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ADVANCES IN GLOBAL SERVICES AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT

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Dr. Cihan Cobanoglu

Dr. Valentina Della Corte



Co-Editors

Dr. Cihan Cobanoglu, University of South Florida, USA

Dr. Valentina Della Corte, University of Naples Federico II, Italy

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Factors That Prevent Participation of Tourists in Online Co-Creation Activities

Resat Arica¹, Feridun Duman², and Abdulkadir Corbaci¹

¹Faculty of Tourism
Adiyaman University, Turkey

²School of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Batman University, Turkey

Abstract

The study aimed to identify the factors that prevent tourists from participating in online co-creation activities. With this aim, the study sample was selected from the tourists who travelled to Istanbul, who did not participate in co-creation. The data were collected through the questionnaire technique, then, analyzed with descriptive and exploratory factor analysis. The findings of the study showed that three factors prevented the tourists from participating in online co-creation activities. These factors were named as (i) lack of knowledge, (ii) lack of participation in social communication networks, and (iii) personal perceptions of co-creation. Lack of knowledge is the most important factor preventing the tourists participating in online co-creation activities. The study further suggested some solutions to the problems faced by the co-creation strategy in practice.

Keywords: service dominant logic, co-creation, co-creation barriers, tourism, technology

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Introduction

The understanding that sees production within the hegemony of enterprises and that perceives customers as a passive element of a production process loses its validity (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Today, consumers are assumed that they actively participate in production processes by taking roles and functions that can affect production processes as a part of the inputs to the end products or services. The participative roles and functions of customers in production processes are best explained by the concept of co-creation. Thus, co-creation is defined as a collaborative production strategy in which customers choose various elements of an existing or new product and service (Manfoldo, Chen, & Noci, 2020). Arica (2019) explains co-creation as the contribution of customers' knowledge, skills and competencies to the production stages of touristic experiences. From a marketing perspective, co-creation is considered as a leverage to develop products or services that fulfil unmet needs of customers in the market as well as a strategy that encourages innovation for businesses and customers (Ge & Gretzel, 2018).

The influential factor that enables the transition to production with customers is the developments in information and communication technologies, which cause macro-scale changes in the market.

According to Manfoldo et al. (2020), technological developments allow customers to access the content and information of products and services without time and space limitations. At the same time, technological developments enable customers to have an opportunity to produce their own experiences. This promotes businesses' online co-creation initiatives and investments to be competitive in the consumer market. According to Li and Petrick (2008), the developments in information and communication technologies enable customers to search, evaluate, purchase, and share their opinions and suggestions on online networks. These developments further make it possible for customers to take an active role in experiencing the production processes. The active participation of customers in production processes enables them to influence the supply and demand-driven experience outputs (Flores & Vasquez-Parraga, 2015). The production with customers, on one hand, is important to improve the competitiveness of businesses and to ensure their sustainability in the market (Nishikawa, Schreier, & Ogawa 2013), on the other hand, producing with customers is to meet the productions or services that match the demands of the customers attributing value for themselves (Grönroos, 2008). In order to achieve the said outputs above, the production structure and modules should be developed together by eliminating the conditions and variables that prevent the participation of customers in co-creation (Zhang, Lu, & Kızıldağ, 2017).

In the literature, the concept of creation with customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Wikström, 1995), the outputs of production with customers (Arıca & Çorbacı, 2020; Prebensen, Kim, & Uysal, 2015; Santos-Vijande, Lopez-Sanchez, & Pasqual-Fernandez, 2015; Tseng & Chiang, 2016) and its promoters (Grisseemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Schüler, Maier, & Liljedal, 2020) were well studied. However, what is less studied is about the factors that hinder co-creation. In the manufacturing and service sectors, the main studies focused upon the factors that prevent co-creation in businesses (Davies, Brady, & Hobday, 2007; Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Sjödin, Parida, & Lindström, 2017; Tuli, Kohli, & Bharadwaj, 2007) and customer-based barriers were also investigated (Constantinidies, Brunink, & Lorenzo-Romero, 2015; Santos-Vijande et al., 2015; Schüler et al., 2020). From the studies mentioned above, it was pointed out that studies should be conducted to determine the factors that prevent customers, who are the main collaborators of businesses and also who actively contribute to their touristic experiences by participating in co-creation (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Constantinidies et al., 2015; Schüler et al., 2020). According to Sjödin et al. (2017), the co-creation strategy is a new business strategy, which has some difficulties that prevent the implementation of the co-creation strategy due to the lack of demand in the market, and thus, the studies available on this subject are limited. Especially in tourism, very few studies are available on the factors that prevent customers from participating in co-creation (Santos-Vijande et al., 2015). Therefore, it is essential to identify the components that prevent customers from participating in production in order to maximize the benefit of the production processes and outputs at a sectoral scale (Constantinidies et al., 2015).

