

Consumer experience co-creation in speciality coffee through social media sharing: its antecedents and consequences

Consumer
experience co-
creation

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Abstract

Purpose – The present study aims to examine consumers' happiness experiences for speciality coffee consumption in Thailand by considering the role of consumers' active participation, sharing of experience and consumer experience co-creation.

Design/methodology/approach – A purposive survey was conducted in speciality coffee shops located in the largest commercial city and industrial development centre in the Northeastern Region of Thailand, Khon Kaen City, which yielded 271 usable and valid responses. The proposed model was evaluated by using a structural equation analysis with a partial least squares technique.

Findings – The results confirmed that consumers' active participation and sharing of experience affected their experience co-creation, which in turn contributed to the consumers' happiness experience at the speciality coffee shops.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the consumer experience co-creation and social media literature by proposing a conceptual model for the speciality coffee consumption experience. Furthermore, the study findings contribute to the existing literature by investigating new linkages, such as the role of consumer experience co-creation in a speciality coffee context as a mediating variable of consumer active participation and the sharing of experience with consumers' happiness experience.

Keywords Active participation, Sharing of experience, Consumer experience co-creation, Consumer happiness experience, Speciality coffee

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

With the continued growth of service industries, competition is intensifying and delivering superior customer experiences in service encounters is seen as a key competitive strategy. Moreover, when facing customers' always-changing behaviours, many service businesses must strengthen customer responses and address their needs (Nasir *et al.*, 2021; Chuang, 2020). In doing so, delivering customer happiness during a product/service consumption experience plays an important role in sustaining customers' continual support of companies (Agarwal *et al.*, 2022). Companies are increasingly managing opportunities to create happiness for their customers. Scholars suggest that service/product quality can cause customers to react differently in terms of happiness based on their perceptions of service/product offerings (Yi and Natarajan, 2018; Chaouali *et al.*, 2020). For example, happiness may strengthen or weaken the impact of customers' values on service/product offerings. Happiness is frequently described as a level of positive (or negative, in its absence) emotions on a psychological level and is often related to customer experience in terms of joy,



contentment and quality of life (Buss, 2000; Hellén and Sääksjärvi, 2011). As a process to create customer happiness, customer co-creation can help a company learn what it can do to satisfy customers' needs and wants (Hsieh *et al.*, 2018).

Along this line, Braxton and Lau-Gesk (2020) suggest that customer co-creation may generate opportunities with a service/product that empowers customers with happiness, thereby usurping the fundamental need to belong. This customer co-creation refers to a customer actively engaging in value co-creation by cooperating with product or service offerings to satisfy their needs and wants and building customer relationships with the product or service delivery (Etgar, 2008; Heidenreich *et al.*, 2015). Drawing on service-dominant logic (SDL), this perspective assigns priority to the interaction between the company and the customer. This logic implies that value occurs in the interaction process itself, rather than exclusively in the provision of the service (Etgar, 2008; Grönroos, 2011). Specifically, involving customers in the creation of a service/product helps in developing it for the customers' particular needs, thus improving their satisfaction and then bolstering their happiness in the service/product delivery (Lusch and Vargo, 2014).

Although previous research has suggested an impact of customer co-creation on happiness and subjective well-being (Dekhili and Hallem, 2020; Lusch and Vargo, 2014), few studies have posited that customers who take part in a company's activities are looking for experiences that will make them feel happy (Prebensen and Xie, 2017; Dekhili and Hallem, 2020). Pera and Viglia (2015) believe in the importance of co-creation behaviour in driving happiness and suggest that the application of customer co-creation can better meet the needs of customers (Hsieh *et al.*, 2018). Prior studies have also emphasised that the link between customer co-creation and happiness deserves further examination in service marketing and hospitality (Hughes and Vafeas, 2021). Research has been called for to examine the effects of co-creation on positive and negative emotions, such as happiness, related to the consumption of experiences (Braxton and Lau-Gesk, 2020) in specific contexts, especially service settings (Hughes and Vafeas, 2021).

As mentioned earlier, customer co-creation can lead to the development of customer happiness towards service offerings, yet can also be more challenging and intriguing. The service marketing and hospitality literature has identified several determinants of customer co-creation towards service offerings, including, among others, interactivity, customer engagement, motivation, perceived physical environment, participation and the sharing of consumption experience (Buonincontri *et al.*, 2017; Cheung *et al.*, 2021; Cheung *et al.*, 2020; Chuang, 2020; Im and Qu, 2017). Binkhorst and Den Dekker (2009) and Buonincontri *et al.* (2017) suggest that co-creation in a consumption experience creates value for both customers and service providers. They also believe that the interaction between customers and service providers, active participation of customers and sharing of the consumption experience with other people should be considered as drivers in strengthening customer co-creation activities in a consumption experience, specifically in a service context, such as a speciality coffee cafe. With the continued growth of speciality coffee consumption, it has become an increasing source of revenue in many countries (Thong *et al.*, 2017). Speciality coffee is considered a service delivery due to the uniqueness of its product and the service nature in which consumers must have a satisfying experience during their coffee consumption; therefore, it is important to understand how willing customers are to participate in the speciality coffee service to co-create meaningful consumption experiences. Prior research in the context of a coffee shop has mainly focussed on perceived value, brand image, satisfaction and customer loyalty in a brand coffee chain, such as Starbucks and McCafe (Tran *et al.*, 2020; Oh *et al.*, 2019; Kim and Lee, 2020; Han *et al.*, 2018). However, research into the impact of customer co-creation on customer happiness in the coffee shop industry,

