understanding its specific application within the Bayelsa beverage sector, particularly regarding local consumer behaviors and preferences. This gap underscores the need for this research, which seeks to provide valuable insights that can enhance the co-creation strategies of beverage firms, ultimately driving sustainable growth and fostering stronger connections with consumers in this unique market.

Statement of Research Problem

Despite the recognized benefits of consumer co-creation in new product development, there exists a significant gap in the understanding of its practical application within the beverage industry in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. While many firms globally have successfully integrated consumer insights into their innovation processes, local beverage companies often operate without a clear framework for engaging consumers effectively. This lack of structured co-creation strategies can lead to missed opportunities for innovation, as firms may fail to capture the unique preferences and cultural nuances of their target market.

Moreover, the beverage industry in Bayelsa State is characterized by rapidly changing consumer tastes influenced by various factors, including health trends and lifestyle choices. However, many firms still rely on traditional product development methods that do not account for these shifts, resulting in products that may not resonate with consumers. This disconnect can hinder the success of new product launches, as firms may struggle to meet the evolving demands of their customer base. Consequently, there is a pressing need for research that explores how beverage firms in Bayelsa State can effectively implement consumer co-creation strategies to enhance their product development processes.

Additionally, existing literature on consumer co-creation tends to focus on broader markets or specific industries, leaving a gap in localized studies that address the unique challenges faced by beverage firms in Bayelsa State. This oversight limits the applicability of co-creation theories to the local context, where cultural, economic, and social factors play a significant role in consumer behavior. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the current state of consumer co-creation in the beverage sector of Bayelsa State, identifying best practices, and offering actionable recommendations for firms seeking to leverage consumer engagement in their product development efforts.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the effect of stakeholders involvement on the success rate of new product development among beverage firms in Bayelsa State.
2. To examine the impact of consumer engagement on consumer satisfaction of beverage firms in Bayelsa State
3. To examine the impact of innovation quality on brand perception of beverage firm in Bayelsa state.
4. To examine the impact of market trend on new product development

Research questions

1. How does stakeholder involvement affect the success rate of new product development among beverage firms in Bayelsa State?

2. What is the impact of consumer engagement on consumer satisfaction of new products development by beverage firms in Bayelsa State?
3. How does innovation quality impact brand perception of new product development in beverage firms in Bayelsa State?
4. What is the impact of market trend on new product development of beverages firms in Bayelsa state?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypothesis were formulated to guide his study:

Ho₁: Stakeholder involvement does not have a significant effect on the success rate of new production development of beverage firms in Bayelsa sate.

Ho₂: Consumer engagement does not have any significant influence on consumer satisfaction of beverage firms in Bayelsa sate.

Ho₃: Innovation quality does not have any significant impact on brand perception of beverage firms in Bayelsa sate.

Ho₄: Market trend does not have any impact on new product development of beverage firm in Bayelsa state.

Scope of the Study

This study explores Consumer Co-creation practices within the beverage industry in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The scope is defined by the following parameters:

Content scope:

The research will focus on the practices of Consumer Co-creation and New Product Development within a beverage company in Bayelsa State. The measurement of Consumer Co-creation practices will involve assessing Stakeholder Involvement, Consumer Engagement, Innovation Quality, and Market Trends. Meanwhile, New Product Development will be evaluated through several dimensions, including Product Success, Consumer Satisfaction, and Brand Perception.

Geographical Focus:

The research is confined to beverage firms located in Bayelsa State. This focus allows for an examination of local market conditions, consumer preferences, and cultural influences that shape co-creation practices.

Industry Focus:

The research specifically aims at the beverage sector, which includes producers and marketers of soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, and non-alcoholic drinks. This focus is essential because of the distinct dynamics and trends characteristic of this industry.

Level/ unit of analysis:

The research will concentrate on both the micro level, which includes managers, and the macro level, which encompasses consumers of beverages in Bayelsa State.

Target Population:

The primary respondents will include managers and decision-makers from beverage firms in Bayelsa State, as well as consumers who have engaged in co-creation initiatives. This diverse sample will provide comprehensive insights into both industry practices and consumer perspectives.

Dimensions of Responsible Marketing:

The study will examine specific dimensions of consumer co-creation, including stakeholder involvement, consumer engagement, innovation quality and market trend.

Measures of new product development:

This study shall look at the influence of co-creation practice by beverage firm in the light of product success, consumer satisfaction and brand perception.

Time Frame:

The study will focus on developments and trends in consumer co-creation practices over the last three (3) years. This timeframe ensures the relevance of findings in the context of current market dynamics.

Methodological Approach:

A mixed-methods approach will be employed, incorporating both qualitative (interviews, focus groups) and quantitative (surveys) data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Limitations:

The study will acknowledge potential limitations, such as sample size, response bias, and the generalizability of findings beyond Bayelsa state.

The investigation will cover various methods and strategies that beverage firms utilize to involve consumers in the new product development process. This includes assessing the degree of consumer involvement in stages such as ideation, design, testing, and feedback.

The research will identify and analyze the perceived benefits of consumer co-creation, including enhanced product innovation and market relevance, as well as the challenges faced by firms in implementing these strategies. This dual perspective aims to provide a holistic understanding of co-creation's effectiveness.

Target Population

The primary respondents will include managers and decision-makers from beverage firms in Bayelsa State, as well as consumers who have engaged in co-creation initiatives. This diverse sample will provide comprehensive insights into both industry practices and consumer perspectives.

