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Title Page

Title

Role of Actor's Internal Disposition in Value Co-Creation: A Case in Retail Industry

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Abstract

Title

Role of Actor's Internal Disposition in Value Co-Creation: A Case in Retail Industry

Summary

This paper aims to explore the role of an actor's disposition for value co-creation. Specifically, it explores the drivers which influence an employee's disposition to prevent shoplifting (a voluntary action) in supermarkets. Within an interpretive paradigm, this research uses phenomenology as the research design. Data was collected using interviews from 26 shop-floor employees from two national supermarket chains in New Zealand. The participants regularly shop at their workplace (i.e., supermarket) and in a way were regular customers of their respective stores. The findings suggest characteristics of drivers which influence an employee's internal disposition to initiate value co-creation in the form of shoplifting prevention such as the actor's engagement quality, nurturing work environment, future growth opportunities, employee ownership, and employee's willingness towards shoplifting prevention. First, the study contributes to the service marketing literature by conceptualizing internal disposition. Second, it explores the role of employee's disposition in value co-creation. By doing so, it contributes towards a more balanced theoretical foundation for service-dominant (S-D) logic.

Keywords

Service-dominant logic; Value Co-creation; Internal Disposition; Shoplifting prevention

Word count

5,600

1. Introduction

Shoplifting significantly affects the retail industry worldwide (Bamfield, 2018). It is a serious crime which not only affects the societal values but also contributes to financial losses to retail firms (Potdar et al., 2018b, Ceccato and Armitage, 2018). Each year millions of persons are estimated to shoplift (Vermeir et al., 2017). Globally, retail crime trends suggest that within a span of 12 years there is a horrendous increase of shoplifting incidents (Maguire and McVie, 2017). The otherwise law abiding citizens commit this serious crime (Kilday and Nash, 2017). This situation reflects an inherent defect in the societal values (Kratcoski, 2018, Miyawaki et al., 2018).

According to the National Association for Shoplifting Prevention, shoplifting is one of the most prevalent crimes in the United States. Each year, the retailers report approximately 550,000 incidents which results in more than \$13 billion worth of goods. This results in approximately \$35 million in losses per day. It is surprising that only 50% of these incidents are reported. One of the major reasons that these incidents go unreported is that due to the increasing legal costs and time issues (Prevention, 2014). In New Zealand, financial losses due to shoplifting were estimated at 1.3% of the total annual revenue (Guthrie and Mulder, 2017). There are various innovative models and frameworks for deterrence of shoplifting (Yamato et al., 2017, Hayes et al., 2012, Argue and Marcar, 2014, Ceccato and Armitage, 2018). Advances in technological and security measures such as CCTV, electronic article surveillance with the help of electronic tags, and facial recognition technologies, retailers risk damaging the relationship between customers and the retailer so much that many retailers see retail crime as a part of doing business (Potdar et al., 2018b). Cutting-edge research considers alternate measures to combat shoplifting especially with the help of intangible measures such as improving relationship quality between the stores and their stakeholders (Potdar et al., 2018a, Potdar et al., 2016), improvised investments in corporate social responsibility practices, organizational atmosphere and climate (Potdar et al., 2018b), employee welfare that facilitate employee engagements (Potdar et al., 2018d, Beck and Borman, 2014) etc.

Employees who witness shoplifting incidents during their working hours and prevent shoplifting exhibit in-role behavior. However, employees preventing shoplifting off duty i.e., at the time of grocery shopping at their workplace (supermarket) exhibits an extra-role (voluntary) behavior. The prevention of shoplifting, an extra-role behavior, is a way an employee co-creates value for the organization. An actor's behavior is manifested from an actor's disposition (Brodie et al., 2019, Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014, Chandler and Lusch, 2015). But what are the drivers of actor disposition that influence these behaviors to co-create value? Both academics and practitioners lack sufficient understanding on the drivers of an actor's internal disposition for value co-creation (Bolton 2011; Brodie and Hollebeek 2011; Brodie et al. 2011). Therefore, this paper explores actor internal disposition and the drivers which influence an employee's internal disposition to prevent shoplifting.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Value Co-creation

Value co-creation is a process which involves multiple actors benefitting one another (Storbacka et al., 2016, Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2017). This depicts a broader scope of value co-creation stemming from a single actor towards multiple actors (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Each actor plays an important role in contributing towards value co-creation. In value co-creation literature, actors in their role as buyers, suppliers, and customers have gained more academic attention than

employees (Grace and Lo Iacono, 2015). Even though scholars have urged for the inclusion of all the stakeholders (Gummesson, 2008a, Gummesson, 2008b, Gyrd-Jones and Kornum, 2013, Bettencourt et al., 2014), academics tend to pay more attention towards actors particularly in their role as suppliers, buyers, and customers. A focus on one role is moved towards multiple actors (i.e., multi-actor centricity approach) (Gummesson, 2008a, Gummesson, 2008b).

As the focus of the current study is retail industry, employees are one of the most significant stakeholders of the supermarket as they directly engage with the beneficiary of the retail services (Potdar et al., 2016, Potdar et al., 2018a). For example, engagement may emerge from an in store service encounter in a retail store. However, the service encounter may occur via a self-serving technology, face-to-face interaction during check-out, or a combination of self-serving and retail employee. Based on this, Chandler and Lusch (2015) assert that the engagement of actors is based on the connections and dispositions of an actor. The connections are external to an actor whereas the dispositions are internal to an actor.