especially speciality coffee, is scant. Speciality coffee is considered as high-specification products that has growing importance at consumption level worldwide (Carvalho *et al.*, 2016). In addition, a coffee consumption continues to be one of the most traded goods in the world and consumed by a large proportion of the worldwide population on a daily basis (Bartoloni *et al.*, 2022). Based on these reasons, the speciality coffee consumption is different from the consumption of other speciality/novel foods. Thus, it would be meaningful to investigate ways to enhance customer happiness based on an understanding of how the customer co-creation process translates into a positive emotional experience.

As previously described, there are limited research models for understanding how co-creation affects customer happiness in the context of a speciality coffee café, which is the central focus of our study. This study addresses a research gap by trying to understand how the co-creation process can lead to customers developing positive affective reactions. A potential link between co-creation and well-being is of considerable interest to the service and hospitality industry. In effect, if co-creation activity is found to be a positive experience for customers, it is a “win-win” situation, countering critics who suggest that co-creators are no more than “exploited workers” (Zwick *et al.*, 2008) belittled by service providers. Under an SDL, consumers are resource integrators connected by shared ideas, knowledge and mutual value creation through a service exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Therefore, this study attempts to determine the influence of consumers’ active participation and sharing of experiences in consumer co-creation. In addition, the study attempts to determine how co-creation activities help to increase consumers’ well-being. It adopts a partial least squares-structural equation model (PLS-SEM), combining consumers’ active participation, sharing of experience, consumer co-creation and consumers’ happiness. Grounded in a speciality café service context, the findings offer various theoretical and managerial implications.

2. Literature rereview

2.1 Concept of customer experience and co-creation

A deeper understanding of consumers’ experiences plays an important role in the hospitality and tourism domains (Adhikari and Bhattacharya, 2016; Tynan *et al.*, 2014). Specifically, when consumers receive a superior experience from a service or product, they may increase their level of satisfaction and become a loyal customer (Choi *et al.*, 2013; Meeprom and Silanoi, 2020). Recently, many service firms have relied on their consumers to co-create by encouraging them to interact and create relationships with the service offerings and other people. The concept of co-created experiences turns the focus to the individual consumer rather than the service firms, which is the underpinning of the meaningfulness of such experiences (Prebensen and Foss, 2011). According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), the value of consumer meaning from co-created experiences comes from how those consumers determine to participate or interact with a focal service or product in a specific time and space. Therefore, the notion of co-creation refers to a process where actors are involved in resource integration and service exchange, enabled and constrained by endogenously generated institutions and institutional arrangements, establishing nested and interlocking service ecosystems of actors (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, p. 7).

A review of the hospitality literature shows that scholars agree that experience co-creation in a focal service or at a destination is a line of thought that deserves attention because service is one of the greatest sources of experiences through which people construct their own unique narratives (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009). Thus, creating value in a service experience considers the important roles of both the customer and the service deliverer as the producer and provider in the co-creation process. Sharing the same sentiment, Li and Petrick (2009) claim that the view of individuals as co-creators of value

and co-producers of their final experiences introduces a paradigm shift that deserves attention. Similarly, [Shaw et al. \(2011\)](#) conducted research on customer experience co-creation in a hotel context and found that customer attitudes towards co-creation are a crucial distinguishing characteristic of service providers. Thus, an investigation of co-creation strategies in a hospitality context might identify synergistic effects and enable an improvement of both service provider perspectives and strategies, as well as increase understanding of the way in which co-creation tenets operate. [Eletxigerra et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Pralhad and Ramaswamy \(2004\)](#) suggest that the core concept of co-creation is a narrative, which is linked to views of SDL. SDL is defined as an active resource that clarifies a person who should be involved in the process of value creation; with this role, the customer is able to impact and improve an organisation's available resources ([Grönroos, 2011](#)).

By examining the hospitality (i.e. speciality coffee) experience from an SDL perspective, insight can be increased to better understand how co-creation takes place in speciality coffee contexts and adds value to an experience ([Poltronieri and Rossi, 2016](#); [Vellema et al., 2015](#)). Recent research was conducted by [Jeon et al. \(2016\)](#) in the context of an innovative coffee shop to examine customer co-creation in a service environment. Their research found that customers experienced a positive mood from a service offering in harmony with the coffee shop environment and, in turn, show approaching behaviour, represented by spending more money and time. Further, [Shulga et al. \(2018\)](#) used SDL to investigate co-creation with a well-known coffee shop brand. The results of this research indicated the customers' willingness to participate in coffee shop activities (e.g. a consumer-generated advertisement contest). Additional research is required within the SDL framework to better understand co-created consumer experience in the coffee industry. More research is needed to gather information on the process behind co-creation and thus identify valuable clues on how to create anticipated experiences and systems that enable the co-creation of value in hospitality contexts ([Prebensen et al., 2013](#); [Shulga et al., 2018](#)). Although a few studies have examined customer experience co-creation in the coffee consumption context, no research has considered the use of SDL to examine co-creation in social media marketing within the speciality coffee context. Thus, this study examined customer experience co-creation from the consumer's perspective and discussed the role the consumer plays in the co-creation process within the SDL view.