By precisely outlining the study's parameters, this research seeks to provide insightful information on the function of consumer co-creation in Bayelsa State's beverage industry, strengthening knowledge of its influence on the creation of new products and general company performance.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study on consumer co-creation and new product development in beverage firms in Bayelsa State is multifaceted, impacting various stakeholders within the industry and beyond. The key areas of significance are outlined as follows:

Contribution to Academic Knowledge: This research will add to the existing body of literature on consumer co-creation and product development, particularly within the context of the beverage industry in Nigeria. It will provide empirical data and insights that can serve as a reference for future studies in related fields.

Practical Implications for Beverage Firms: The study's conclusions will provide beverage companies looking to improve their product development procedures with practical suggestions. By

understanding the benefits and challenges of consumer co-creation, firms can better strategize their engagement with consumers, leading to improved product innovation and market performance.

Consumer Empowerment: This study emphasizes the role of consumers in the product development process, highlighting their importance as active participants rather than passive recipients. By investigating consumer attitudes towards co-creation, the research can empower consumers, encouraging their involvement in shaping products that meet their needs and preferences.

Policy Formulation: The insights gained from this research can inform policymakers and industry regulators about the dynamics of consumer engagement in the beverage sector. Understanding these dynamics can lead to the development of policies that foster innovation and competitiveness within the industry.

Enhancing Competitive Advantage: For beverage firms, leveraging consumer co-creation can lead to a significant competitive advantage. This study will elucidate how effective co-creation strategies can differentiate firms in a crowded market, ultimately leading to increased customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Local Economic Development: By focusing on Bayelsa State, this research contributes to the understanding of local industry practices and consumer behaviors. The findings can stimulate local economic development by encouraging firms to adopt innovative practices that resonate with the community's needs.

Both academic scholars, business professionals, legislators, and consumers will find great value in this study. It seeks to provide a better understanding of how cooperative methods may propel innovation and success in the beverage sector by examining the relationship between customer co-creation and new product development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review provides a comprehensive overview of existing research and theoretical frameworks relevant to the study topic. This chapter aims to contextualize the current research within the broader academic discourse, highlighting key findings, methodologies, and gaps in the literature.

Conceptual Clarifications

This section provides comprehensive clarification for key terms used throughout the study, ensuring clarity and understanding within the context of consumer co-creation and new product development in the beverage industry.

Consumer Co-Creation:

A cooperative method known as "consumer co-creation" involves customers actively contributing to the design and development of goods and services. This engagement can take various forms, including idea generation, feedback provision, and participation in design and testing phases. Businesses may gain important insights that represent actual customer demands and preferences by incorporating customers directly into the development process. Because customers believe their input directly affects the product's performance, this strategy not only increases the end product's relevance but also cultivates a sense of ownership and loyalty among them. (Frow et al., 2016).

The significance of consumer co-creation lies in its ability to bridge the gap between producers and consumers, transforming traditional roles. In the past, consumers were often seen as passive recipients of products, with little influence over their design or functionality. However, co-creation

shifts this dynamic, empowering consumers to become active participants in the innovation process. In the end, this cooperative strategy may result in more inventive items that appeal to the target market, increasing brand loyalty and consumer pleasure. (Ranjan & Read, 2016).

New Product Development (NPD):

New Product Development (NPD) refers to the comprehensive process of bringing a new product to market, encompassing several critical stages from conception to launch. The NPD process typically begins with idea generation, where firms brainstorm potential product concepts based on market research, consumer feedback, and emerging trends. Following this, the ideas undergo rigorous evaluation and refinement through concept development, where the feasibility and market potential of each idea are assessed. This stage is crucial for identifying viable products that align with consumer needs and company capabilities (Ulrich & Eppinger, 2016).

After selecting promising concepts, firms proceed to design and prototype development, where initial models of the product are created for testing. This phase often involves consumer testing to gather feedback on functionality, design, and overall appeal. Once the product has been refined based on this feedback, it moves into the launch phase, where marketing strategies are implemented to introduce the product to the market. Effective NPD is essential for companies to remain competitive, as it allows them to respond to changing consumer demands and capitalize on emerging opportunities within the beverage industry (Cooper, 2019).

Beverage Industry:

The beverage industry encompasses a wide range of businesses involved in the production, distribution, and marketing of drinks. This sector includes both alcoholic beverages, such as beer, wine, and spirits, and non-alcoholic beverages, such as soft drinks, juices, teas, and bottled water. Companies must constantly adapt and create new items that satisfy market expectations since the sector is marked by fierce rivalry, quick innovation, and changing customer tastes. (Statista, 2023). A number of other variables also impact the beverage sector, such as legislative changes, sustainability concerns, and health trends. For instance, there has been a growing demand for healthier beverage options, prompting companies to innovate by introducing low-calorie, organic, or functional drinks that offer added health benefits. Additionally, sustainability has become a significant focus, with many firms seeking to reduce their environmental impact through eco-friendly packaging and sourcing practices. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for firms operating within the beverage sector, as they navigate challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing market landscape (Mintel, 2021).

Market Relevance:

Market relevance refers to the degree to which a product meets the specific needs and preferences of consumers in a given market. It encompasses various factors, including the product's ability to address consumer pain points, its alignment with current trends, and its competitive positioning relative to other offerings. A product that is highly relevant to the target market is more likely to succeed, as it resonates with consumers and fulfills their expectations (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016).