2.2 Disposition

Dewey (1933) explains disposition as an individual's personal attributes. The word is used to exhibit attitude or attitudinal tendency of individuals (Facione, 2000). Chandler and Lusch (2015) suggests an actor's internal disposition is a psychological state of an actor. A psychological disposition represents an individual's ability and willingness to adapt to change (Kuo and Tsai, 1986). These dispositions are towards a certain past, present, and future. These dispositions reflect an actor's capacity to appropriate, reproduce, or potentially innovate connections (i.e., both temporal and relational). The connections surrounding an actor's experience contributes to the framing of disposition i.e., the inclination of the actor to take up ideas and interests (Chandler and Lusch, 2015). An actor's disposition is influenced by the context and institution (Alexander et al., 2018). An actor chooses to draw on his or her connections with respect to their personal and collective ideals, interests, and commitments (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). In this research, we explore the past dispositions of actors as the employees reflect on their past experiences of shoplifting.

To fully comprehend the role of employees to co-create value, a literature search identified disposition of actors as an important psychological construct whose role in such processes requires further investigation. Appendix 1 lists extant literature on internal disposition and value co-creation.

2.2 Shoplifting in retail context

Shoplifting is mainly categorized as consumer misbehavior (Potdar, 2015a, Potdar, 2015b, Tonglet, 2002, Shambare et al., 2018, Reynolds and Harris, 2006). Studies focus on the prevention of shoplifting with a criminological viewpoint that mainly depends on tangible equipment (Capers, 2008). The primary methods to detect and prevent shoplifting are CCTVs, RFID tags, electronic shelf labels, burglar alarms, and uniformed or undercover loss prevention officers (Smith, 2016, Hagberg et al., 2017, Potdar et al., 2018d, Potdar et al., 2018c, Beck, 2008, Beck, 2011, Beck, 2016, Beck and Palmer, 2010, Beck and Willis, 1999, Soutjis et al., 2017). Electronic equipment as well as human guardians are used to protect supermarkets from shoplifting (Jaakson et al., 2017). However, primarily it is considered as a reactive task since usually shoplifters are scrutinized or questioned when a detection of crime or shrinkage is highlighted (Kelkar and

Emilus, 2016). There are various methods in place to detect, deter, and combat shoplifting incidents (Smith, 2018, Beck, 2017, Beck and Willis, 1993, Beck and Willis, 2005, Beck and Willis, 1999) and employees are the main resource to implement these methods. Hence, role of employees in shoplifting prevention is intensely important for retailers (Potdar et al., 2018b).

Employees who prevent shoplifting during their on-duty hours exhibit in-role behavior. However, employees who prevent shoplifting off-duty i.e., at the time of grocery shopping at their workplace (supermarket) exhibit an extra-role (voluntary) behavior. The prevention of shoplifting, an extra-role behavior, is a way an employee co-creates value for the organization. An actor's behavior is manifested from an actor's disposition (Brodie et al., 2019, Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014, Chandler and Lusch, 2015). However, the key drivers of actor disposition that influence these behaviors to co-create value require both academics and practitioners attention (Bolton 2011; Brodie and Hollebeek 2011; Brodie et al. 2011). Therefore, this paper explores actor internal disposition and the drivers which influence an employee's internal disposition to prevent shoplifting. By doing so, this paper aims to explore the role of an actor's internal disposition in value co-creation.

3. Methodology

Given the aim of the research, a qualitative research approach within an interpretive paradigm was deemed appropriate. Phenomenology as a research design was adopted in order to understand a participant's lived experiences, derive common meanings from those experiences, and then explain it in universal terms (Creswell, 1998). This study followed three iterative processes including data collection, coding, and analysis. Data was collected using interviews from 26 shop-floor employees from two national supermarket chains in New Zealand. The participants would regularly shop at their workplace (i.e., supermarket) and in a way were regular customers of their respective stores between July 2017 and May 2018. The interview guide may be seen in Appendix 2. Initially, a total of 6 interviews were conducted and then the preliminary analysis of these interviews was conducted using 'Nvivo 11' to check its data saturation (Guest et al., 2006). All the shop floor employees were interviewed at their workplace. Interviews lasted for an average of 54 minutes.

Effective transcription of the interviews is the key for successful outcome of a research study. Therefore, initially interviews were recorded using an Audio recorder and then transcribed them in a MS-Word document. It was beneficial to transcribe these interviews as comparison of documents and application of proper coding schemes become easier if an interview is recorded and then transcribed. All participants agreed to get audio recorded. The interviews were transcribed as meticulously as possible to the "original spoken language", including duplications and fragmented or interrupted sentences as suggested by McDonald (2015). Punctuations have been added to suit the oral indications such as 'pauses' and to assist the reader make common sense of the conversation. The primary emphasis on the transcripts as they were the engines to code development and their combinations as it moved to the next levels.

Data coding consisted units of sense that included similar meaning or context words, phrases, single sentences, and one or more paragraphs. The management of these codes needed a reliable and effective computer software/application therefore 'Nvivo 11' was used. Continuous comparison of subsequent interviews was needed to seek similarities, differences, and causes

between recurring occurrences of content and codes. Addition, modification, an amalgamation of codes was done, as required. The associations between codes and their resulting benefits were noted separately in a file which is called as a memo and this process is known as memoing which scholars used (McDonald, 2015). At the end of twenty-sixth interviews, analysis of these interviews was reviewed twice to ensure everything was correctly and smoothly moving ahead.

Profiles of the actors (see Appendix 3) consists of their demographic details with eighteen male participants ranging between 19-62 and eight female participants ranging between 25-39 as shown in Table 1. The median age of actors is noted as 29 years. The steps for thematic analysis may be seen in Appendix 4.

| Gender | Participant | Age range | Percentage |
|--------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 18 | 19-62 | 69% |
| Female | 8 | 25-39 | 31% |

Table 1: Sample characteristics of interview participants

4. Findings

Further the findings of phenomenological interviews reflect the most prevalent themes emerging from the interviews pertinent to the focus of the research study. The findings suggest the key drivers which influences the disposition of actors such as the actors engagement quality, nurturing work environment, future growth opportunities, employee ownership, and employee’s willingness towards shoplifting prevention. The names and identifying features of individuals, companies, products, and other related terms are changed to ensure participant anonymity.