Based upon the need determined from the literature above, this study aims to determine the factors that prevent tourists from participating in the online co-creation process. With this aim in hand, this study will contribute to the theory and practice in tourism. Firstly, this study will contribute to the theory by examining the factors that prevent co-creation rather than the outputs of co-creation. Secondly, this study will identify the components that prevent co-creation, and will offer some suggestions to businesses to improve the co-creation processes in the study context.

Literature Review

Online Co-Creation

The businesses are turning to production and marketing techniques different from their competitors by avoiding standardized business activities in order to react rapidly to the changes in the market and in turn ensure the sustainability in their businesses in the long term (Wikström, 1995). Thus, the co-creation is developed as a differentiating business strategy in different industries and is conceptualized in various ways (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Bendapudi and Leone (2003) describe the concept of co-creation as the mode of production in which businesses, employees and customers interact and participate in production. According to Davies et al. (2007), the concept of co-creation is the technique of producing products with a cooperation between businesses and the customers in order to meet the special needs of the customers. Thus, the main purpose of co-creation is to realize personalized, additional value-creating and functional productions that meet customer wants and needs (Grönroos, 2008).

With the technological developments, the transition from the mechanical environment to the digital environment has caused radical changes in the supply and demand side of production. This transition affected people, products, business structure and processes in the market such a way that the existing roles were changed accordingly. The inexorable developments of internet technology, mass media, mobile technological gadgets and the other developments of technological devices increased the interaction between customers and businesses by making it convenient for customers to regularly contribute to production processes in the tourism industry (Hoyer, Chandy, Dorotic, Krafft, & Singh, 2010; Salvado, Ferreira, & Costa, 2011). While this situation made the business processes of the businesses open to customers, this in turn moved the customers from the consuming stage to the producing stage (Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008; Reay & Seddighi, 2012). In this context, customers have the opportunity to share, evaluate and recommend their touristic experiences on virtual platforms with technological tools, and this situation enabled virtual platforms to turn into marketing and sales areas for the commercial businesses (Grisseman & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Campos, Mendes, Valle, & Scott, 2015). Following this understanding, the opportunity for customers to influence the processes of the businesses without limitation of space and time with the innovative technological tools expanded the areas of production with customers (Flores & Vasquez-Parraga, 2015). To be more specific on the subject that the potential offered to customers to take an active part in the design, production and operation processes changed the conditions of the interaction between the businesses and the customers, which made the customers a source of information for businesses (Arica, 2019).

The increasing importance and collaborative roles of customers in production lead businesses to initiatives that focus upon an optimum benefit from production with customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In this context, while the businesses adapt their business structures and processes to co-creation, they also restructure their initiatives within the framework of the factors that motivate or hinder co-creation (Sjödin et al., 2017).

Barriers to Customer Co-Creation

The production with customers is accepted as a production strategy in the tourism industry. However, it is not implemented sufficiently across the industry, and thus, it needs to be further

developed (Sjödin et al., 2017). Santos-Vijande et al. (2015) emphasized that it is necessary for the businesses to identify the factors that prevent co-creation and to develop strategies to reduce and eliminate these factors in order to expand the application areas of co-creation strategy in the tourism industry.