2.2 Consumers' active participation

Active participation can build a strong service and product relationship, which is the focus of this study. Active consumers are highly motivated to participate in service offerings by providing more positive evaluations of service encounters and delivery procedures and engaging in activities such as creating messages, disseminating information and providing emotional support to others ([Kang et al., 2014](#)). Moreover, active participation can enhance customers' service knowledge and thus enable them to help other customers in solving problems with the service process and in making informed purchasing decisions ([Casaló et al., 2007](#); [Flavián and Guinaliú, 2006](#)). Thus, converting "lurkers" to active participants plays a critical role in driving social media interaction.

[Pralhad and Ramaswamy \(2004\)](#) identify the influence of the active participation (involvement) of customers toward experience co-creation before, during and after consumption. Furthermore, [Vivek et al. \(2012\)](#) consider the participation of the customer as an antecedent that influences a customer's engagement and their co-creation. In the same vein, [Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer \(2012\)](#) found a direct effect of active participation on co-creation process outcomes within the tourism sector; also, in co-creation within tourism, the active role of tourists is especially important because direct tourist intervention

with their own resources is required for successful tourist experiences (Chathoth *et al.*, 2013). Recently, Buonincontri *et al.* (2017) found that in the tourism sector, the main antecedent of experience co-creation was the active participation of tourists. The improvement degree of co-creation depends on the decision of the tourist to challenge their skills and abilities during the travel period and the destination providing for active involvement in the activities (Mathis *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1. Consumer active participation will have a positive effect on experience co-creation.

2.3 Sharing of experience

Sharing an experience with others via social media has the power to provide many opportunities for educating consumers on the service process, good taste and good manners with regard to a specific service encounter (Dion and Borraz, 2017). In particular, sharing an experience via social media provides new opportunities in the consumption evaluation of an experience by reinforcing the meaning of the service being delivered. Focusing on the role of social media interaction in promoting the sharing of a service experience, this sharing refers to the activity of customers for their own interests, that is, for the pleasure and satisfaction derived (Tajvidi *et al.*, 2020). For example, a customer may want to share an experience with other people when they receive superior service quality and encounter a distinct service environment (popular photo-sharing) to inspire them to choose a service or product (Liu *et al.*, 2019). In other words, the use of social media sharing, such as recommendations, referrals, ratings and reviews, generates valuable information for consumers and influences their intentions and purchasing decisions (Lee *et al.*, 2014). Some people endeavour to share content, such as with food and beverages, to promote food experience sharing (Wilson *et al.*, 2012). In doing so, the presence of the sharing experience on social media can create an opportunity for consumers to communicate service delivery with others and to co-create service/product values, resulting in a successful service/product.

Laroche *et al.* (2012) demonstrate that the influence of social media community features, such as user input or posting to a site, affects co-creation practices (e.g. shared rituals and traditions and shared consciousness), in turn, increasing customers' brand trust and behavioural intention. For this reason, in interacting with other people via social media sites, consumers are able to spread certain of their service/product experiences, create service/product stories and deliver sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and relational values to other people. Posting and sharing a consumption experience can be considered an innovation of design feature (Zhou *et al.*, 2013), such as social content presentations, notifications, topic focuses and social ads; these could be catalysts for experience co-creation (Tajvidi *et al.*, 2018). These features help consumers gain information prior to making a purchase in order to obtain insights from consumers and intensify selling and service activities. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2. Sharing of the experience with others will have a positive effect on consumer experience co-creation.

2.4 Consumer's happiness with the experience

The customer is a part of the service process. Competitive markets have recognised the importance of customer experience and its impact on both word-of-mouth and customer loyalty. In addition, the customer can be an active participant in the co-creation of their experience. Both the positive and negative service experiences of customers create memories

of their relationship with the business and affect the emotional attachment between the customer and the service provider. [Buonincontri et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer \(2012\)](#) state that experience co-creation has a strong and positive effect on customer happiness. Customer happiness can be defined as the propensity to frequently experience positive emotions and infrequently experience negative emotions related to a service-consumption experience ([Diener, 2009](#)). Based on this logic, it can be a better predictor of loyalty than cognition ([Buonincontri et al., 2017](#)). In fact, a service offering involves a high level of human interaction; people play a significant role in maintaining and sustaining relationships and encouraging the connection of emotional and experiential memories. Thus, an emotional reference to a customer experience can have a long-lasting effect on a business.