4.1 Engagement quality

A number of respondents describe the nature of their relationships with various stakeholders of the store that include their supervisors, colleagues, and in general, their respective stores. Initially, with respect to quality of engagement with their superiors, employees discuss qualities of their superiors (e.g., store owners, managers, and supervisors) that build positive relationships with superior. These good qualities of superiors are defined using words such as ‘inspiring’, ‘supportive’, ‘understanding’, ‘approachable’, ‘cooperative’, ‘encouraging’, ‘empathetic’ etc. This frequently resulted in the evocation of more positive emotions when referring to employee’s relationship with their superiors. The other words used to express the relationship are words such as ‘good’, ‘nice’, ‘awesome’ etc.

Edward states:

“...our store owners- who are our bosses, also work with us...they inspire me to always be on my toes...” (Edward¹, Male, 10)².

Similarly, Sean shares:

“...for around ten months...I worked in the Grocery department...once I moved to the Dairy department...he [the departmental manager], personally showed me how stock must be rotated...also guided me on why it [regular stock rotation] is an important task that must be done before shelving new stock...I am glad to have a supportive manager...” (Sean, Male, 1).

¹ We’ve used pseudo names to ensure the anonymity of the actors.

² (Respondent, Gender, Number of years’ association as actor of the respective supermarket)

Further, Zara narrates:

“...that evening...I had to rush to see my younger sister who fell in her shower...she broke her right elbow...my cousin called me on our store’s landline...it was a busy day...my manager is so understanding that he asked me to clock out immediately...later he called me...to ask about my sister’s health...later, on my request...he approved me leaves for two more days...until my mom return to Dunedin from Brisbane...I am lucky that XYZ [manager’s name] is my manager...” (Zara, Female, 9).

Although, just a couple of employees use negative terms such as “*snobbish*” (Iliana, Female, 1.5) and “*overbearing*” (Geo, Male, 3) to describe their engagement with their superiors, the frequency of such terms is very less as compared to the positive terminologies used to describe employees’ engagement with their superiors.

Overall, predominantly, positive phrases are used by participants to describe their relationship quality with superiors. These include “*...glad to have a supportive manager*”, “*...lucky that [manager’s name] is my manager*”, “*...it’s a privilege to have encouraging supervisor like ABC [supervisor’s name]*” etc.

Furthermore, employees discuss aspects of their colleague’s personality to define their relationship quality with them such as ‘*helpful*’, ‘*kind*’, ‘*trustworthy*’, ‘*witty*’, ‘*funny*’, ‘*offbeat*’, ‘*friendly*’ etc. This frequently resulted in the evocation of more positive emotions when referring to employee’s relationships with their colleagues.

Holistically, various pleasant terms used by employees for their superiors suggest that they perceive positive relationship quality exists between them and their superiors.

For example, Natalia shares:

“...heavy boxes are not easy to handle...my colleagues are helpful...they help me whenever I need their help for lifting heavy boxes...it’s always good to have helpful colleagues at work...” (Natalia, Female, 7).

Similarly, Frank shares:

“...a couple of times, I was asked to work on Sundays...once, I agreed to work but then realized that my in-laws were supposed to visit us from Burma...I requested one of my colleagues to fill for me...she did so...it was really kind of her...I believe she has been one of my trustworthy colleagues whom I can count on in urgency...to fill for me...” (Frank, Male, 13).

Also, Ultra mentions:

“...it’s so nice to have friends at work...we take breaks together and share each-others’ tiffin...sometimes, we also help each other in shelving [stocking groceries and other items in designated shelves]...” (Ultra, Male, 22).

Nonetheless, few employees used negative terms such as “*crazy*” (Warren, Male, 3), “*disgraceful*” (Sean, Male, 1), and “*fool*” (Julia, Female, 13) in order to describe their relationships with their

colleagues, the frequency of such terms is very less as compared to the positive terminologies used to describe employees' relationships with their colleagues.

Overall, predominantly, positive phrases used by participants to describe their positive relationship quality with colleagues. These include "...*helpfulness of colleagues at work...*", "*kindness of her...*", "*...it's so nice to have friends at work...*" etc. Holistically, the various positive phrases used by employees for their colleagues suggest that they perceive positive relationship quality exists between them and their colleagues.

Finally, employees shared good qualities about their overall association with store that define their relationship quality with store. Various terminologies define using high level emotions for store suggest their good relationship with it such as '*belonging*', '*respect*', '*responsibility*', '*concern*', '*worry*', '*contribution*', '*ownership*' etc. This frequently resulted in the evocation of more positive emotions when referring to employee' relationships with their stores. This frequently resulted in the evocation of more positive emotions when referring to actors' relationships with their stores.

For example, Pedro states:

"...I believe...it is everyone's responsibility...to volunteer and contribute...towards the success of the store..." (Pedro, Female, 9).

Kiara shares:

"...it makes me feel good...to do something beyond my duties...I work in the Produce section...I like to help her [the dairy supervisor]...to note down temperature readings of various chillers..." (Kiara, Female, 13).

Further, Ultra shares:

"...it concerns me when the footfall falls down on a supposedly busy day [such as – a weekend]...it really worries me..." (Ultra, Male, 22).

Likewise, Quantum narrates:

"...this is my store..." (Quantum, Male, 16).

It is interesting to note that Quantum's level of ownership for his store is such that he uses the pronoun 'my' when discussing about his association with the store. Implicit within this statement is the extent of closeness to store that Quantum feels.