The effective and efficient production process that is a new way of understanding the cooperation and interaction with customers depends on the supply and demand factors in the production process. The factors that prevent co-creation are evaluated on the basis of two different parts. The first part put an emphasize on the businesses. On the other hand, the second part covered the customers. Therefore, there are different determinations on business-related barriers in the literature. For example, Vargo & Lusch (2008) stated that the fact that businesses do not have co-creation platforms prevents the potential for participation in co-creation. In another study, in which this determination is supported, it is explained that the main factor that prevents co-creation is that businesses do not have the technological infrastructure and systems that will enable co-creation (Chen, Drennan, Andrews, & Hollebeek, 2018). Especially, Sjödin et al. (2017) explained the components that restrict participation in co-creation in terms of operational cultural resistance, operational information loss and operational conflict risk. Essén, Winterstorm Värlander, and Liljedal (2016), on the other hand, emphasized that co-creation can be prevented due to the customer-driven elements along with the business-related elements. Accordingly, it was also mentioned that if customers perceive that co-creation is only in the interest of the business, then, this will prevent the participation of customers in the process (For example, if the customers think that a touristic business applies co-creation only for profit, it will then prevent participation in co-creation). Santos-Vijande et al. (2015) evaluated the components that prevent participation of tourists and they concluded that tourists do not participate in the co-creation due to their lack of knowledge, ideas, skills, and time, and the high prices of the products in question. Furthermore, Schüller et al. (2020) developed a comprehensive perspective on the factors that prevent customers from participating in co-creation and their perspective focused upon the factors hindering co-creation as follows: fear of failure threshold, social anxiety (social risk) threshold, time threshold, trustworthiness (security risks) threshold, product attitude (perceived image) threshold, interaction with technology (fear of poor functionality), and convenience-based hygiene factor. Mani & Chouk (2018) also emphasized that communication problems and their unwillingness to change their habits were the main factors that prevent customers from participating in co-creation. In another study supporting this idea, it is stated that customers' not being open to innovation prevents participation in co-creation (Heidenreich & Handrich, 2015). Gebauer, Füller, and Pezzeri (2013) also studied the effects of customers' previous experience that if customers' experience of co-creation is negative, then, this makes them reluctant to participate in co-creation. To support this, Kleijnen, Lee, and Wetzels (2009) stated that the risk perceived by customers will also prevent participation in co-creation.

Overall, by looking at the literature, the business-related factors that prevent co-creation were seen as the lack of the technological infrastructure and systems that enable co-creation, knowledge, skills and competencies to realize co-creation. On the other hand, the customer-related factors that prevent co-creation were described as the lack of knowledge and awareness of customers, temporal insufficiencies, perception of social and security risk, perception of the company image, communication and interaction problems, customers not being open to innovation and previous negative co-creation experiences.

Methods

Sampling

The data was collected from the tourists visiting to Istanbul, which is one of Turkey's top tourist city destinations. The tourists that did not purchase any product through the co-creation were purposefully selected. To manage the proper sampling of the tourists, the concept of co-creation was defined in the first part of the questionnaire in order to determine whether the participants purchased a touristic product through co-creation, and then, the participants were asked whether they purchased touristic products through co-creation. The data were collected from the participants who stated that they did not purchase any touristic products with the co-creation method.

Due to the difficulty in sampling, a systematic sampling method was not used. The data collection was carried out from October 10th to October 30th, 2020. A total of 208 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis of the study data.

Instrument and Data analysis

A questionnaire survey was used to collect the data for this study. The questionnaire comprised of two parts. In the first part, the scales of the barriers to participating online co-creation were included, while demographic statements such as age, gender, education, income, travel information and social media usage information were included in the second part. Barriers to participating online co-creation scale was adapted from the study of Constantinidies et al. (2015). The study was measured by twelve items in total. The questionnaire was translated into Turkish. All study items were measured by using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. The demographic variables were measured using categorical and ordinal scales.

In the study, the demographic characteristics of the sample, travel and social media usage and the measurement items were analysed by using IBM SPSS Statistics program. The demographic characteristics, travel and social media usage analysed by the Descriptive Analysis while the measurement items were analysed by the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

Findings

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the tourists participating in this study are summarized in Table 1 below. The findings showed that the ages of the participants were varied from 18 years old to 71 years old. However, the majority (40.9%) was in the 25-34 age group. On the other hand, the education level of the participants was high. The gender of the study sample was evenly distributed. 95% of the tourists participating in the study had degrees of college, undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition, the working status of the participants showed that almost 83% of the participants were employed in the public or private sector. Moreover, the household income status of the participants displayed that there was a highly variable income structure. However the majority of the income group was between 4001-5500 Turkish Liras (36.5%). Finally, the study showed that 57.7% of the participants were married.

