

Achieving Value Co-Creation in IT Outsourcing

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, information technology outsourcing has become a widely used and researched means for enterprises to change their performance. In this article, we attempt to link value co-creation to the information technology outsourcing satisfaction of enterprises. We argue that although enterprises may be able to increase their value co-creation through information technology outsourcing, this is only true up to a point, beyond which customer participation, customer orientation, service quality, communication culture, trust, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment actually impact on a consequence of value co-creation. There is, in other words, a positively impacted relationship between value co-creation and information technology outsourcing. To bridge this gap, structural equation modeling is applied to test this study. We empirically confirm these arguments through a survey data analysis containing 207 CEOs' or senior managers' valid measurements. Finally, we find that all factors have important effects on inter-organizational value co-creation.

Keywords : IT outsourcing, Value co-creation, Service quality, Trust, Commitment

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I. Introduction

Since the genesis of IT outsourcing in the early 1960s and the growth of business-centric outsourcing in the mid-2005s (Weick, 2007) outsourcing has become a ubiquitous phenomenon (Kotlarsky, 2014) and the subject of considerable research (Lacity et al., 2009; Dibbern et al., 2004)

While the outsourcing market is burgeoning, the focus of this work is on value co-creation, Information Technology (IT) outsourcing satisfaction, and future collaboration. Value co-creation refers to the practice of shifting one or more organizational activities related to IT to an outside firm (Darmayanti & Cahyono, 2014; Dibbern et al., 2004). It includes customer participation, customer orientation, service quality, communication culture, trust, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Most research in outsourcing has focused on customer-related aspects. Since these aspects have a significant effect on service provider organizations, regular communication between clients and providers is necessary. Therefore, clients are likely to discuss market developments and business needs with their service providers regularly. (Liu & Deng, 2015; Plugge et al., 2013; Gonzalez et al., 2006)

The major view is value co-creation between clients and providers. Value and its creation and appropriation are central concepts in management research (Pitelis, 2012) as well as in the research on alliances and networks (Pitelis, 2012; Capaldo & Petruzzelli, 2011; Dhanaraj & Singh, 2006; Dyer et al., 2008; Lavie, 2006; Moller et al., 2005). Value in economics can be formally defined as the willingness to pay from the end-customer perspective (Huang et al., 2015). Value creation refers to activities that increase the amount of such value independently of the context and level of analysis.

The purpose of this study is to link value co-creation to the information technology outsourcing satisfaction of enterprises. We argue that although enterprises may be able to increase their value co-creation through information technology outsourcing, beyond which customer participation, customer orientation, service quality, communication culture, trust, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment actually impact on a consequence of value co-creation. There is, in other words, a positively impacted relationship between value co-creation and information technology outsourcing.

Theoretical Background and Research Model development

We review the literature related to our main constructs before detailing research model development,

suggesting that customer participation, customer orientation, service quality, communication culture, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment positively associate with value co-creation. Trust positively impacts on affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Value co-creation positively influences IT outsourcing satisfaction. Finally, IT outsourcing satisfaction is positively associated with future collaboration. We first review and present an operational definition of the concept of the customer participation and then turn to the customer orientation, service quality, communication culture, trust, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, value co-creation, outsourcing satisfaction, and future collaboration found in the literature. Figure 1 presents the nomological model of the study, while the following sections generate the hypotheses representing the links indicate between the constructs.