[Peterson et al. \(2005\)](#) suggested three typologies of happiness: pleasure, meaning and engagement. The third typology emphasizes how activities and experiences that are more engaging for customers are accompanied by a psychological state that determines a flow in which the sense of self is lost, time passes very quickly, the senses are over-excited and pleasure is invigorated. Prior studies present that customer experience may contribute to a higher level of customer happiness ([Brakus et al., 2009](#); [Buonincontri et al., 2017](#)). For example, [Brakus et al. \(2013\)](#) identified two studies to clarify how customer experiences contribute to happiness in either an active or passive consumption set; the result reveals the link between the four experience dimensions, which are sense, affect, intellect and behaviour and the three happiness dimensions of pleasure, meaning and engagement. Similarly, [Carter and Gilovich \(2010\)](#) illustrate the reason why purchases of experience tend to increase the level of satisfaction of people more than material purchases. The results of [Carter and Gilovich's \(2010\)](#) work show that a satisfying experience often becomes more positive as it is recorded in memory, leading to an increase in the happiness of the customers. This result shows how to increase consumers' positive emotions, behaviour, happiness and well-being ([Lin and Utz, 2015](#); [Kerr et al., 2012](#); [Liu et al., 2019](#)). Customers' happiness, therefore, may be considered as a measure of customers' success in their experience co-creation. In extending this reasoning to the speciality coffee context, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3. Consumer experience co-creation will have a positive effect on consumer happiness.

As suggested by [Buonincontri et al. \(2017\)](#), customers' happiness, thus, can be considered as a customer success measurement for the separate antecedents of experience co-creation. The active role of the consumer and experience sharing can be considered to be important antecedents of experience co-creation that impact consumer happiness in speciality coffee. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H4. Consumer active participation will have a positive effect on consumer happiness.

H5. Sharing of the experience with others will have a positive effect on consumer happiness.

2.5 Mediating role of consumer experience co-creation

Prior research has found that active participation and the sharing of experience lead to gains in positive affect and happiness ([Lambert et al., 2013](#); [Buonincontri et al., 2017](#)). However, the vital role of consumer co-creation in mediating this relationship with regard specifically to consumer happiness in the context of speciality coffee has scarcely been examined. Many studies in the hospitality domain have considered co-creation as an independent variable ([Luo et al., 2019](#); [Mathis et al., 2016](#)) and many others have treated it as a dependent variable

(Palma *et al.*, 2019; Xia and Suri, 2014). Cultivating active participation through coffee-related activities, online interaction in a coffee shop's Facebook page and encouraging the sharing of experience facilitate co-creation and subsequently the improvement of consumer happiness with the coffee experience. Active participation facilitates co-creation by involving the transformation of customers from passive to active partners and their involvement in activities oriented to combine not only the basic consumption of coffee but also more personal and unique resources. Active participation that emphasises consumer experience co-creation provides a continuation of the sharing of experiences. If the coffee shop offerings create a superior service experience for customers through effective sharing processes via social media, overall consumer happiness with coffee consumption will be increased. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H6a. Consumer experience co-creation will mediate the relationship between consumer active participation and consumer happiness.

H6b. Consumer experience co-creation will mediate the relationship between the sharing of experience with others and consumer happiness.

2.6 Control variables

To provide a more robust test of the conceptual model, this study used age and gender and types of social network usage to control for user heterogeneity and ensure that the empirical results were not due to covariance with other variables.

2.7 Proposed conceptual framework

The proposed conceptual framework for this study is outlined in [Figure 1](#).

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection and procedure

In this study, speciality coffee is defined as all coffees that are differentiated, which considers that they are able to increase customer perception of a premium coffee experience. Thailand has become one of the most increasing coffee producers in Asia and is uniquely positioned to benefit from the increasing demand for speciality coffee. Specifically, Thai speciality coffee consumption has been continuously increasing to a level of 82,500 metric tons of coffee per year. As speciality coffee consumption increases, the number of speciality coffee shops is increasing throughout Thailand. Therefore, it is believed that Thailand serves as an excellent research laboratory for collecting data on how speciality coffee consumers co-create their experience via social media by delivering and sharing superior

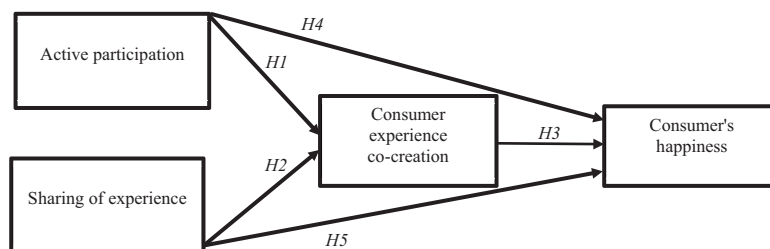


Figure 1.
Conceptual model

experiences with other people. This research was carried out in Khon Kaen City, which is the largest commercial city and industrial development centre in the Northeastern Region of Thailand, which is close to realising its ambitions of becoming a digital “smart city”. The data were collected at speciality coffee shops during late October 2020. Customers who experienced and shared their speciality coffee experiences, pictures, videos and conversations via social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest) were asked to take part in the survey under the guidance of the researcher. Since the population of speciality coffee consumption in Khon Kaen was unknown, purposive sampling using a self-administrative approach was applied. A total of 350 surveys were distributed to the customers. Among the questionnaires received from the 350 respondents, 79 surveys were incomplete and, therefore, were eliminated. Finally, 271 questionnaires were usable, resulting in a 77% effective response rate.