On the other hand, a couple of respondents suggest negative emotions for their overall relationships with stores. Such as, Maurice states:

"...I am mainly concerned about my wages..." (Maurice, Male, 1).

Whereas, Octavio states:

"...I do not think that... [For me,] this store is anything more than a business...a professional workplace..." (Octavio, Male, 1).

Overall, participants share their positive relationship quality with respective stores. These include "*...towards the success of the store...*", "*...it makes me feel good...to do something beyond my*

duties...”, “...it really worries me...”, “...my store” etc. Employees suggest that they perceive positive relationship quality exists between them and their respective stores.

4.2 Nurturing work environment

There are multiple evidences where participants shared their positive perceptions about work environment of their respective stores. Participants explicitly shared positive experiences to describe their working environment nurtured them as employees based on employees growth, providing suitable opportunities, and healthy work environment directed towards employees.

By way of example, Carter shares,

“...it’s our store...it has nurtured me responsibly... [Similarly] it’s my work... [Therefore,] I believe that I must do it properly...to earn respect and success for myself and our store...”
(Carter, Male, 15).

In this case, Carter shares how he perceives his store’s upbringing as an important factor for his growth as an employee. The phrases such as ‘*nurtured me responsibly*’, ‘*I must do it properly*’, and ‘*to earn respect and success for myself and our store*’ show his ownership and responsibility towards work as well as for his personal and organizational success. Particularly, Carter’s experience of the store ‘*nurtured me*’ suggests that his store has a pleasant work environment that ensures its employees’ overall wellbeing. Along with this, similar to Carter, Quantum uses pronouns such as ‘*our*’ and ‘*my*’ to denote his closeness as well as fondness with his store.

Further, Quantum states:

“...I was pleased to be able to apply for the supervisor’s position in the department along with others who have just recently...joined our store...it makes me feel that my hard work is paying off...” (Quantum, Male, 16).

This particular example suggests that Quantum’s store has healthy work environment where equal opportunities are given to every employee based on their hard work, perks are given to hardworking employees. In this case, an employee who has joined merely one year ago has earned a promotion. This suggests that Quantum’s store has a work environment that not just recognizes and respects hard work of employees but also warrants suitable higher job opportunities.

Nevertheless, a negative perception was shared by Leo about the work environment of his store.

“...it is not nice as he [the departmental supervisor] makes higher trolleys for me [for shelving]...” (Leo, Male, 6).

In this example, Leo shares he has to shelf bigger or higher trolleys as compared to his colleagues. Though the frequency of such negative perceptions is less, suggesting, there are predominantly positive perceptions regarding stores’ work environment amongst employees.

Holistically, it is inferred that employee’s nurturing work environment influences their disposition towards their stores.

4.3 Future growth opportunities

There are evidences where consideration of employee's future with respective stores influences their internal disposition.

By way of example, Kiara suggests:

"...employees are encouraged to continue their education...opportunities are available to enroll for various retail certificate courses...these are NZQA [New Zealand Qualifications Authority] accredited online courses...sponsored by our store...it's amazing...employee welfare activities like this make me feel closer to our supermarket...I believe the retail certificate course gave me many insights on planning, organizing, managing, and executing retail functions...[if] given a chance, I would be happy to contribute towards enhancing everyday [retail] functions of our store..." (Kiara, Female, 13).

Similarly, Xia shares:

"...this year, I am going to graduate...I am pursuing an honor's [degree] in retailing...there are various events either organized or sponsored by this store...these are wonderful platforms...to demonstrate my organizational and management skills...to gain hands-on experience...it feels great to participate in these volunteering events...I am thankful to this store [for letting me volunteer]...I believe these experiences will be beneficial for me in my intended profession of a retail manager...once I finish my honors [degree]...utilizing my retail management skills...I intend to help this store with implementation of better procedures and processes..." (Xia, Female, 10).

Participants are grateful towards their stores' continuing education and volunteering policies for employees and they feel that these policies are beneficial to constructively shape their intended profession. This suggests employee's future disposition to integrate their intentions to better daily functions, processes, and procedures of their respective stores.

4.4 Employee ownership

As our context for the study was retail crime, specifically, shoplifting, so the data exhibited participants' awareness and level of understanding regarding in-store retail crime incidents. Recognition of crime and its ill effects may trigger emotions to safeguard and prevent the crime. Therefore, participants' awareness is divided into their '*attitudes towards shoplifting*', '*concerns regarding losses due to shoplifting*', and '*preparedness for shoplifting prevention*'. All participants affirmed their awareness regarding retail crime.

By way of example, Natalia explains her attitude towards shoplifting:

"...shoplifting is a bad act...for retailers...customers...employees...society...and everyone else..." (Natalia, Female, 7).

Further, Arrow, Hannah, and Zara share their concerns respectively regarding social, financial, and emotional losses due to shoplifting as follows:

"...elevating incidents are not good for a civilized society like New Zealand...shoplifting incidents indicate financial discord in the society... [Which is] harmful for social harmony..." (Arrow, Male, 11).

“...they [shoplifting incidences] are petrifying...primarily, there is loss of money...it’s abysmal... [But] definitely manageable...” (Hannah, Female, 16).

“...I am afraid....shopliftings brings ill-effects...on emotional health of retailers...due to breach of trust by their...customers...” (Zara, Female, 9).

Also, Edward shares:

“...I generally get alert whenever I spot dodgy customers around...” (Edward, Male, 10).

There is one participant who displays negative emotion against ‘preparedness for shoplifting prevention’. Iliana shares:

“...I certainly know about shoplifting...it’s theft...it’s absolutely evil...[however,] more than shoplifting...probably I would be more worried for my [own] safety...personally, I feel that it’s not easy for me to seek for shoplifters...especially, while shopping...I don’t want to stretch myself...while I am not working...” (Iliana, Female, 1.5).

