Chapter 9
When Multiple Actors’ Online Interactions Lead to Value Co-Destruction: An Explorative Case Study

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ABSTRACT
This chapter explores the value co-destruction and deviant behavior during multiple actors’ online interactions. While several studies have highlighted its benefits, researchers have often failed to consider the negative consequences of these interactions. Previous studies focused on offline dyadic interactions and have not completely explained the causes of these problematic interactions in an online context. To this end, by using JetStar Airways, this chapter explores VCD by investigating the online context of the tourism industry, as characterized by the often complex relations among multiple actors. This study contributes from a theoretical standpoint by extending VCC literature considering the negative consequences of deviant behaviors in an online context and by identifying five deviant behaviors related to multiple actors’ interaction: performing illegal actions, supporting illegal actions, making insults, lacking transparency, and providing false information. This chapter provides guidance to practitioners on how to handle an interactive crisis caused by deviant behaviors.

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INTRODUCTION

In contrast to the majority of research on service dominant logic (S-D logic) (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008), recent studies have noted that the relationships among actors sometimes lead to value co-destruction (VCD) (Plé & Cáceres, 2010; Vartiainen & Tuunanen, 2016) rather than value co-creation (VCC). VCD is defined as “an interactional process between service systems that results in a decline in at least one of the system’s well-being” (Plé & Cáceres, 2010, p. 431).

According to some scholars (Lindgreen, Hingley, Grant, & Morgan, 2012; Plé & Cáceres, 2010), the S-D logic has an optimistic and favorable view of VCC, especially in one of its fundamental premises: the customer is always a co-producer (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 10). For this reason, other researchers have considered the eventuality of value destruction, even though they still follow the S-D logic (Crowther & Donlan, 2011; Grönroos, 2011; Gummerus, 2013; Lambert & Enz, 2012; Worthington & Durkin, 2012). In particular, they observe that co-creation experiences are not always positive because “not everyone enjoys such an interactive co-creation process” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2013, p. 21).

Nevertheless, VCD has been addressed by only a limited number of studies (Echeverri & Skålén, 2011; Kashif & Zarkada, 2015; Robertson, Polonsky, & McQuilken, 2014) that have focused on the misalignment or misuse of resources (Plé, 2016; Smith, 2013) and/or practices (Echeverri & Skålén, 2011) with a desirable outcome. While previous studies provided valuable insights into the processes underpinning value co-destruction, few studies have considered how VCD involves the interaction among multiple actors (Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016; Dootson, Johnston, Beatson, & Lings, 2016).

The current research on VCD has focused on the dyadic interactional process overlooking the wider network of interactions among multiple actors within the service ecosystems (Vafeas, Hughes, & Hilton, 2016; Worthington & Durkin, 2012). Therefore, the dyadic vision of the interactional process limits our comprehension of VCD because we are facing a more connected economy in which value formation is influenced by several actors who could have different or conflicting interests. Furthermore, another gap in the VCD research is the limited number of studies focused on the online context (Quach & Thach, 2017). A specific VCD in an online environment is particularly important due to the growth of e-commerce and interactive media (Robertson, Polonsky, & McQuilken, 2014). There is a growing sense that the Internet presents some unique opportunities for deviant behaviors (Rogers, Smoak, & Liu, 2006, p. 246), because it confers new opportunities for deviance, such as the development of virusware, cyber terrorism, computer hacking, and online harassment (Joinson, 2005).

The tourism industry is not immune to these deviant behaviors. On the contrary, the tourism sector could be a fruitful setting where deviant behaviors, such as misleading or fake online reviews, fake online profiles, provision of false online information, and so on, can be observed (Munzel, 2016; Sigala, 2015). Although increasing attention is directed to misleading and fake reviews in online websites like TripAdvisor or Yelp (Liu, Pennington-Gray, Donohoe, & Omodior, 2015; Luca & Zervas, 2016), the attention on fake profiles and the provision of false information in social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, is missing.

All in all, there is an imperative need to develop an understanding of VCD from a multi-actor point of view in the online service setting. For all these reasons, the purpose of this paper is to shed light on the phenomenon of VCD and deviant behaviors during multiple actors’ online interactions in the tourism sector. To do so, this research seeks to answer two critical research questions: 1) What are the typologies of online deviant behavior in tourism that lead to VCD? 2) How do multiple actors’ interactions influence online VCD?