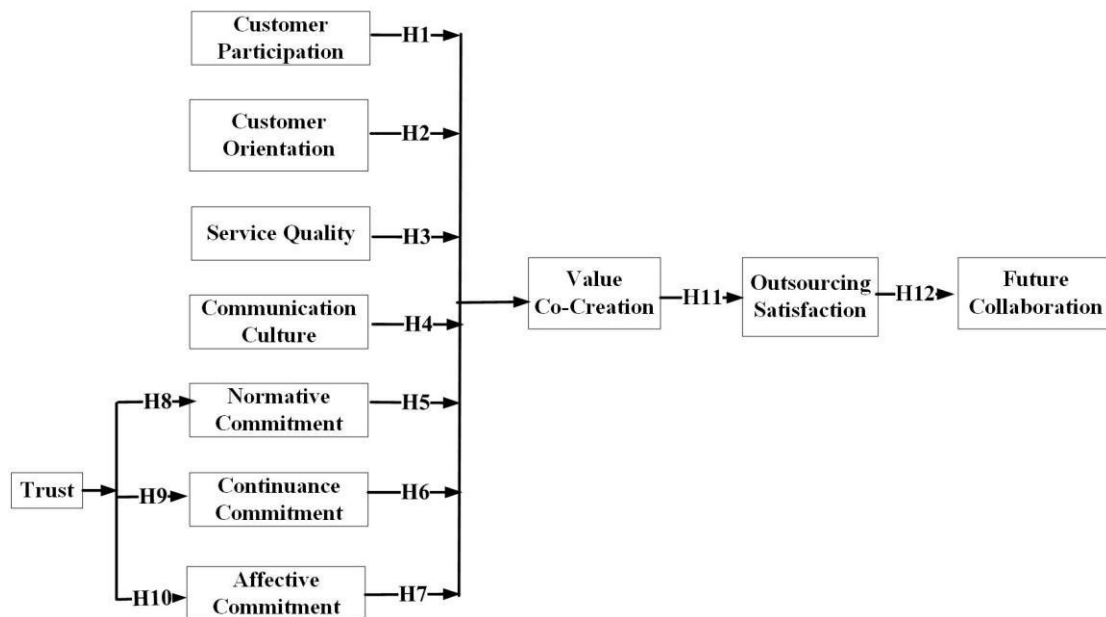


Figure 1. Nomological model

Customer Participation

Customer participation may increase communication and relationship building between customers and employees (Zhang et al., 2015). According to health care literature (Wang et al., 2015), when patients work with doctors to incorporate their preferences and values, this improves the level of care delivered and encourages more empathetic, honest and friendly interactions, which produces relational values. On the service provider side, employees may fulfill their social needs for approval when they co-create services with customers, similar to the way their perceptions of being valued by the organization enable them to satisfy their social needs for approval, affiliation, and esteem (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Thus, every interaction between employees and customers represents an opportunity to co-create relational values for both parties (Fleming et al., 2005). Illustrative comments from service employees about camaraderie and social bonding with their customers support this assertion (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). Based on the statements above, hypothesis 1 is proposed as follows.

H 1: Customer participation has a positive impact on value co-creation.

Customer Orientation

Customer orientation is based on customer-driven value creation (Lindblom et al., 2015; Korschun et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2014;). At the firm level, Slater and Narver (1995) emphasized that market-oriented firm's place highest priority on the profitable creation, and maintenance of superior customer value. In this study, value creation has been defined as customer's perspective of achieving desired benefits attributable to the salesperson and the company. Yeh (2015) suggest that customer orientation at an individually employee level is closely related to a 'concern for others' dimension. Therefore, salespersons high on customer orientation are likely to show higher concern for self and for others, but salespeople with sales orientation or having low customer orientation would exhibit high concern for self, but low concern for others. Therefore, it is also likely

that a customer oriented salesperson is more likely to create value for customers, since s/he is likely to be more concerned for others (customers). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: Customer orientation is positively associated with value co-creation.

Service Quality

Value is at the heart of what consumers pursue from a marketing exchange. While value is operationalized in different ways, the general definition of value is a consumer's perception of the subjective worth of some activity or object considering all net benefits and costs of consumption (Singh, 2015). Perceived quality will positively influence value, while price/cost will negatively influence value (Hellier et al., 2003). Logically, high quality is not a prerequisite for value because a reduction in quality can be offset by lower overall costs. However, research supports a positive relationship between quality and value (e.g. Choi et al., 2004; Cronin et al., 2000; Zins, 2001). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Service quality has a significant, positive effect on value co-creation.