This indicates her awareness regarding shoplifting, her attitude towards it, but she seems to be unprepared as well as hesitant to stop shoplifting. However, predominantly, there are various evidences that suggest participants’ awareness regarding retail crime, such as above, including that include their ‘attitude towards shoplifting’, ‘concerns regarding losses due to shoplifting’, and ‘preparedness for shoplifting prevention’.

4.5 Employees willingness towards shoplifting prevention

Given the positive perceptions of engagement quality with stores’ superiors, colleagues, and stores themselves as well as stores’ work environment implicit within the responses of many participants own willingness towards preventing shoplifting. A typical response is “...I would like to improve our [store’s] day-to-day activities...” (e.g., Arrow, Carter, Edward, Hannah, Quantum, Ultra etc.). Participants’ willingness towards shoplifting prevention consists their attitude and extra-input towards shoplifting prevention.

By way of example, Kiara states:

“...I believe it is...my responsibility as an employee of this store... [As well as]... obligation as a human being...to stop theft...” (Kiara, Female, 13).

Also, Hannah states:

“...shoplifting is not at all appreciated...I believe, it is certainly manageable...I am always alert... [While] at work... as well as...I shop from our store...on weekends...” (Hannah, Female, 16).

Similarly, Edward shares:

“...I actively spot dodgy people...it is easier for me while shopping as I am not in my work uniform...” (Edward, Male, 10).

Further, with respect to suggestions for improving prevention of shoplifting incidents, Carter recommends:

“...shoplifting brings big financial losses...it’s absolutely frightening for the growth of our store...[Hence,] may be...more awareness regarding shoplifting related losses should be communicated to the society... [So that] additional help from society may be sought...for better deterrence of shoplifting ...” (Carter, Male, 15).

And, Natalia advises:

“...social campaigns...to make everyone aware of ill-effects of shoplifting...should be carried out...may be with the help of the support from the police and those who control crime...” (Natalia, Female, 7).

Also, Ultra proposes:

“...shoplifting should be considered as theft and perpetrators should be put behind bars or charged with heavy fines...” (Ultra, Male, 22).

Finally, Xia goes much deeper and suggests that morality should be nurtured to avoid such incidents:

“...stealing is unquestionably intolerable...may be, everyone should be given lessons on ethics and decency...in schools...at homes...within social gatherings...since early stage of life...to ensure they refrain from crime...” (Xia, Female, 10).

Implicit within the above examples is the extent of their willingness that Kiara, Hannah, Edward, Carter, Natalia, Ultra, and Xia demonstrate when suggesting the emotions evoked are similar to those that would be induced if a crime was being committed in a store they shop from as both employees and customers.

Apparently, there is also a consensus amongst participants that they would be acting for the betterment of their stores. Such an insight echoes the sense of their future disposition attributable to the perceived levels of relationship quality with their stores.

For example, Dennis succinctly illustrates this engagement as below:

“...this is my store...I always belong to it...just recently I have finished my free online retail certification...based on my learning...in future...I will ensure...whether employees are on-duty or off-duty...they are well-equipped...with relevant resources...for careful and effective...intervention to deter and control...shoplifting [and] other in-store crimes...” (Dennis, Male, 4).

Similarly, York states:

“...I am a health conscious person...I regularly exercise...working at this store gives me a discount of flat 20 percent on the annual membership of the PQR [a popular fitness club in New Zealand]...also, I redeem free vouchers for staff at EFG [a popular herbal product store in New Zealand]...it makes me feel good...this store is now an integral part of my life...as I am more aware of the bad effects of shoplifting...I will certainly be more proactive to look for dodgy people who might shoplift from our store...to help in the progress of our store...” (York, Male, 2).

5. Discussion and conclusion

The paper aims to explore the role of an actor's internal disposition in value co-creation in retail industry. Specifically, it explores the drivers which influence an employee's internal disposition to prevent shoplifting in supermarkets. The findings suggest the characteristics of key drivers which influences the disposition of actors such as the actor's engagement quality, nurturing work environment, future growth opportunities, employee ownership, and employee's willingness towards shoplifting prevention.