Achieving market relevance requires continuous market research and consumer engagement. Firms must remain attuned to shifts in consumer behavior, preferences, and emerging trends to ensure their products remain aligned with market demands. This proactive approach allows companies to adapt their product offerings, marketing strategies, and overall business models to maintain relevance in a competitive landscape. By prioritizing market relevance, firms can enhance customer satisfaction, drive sales growth, and build long-term brand loyalty (Gonzalez & Palacios, 2020).

Innovation Quality:

Innovation quality refers to the perceived value and effectiveness of new products in meeting consumer needs and expectations. It encompasses various dimensions, including uniqueness, functionality, and the ability to solve existing problems or enhance the consumer experience. High-quality innovation is characterized by products that not only stand out in the market but also deliver tangible benefits to consumers, thereby increasing their likelihood of adoption and purchase (Homburg et al., 2016).

To achieve high innovation quality, firms must engage in thorough research and development processes, incorporating consumer feedback at various stages of product development. This iterative process enables businesses to improve their products in response to practical findings, guaranteeing that the finished result accurately reflects customer preferences. Ultimately, innovation quality is a critical determinant of a product's success in the marketplace, as it influences consumer perceptions, brand reputation, and overall market performance (Bessant & Tidd, 2016).

Stakeholders:

Stakeholders are individuals or groups that have a vested interest in the outcomes of a study or business operation. In the context of this research, stakeholders include beverage firms, consumers, policymakers, and academic researchers. Each stakeholder group plays a unique role in the ecosystem of consumer co-creation and new product development, influencing and being influenced by the processes and outcomes of the study (Freeman, 2017).

Understanding the perspectives and interests of various stakeholders is essential for effective collaboration and decision-making. For beverage firms, engaging with stakeholders can provide valuable insights that inform product development and marketing strategies. Consumers, as active participants in co-creation, can offer feedback that shapes product features and enhances market fit. Policymakers may use the findings to develop regulations that support innovation and consumer protection, while academic researchers can build on the study's results to further investigate related topics. By recognizing and addressing the diverse interests of stakeholders, firms can foster more effective partnerships and drive successful outcomes (Mitchell et al., 2017).

Engagement Methods:

The different tactics and resources used by businesses to include customers in the product development process are referred to as engagement approaches. These methods can include surveys, focus groups, social media interactions, workshops, and collaborative platforms designed to gather consumer insights and feedback. Businesses may better understand customer preferences, spot new trends, and improve their product offerings to meet market demands by employing these engagement techniques. (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2016).

The effectiveness of engagement methods relies on the ability to create meaningful interactions between firms and consumers. Effective interaction encourages customers to freely express their thoughts and opinions by fostering a sense of community and teamwork. Because customers feel appreciated and acknowledged for their contributions, this two-way communication not only improves the caliber of consumer insights but also fortifies brand loyalty. As a result, effective engagement methods are crucial for firms seeking to leverage consumer co-creation in their new product development efforts (Cova et al., 2018).

Challenges of Co-Creation:

Challenges of co-creation refer to the obstacles and difficulties that firms encounter when attempting to implement consumer co-creation strategies in their product development processes. These challenges can include resource constraints, such as limited budgets or personnel, which may hinder the ability to effectively engage consumers. Additionally, firms may face consumer resistance, where

potential participants are hesitant to share their ideas or feedback due to concerns about intellectual property or the effectiveness of their contributions (Hoyer et al., 2018).

Furthermore, managing diverse consumer inputs can be complex, as varying opinions and preferences may lead to conflicting feedback. Firms must develop strategies to synthesize and prioritize consumer insights effectively, ensuring that the final product reflects the most relevant and valuable contributions. Addressing these challenges requires a thoughtful approach to co-creation, including clear communication, transparent processes, and the establishment of trust between firms and consumers. Businesses may effectively use customer co-creation to spur innovation and improve product development by addressing these challenges. (Fang et al., 2019).

Relationship between Stakeholder Involvement and Product Success

The relationship between stakeholder involvement and product success is crucial in new product development, as stakeholders—including customers, employees, suppliers, investors, and community members—significantly enhance the quality, relevance, and acceptance of final products. Stakeholder engagement offers valuable insights that guide product development, fosters a sense of ownership that increases buy-in and advocacy, and aids in risk mitigation by identifying potential issues early in the process. Freeman's stakeholder theory emphasizes that organizations should consider the interests of all stakeholders in their decision-making, reinforcing that successful products arise from understanding and addressing diverse stakeholder needs. Aaltonen and Kujala (2016) highlight that effective stakeholder engagement leads to improved project outcomes and increased product success rates.

A compelling example of successful stakeholder involvement is the LEGO Ideas platform, which allows enthusiasts to submit and vote on design ideas for new sets. This collaborative process not only prioritizes the most desired concepts but also fosters ongoing interaction between LEGO and its community, leading to the successful launch of popular sets. By valuing customer input and creating a participatory environment, LEGO enhances customer loyalty and ensures that its products remain relevant in the market. Ultimately, organizations that prioritize stakeholder engagement are more likely to develop successful products that resonate with their target audiences, highlighting the need for continued exploration of innovative ways to enhance stakeholder involvement in product development.