Communication Culture

Communication culture and structures - is the atmosphere within the organization that defines accepted communication behavior which may facilitate or hinder the communication process (Littler, 2013; Brown, 1997; Adler, 1965). The structures of communication and integration of knowledge are essential for enhancing the absorptive capacity (George & Jonathan, 2015). Different authors regard the communication climate as an important factor impacting the communication process (Tsai, 2001). An open culture that views change as positive can facilitate communication and thus the learning process (Levinson & Asahi, 1995). New knowledge creation requires routines that simplify and facilitate communication allows members of the firms to explore ways in which they can use existing knowledge or develop new knowledge (Zahra & George, 2000). They argue that structural, cognitive, behavioural and political barriers may stifle the effective sharing and integration of knowledge. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H4: Communication Culture has a positive impact on value co-creation.

Commitment

This study investigates the influence of employees' commitment to the organisation on their adoption of brand values. Organisational commitment is a state of psychological attachment to the workplace (Boix & Svolic, 2013; Chen et al., 2002). We identify commitment as a critical variable for exploration due to its influence on employee performance and values adoption (; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2009; Somers, 2009; Park & Rainey, 2007; Boyd & Sutherland, 2006). When employees are committed to the organisation, they display greater 'social capital' where relationships are created from shared values (Park & Rainey, 2007).

The influence of the three-component model of commitment is helpful to appreciate the adoption of brand values. The three components of this model are Affective Commitment or 'an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization' (Demirtas, & Akdogan, 2015), Continuance Commitment or 'an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation' (McCallum, & Forret, 2014), and Normative Commitment or 'a feeling of obligation to continue employment' (McCallum, & Forret, 2014). Employees who experience affective commitment continue to work for an organisation because they want to; those experiencing continuance commitment continue to work because they need to, and those with a high level of normative commitment work because they feel they ought to. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H5: Normative Commitment is positively associated with value co-creation. H6: Continuance Commitment is positively associated with value co-creation. H7: Affective Commitment is positively associated with value co-creation.

Trust

Trust can be expected to have a direct, positive impact on commitment because trading relationships based on trust are usually highly appreciated by those involved in them. The fact that the parties act sincerely or credibly—and that they aim to protect, whenever possible, the interests and wellbeing of the counterpart—generally results, as shown empirically, in the generation of commitment (Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2005). This supports the argument that distributors prefer to work in the long term with manufacturers they can trust who will act sincerely and benevolently toward the relationship, thus covering themselves against the risk of damage caused by the manufacturer in any actions taken (Ang et al., 2015). This leads us to suggest that

H8: Trust has a positive effect on the normative commitment. H9: Trust has a positive effect on the continuance commitment. H10: Trust has a positive effect on the affective commitment.

Value Co-Creation, Outsourcing Satisfaction, and Future Collaboration

The concept of value co-creation is developed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004). They suggested that the value of a service or a product is not created by the manufacturer/supplier solely, but co-created by the manufacturer/supplier and the consumer of the product or the service.

Outsourcing has emerged as a key trend in contemporary business environments, and has migrated from the procurement of non-core, support services to virtually every activity of a firm (Griffith & Yanhui, 2015). Outsourcing is also considered to be a strategic priority (Holcomb and Hitt, 2007).

H 11: Value co-creation has a positive impact on outsourcing satisfaction.

Finally, the company's satisfaction with collaboration influences the future of the relationship. Because current experiences should recur in future collaborations, companies continue collaborations only if their current outsourcing experiences meet their expectations.

H12: Outsourcing satisfaction has a positive impact on future collaboration intentions.

II. Research methodology and design

Data collection and research design

This study is based on an online questionnaire and selected sample firms from the Information Management Association of R.O.C. (IMA), International Service Industry Association of R.O.C. (CISA), and International Trade Executives Association of R.O.C. (ITEA) from July 2013 to October 2014. Recipients of the survey are CEOs or senior managers of sample firms (Manufacturing sector 21.7%, Information Technology sector 12.6%, Food and beverage service sector 12.1%, Others service sector 10.6%, Tourism sector 10.6%, Finance and insurance sector 9.2%, Medical Treatment & Health Care sector 8.2%, Logistic retailing sector 10.2%, Trading sector 4.8%), and they evaluate items regarding a firm's outsourcing, as shown in Table 1.