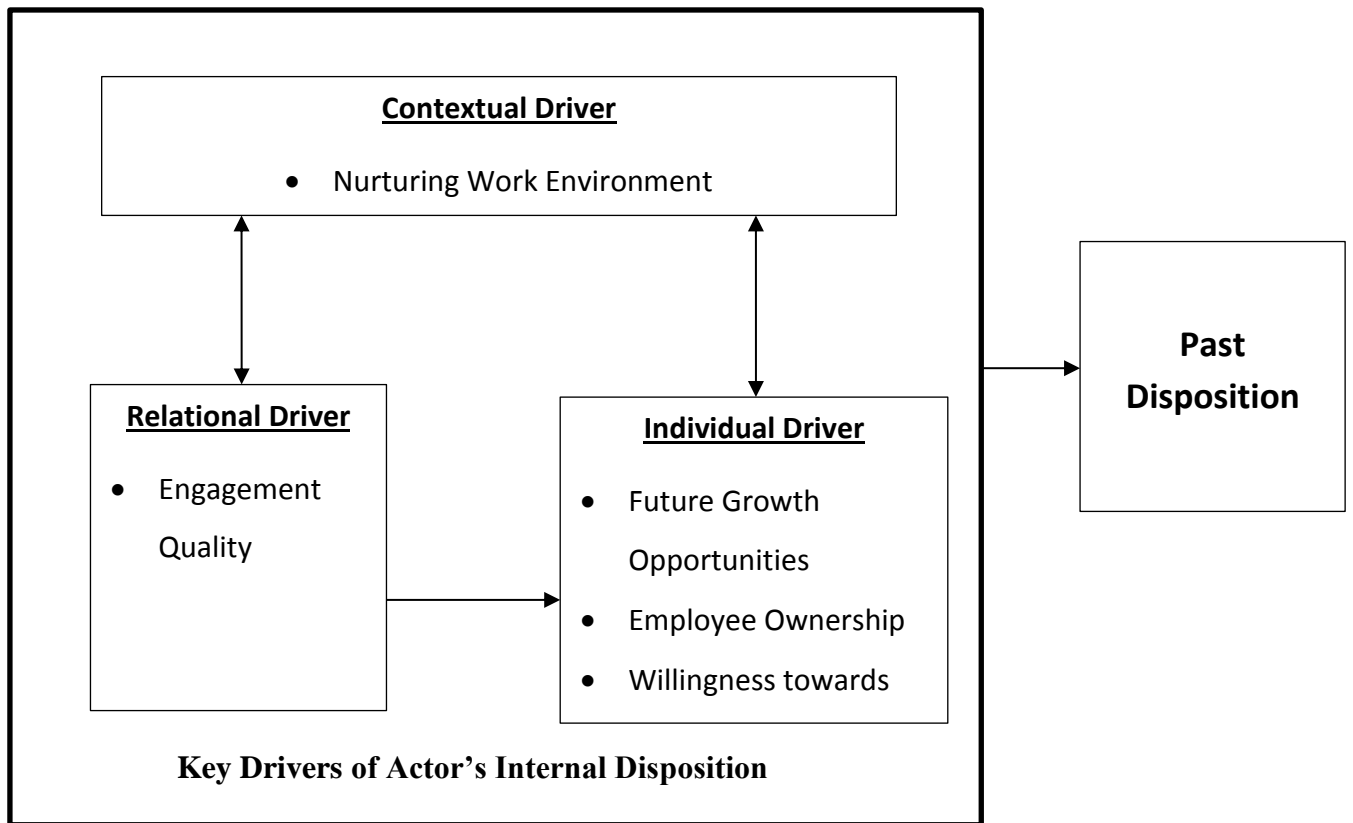


Figure 1: Key Drivers which Influence an Actor's Internal Disposition to Co-create Value

This study proposes a holistic view on the key drivers that influence supermarket employees' willingness to prevent shoplifting while shopping at their respective workplace (supermarket) and their engagement in value co-creation. It further discusses the key driver's cross-feeding nature, and mutual influence on actor's present and future dispositions.

The findings of exploratory interviews support the extant literature reviewed in the present context. Consequently, these findings confirm that a major section of participants in co-creation activities

experienced a greater sense of belongingness, attachment, commitment, and ownership with their workplace prior to their engagement in co-creation for shoplifting prevention.

The engagement quality reflects an actor's quality of interaction and relationship which positively influence value co-creation (Waseem et al., 2018). Jaakkola and Alexander (2014) propose the conceptual connection between engagement and value creation as they propose that Customer Engagement Behaviors (CEB) trigger broader value co-creation processes. Pierce et al. (2001) suggests nurturing work environment may evoke feelings of responsibility to create value for the organization. The growth opportunities such as material well-being, development of others, socioeconomic prosperity in work a design influences an individual's motivation (Grant, 2007) to contribute towards organization's value creation. Employee ownership reflects a sense of possessiveness toward an object (Pierce et al., 2001). Such ownership may result in extra-role behaviors (Vandewalle et al., 1995) which encourage value co-creation (Waseem et al., 2018). Employee's willingness towards shoplifting prevention reflects employee's voluntary engagements (Ballantine and Creery, 2010) for potential individual or collective value creation (Chandler and Lusch, 2015). Based on these findings, we propose a framework that explains key drivers of an actor's internal disposition to co-create value (see Figure 1).

The findings indicate that experiencing the characteristics of disposition may be reflective of future and relational characteristics of actors. The key driver of 'future growth opportunities' reflects growth as a characteristic of future disposition. Actor's engagement quality, employee ownership, and employee's willingness reflect on the relational characteristics of disposition. Nurturing work environment reflects characteristics of context that influence actor's disposition.

Holistically, this research study makes two contributions to the literature. First, it advances the conceptualization of disposition that focuses on the employee's experience that occur among actors while they exhibit a voluntary behavior. Second, it offers a step towards clarifying the role of employee's disposition in value co-creation. By doing so, it contributes towards a more balanced theoretical foundation for S-D logic.

6. Limitations and future research

First, the current study only looked at the past disposition of actors. There is an opportunity to look for future and present disposition of employees. A longitudinal study encompassing past, present, and future may deem to address limitations of the present study and these would be interesting directions to take future research. Secondly, the empirical data was collected in New Zealand. The retail crime rates between New Zealand and other developed countries are much lower. Therefore, New Zealand supermarkets may not be potential representative of supermarkets in other developed countries.

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Appendix 1: Extant Literature on Internal Disposition as a Key Driver of Value Co-creation (Between 2011 and 2019)