Relationship between Consumer Engagement and Consumer Satisfaction

The concepts of consumer engagement and consumer satisfaction are closely intertwined, playing a crucial role in the success of brands and products. Consumer engagement refers to the emotional and psychological investment that customers make in a brand, encompassing various interactions such as communication, feedback, and participation in brand-related activities. High levels of consumer engagement lead to increased loyalty, advocacy, and stronger relationships between consumers and brands. Conversely, consumer satisfaction measures how well a product or service meets or exceeds customer expectations, serving as a critical determinant of repeat purchases and overall brand loyalty. Engaged consumers are more likely to express their opinions and participate in brand communities, which helps brands understand and meet customer needs effectively, thereby enhancing overall satisfaction.

The relationship between consumer engagement and satisfaction is mutually reinforcing, where engaged consumers contribute to a brand's success by providing valuable insights and fostering loyalty, while satisfied consumers are more likely to engage actively with the brand. Important elements affecting this connection include feedback systems that let customers express their opinions, which improves products; customization, which enhances emotions of value; and communication, as open and honest interactions build trust. Brands that prioritize both consumer engagement and satisfaction are better positioned to build lasting relationships with their customers,

driving long-term success and growth. For further understanding, works by Brodie et al. (2011) and Oliver (2010) provide valuable insights into these concepts.

Relationship between Innovation Quality and Brand Perception

Innovation quality and brand perception are critical components that influence a brand's success in the marketplace. Innovation quality refers to the effectiveness, uniqueness, and relevance of new products or services introduced by a brand. High-quality innovations have the power to improve a brand's image, draw in new clients, and hold on to current ones, all of which eventually support the expansion of a corporation. Contrarily, brand perception refers to how customers see and understand a brand in light of their interactions, experiences, and beliefs. It encompasses various factors, including brand image, reputation, and the emotional connection consumers have with the brand. A positive brand perception can amplify the impact of high-quality innovations, making them more appealing to consumers.

High-quality innovations may boost brand perception, and a strong brand impression can raise the perceived value of innovations. This link between innovation quality and brand perception is reciprocal. Key factors influencing this relationship include consistency in delivering innovative solutions that meet consumer needs, effective communication strategies that highlight the benefits of innovations, and the role of customer feedback in refining products. Brands that successfully integrate high-quality innovations while maintaining a positive brand perception are better positioned to differentiate themselves in competitive markets, foster customer loyalty, and achieve sustainable growth. For deeper insights into this relationship, consider exploring works by authors such as Beverland and Farrelly (2010) and Aaker (1996).

Relationship between Market trends and new product development

Market trends and new product development are closely linked, as understanding current trends is essential for creating products that meet consumer needs and preferences. Market trends refer to the general direction in which consumer behaviors, preferences, and market dynamics are moving. These trends can encompass various factors, including technological advancements, shifts in consumer demographics, sustainability concerns, and changes in purchasing behavior. By analyzing these trends, companies can identify opportunities for innovation and ensure that their new products align with market demands. Effective new product development involves not only generating ideas but also validating them against market trends to enhance the likelihood of success.

The relationship between market trends and new product development is dynamic, where emerging trends can inspire new product ideas, and successful new products can, in turn, shape future market trends. Key factors influencing this relationship include the importance of market research, which helps identify consumer preferences and emerging trends; the role of cross-functional teams that bring together diverse expertise to innovate effectively; and the need for agility in product development processes to respond quickly to changing market conditions. Companies that leverage insights from market trends in their new product development efforts are better positioned to create relevant and successful offerings, ultimately driving growth and competitive advantage. For further exploration of this topic, consider the works of authors such as Ulrich and Eppinger (2015) and Cooper (2019).

Related Theory

Theories Related to Consumer Co-Creation

Service-Dominant Logic

The Service-Dominant Logic theory, proposed by Vargo and Lusch in 2004, fundamentally shifts the perspective of value creation from a goods-centric view to one that prioritizes services as the core of economic exchange. This theory emphasizes that value is co-created through interactions between providers and consumers, rather than being embedded solely in the products themselves.

Key elements of this theory include the concept of value-in-use, which focuses on the benefits derived from using a service, the co-creation of value through collaborative processes, and the notion that service exchanges are inherently relational. The implication for consumer co-creation is significant; marketers should create environments that facilitate customer engagement and collaboration, enabling consumers to actively participate in shaping service offerings and enhancing their overall experience.

The study will focus on both the micro level, which will comprise managers, and the macro level, which will include consumers of beverages in Bayelsa State. This theory has garnered both support and criticism from various scholars. Supporters like Vargo and Lusch (2016) argue that Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) offers a robust framework for understanding the relational nature of service exchanges and emphasizes the importance of customer participation in value creation. Conversely, critics such as Frow and Payne (2011) suggest that SDL may overlook the complexities inherent in service delivery and the significance of tangible goods in the value creation process. Additionally, Lusch and Nambisan (2015) argue that while SDL promotes a relational perspective, it could inadvertently marginalize the transactional aspects that still play a crucial role in many service contexts. These discussions reflect an ongoing debate regarding the comprehensiveness and applicability of SDL across different marketing environments.