According to the sample plan, the sample company adopts method of questionnaire survey, and the sampling sample is 300. Sampling yields 297 useful questionnaires, a response valid rate of 97%. We design the questionnaire by considering related works and experts' views. After the first draft is completed, a pretest is undertaken with established leaders in outsourcing value co-creation in the IT industries to amend any part perceived to have a dubious presentation. Therefore, questionnaire recipients could understand the questions in the official survey, and a satisfactory completion of the questionnaire is ensured. All aspects are assessed using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'.

Analysis method

The method chosen to analyze the data is the structural equations method, using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique. This technique is designed to reflect the theoretical and empirical characteristics of social sciences and behavioral characteristics, in which we often find theories with insufficient support or little information available. More specifically, we use Smart PLS 2.0 build M3.

Table 1. Demographic information about the respondents						
Measure	Items	Frequency	Percent	Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	155	74.9%	Female	52	25.1%
IT Outsourcing Frequency (per year)	Under 1(inclusive)	6	2.9%	3 – 6 (inclusive)	83	40.1%
	1 – 3 (inclusive)	90	43.5%	6 (or more)	28	13.5%
Industry Category	Manufacturing sector	45	21.7%	Finance and insurance	19	9.2%
	Information Technology	26	12.6%	Medical Treatment & Health Care	17	8.2%
	Food and beverage service	25	12.1%	Logistic retailing	21	10.2%
	Others service	22	10.6%	Trading	10	4.8%
	Tourism	22	10.6%			
IT Outsourcing Entrusted Amount (million, NT)	Under 5 (inclusive)	56	27.1%	100-500 (inclusive)	23	11.1%
	5-10 (inclusive)	50	24.2%	500-1000(inclusive)	19	9.2%
	10-50 (inclusive)	18	8.7%	1000 (or more)	9	4.2%
	50-100 (inclusive)	32	15.5%			
Turnover of Enterprise (Hundred million, NT, nearly 1 year)	Under 1(inclusive)	35	16.9%	10-15 (inclusive)	36	17.4%
	1-5 (inclusive)	60	29.0%	15-20 (inclusive)	23	11.1%
	5-10 (inclusive)	34	16.4%	20 (or more)	19	9.2%
IT Outsourcing Entrusted Item (Complex topics) (N=535).	Network	182	34.0%	Hardware Maintenance	90	16.8%
	Software (such as information systems, etc.)	179	33.5%	Cloud	84	15.7%

III. Research Results

Structural equation modeling (SEM) technique is used to test the hypotheses. SmartPLS software is used to analyze the data. We first examine the instrument (the measurement model) to assess reliability and validity before testing the structural model using the level of significance of the path coefficients and the variance explained (R square measures), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the constructs								
Constructs		AVE	Composite Reliability	R Square	Cronbachs Alpha	Communality	Redundancy	LV Index Values
Affective Commitment	AC	0.938	0.978	0.725	0.967	0.938	0.680	3.647
Communication Culture	CC	0.923	0.974		0.960	0.927		3.713
Continuance Commitment	CCT	0.643	0.782	0.650	0.573	0.964	0.626	3.721
Customer Orientation	CO	0.941	0.979		0.968	0.941		3.683
Customer Participation	CP	0.893	0.961		0.940	0.893		3.895
Future Collaboration	FC	0.962	0.987	0.823	0.980	0.962	0.791	3.709
Normative Commitment	NC	0.841	0.941	0.700	0.906	0.841	0.588	3.828
Outsourcing Satisfaction	OS	0.948	0.982	0.603	0.973	0.948	0.572	3.667
Service Quality	SQ	0.851	0.945		0.913	0.851		3.861
Value Co-Creation	VC	0.867	0.951	0.869	0.923	0.867	0.126	3.730

Measurement model

We assess Cronbach's alpha, the composite reliability of constructs, average variance extracted (AVE), R square, and communality to test convergent validity. As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha values of all constructs range from 0.573 to 0.980. Composite reliability values range from 0.782 to 0.987 and are above the benchmark value of 0.70, suggesting acceptable degrees of internal consistency of each construct. AVE values

range from 0.643 to 0.962. Communality values range from 0.841 to 0.964 and are above the benchmark value of 0.50. This will indicate that the model explains most of the variation for those variables.