Table 1. Profiles of the Study Participants (n = 208)

Characteristics	Frequency	Participants %
Gender		
Female	99	47,6
Male	109	52,4
Age		
18-24 years old	10	4,8
25-34 years old	85	40,9
35-44 years old	67	32,2
45-54 years old	25	12,0
55-64 years old	19	9,1
65 years old & older	2	1,0
Education		
Less than high school degree	2	1,0
High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)	6	2,9
Associate degree in college (2-year)	23	11,1
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	25	12,0
Master's degree	130	62,5
Doctoral degree	22	10,5
Marital Status		
Married	120	57,7
Single	88	42,3
Monthly Household Income		
2500 Turkish Lira and above	8	3,8
2501-4000 Turkish Lira	44	21,2
4001-5500 Turkish Lira	76	36,5
5501-7000 Turkish Lira	38	18,3
Above 7001 Turkish Lira	42	20,2
Occupation		
Public sector	115	55,3
Private sector	58	27,9
Retired	9	4,3
Self-employment	10	4,8
Non-employed	16	7,7
Total	208	100

The Findings of Travel and Social Media Usage

The travel information of the participants showed that 47% of the participants travelled 3 to 4 times a year. However, the main travel goals of the participants focused on visiting families and relatives, resting and entertainment travelling. The participants who had multiple purposes to travel was 9.3% out of the study participants. (See Table 2 below).

Table 2. Travel Information

Information	Frequency	Respondents %
Number of Travels per Annum		
1-2	62	29,8
3-4	98	47,1
5-6	16	7,7
7 and over	32	15,4
Purpose of Travel		
Resting	44	21,5
Entertainment	32	15,4
Business	22	10,6
Visiting Families and Relatives	51	24,5
Culture	9	4,3
Education	14	6,7
Health	11	5,3
Adventure	5	2,4
Multiple Purposes	20	9,3
Total	208	100

The findings of the social media usage showed that up to 60% of the participants spent their 1-3 hours a day on the social media. Regarding the internet access to the social media, the smart phones

(49,5%) were preferred. The other option of using more than one devices to access the internet (35,1%) was selected as a second option, which indicated that the social media users would like to have an access in every part of their daily lives. On the other hand, the social media users used Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, and TripAdvisor as their popular social media accounts. Further on this, the tourists who had the social media accounts spent time on these accounts every day (74.0%). With the participants' purposes of using the social media, the findings showed that the social media was mostly used for multiple purposes (48,6%). More specifically, the social media was used for the purposes of obtaining information, communication and entertainment. The usage of the social media for the touristic experience was low (3,8%).

Table 3. Information of Social Media Usage

Usage Information	Frequency	Participants %
Time Spent for Social Media (Daily)		
0-59 minutes	24	11,5
1-3 hours	123	59,1
3-6 hours	38	18,3
6 hours and over	23	11,1
Internet Access		
Personal computer at home	4	1,9
Tablet at home	5	2,4
Laptop at home	8	3,9
Personal computer at work	6	2,9
Tablet at work	4	1,9
Laptop at work	5	2,4
Smart phones	103	49,5
More than one	73	35,1
Social Media Accounts		
Twitter	6	2,9
Instagram	34	16,3
Facebook	13	6,3
TripAdvisor	5	2,4
YouTube	4	1,9
Twitter and Instagram	12	5,8
Twitter and Facebook	7	3,4
Instagram and Facebook	47	22,6
Twitter, Instagram and Facebook	44	21,2
Twitter, Instagram and YouTube	4	1,9
Instagram, Facebook and YouTube	5	2,4
Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn	13	6,3
Twitter, Instagram, Otelz, and Trivago	5	2,4
Twitter, TripAdvisor and Trivago	5	2,4
Facebook, Trivago, Booking, LinkedIn and YouTube	3	1,4
I do not have an account	1	0,5
Usage of Social Media Accounts		
I have an account and I use every day	154	74,0
I have an account and I rarely use	42	20,2
I have an account and I do not use at all	9	4,3
I do not have an account but I know social communication networks	3	1,4
I do not have an account and I do not know social communication networks	0	0
Purpose of Social Media Usage		
Entertainment	23	11,1
Receiving information about news	32	15,4
Communicating with friends and relatives	17	8,2
Searching information about touristic experience I intend to purchase	13	6,2
Seeking assistance from the business or pre-service users about the touristic experience	8	3,8
Describing my experiences or complaints about the touristic experience I purchased	8	3,8
Helping the touristic businesses to produce better products	5	2,4
Multiple purposes	101	48,6
I do not use	1	0,5
Total	208	100

