



An examination of value co-creation drivers in Ghana's hotel setting: a micro
level approach

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Completing the PhD journey has been very stressful, challenging but quite rewarding. Reflecting on the journey's experiences sometimes leads to the shedding of tears, because I never thought that it would be possible. However, the strength of God became much stronger in my life when I felt weak. God sent companions and I am extremely grateful to them for the assistance they offered when I needed it most. The completion of this PhD would not have been possible without the help and support of my supervisory team including Dr Angela Rushton and Dr Kathleen Mortimer from the University of Northampton Faculty of Business and Law. Dr Cristina Devecchi from the University's Faculty of Health, Education and Society agreed to join the team at a critical stage as Advisor, and had a huge impact in helping me to get it done. I have the deepest debt of gratitude to each of them for their guidance over the past few years, especially for their commitment, time and insights. During the PhD journey I had the privilege of interacting with them and have learned from their rich experience. Their continuous support and guidance were invaluable at all stages of the study.

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines co-creation drivers in a hotel setting in Ghana, using a micro level approach. Drawing on the literature of service dominant logic for marketing, the study claims that understanding the factors that drive value co-creation is pivotal since by meeting actors' expectation and service delivery it contributes to gaining mutual benefits to both parties. The original contribution of this study is to focus on the co-creation drivers resulting from guests' and 'employees' participation in the service encounter. A better understanding of the drivers will not only enable successful value co-creation encounters, but also foster the development of future co-creation opportunities.

Using phenomenology, this qualitative study adopts an exploratory research design which combined semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations to identify value perceptions, motivation and personal characteristics as critical factors necessary for successful co-creation to occur in a hotel setting. The study's participants were selected from 3 to 5-star hotels, of which 2 each was selected from every category in the greater Accra region of Ghana.

The study discloses that employees' and guests' willingness to participate in co-creation is based not only on monetary motives and returns, but also on non-monetary incentives such as the opportunity to interact and be part of creating their own total experience. The findings revealed that drivers of employees' and guests' co-creation participation tend to differ across service stages, including pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay. In addition, the findings show that individual employees' and guests' ' motivation and personal characteristics significantly affect co-creation participation and the outcome of service. For instance, the study revealed that passion, belongingness, openness, shared and enhanced experience and satisfaction were common motivators for employees and guests. However, reputation development, promotions and rewards were exclusive to employees, while relationship and communication were unique to guests. In addition, the findings suggest employees' and guests' monetary and non-monetary

value perceptions have an influence on the total experience that is realised from co-creation encounters. Understanding these factors can help hotels to not only strategically manage employees' and guests' expectations towards successful co-creation encounters, but also to concentrate on resource provision that enhance co-creation activities for mutual benefit.

As a final contribution to knowledge, the study develops a model for deeper understanding of value co-creation participation between employees' and guests' in a hotel setting, which is the thesis' original contribution to knowledge. The model's core are the key factors that drive employee-guest joint participation in co-creation at the micro level, which has both theoretical and practical implications. The research also contributes to knowledge by establishing that although driving factors for co-creation participation vary and are context-based, a set of common factors influence participation regardless of whether it is employee or guest.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Value co-creation improves guests' satisfaction by making guests and employees participate in the design and delivery of value which they both see as beneficial. This implies that hospitality service providers in Ghana will improve their service and income by investing in value co-creation. However, the literature is complex and contested, and there are different understandings of what guests and employees consider to be of value and how we can understand what participation dynamics lead to value co-creation. Therefore, it was essential to conduct an empirical study which examined the drivers which make guests and employees participate in value co-creation. To fill the gap in the literature, this empirical study examined drivers of value co-creation, involving employees and guests in Ghana's hospitality industry. Studying the topic in Ghana was considered to be critical and timely, since it can be part of the strategies for achieving the sector's goals, which is highlighted later in this section.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the hospitality industry plays an important role in fostering economic growth, since the sector's diversity with regard to creating jobs and generating income is recognised to be critical to the growth of developed and developing economies (WTTC, 2018). Globally, the industry's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose from 2, 750.7 in 2018 to 2, 849.2, and projected to increase to 4, 065.0 by 2029. The total contribution of the industry to employment moved from 318, 811 in 2016 to 328, 208 in 2017 and is projected to rise to 420,659 by 2029 (WTTC, 2018). This suggests that globally the industry keeps growing year by year.