The second criterion requires that the square root of AVE shall be greater than the correlations between the constructs. As seen in Table 3, the square roots of AVEs (diagonal elements) are higher than the correlation between constructs (off-diagonal elements). The results support the discriminant validity of the scale used. These results indicate that the measurement model has satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 3. Correlation among constructs and the square root of the AVE on Diagonals

	AC	CC	CCT	CO	CP	FC	NC	OS	SQ	VC
AC	0.969									
CC	0.856	0.961								
CCT	0.879	0.798	0.802							
CO	0.843	0.917	0.815	0.970						
CP	0.741	0.720	0.740	0.772	0.945					
FC	0.844	0.859	0.773	0.800	0.672	0.982				
NC	0.755	0.726	0.797	0.746	0.837	0.697	0.917			
OS	0.905	0.864	0.796	0.863	0.714	0.907	0.721	0.974		
SQ	0.751	0.750	0.747	0.746	0.774	0.727	0.859	0.752	0.922	
VC	0.860	0.865	0.871	0.855	0.773	0.775	0.825	0.777	0.816	0.931

Structural model

The structural model is assessed using the variance explained (R square measures) and the level of significance of the β -Values and T values, as shown in Table 2. The R square results for the six dependent variables are high, particularly affective commitment (R square =0.725), continuance commitment (R square =0.650), normative commitment (R square =0.700), and outsourcing satisfaction (R square =0.603), future collaboration (R square =0.823), and value co-creation (R square =0.869). This suggests that the model has high explanatory power, explaining 72.5%, 65.0%, 70.0%, 60.3%, 82.3% and 86.9% of the variance in these dependent variables respectively.

The result for H1 linking customer participation to value co-creation is supported (β -Value=0.007). Consistent with this, we find that customer orientation to value co-creation (H2) is supported (β -Value=0.080). Service quality to value co-creation (H3) is supported (β -Value=0.146, $p<.01$). Communication culture to value co-creation (H4) is supported (β -Value=0.268, $p<.001$). Normative commitment to value co-creation (H5) is supported (β -Value=0.146, $p<.01$). Continuance commitment to value co-creation (H6) is supported (β -Value=0.282, $p<.001$). Affective commitment to value co-creation (H7) is supported (β -Value=0.089). Trust to normative commitment (H8) is supported (β -Value=0.836, $p<.001$). Trust to continuance commitment (H9) is supported (β -Value=0.806, $p<.001$). Trust to affective commitment (H10) is supported (β -Value=0.851, $p<.001$).

Value co-creation positively impacts on IT outsourcing satisfaction (β -Value=0.877, $p<.001$). H11 is supported. IT outsourcing satisfaction positively impacts on future collaboration (β -Value=0.907, $p<.001$). H12 is supported. These results can provide valuable reference information for IT outsourcing process to manage their services and enhance their performance. The main effect model is shown as Figure 2.