3.2 Measure development

The measures in this research were drawn from the literature and adapted to suit the hospitality context. As presented in [Table 1](#), all the constructs of interest used multi-measurement items because, when compared to a single item, multi-measurement items lead to better reliability and validity ([DeVellis, 2016](#)). All of the scale items were measured using five-point Likert-type response scales (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). Active participation was measured using items adapted from [Mathis *et al.* \(2016\)](#) and [Peterson *et al.* \(2005\)](#). The sharing of experience construct was adapted from [Munar and Jacobsen \(2014\)](#). The consumer experience co-creation construct was adapted from [Zhang *et al.* \(2019\)](#), which was related to the co-creation experience with staff members. Consumer happiness was measured as an outcome variable, as adapted from [Neal *et al.* \(2007\)](#). Because the target population was Thai speciality coffee consumers, all the measurement items were first developed in English to maintain the originality of the measurements. Then, a professional translator was asked to translate them into the Thai language. Finally, another professional translator translated the Thai survey back into English to ensure the translation accuracy ([Meeprom and Dansiri, 2020](#)). Furthermore, the surveys were pre-tested during a pilot phase.

This study used a two-stage pilot study. During the first stage, 10 hospitality and marketing academics and five managers of speciality coffee shops were used to ensure that the questions and wording were understood ([Bell, 2010](#)). During the second stage, a purposive sample was employed for pre-testing through the recruitment of 30 participants who were tested to ensure the reliability of the measurement items. The conclusion of the pre-testing survey resulted in the retention of all items in the final survey ([Malhotra, 2014](#)). In all cases, the items for the latent variables were measured on 5-point Likert-type response scales (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). Because the study used self-report data, common method bias (CMB) was examined. Harman’s one-factor test was used to examine if there was CMB in this study. The procedure of [Podsakoff and Organ \(1986\)](#) was followed. For this purpose, all measurement scales were entered into a principal component analysis with varimax rotation so that any signs of a single factor could be identified from the factor analysis. The analysis extracted four different variables from the 15 measurement items (i.e. active participation, sharing of experience, consumer experience co-creation and consumer happiness), and the rotation converged in seven iterations. The results demonstrated that this study did not show any indication of a common-method variance bias.

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| | Mean | (SD) | Factor loadings | <i>t</i> -value | AVE | CR |
|---|------|------|-----------------|-----------------|------|------|
| <i>Active participation</i> | | | | | 0.50 | 0.80 |
| My coffee experience was enhanced because of my participation in the activities | 3.52 | 0.94 | 0.76 | 24.10*** | | |
| I have sought out situations that challenge my skills and abilities with this coffee shop | 3.65 | 0.88 | 0.62 | 10.40*** | | |
| I take an active part in the coffee shop's Facebook page | 3.42 | 0.94 | 0.65 | 10.53*** | | |
| In general, I post messages and responses on the coffee shop's Facebook page with great enthusiasm and frequency | 3.47 | 0.85 | 0.66 | 14.24*** | | |
| I do my best to participate in activities offered on the coffee shop's Facebook page | 3.04 | 1.18 | 0.66 | 13.00*** | | |
| <i>Sharing of experience</i> | | | | | 0.52 | 0.76 |
| I have shared my coffee experience in the coffee shop with others | 3.69 | 0.81 | 0.77 | 18.14*** | | |
| I will tell others about the coffee experience I had in the coffee shop | 3.32 | 1.03 | 0.74 | 18.43*** | | |
| Sharing my coffee knowledge and information through social media is pleasant | 4.22 | 0.74 | 0.64 | 9.91*** | | |
| <i>Consumer experience co-creation</i> | | | | | 0.70 | 0.83 |
| I felt comfortable interacting with the employee(s) in the coffee shop | 3.70 | 0.88 | 0.86 | 39.87*** | | |
| The setting of the coffee shop allows me to effectively interact with the employee(s) | 3.65 | 0.82 | 0.81 | 26.58*** | | |
| <i>Consumer happiness</i> | | | | | 0.50 | 0.79 |
| This coffee experience was rewarding to me in many ways, and I feel much better about things and myself after the coffee experience | 3.83 | 0.86 | 0.83 | 35.56*** | | |
| I engaged in my coffee experience for pleasure. | 3.80 | 0.80 | 0.65 | 13.75*** | | |
| I love to have coffee experiences that excite my senses | 3.97 | 0.80 | 0.67 | 12.38*** | | |
| During my coffee experience, the time passed very quickly | 3.56 | 0.90 | 0.63 | 11.32*** | | |

Table 1.
Items and loadings of
latent variable
reflective construct
indicators

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

4. Results

The data analysis and discussion of the research findings begin with a brief description of the demographic profile of the samples. Out of a total of 271 respondents, 47.6% were male, whereas 52.4% were female. The majority of the respondents (almost 84.9%) were aged between 20 and 30 years old. Furthermore, 90% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree. Regarding the respondents' occupations, 62% of the respondents reported that they were working as an employee in administration occupations and 15% were students. In addition, the income per month was approximately THB 15,000 to 25,000 for 64.9% of the respondents and 25,001 to 35,000 THB for 24%. Furthermore, for sharing their experiences, a majority of the respondents (almost 57.2%) were using Instagram and 30.3% were using Facebook.