| Author (Year) | Research Context/ Objective (Place of study) | Paper type/Methodology adapted | Respondents | Antecedent(s)/Precursors | Existing concept(s) or framework(s) used to understand the phenomenon/Dimension(s) | Consequence(s)/Contribution(s) |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Ciasullo et al. (2019) | Fashion retailing (Italy) | Review of Internet of things relevant to digitalization of fashion retailing services | Not Applicable | Various digital platforms available to cater fashion needs | Effectiveness of digital technologies | Service innovation and value co-creation |
| Fehrer et al. (2018) | Considering the contextual effects of connections with other customers and crowding-in effects based on monetary incentives in the insurance industry (New Zealand) | A 2*2 experimental design model was adopted at three points in time (t0 as a part of the pilot study and t1,t2, t3 as parts of the main study) | A total of 214 insurance customers participated in three phases. | Customer engagement disposition, satisfaction, involvement, loyalty | Social proof and Customer engagement behaviour | In order to achieve high levels of customer engagement behavior, incentives and ties to other network actors are important. This may be achieved by facilitating connections between customers and compensating for low intrinsic interest. An increased engagement disposition, higher satisfaction, higher involvement and higher loyalty follow once engagement behavior has been triggered. |
| Hollebeek (2011) | Customer Brand Loyalty (New Zealand) | Conceptual in-depth literature review | Not Applicable | Customer brand involvement | Customer brand engagement (cognitive, emotional, behavioural), relationship quality (trust, satisfaction, commitment) | Customer loyalty/Develops a tripartite customer brand-engagement conceptualization comprising activation, identification, and absorption dimensions. |
| Huang et al. (2019) | Top-down and bottom-up theories of well-being in a spa hotels (Taiwan) | Anonymous on-site survey (questionnaires) | A total of 357 spa hotel guests | Internal disposition (Autonomy) | Experience (education, entertainment, escapism) | 1. A person's internal disposition as well as his or her spa experience both have positive effects on subjective well-being (positive emotions, life satisfaction) regardless of the duration of the stay. 2. Travel experience and well-being have positive effects on customer loyalty (revisit, recommendation). |
| Li et al. (2018) | Conceptualizing engagement valence in actor networks (New Zealand) | A systematic literature review | A total of 12 studies (7-already published journal articles, 3-book chapters, and 2-then forthcoming journal articles) were analysed | Psychological foundations of valence | Actor engagement valence | 1. Valence exist in the engaging actor's past, current and future psychological dispositions, that may change between positive, negative and ambivalence 2. Actor engagement valence is caused by the engagement objects and value propositions of other actors in the network. 3. The antecedents of actor engagement valence comprise (a) individual factors such as cognitive evaluations and hedonic feelings, as well as (b) network-related factors such as social norms and shared beliefs, and the network structure. |

| Author (Year) | Research Context/ Objective (Place of study) | Paper type/Methodology adapted | Respondents | Antecedent(s)/Precursors | Existing concept(s) or framework(s) used to understand the phenomenon/Dimension(s) | Consequence(s)/Contribution(s) |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| | | | | | | 4. The net balance of actor engagement valence defines the actor's engagement behaviours, and this association is moderated by individual and network elements. |
| Makkonen and Oikkonen (2017) | Interactive value formation (IVF) in interorganizational relationships [A case study between Museum of Contemporary Art (KIASMA) in Helsinki and a Finnish Media Company (MTV)] (Finland) | Longitudinal - Multiple sources, were used including - Semi-structured interviews, company archives, newspapers, documents, periodicals, magazines etc. | 24 participants (Key respondents : 2- From Museum 3-From MTV 1-From sponsorship consultancy) | Interorganizational relationships | Interactive Value Formation | Develops a conceptual framework and advances literature on Co-creation, Co-destruction, No-creation |
| Santos et al. (2019) | Conceptualization and measurement of the construct of fan engagement through social networking sites (SNS) (Portugal) | A multi-stage procedure for validating the proposed fan engagement through SNS model, an online survey, and analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) | 139/190/400 student sport fans from a mid-sized university | Fan-to-fan relationships, team-to-fan relationships and fan co-creation | Fan engagement through SNS | Online and off-line positive behavioural intentions. Essentially, good psychometric properties of the three constructs of were significantly related with the second-order construct of fan engagement through SNS. |
| Storbacka et al. (2016) | Microfoundation movement in strategic management (New Zealand) | Conceptual in-depth literature review | Not Applicable | Actor engagement | The Coleman Bathtub Coleman (1994) | Advances literature on value co-creation |
| Thakur (2016) | Developing and validating a measurement model for customer engagement with specific focus on mobile devices for shopping (India) | 1*In-depth interviews and 2*surveys (uses SEM for analysis) | 10-interviews 304-survey questionnaires 433-survey questionnaires | Customer engagement (social facilitation, self-connect, intrinsic enjoyment, time filler, utilitarian, monetary evaluation) | Continuance intention (customer satisfaction, shopping convenience, application usability) | Customer loyalty (repeated purchases) prompted by a strong internal disposition over a long period of time. Advances literature on customer engagement. |
| Thuy et al. (2016) | Health care and retail banking sectors (Vietnam) | Personal interview survey of using a structural questionnaire (English-Vietnamese-English), analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) | Customers of banks and health-care centres | Value proposition to a peaceful life, value to social recognition, value to social integration | outcome value, process barrier, value, economic relational barrier | Customer loyalty as a form of value co-creation |