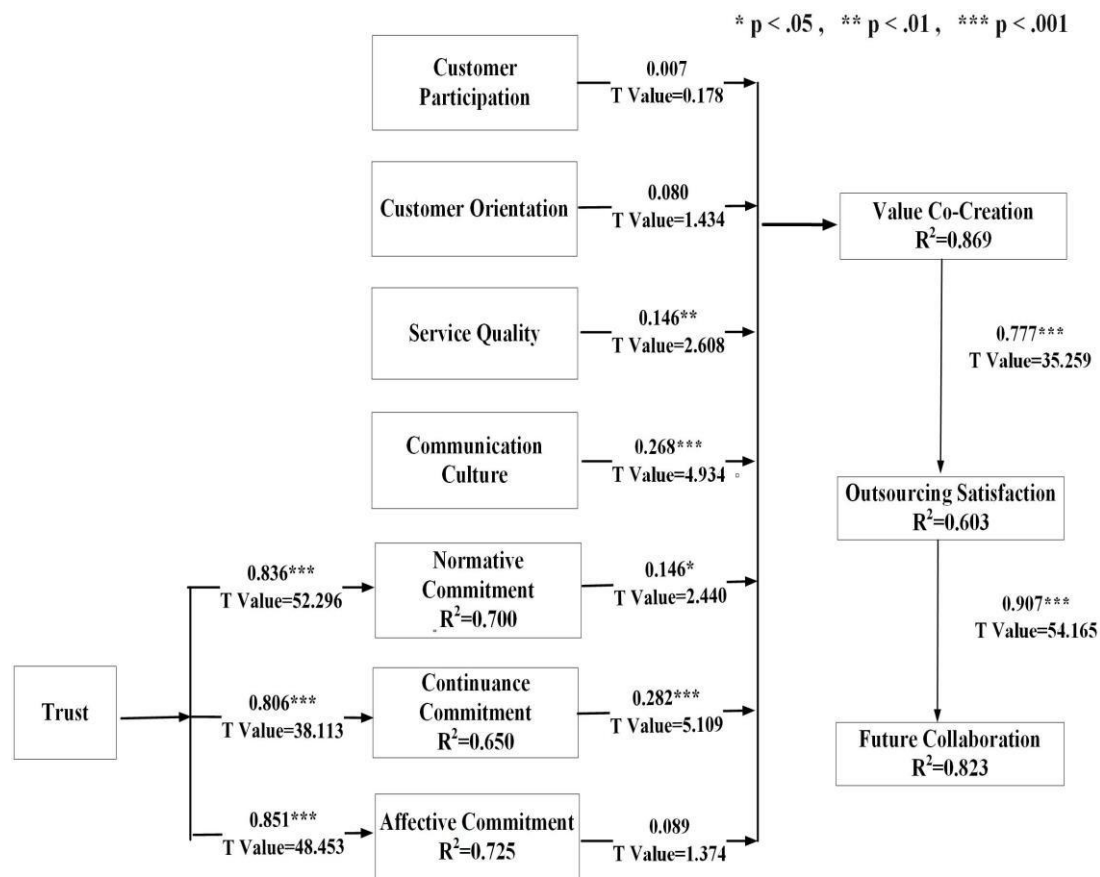


Figure 2. Interaction Effect Model

IV. Discussion

We formulate twelve hypotheses and conduct a field study to develop our understanding of how customer participation, customer orientation, service quality, communication culture, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment impact value co-creation in an organizational context. Our goal in this research is to document the association between IT outsourcing satisfaction and value co-creation. We find value co-creation has a strong impact on IT outsourcing satisfaction. We might this understanding inform managers about appropriate strategies for leveraging IT outsourcing as part of a value-creating strategy for the enterprise. Managing customer relationships are strategically important for IT outsourcing vendors, and they can be instrumental creating enterprise value.

The contributions of the paper are described as follows. First, this study contributes to enterprises by integrating relational view in the study of the relational outsourcing vendors. Second, this paper extends current research by highlighting the role of value-based relationships from the economic and relational view of enterprises and IT outsourcing vendors. The direct effect of customer participation, customer orientation, service quality, communication culture, trust, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment and value co-creation on IT outsourcing satisfaction are the complete pictures.

V. Conclusion

In this paper, we have developed a new research model to understand the factors influencing the IT outsourcing satisfaction between IT outsourcing vendors and enterprises. With the study of Taiwan's IT outsourcing vendors, we have found that all the factors modeled have a significant influence on inter-organizational value-creating. In this study, we find that the relationships between IT outsourcing vendors and enterprises on value co-creation and IT outsourcing satisfaction. In this paper, we also find that customer participation, customer orientation, service quality, communication culture, trust, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment would enhance the value co-creation and IT outsourcing satisfaction between IT outsourcing vendors and enterprises.

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