Value Co-Creation Theory

The Value Co-Creation Theory, developed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy in 2004, underscores the active role of consumers in the value creation process, positioning them as co-creators rather than passive recipients. According to this notion, companies must now include customers in the creation of goods and services that cater to their requirements and preferences rather than dictating value. Important components include customer engagement that encourages a sense of ownership and involvement, co-creation experiences—which entail cooperative interactions between consumers and businesses—and collaborative innovation—where ideas are produced through collaborations. It has significant implications for consumer co-creation; companies should actively include customers in the process of developing new products, using their opinions and ideas to increase customer happiness and loyalty and, eventually, the success of new products.

This theory has received both support and critique from various scholars. Proponents like Vargo and Lusch (2008) affirm that this theory aligns with the Service-Dominant Logic, emphasizing the importance of consumer engagement in value creation and suggesting that businesses must adapt to a more collaborative approach. However, critics such as Frow and Payne (2011) argue that while co-creation is significant, it can be challenging to implement effectively due to varying consumer expectations and the complexity of managing collaborative processes. Additionally, researchers like Gummesson (2008) caution that an overemphasis on co-creation may lead firms to overlook the essential role of traditional marketing strategies and the value of established brand equity. These discussions illustrate the ongoing debate surrounding the practical application and implications of Value Co-Creation Theory in contemporary marketing.

Customer Engagement Theory

Customer Engagement Theory, proposed by Van Doorn et al. in 2010, examines the multifaceted ways in which customers interact with brands, highlighting their active participation in the brand experience. This theory identifies engagement as a critical driver of consumer behavior, suggesting that when customers feel emotionally and cognitively involved with a brand, they are more likely to contribute to value creation. Key elements of this theory encompass behavioral engagement, which refers to the actions consumers take in relation to the brand, emotional engagement that captures the feelings and connections consumers develop, and cognitive engagement that involves the mental effort and thought processes consumers invest. The implication for consumer co-creation is that marketers should strive to foster deeper emotional connections with consumers, creating

opportunities for meaningful interactions that encourage them to participate in co-creation activities and share their experiences.

Customer Engagement Theory, proposed by Van Doorn et al. (2010), has sparked both support and critique among scholars. Advocates like Brodie et al. (2011) argue that the theory provides a comprehensive understanding of how customer engagement influences brand loyalty and value co-creation, emphasizing the importance of emotional and cognitive connections in enhancing consumer relationships. Conversely, critics such as Lemon and Verhoef (2016) suggest that while the theory highlights important aspects of engagement, it may oversimplify the complexities of consumer behavior by not fully accounting for external factors influencing engagement, such as market conditions and competitive dynamics. Additionally, Kumar and Pansari (2016) caution that the focus on engagement might lead firms to overlook the necessity of delivering consistent value through traditional marketing strategies, potentially undermining long-term customer satisfaction. These discussions reflect the evolving discourse surrounding Customer Engagement Theory and its practical implications for marketers.

Open Innovation theory

The Open Innovation theory, introduced by Chesbrough in 2003, revolutionizes the traditional view of innovation by advocating for the integration of external ideas and contributions into the innovation process. According to this notion, businesses may improve their capacity for innovation by working with external stakeholders, such as customers, to take advantage of a variety of viewpoints and expertise. External cooperation, which stresses alliances with clients and other businesses, idea sourcing from a wider community, and information exchange that promotes reciprocal learning are important components of this philosophy. The implication for consumer co-creation is that companies should establish open channels for consumer feedback and collaboration, enabling them to contribute ideas and insights that can lead to more innovative and relevant product offerings.

Open Innovation Theory, introduced by Chesbrough (2003), has garnered both support and critique from various scholars. Proponents such as West and Bogers (2014) argue that the theory effectively captures the shift in innovation paradigms, emphasizing the importance of external collaboration and the benefits of integrating diverse knowledge sources to enhance innovation outcomes. Conversely, critics like Gassmann (2006) contend that while Open Innovation encourages collaboration, it may also lead to challenges in managing intellectual property and the risks of idea theft, which can deter firms from fully embracing external contributions. Additionally, Enkel, Gassmann, and Chesbrough (2009) highlight that the practical implementation of Open Innovation can be complex, as organizations must navigate cultural barriers and establish effective processes for collaboration. These discussions illustrate the ongoing debate regarding the applicability and implications of Open Innovation Theory in contemporary innovation practices.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, developed by Homans in 1958, provides a framework for understanding how social interactions are governed by the exchange of resources and benefits. This theory asserts that individuals seek to maximize their rewards while minimizing their costs in relationships, leading to a dynamic where trust and reciprocity play crucial roles. Key elements of this theory include reciprocity, which highlights the mutual exchange of benefits, trust that forms the foundation of strong relationships, and relationship dynamics that influence consumer behavior. The implication for consumer co-creation is that brands should focus on building trust and establishing mutual benefits with consumers, creating an environment where co-creation is encouraged and valued, ultimately leading to stronger brand loyalty and advocacy.

Social Exchange Theory, developed by Homans (1958), has been both supported and critiqued by various scholars. Proponents like Blau (1964) affirm that the theory effectively explains the motivations behind social interactions and relationships, emphasizing the importance of reciprocity

and trust in fostering strong connections between individuals and brands. However, critics such as Thibaut and Kelley (1959) argue that the theory may oversimplify the complexities of human relationships by focusing predominantly on economic exchanges, neglecting emotional and psychological factors that also influence social interactions. Additionally, researchers like Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) suggest that while Social Exchange Theory provides valuable insights into relationship dynamics, it may not adequately account for the role of social norms and cultural contexts in shaping exchange processes. These discussions highlight the ongoing debate regarding the applicability and limitations of Social Exchange Theory in understanding consumer behavior and co-creation.