Findings of Exploratory Factor Analysis

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a statistical technique used to bring variables together in groups by examining the relationship between the variables that measure a particular phenomenon (Saruhan & Özdemirci, 2011). In the study, an EAF was performed on the data set in order to determine the factors that prevent customers from participating in co-creation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient (.824) and Bartlett Sphericity Test (.000) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (.815) were found suitable for the factor analysis for the study's data set.

In EFA, three factors with the eigenvalues above 1.00 were determined according to Kaiser criterion. These factors were named as (i) lack of knowledge, (ii) lack of participation in social communication networks, and (iii) personal perceptions of co-creation. The total variance explained by the determined factors was 0,75. Thus, the total variance explained was above the limit for acceptance (0,60).

Table 4. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Factors and Statements	Loadings	Eigenvalues	Explained Variance	Cronbach Alpha	Mean	Standart Deviation
Lack of Knowledge		3,936	32,579	,960	3,91	,698
I did not think that touristic businesses would produce and sell on the basis of the information provided by the customers.	,955					
I do not know how to participate in co-creation activities.	,939					
I did not know that tourist experiences can be prepared through co-creation.	,939					
I never thought of tourist experiences being produced through co-creation.	,932					
Lack of Participation in Social Communication Networks		2,847	27,396	,888	4,18	,477
I do not share information about my touristic experiences on social communication networks.	,887					
I do not participate in discussions about touristic experiences on forms and blogs.	,883					
I do not read comments on touristic experiences on social networks, forms and blogs.	,866					
I read comments on touristic experiences on social networks, forms and blogs, but I do not make a decision accordingly.	,807					
Personal Perceptions of Co-creation		1,531	15,644	,610	4,07	,501
In cases where I am not satisfied with the experiences, I do not need co-creation as I can make different choices from many alternatives.	,795					
I don't have the time to go into co-creation.	,696					
I do not think that touristic businesses take into account the information and experiences I will offer.	,382					

Total Variance Explained 75, 579; Total Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient (%) ,815; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) ,824; Bartlett's' Test of Sphericity, 000

Conclusion and Discussion

Theoretical Implications

The main purpose of this study was to identify the factors that prevent the tourists from participating in online co-creation activities. According to the findings of the study, (i) lack of knowledge, (ii) lack of participation in social communication networks, and (iii) personal

perceptions of co-creation prevent the tourists from participating in online co-creation activities. The lack of knowledge means that the tourists do not have information about co-creation and do not know how to perform co-creation. Santos-Vijande et al. (2015) concluded that one of the factors preventing participation in co-creation in the tourism sector was the lack of knowledge. Similarly, Mani & Chouk (2018) stated that the lack of knowledge and communication problems were the main factors that prevent co-creation. The other finding this study produced was the lack of participation in social communication networks prevented co-creation. The lack of participation in social communication networks means that tourists do not comment on social communication networks, forms and blogs, and do not read the comments as well. This suggests that even if tourists read the comments, they do not take their touristic decisions and preferences accordingly. This finding is supported by various studies in the literature. One of the reasons that customers do not produce information in social communication networks is security and privacy concerns or lack of technological information (Constantinidies et al., 2015; Oliveira, Araujo, & Tam, 2020; Schüller et al., 2020). Finally, this study concluded that personal perceptions of co-creation prevent customers from participating in co-creation activities. The personal perceptions of co-creation were reflected that customers do not participate in co-creation due to various personal reasons, although they have information about co-creation activities. The various reasons could be that tourists think that they can make different choices among many alternatives when they are not satisfied with their experiences, and the perception that businesses will not consider the tourists' ideas and suggestions in the co-creation process, and that they cannot spare time for co-creation. The studies of customers' perceptions of businesses and experiences (Kleijnen et al., 2009) and their lack of time (Constantinidies et al., 2015; Santos-Vijande et al., 2015; Schüller et al., 2020) showed that tourists are negatively affected to participate in co-creation. To sum up, it is possible to say that the findings of this study are relatively in line with the service sector literature. In this context, the study contributes to the tourism literature in the theoretical terms.