The analysis of the measurement models demonstrated reliable and valid components. Composite reliability was used to assess the reliability. To assess convergent validity,

loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE) were evaluated (Hair *et al.*, 2019). All measurement items' loadings were above the critical value of 0.6 (Hair *et al.*, 2019), except for the third item under the customer co-creation construct, whose loadings were lower than the critical value, as shown in Table 1. Thus, this item was eliminated from the analysis. After the measurement items were assessed, reliability (including construct reliability), convergent validity and discriminant validity were formulated as the reflective variables. The construct reliability of the construct measures was evaluated through an internal consistency measure. As presented in Table 1, the composite reliability should be greater than 0.70, and in this case, five reflective variables were acceptable, as all the composite reliabilities ranged from 0.76 to 0.83. The convergent validity was evaluated based on the AVE. The findings showed that the AVE values for all the constructs, ranging from 0.50 to 0.70, were above the 0.50 cut-off value; therefore, the measures of the reflective constructs had acceptable levels of convergent validity. As shown in Table 2, discriminant validity was assessed to determine whether the construct measures discriminated well empirically. According to the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Hair *et al.*, 2019), the square root of the AVE values of each construct should be higher than the correlation coefficients between the constructs. Overall, the results showed that all the reflective constructs were valid measures of the unique concepts (Table 2).

4.1 Assessment of structural model

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was applied using partial least squares (PLS) with the SmartPLS 3.0 software to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings showed that all the variance inflation factor (VIF) values of the predictor constructs were above 0.20 and below the threshold of 5. Hence, collinearity among the predictor constructs was not a critical issue in the structural model. Table 3 presents the results of the hypothesized structural model test, consisting of the overall explanatory power indicated by the coefficient of determination (R^2 value), evaluated significance of path coefficients and loadings (with displayed significant paths and loadings indicated by asterisks and associated t -values of the paths/loadings). The R^2 value indicated that the model explained 37.20% of the variance of the consumer experience co-creation, and 62.70% of the variance of the consumer happiness with the experience. In addition, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable was examined through the effect size f^2 values. For the interpretation of the effect size in PLS-SEM, it is recommended that the f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 indicate small, medium and large effects, respectively, of an exogenous variable (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The results indicated that active participation (0.20) and the sharing of an experience (0.10) have a medium effect on consumer experience co-creation. In addition, active participation (0.10) and consumer experience co-creation (0.13) had a medium effect on

| Variable | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------------------------|------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Gender | 1.52 | 0.49 | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| 2. Age | 1.53 | 0.87 | -0.11 | 1.00 | | | | | |
| 3. Social media type | 2.43 | 1.00 | -0.12 | -0.06 | 1.00 | | | | |
| 4. Active participation | 3.41 | 0.65 | 0.04 | -0.02 | 0.06 | 0.67 | | | |
| 5. Sharing of experience | 3.74 | 0.63 | 0.08 | 0.21 | -0.03 | 0.56 | 0.72 | | |
| 6. Co-creation | 3.64 | 0.64 | 0.05 | -0.02 | -0.06 | 0.57 | 0.50 | 0.84 | |
| 7. Consumer happiness | 3.80 | 0.59 | -0.03 | -0.06 | 0.03 | 0.65 | 0.70 | 0.63 | 0.70 |

Table 2.

Discriminant validity **Notes:** The bold diagonal italics elements are square root of AVE; M = Mean; and SD = Standard deviation

| Hypothesis | Relationships | β | SE | t -values | p -value | Results |
|------------|----------------------|---------|------|-------------|------------|---------|
| H1 | AP \rightarrow CO | 0.43 | 0.07 | 5.86 | 0.000 | Accept |
| H2 | SE \rightarrow CO | 0.26 | 0.06 | 5.37 | 0.000 | Accept |
| H3 | CO \rightarrow HAP | 0.28 | 0.05 | 5.35 | 0.000 | Accept |
| H4 | AP \rightarrow HAP | 0.25 | 0.05 | 5.86 | 0.000 | Accept |
| H5 | SE \rightarrow HAP | 0.42 | 0.05 | 9.14 | 0.000 | Accept |

Control variables

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|------|---------------------|-------|
| Gender – HAP | -0.10 | 0.04 | 2.85** | 0.01 |
| Age – HAP | -0.16 | 0.04 | 3.57*** | 0.000 |
| Social media types \rightarrow HAP | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.58 ^{n.s} | 0.56 |

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$. AP = Active participation; SE = Sharing of experience; CO = Consumer experience co-creation; and HAP = Consumer happiness

Table 3.
Results of structural
model analysis
(hypothesis testing)

consumer happiness, while sharing of an experience (0.39) had a large effect on consumer happiness. Furthermore, Stone–Geisser’s Q^2 values were computed using the blindfolding procedure. As suggested by Hair *et al.* (2018), a Q^2 value larger than zero indicates the predictive relevance of the model. The findings were that the Q^2 values of the dependant variables were above zero. The Q^2 value of consumer experience co-creation was 0.25, whereas the Q^2 value of consumer happiness was 0.30. Thus, these results showed clear support for the model’s predictive relevance.