Theories Related to Consumer Co-Creation

Service-Dominant Logic theory

The Service-Dominant Logic theory, proposed by Vargo and Lusch in 2004, fundamentally shifts the perspective of value creation from a goods-centric view to one that prioritizes services as the core of economic exchange. This theory emphasizes that value is co-created through interactions between providers and consumers, rather than being embedded solely in the products themselves. Key elements of this theory include the concept of value-in-use, which focuses on the benefits derived from using a service, the co-creation of value through collaborative processes, and the notion that service exchanges are inherently relational. The implication for consumer co-creation is significant; marketers should create environments that facilitate customer engagement and collaboration, enabling consumers to actively participate in shaping service offerings and enhancing their overall experience.

Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) theory, proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004), has garnered both support and criticism from various scholars. Proponents like Grönroos (2006) argue that SDL effectively redefines the nature of value creation, emphasizing the importance of service interactions and relationships in fostering customer loyalty and satisfaction. However, critics such as Lusch and Nambisan (2015) contend that while SDL offers a valuable framework, it may lack specificity in its application, particularly regarding how firms can operationalize the co-creation of value. Additionally, scholars like Gummesson (2008) suggest that SDL may oversimplify the complexities of service exchanges by not adequately addressing the role of technology and digital platforms in shaping service interactions and consumer experiences. These discussions illustrate the ongoing dialogue surrounding the relevance and applicability of Service-Dominant Logic in contemporary marketing and service management.

Value Co-Creation Theory

The Value Co-Creation Theory, developed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy in 2004, underscores the active role of consumers in the value creation process, positioning them as co-creators rather than passive recipients. This theory argues that businesses can no longer dictate value; instead, they must engage consumers in the development of products and services that meet their needs and preferences. Key elements include co-creation experiences, which involve collaborative interactions between consumers and firms, consumer engagement that fosters a sense of ownership and involvement, and collaborative innovation, where ideas are generated through partnerships. The implication for consumer co-creation is profound; brands should actively involve consumers in product development processes, utilizing their insights and feedback to enhance loyalty, satisfaction, and ultimately, the success of new offerings.

Value Co-Creation Theory, developed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), has received both support and criticism from various scholars. Supporters, such as Frow and Payne (2007), argue that the theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how businesses can leverage consumer insights to create value, emphasizing the importance of collaborative experiences in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Conversely, critics like Vargo and Lusch (2008) suggest

that while the theory highlights consumer engagement, it may overemphasize the role of consumers in the value creation process, potentially downplaying the significance of firms' contributions and the complexities involved in managing co-creation relationships. Additionally, scholars such as Cova and Dalli (2009) argue that the theory may not adequately address the challenges and limitations of co-creation in diverse contexts, including the potential for conflicts between consumer expectations and firm capabilities. These discussions illustrate the ongoing debate regarding the applicability and implications of Value Co-Creation Theory in contemporary marketing practices.

Customer Engagement Theory

Customer Engagement Theory, proposed by Van Doorn et al. in 2010, examines the multifaceted ways in which customers interact with brands, highlighting their active participation in the brand experience. This theory identifies engagement as a critical driver of consumer behavior, suggesting that when customers feel emotionally and cognitively involved with a brand, they are more likely to contribute to value creation. Key elements of this theory encompass behavioral engagement, which refers to the actions consumers take in relation to the brand, emotional engagement that captures the feelings and connections consumers develop, and cognitive engagement that involves the mental effort and thought processes consumers invest. The implication for consumer co-creation is that marketers should strive to foster deeper emotional connections with consumers, creating opportunities for meaningful interactions that encourage them to participate in co-creation activities and share their experiences.

Customer Engagement Theory, proposed by Van Doorn et al. (2010), has been both supported and critiqued by various scholars. Proponents, such as Brodie et al. (2011), argue that the theory effectively captures the dynamic nature of customer-brand interactions and emphasizes the importance of emotional and cognitive involvement in driving consumer loyalty and advocacy. However, critics like Kumar and Pansari (2016) suggest that while the theory provides valuable insights, it may lack a comprehensive framework for measuring engagement and its direct impact on financial performance, potentially leading to challenges in its practical application. Additionally, scholars such as Malthouse et al. (2013) raise concerns about the overemphasis on emotional engagement, arguing that it may overshadow other critical factors, such as brand trust and satisfaction, that also play significant roles in consumer behavior. These discussions highlight the ongoing debate surrounding the relevance and applicability of Customer Engagement Theory in contemporary marketing strategies.

Open Innovation theory

The Open Innovation theory, introduced by Chesbrough in 2003, revolutionizes the traditional view of innovation by advocating for the integration of external ideas and contributions into the innovation process. This theory posits that firms can enhance their innovation capabilities by collaborating with external stakeholders, including consumers, to leverage diverse perspectives and knowledge. Key elements of this theory include external collaboration, which emphasizes partnerships with customers and other organizations, idea sourcing from a broader community, and knowledge sharing that fosters mutual learning. The implication for consumer co-creation is that companies should establish open channels for consumer feedback and collaboration, enabling them to contribute ideas and insights that can lead to more innovative and relevant product offerings.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, developed by Homans in 1958, provides a framework for understanding how social interactions are governed by the exchange of resources and benefits. This theory asserts that individuals seek to maximize their rewards while minimizing their costs in relationships, leading to a dynamic where trust and reciprocity play crucial roles. Key elements of this theory include reciprocity, which highlights the mutual exchange of benefits, trust that forms the foundation of

strong relationships, and relationship dynamics that influence consumer behavior. The implication for consumer co-creation is that brands should focus on building trust and establishing mutual benefits with consumers, creating an environment where co-creation is encouraged and valued, ultimately leading to stronger brand loyalty and advocacy.