Managerial Implications

This study determined three factors that prevent tourists from participating in online co-creation activities. These are as: (i) lack of knowledge, (ii) lack of participation in social communication networks, and (iii) personal perceptions of co-creation. In this context, it is suggested that touristic businesses should take into account the preventive factors while structuring their activities for the co-creation processes and directing improvement and development initiatives in this aspect will encourage tourists' participation in co-creation. In this context, it is possible that the findings obtained in the study could constitute a framework for touristic businesses at three points.

Firstly, the study determined that the most important factor preventing participation in co-creation was the lack of knowledge. This indicates the necessity of touristic businesses to develop solutions that will eliminate or reduce the lack of knowledge. Prebensen, Woo, and Uysal (2014) pointed out that knowledge and the quality of knowledge are important elements in co-creation activities in the tourism industry. In this context, informing and awareness-raising initiatives of the businesses for co-creation activities would encourage customers to participate in co-creation. Therefore, it is important for business managers to provide accurate and complete information about co-creation strategies to large masses by using web pages, online travel sites and other online platforms regarding the strategy and structure of co-creation, and to develop modules and systems that enable co-creation on online platforms.

Secondly, the next finding of the study showed that the tourists were reluctant to share and discuss on social networks. In addition, the findings indicated that tourists do not have sufficient motivation to direct their touristic experience preferences and decision processes in line with the review and sharing of existing posts in social communication networks. To support this finding mentioned above, the study displayed that most of the tourists have one or more social media accounts and they spend their time on social media regularly every day. This situation shows that although tourists use social communication networks actively and intensively, however their social media usage for co-creation purposes is low. Oliveira et al. (2020) and Sun, Rau, and Ma (2014) associated the low rate of tourists' social media sharing, usage of information on social media at the point of tourists making decisions and preferences with the security and privacy concerns signalling private information problems on the internet. At this point, any attempts to reduce or eliminate security and privacy factors causing concerns will increase the participation of tourists in online co-creation activities.

Thirdly, the study determined that the tourists do not participate in online co-creation activities due to personal concerns. In this context, the primary preference of the tourists who have problems in the existing touristic experience process is to choose another one among similar alternative touristic experiences. This preference causes them to throw the experiences co-created to the second plan and this situation further causes them not to demand the co-created experiences again. However, Etgar (2008) and Arica (2019) stated that touristic experiences co-created have more benefits compared to other touristic forms or products. Therefore, it is important for business managers to take awareness-raising initiatives for tourists that the benefit from touristic experiences co-created is higher than other types of tourism. This will ensure that tourists who are dissatisfied with a tourist experience tend to co-create again. However, another factor that prevents tourists from participating in co-creation is determined to be the lack of time. In this context, business managers need to take initiatives to reduce the time problems in co-creation and to bring an effective and efficient operation to the process (e.g. development of co-creation modules, personnel training). Another personal obstacle is that the idea that tourists have will not be taken into account by business managers. At this point, it is essential for business managers to provide information that co-creation is a strategy applied to create productions compatible with customer wants and needs. In summary, the knowledge and experience of customers are important for co-creation.

Limitations and Future Research

The study investigated the factors that prevent tourists from participating in online co-creation activities and found that the tourists did not participate in online co-creation activities due to the different components. In this context, it will be fruitful to conduct future researchers on the factors that prevent businesses from participating in co-creation, and to evaluate the elements that prevent participation in co-creation with a supply and demand-oriented holistic perspective. In addition to all these, it is important to determine the factors that prevent online co-creation activities over a larger study sample in different touristic destinations in terms of making comparisons and evaluating with more concrete indicators.

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