Table 3 and Figure 2 present the results of the structural path coefficients. The results show that the direct path coefficients were significant at the 0.001 level ($t > 1.96$) for the path model relationships. Active participation with other consumers and service providers significantly influenced consumer experience co-creation ($\beta = 0.43$; $t = 5.86$; $p < 0.001$); therefore, H1 was supported. Regarding H2, the sharing of an experience positively and significantly influenced consumer experience co-creation ($\beta = 0.26$; $t = 5.37$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H2 was supported. H3, which proposed that consumer experience co-creation would directly affect consumers’ happiness with the experience, was also supported ($\beta = 0.28$; $t = 5.35$; $p < 0.001$). Moreover, consumers’ happiness with the experience was

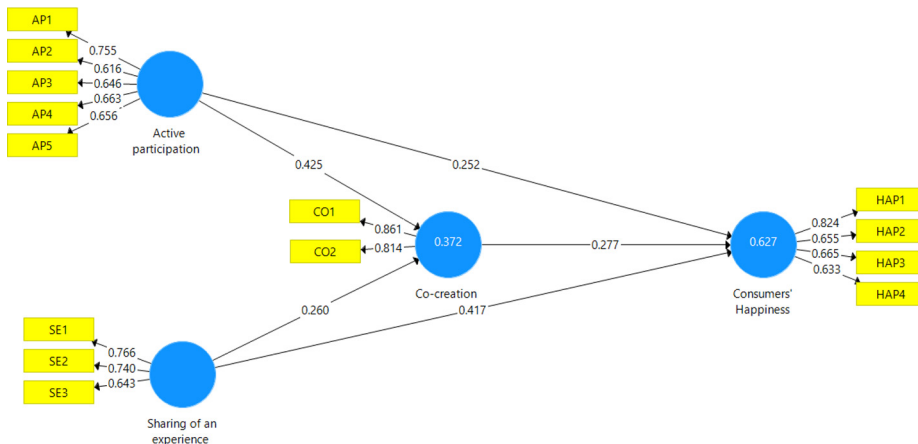


Figure 2.
The path coefficients
of the structural
model

positively influenced by active participation with other consumers and service providers ($\beta = 0.25$; $t = 5.86$; $p < 0.001$) and the sharing of an experience ($\beta = 0.42$; $t = 9.14$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, $H4$ and $H5$ were supported.

4.2 Assessment of mediating effects

Although many studies have commonly used Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedures for mediation and moderation analysis, some scholars have been critical and suggested avoiding this approach for a number of reasons. First, their procedure does not indicate the magnitude of an indirect impact, while now it is suggested to present the magnitude along with the significance of an indirect impact to provide the effect size of the mediation (Hayes, 2018; Hayes and Rockwood, 2017). Second, Baron and Kenny's approach is cumbersome specifically when a multi-mediating construct is included between an independent and dependent construct because each mediating impact is to be tested separately (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Third, the relationship between the independent and dependent constructs has to exist statistically, but the Baron and Kenny method counts low statistical power (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2007). Based on these reasons, this study used the approach of mediation analysis suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008), which is a suitable and convenient technique for testing mediating variables. Following the approach suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008), a bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples was used to examine t -values and confidence intervals. Table 4 shows that $H6a$ and $H6b$ were accepted, as the confidence intervals did not include zero (Preacher and Hayes, 2008).

5. Discussion and conclusions

The results showed that active participation with other consumers and service providers had a positive effect on customer experience co-creation, which provided support for $H1$. In other words, consumers are more motivated to engage in ongoing relationships with a service provider that offers expected benefits. Moreover, active interaction with other people can help service firms establish strong consumer–service relationships over the long term (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). This result is consistent with the work of Mathis *et al.* (2016) that found the improvement of co-creation degree depends on customers' decisions to interact with the product to increase their positive attitudes and strengthen the consumer–brand bond. Further, the results of this study included a significant relationship between the sharing of experience with others and customer experience co-creation in speciality coffee. One possible explanation for this result is that consumers take more interest in sharing knowledge and interacting with peers and service employees via social media in giving feedback and promoting speciality coffee as a citizenship agent. The output of this study is consistent with Lee *et al.* (2014) who argue that experience sharing on social network sites is one of the most popular tools for customers. This role of social media in promoting food experience sharing can be a significant tool in motivating customers with review, rating and ranking activities. There is a positive impact of sharing experiences during speciality coffee

| Hypothesis | Relationships | β | SE | t -values | P-value | CI.95 | | Results |
|------------|---------------------------------------|---------|------|-------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|
| | | | | | | 2.5% | 97.5% | |
| $H6a$ | AP \rightarrow CO \rightarrow HAP | 0.10 | 0.03 | 3.74 | 0.000 | 0.05 | 0.16 | Accept |
| $H6b$ | SE \rightarrow CO \rightarrow HAP | 0.09 | 0.02 | 4.06 | 0.000 | 0.05 | 0.13 | Accept |

Table 4.

Mediation analysis

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

experiences. Nowadays, only a few customers love to share their experiences on their own social media pages; most often, they prefer to share and express their feelings or their opinions and any suggestions about their experiences through various social media channels, especially on public sites (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014).

The findings of this research illustrate that consumer experience co-creation in speciality coffee exerts a significant positive effect on customer happiness with the experiences, which confirmed *H3*. This is in agreement with previous studies that found a positive relationship between the level of co-creation and level of expenditure and between the level of co-creation and satisfaction; in particular, the strongest impact of experience co-creation in service tourism was on the tourists' happiness (Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). Moreover, this result is in line with previous research that customer experience may contribute to a higher level of customer happiness, which is closely related to the nature of mood (i.e. feeling pleasant or happy) (Brakus *et al.*, 2013; Buoincontri *et al.*, 2017).