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Actors

| Q. No. | Questions |
|---|---|
| Section A: Internal customers' encounters with shoplifting incidents | |
| 1 | <p>Do you shop from this supermarket, particularly while off-duty? Prompt 1: If yes, why? If no, why not? Prompt 2: Particularly while off-duty, if you shop at this supermarket, in a month, how often do you shop here? Prompt 3: Why do/don't you shop from this supermarket, particularly while off-duty?</p> |
| 2 | <p>If applicable, have you ever witnessed someone shoplifting, particularly when you were shopping at this supermarket while off-duty? Prompt 1: If yes, how did you notice that shoplifting incidence? Prompt 2: Please narrate the shoplifting incident in detail. Prompt 3: What was your reaction? How did you feel about it? Prompt 4: Why did you react/feel in that particular way? Prompt 5: How well this supermarket receive your reaction of shoplifting prevention? Prompt 6: How well this supermarket should have received your positive reaction of shoplifting prevention? Why/why not?</p> |
| 3 | <p>Have you ever witnessed someone grazing (that is - eating food before paying for it) while you were shopping at this supermarket? Prompt 1: If yes, how did you notice that grazing incidence? Prompt 2: Please narrate the grazing incident in detail. Prompt 3: What was your reaction? How did you feel about it? Prompt 4: Why did you react/feel in that particular way? Prompt 5: If applicable, how well this supermarket receive your reaction of grazing prevention? Prompt 6: If applicable, how well this supermarket should have received your positive reaction of grazing prevention? Why/why not?</p> |
| 4 | <p>Do you shop from any other supermarkets? Prompt 1: If yes, please name them and share why do you shop from there? If no, why not? Prompt 2: If you shop at other supermarkets, in a month, how often do you shop there? Prompt 3: If applicable, why do you frequently or occasionally shop from those other supermarkets?</p> |
| 5 | <p>Have you ever witnessed someone shoplifting or grazing while you were shopping at those other supermarkets? Prompt 1: If yes, how did you notice that shoplifting/ incidence? Prompt 2: Please narrate the shoplifting incident in detail. Prompt 3: What was your reaction? How did you feel about it? Prompt 4: Why did you react/feel in that particular way? Prompt 5: If applicable, how well those supermarkets receive your reaction of shoplifting/grazing prevention? Prompt 6: If applicable, how well those supermarkets should have received your positive reaction of shoplifting prevention? Why/why not?</p> |
| 6 | <p>Would you be interested to put forward any ideas for effective shoplifting prevention? Prompt 1: If yes, what ideas would you like to put forward to the supermarket where you work for effective shoplifting prevention? Why would you do so? Prompt 2: If no, Why wouldn't you do so?</p> |

Appendix 3: Profiles of the Actors

| Act or No. | Gender | Age | Association with the store as | Interview Duration | Approximate monthly frequency of shopping | Supermarket |
|------------|--------|-----|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------|
|------------|--------|-----|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------|

| | | | | from the respective store while off-duty | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------|----|---|-------------------------|---------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Actors³ | | | | An Internal Customer | A Normal Customer | In Minutes | Minimum | Maximum | |
| 1 | Arrow | Male | 34 | 11 | 14 | 64 | 5 | 6 | X |
| 2 | Bravo | Male | 24 | 3.5 | 4 | 47 | 1 | 2 | X |
| 3 | Carter | Male | 32 | 15 | 21 | 68 | 9 | 10 | X |
| 4 | Dennis | Male | 33 | 4 | 6 | 53 | 2 | 3 | X |
| 5 | Edward | Male | 62 | 10 | 12 | 64 | 4 | 5 | X |
| 6 | Frank | Male | 31 | 13 | 18 | 51 | 2 | 3 | X |
| 7 | Geo | Male | 29 | 3 | 3.5 | 44 | 2 | 3 | X |
| 8 | Hannah | Female | 30 | 16 | 19 | 58 | 8 | 9 | X |
| 9 | Iliana | Female | 34 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 59 | 4 | 5 | X |
| 10 | Julia | Female | 39 | 13 | 17 | 57 | 6 | 7 | X |
| 11 | Kiara | Female | 29 | 13 | 22 | 61 | 1 | 2 | X |
| 12 | Leo | Male | 26 | 6 | 7 | 44 | 2 | 3 | Y |
| 13 | Maurice | Male | 19 | 1 | 1.5 | 42 | 2 | 4 | Y |
| 14 | Natalia | Female | 25 | 7 | 8 | 47 | 3 | 4 | Y |
| 15 | Octavio | Male | 19 | 1 | 1.5 | 52 | 1 | 2 | Y |
| 16 | Pedro | Male | 25 | 5 | 5.5 | 51 | 4 | 5 | Y |
| 17 | Quantum | Male | 31 | 16 | 17 | 62 | 1 | 2 | X |
| 18 | Rocky | Male | 23 | 1 | 4 | 45 | 4 | 5 | X |
| 19 | Sean | Male | 29 | 1 | 10 | 53 | 2 | 4 | X |
| 20 | Taurus | Male | 29 | 4.5 | 5 | 58 | 3 | 4 | X |
| 21 | Ultra | Male | 45 | 22 | 24 | 65 | 2 | 3 | Y |
| 22 | Victoria | Female | 29 | 2 | 8 | 47 | 1 | 2 | X |
| 23 | Warren | Male | 25 | 3 | 4 | 54 | 1 | 2 | Y |
| 24 | Xia | Female | 27 | 10 | 12 | 56 | 4 | 5 | Y |
| 25 | York | Male | 24 | 2 | 6 | 42 | 1 | 2 | Y |
| 26 | Zara | Female | 25 | 9 | 14 | 61 | 7 | 8 | Y |

³ We've used pseudo names to ensure the anonymity of the actors.

Appendix 4: Steps for Thematic Analysis

| Step No. | Description |
|----------|--|
| 1 | The central concept of this step is to create a sense of the whole (Giorgi, 1985). For this, the general initial description of all 26 actors is expressed from the interview transcripts. Therefore, in the analysis, the present researcher has included the most essential experiences of participants as the background for detailed analysis of the interviews in the next steps. |
| 2 | In this step the significant statements relevant to the phenomenon under investigation are extracted from the transcripts. |
| 3 | In this step statements are grouped into meaning units. According to Giorgi (1985), this statement is 'Transformation of Subject's Everyday Expressions' (Jaavall, 2007). |
| 4 | In this step, meaning units from step 3 are used to develop themes. This is also described as 'Synthesis of Transformed Meaning Units into a Consistent Statement' (Giorgi, 1985) that allows emergence of common themes related to all 26 shop-floor employee's description of their experiences. |
| 5 | An exhaustive description of the results of the analysis is done in this step. The description on quality of relationship and shoplifting prevention can't be similar for all 26 employees, therefore, a general description of analysis is done in this step. |