Relational Marketing Theory

Relational Marketing Theory, proposed by Berry in 1983, highlights the value of establishing enduring connections with customers as opposed to concentrating just on transactional exchanges. According to this hypothesis, building solid relationships might result in more satisfied and loyal customers. Key elements of this theory include relationship management that focuses on nurturing connections with consumers, customer loyalty that results from positive interactions, and trust that underpins successful relationships. The implication for consumer co-creation is that marketers should prioritize relationship-building strategies that encourage consumer involvement in co-creation, recognizing that engaged and loyal customers are more likely to contribute to the brand's success.

Relational Marketing Theory, proposed by Berry (1983), has been both supported and critiqued by various scholars in the marketing field. Proponents like Grönroos (1994) argue that the emphasis on long-term relationships fosters customer loyalty and enhances brand equity, which can lead to sustained business success. However, critics such as Palmatier et al. (2006) contend that while relational marketing can enhance customer satisfaction, it may not always translate into increased profitability, suggesting that the costs associated with maintaining relationships can sometimes outweigh the benefits. Additionally, scholars like Gummesson (2002) caution that an overemphasis on relationships might lead marketers to neglect the importance of transactional interactions, which can also be vital in certain contexts. These discussions highlight the complexities and varying perspectives surrounding Relational Marketing Theory, particularly regarding its practical implications for consumer co-creation and overall marketing strategy.

Review of Empirical Literature

This section of this chapter has the review of literatures that are relevant to the study on the relationship between consumer co-creation and new product development.

Frow et al. (2016) examined the concept of co-creation within service ecosystems in their article titled "Framing co-creation: A service ecosystem perspective," published in the *Journal of Service Management*. The study focused on various stakeholders, including consumers, and utilized qualitative analysis to explore how stakeholder involvement enhances value creation, finding that integrating consumer perspectives significantly improves product relevance.

In their paper "Value co-creation: Concept and measurement," which was published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Ranjan and Read (2016) talked about the idea and assessment of value co-creation. This research involved consumers as the primary population and employed a conceptual framework to analyze the impact of stakeholder involvement on product development, concluding that active consumer engagement leads to higher customer satisfaction.

Hoyer et al. (2018) provided a comprehensive review of consumer co-creation in new product development in their article "Consumer co-creation in new product development: The Journal of Consumer Research issued a review and research agenda. After using a systematic literature review process and concentrating on a variety of stakeholders, the authors concluded that improving innovation results requires stakeholder involvement.

Cova, Dalli, and Zwick (2018) critiqued traditional views of consumer co-creation in their article "Critical perspectives on consumer co-creation," published in *Marketing Theory*. This study involved a diverse range of stakeholders and employed critical discourse analysis, revealing that broader stakeholder involvement can significantly influence marketing strategies.

Finally, Gonzalez and Palacios (2020) investigated the role of customer involvement in market relevance and innovation in their article "Market relevance and innovation: The role of customer involvement," published in the Journal of Business Research. The study focused on consumers and employed regression analysis to demonstrate that stakeholder engagement contributes positively to the market relevance of new products.

CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AS A DIMENSION OF CONSUMER CO-CREATION

In their work "Competitive advantage through engagement," which was published in the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Kumar and Pansari (2016) examined the function of customer engagement. Higher levels of customer involvement result in increased brand loyalty and happiness, according to the study, which used structural equation modeling to examine the link between consumer engagement and competitive advantage using consumers as the main population.

In the Journal of Business Research article "Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community," Brodie et al. (2011) explored the idea of consumer engagement. This study focused on consumers within online communities and employed qualitative analysis to investigate how consumer engagement fosters co-creation and brand loyalty, concluding that active participation significantly enhances the consumer experience.

Hollebeek (2011) contributed to the understanding of consumer engagement with her article "Demystifying customer brand engagement: Exploring the relationship between customer and brand," published in Journal of Marketing Management. The study focused on consumers and utilized a mixed-method approach to examine how consumer engagement influences brand attachment and co-creation, finding that engaged consumers are more likely to participate in co-creation activities.

Bennett and Rundle-Thiele (2005) investigated the impact of consumer engagement on brand loyalty in their article "The brand loyalty life cycle," published in Journal of Brand Management. This research involved consumers as the primary population and employed longitudinal analysis to explore how consumer engagement influences brand loyalty over time, concluding that sustained engagement leads to increased brand loyalty and advocacy.

Finally, van Doorn et al. (2010) explored the influence of consumer engagement on co-creation in their article "Customer engagement behavior: The Journal of Service Research released an article on the function of customer involvement in the co-creation process. The study focused on a diverse range of consumers and employed survey methodology to analyze the effects of consumer engagement on co-creation outcomes, finding that higher engagement levels lead to more significant co-creation efforts and value generation.