The results of this study also highlight the importance of active participation with other consumers and service providers for contributing to their happiness with the experience (*H4*). Furthermore, the study found that the sharing of the experience with others during the speciality coffee experience had a positive effect on consumer happiness (*H5*). These clearly imply that active participation and the sharing of experience with peers via social media interactions increase customer happiness, which can be described as the propensity to frequently experience positive emotions related to the consumption of the service encounter. In other words, customers drew on a reservoir of positive events readily accessible to memory when they were asked about their current affective state. Specifically, sharing experience, writing a comment and exchanging knowledge with other people may also be instrumental in increasing the cognitive accessibility of the service experience in one's memory. This explains that active participation sharing an experience with someone else is unique and different from posting and writing content on social media. This result is congruent with Buoincontri *et al.* (2017) and Lambert *et al.* (2013) work that found customers' happiness was a customer success measurement for active participation and the sharing of experience.

Furthermore, the empirical results indicate that consumer co-creation of the speciality coffee experience serves as an important mediating factor between the independent variables (participation and the sharing of experience) and the outcome variable (consumer happiness), supporting *H6a* and *H6b*, respectively. This result is in agreement with the view of service-determinant logic (SDL). According to this view, experience co-creation with speciality coffee can be affected by the overall service, product and environmental experience of an individual, which ultimately affects the general happiness with one's life and experience of positive emotions and infrequent experience of negative emotions related to the consumption of experiences.

6. Theoretical contribution and practical implications

The theoretical implications of this research are twofold. First, this research aligns with the study of the customer co-creation of an overall coffee consumption experience. The research not only investigates coffee shop service but also seeks to examine the role of the co-creation of the whole consumption experience found when customers interact in relation to a speciality coffee shop. In addition, this research offers new insights into the main antecedents and outcomes of the customer co-creation experience. Although prior studies have suggested customer co-creation experience as a successful strategy of differentiation against competitors (Wu and Gao, 2019), there has been limited empirical research on speciality coffee related to the antecedents and consequences of including customers as experience co-creators (Yen *et al.*, 2020). The findings of this research demonstrate that the

customer co-creation experience in speciality coffee consumption service is highly affected by the ability of customers to directly interact with the coffee shop staff and barista and by the customers' active participation during their consumption experience. The active participation of the customer is the main antecedent of the customer co-creation experience in the service process. The level of customer co-creation was increased due to customers' decisions to challenge their skills and abilities in the coffee shop and active involvement in the coffee shop activities. In addition, the customers' attitudes towards sharing their experiences with others via social media had an influence on the customer co-creation experience process during their coffee shop consumption. In doing so, this was a starting point for the consumers as key co-creative actors (Chen *et al.*, 2018). The results offer a deeper understanding of customer-based co-creation experiences and interactivity that can benefit the company and/or other customers. The study also provides insight into how to harvest customers' interactive, resource integration-related efforts, which exhibit reciprocity, such as customer-to-customer knowledge sharing (Sweeney *et al.*, 2015).

Second, this research also examined the strength and direction of the consequences of the customer co-creation experience. The co-creation experience in a speciality coffee shop had a strong and positive influence on consumer happiness. This is one of the first studies to investigate this relationship in the context of coffee consumption. Few studies have been conducted on the influence of the co-creation experience on the happiness of the customer in the coffee industry. However, the research findings of this study support the work of Buonincontri *et al.* (2017) that individuated a positive link between customers' happiness and experience dimensions. Moreover, this study is relatively novel in terms of conceptualising and testing the concept of co-creation to speciality coffee as a mediator between the independent (active participation and sharing of experience) and dependent variables (consumer happiness). This theorising was underpinned by a SDL perspective.

Practically, the results of this study offer a roadmap for designing and managing successful customer experiences with speciality coffee. Based on the results, it is suggested that coffee managers should further pursue customer relationship management and establish closer relationships with customers to provide feedback on their experiences with the consumer and their resulting beliefs. In understanding the speciality coffee experiences and customers' beliefs regarding a coffee shop, they should formulate service strategies that enable customers to take more interest in seeking information, sharing knowledge, interacting with peers and service employees, giving feedback and promoting the speciality coffee shop as an influencer agent. The manager should focus on building positive service and product experiences. The evidence of the crucial role of experience co-creation will help in making customers happier and more satisfied. This information is important for the management at a coffee shop, as there is a higher tendency that satisfied and happy customers may return to the shop and spread positive word of mouth, positively influencing the shop's image and competitiveness.

7. Limitations and future research direction

This study has several limitations. First, this study explored a cross-sectional survey design, whereas future studies may consider a longitudinal approach to reflect the consumer behavioural pattern more accurately. Second, this study focused on the role of the consumer as a co-creator in the speciality coffee industry without paying much attention to the entire co-creation experience process, which may involve other co-creators. Future research may consider other stakeholders and their role in experience cocreation. From this view, an interesting topic would be the co-creation of collective experiences. Third, this study used a quantitative method, whereas another qualitative approach can be beneficial in understanding insights on the topic of true experiences of the consumers and their attitudes

towards experience co-creation. Finally, the robustness of the conceptual model can be developed by incorporating other crucial concepts in the hospitality areas, such as psychographics and demographics, in understanding co-creation in the consumed coffee industry. Studying coffee shop branding could also help in better understanding consumption in the coffee industry.

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