INNOVATION QUALITY

In their paper "Open innovation with customers," which was published in the International Journal of Technology Management, Piller and Ihl (2009) investigated the connection between innovation quality and consumer co-creation. Direct customer input greatly improves product development results, according to the study, which included consumers as active participants in the innovation process and used case studies to examine how consumer engagement affects the quality of inventions.

In their work "Customer empowerment in new product development," which was published in the Journal of Product Innovation Management, Fuchs and Schreier (2011) investigated the ways in which customer co-creation affects the quality of innovation. Using empirical analysis and an emphasis on customers as co-creators, this study demonstrated that consumer engagement improves the quality of innovation, which in turn increases customer pleasure and brand loyalty.

Hoyer et al. (2010) investigated the role of consumer co-creation in enhancing innovation quality in their article "Consumer co-creation in new product development," published in Journal of Consumer Research. The study focused on various consumer segments and utilized a mixed-method approach

to demonstrate that consumer involvement in the innovation process leads to higher quality outcomes and increased product success rates.

In their work "Value co-creation: Concept and measurement," which was published in the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Ranjan and Read (2016) also discussed how customer interaction affects the quality of innovation. Consumers were co-creators in this study, which used structural equation modeling to examine how consumer interaction affected the caliber of inventions and came to the conclusion that greater degrees of engagement produced better and more effective results.

Von Hippel (2005) examined the role of user innovation in enhancing innovation quality in his article "Democratizing innovation," published in The MIT Press. This study focused on users as innovators and utilized qualitative analysis to demonstrate that user contributions significantly improve the quality of innovations, emphasizing the importance of consumer input in the development process.

Research Gap

The gap in the study on consumer co-creation and new product development lies in the lack of a holistic framework that integrates consumer involvement throughout all stages of the development process, insufficient quantitative measurement of co-creation's impact on business outcomes, neglect of consumer diversity and segmentation, limited exploration of technology's role in facilitating co-creation, absence of longitudinal studies examining long-term effects, oversight of contextual influences on co-creation strategies, and inadequate attention to the ethical implications of engaging consumers in the co-creation process.

By converting the conventional connection between businesses and their consumers into a dynamic collaboration, consumer co-creation is redefining new product development (NPD). Customers are encouraged to actively engage in all phases of the development process through this collaborative approach, from generating creative ideas to honing designs and testing prototypes. Businesses may create goods that profoundly address market demands by leveraging consumer creativity and insights, which will eventually spur innovation and cultivate enduring client loyalty. Theories like Design Thinking and Agile Development highlight this shift, showcasing how consumer engagement can lead to faster turnaround times and more relevant offerings.

However, the journey of co-creation is not without its challenges. The literature uncovers intriguing gaps, such as the absence of comprehensive frameworks that seamlessly integrate consumer input throughout the NPD process and the need for robust quantitative measures to assess the impact of co-creation on business success. Additionally, there's a rich landscape of diversity among consumers that remains largely unexplored, along with the powerful role of technology in enhancing collaboration. Ethical considerations around data privacy also demand attention. By filling up these gaps, businesses may fully realize the promise of consumer co-creation, opening the door for creative goods that satisfy consumer needs while also strengthening relationships with their clients and turning them into ardent brand evangelists.

Recommendation on Consumer Co-Creation and New Product Development

Consumer co-creation should be actively integrated into the new product development (NPD) process as a strategic approach to align products with market demands and enhance consumer satisfaction. To achieve this, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Foster Collaborative Platforms:** Companies should invest in digital platforms and forums that encourage consumer interaction. These platforms can serve as innovation hubs where customers share ideas, provide feedback, and participate in product design. Leveraging technologies like crowdsourcing, online communities, and social media can enhance the co-creation process.

2. **Engage Lead Users:** Identifying and involving lead users—consumers who are ahead of market trends—can provide invaluable insights. Lead users are often the source of innovative ideas that can improve product features and drive differentiation in competitive markets.
3. **Implement Feedback Loops:** Create structured mechanisms for collecting, analyzing, and integrating consumer feedback at various stages of product development. This ensures that the evolving product aligns with consumer preferences, reducing the risk of market rejection.
4. **Personalize Co-Creation Experiences:** Develop co-creation initiatives that cater to individual consumer preferences, enabling customers to feel valued and recognized. For example, using AI-driven tools to tailor consumer participation opportunities based on their history with the brand can enhance engagement.
5. **Enhance Transparency:** Establish clear communication channels to update consumers on how their input is being utilized. Transparency builds trust and strengthens the co-creation partnership, motivating consumers to contribute meaningfully.
6. **Promote Trust and Reciprocity:** Drawing on theories like Social Exchange Theory, companies should foster mutual benefits. Incentivizing consumer participation through rewards, recognition, or exclusive benefits can sustain engagement and loyalty.
7. **Train and Empower Employees:** Equip employees with the skills to facilitate co-creation initiatives effectively. Employees should act as facilitators, enabling seamless consumer participation in product ideation and development processes.
8. **Evaluate and Iterate:** Continuously assess the effectiveness of co-creation efforts. Use metrics like consumer satisfaction, product adoption rates, and innovation success to measure outcomes and refine approaches.

By integrating consumer co-creation into the NPD framework, companies can not only enhance the relevance and appeal of their products but also build long-term consumer relationships, fostering loyalty and driving sustained business growth. Adopting these practices ensures that consumer voices are central to innovation, aligning with evolving market dynamics and preferences.

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