In Ghana, the hospitality sector consists of three distinct categories, namely, food and beverage (restaurants, bars), accommodation (hotels, hostels, rental event spaces, bed and breakfasts) and tourism (parks, flights, heritage and natural sites, cultural museums and theatres). This study focuses on Ghana's hotel industry, not only because of its important contribution to the economy regarding distinct segments of service provision, which differ in terms of how they are produced, consumed and evaluated, but also because of the sector's attraction of different guests that may have unique and dynamic value expectations and perceptions. However, meeting or exceeding guests' value expectations and perceptions might require hotel service providers to understand the factors that influence guests' desired service levels (Gronroos, 2008), which could give a competitive edge to service providers in Ghana's hotel industry. Importantly, it is essential that employees understand how guests evaluate a hotel service in order to attract and retain guests. In this context, while the industry continues to contribute economically to the growth of the nation, delivering the needs and expectations of guests becomes critical for the survival and growth of hotel firms, with the need to take into consideration that this is an era of complex guest needs and expectations at the global level.

According to Telfer and Sharpley (2015), Ghana is ranked 3rd in terms of the most peaceful countries in Africa, 3rd in hotel development in sub-Saharan Africa, the 8th best African country in terms of business and the 11th friendliest country in the world. The hotel sector was ranked the 98th biggest in the world in terms of absolute earnings, and 119th largest in terms of its relative contribution to GDP (Telfer and Sharpley, 2015). With increasing potential to drive economic growth and job creation, the sector contributed \$2.7 billion, which was approximately 6.2% of GDP, and provided 682, 000 jobs (5.3%) of total employment to GDP in 2017 (WTTC, 2018). The sector's contribution in 2017 to GDP primarily reflected the economic activities of hotels, travel agents and airline services. International tourist arrivals is projected to grow between 4.5% to 5.1% per annum, leisure travel spending to go up by 4.9%

per annum, while business travel spending is projected to rise by 3.6% per annum by 2025 (WTTC, 2018). Other studies suggest the sector has the potential to be highly competitive with the springing-up of more 4-star and 5-star hotels (e.g. Narteh, Agbemabiese, Kodua and Braimah, 2013). For instance, Telfer and Sharpley (2015) predicted that Ghana's hospitality sector will be the world's 88th-fastest-growing between 2014 and 2024, of which the hotel industry's contribution is key. In addition, while results of this and previous studies showcase the sector as a large destination market in relation to others within the sub-region, Narteh et al. (2013) predicted further expansion in the sector, due to the growth of Ghana's mining industry, stable government and economy. Therefore, it was not surprising to note that large hotel chains such as Kempinski Gold Coast, Marriott and Radisson International started operations in Ghana in 2016.

From the economic standpoint, the country is well-positioned for growth due to its natural resources in oil, natural gas, gold, diamond, aluminium, uranium and cocoa, which are the main source of attraction to international business visitors (World Bank report, 2017). The sector aims at attracting over two million visitors by 2022 and over 4 million in 2027 (WTTC, 2018), which might have informed Ghana Tourism Authority's desire to invest in the sector (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2018). Investing in the sector may not only guarantee desired service delivery, but also the industry can increase its competitiveness through using value co-creation to access guests' resources, such as knowledge and skills for service improvement, innovation and enhancing understanding of the factors that may influence employees' and guests' joint participation in both current and future desired service.

With these developments in Ghana's hotel industry, an examination of the drivers for employee-guest participation in value co-creation was considered critical and timely, since it can be part of the strategies for achieving the sectors' goals by 2022. Further, the study was considered useful, considering that the research topic has been under researched, especially in

the context of a Sub-Saharan developing African country, such as Ghana. As a developing country, Ghana has a population of about 28 million, with 270 districts within fifteen (15) administrative regions. The economy is dominated by the service sector, of which the hotel industry is no exception. The service sector contributes about 50% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), followed by the agricultural sector (29.9%) and lastly the industrial sector, 18.6% (World Bank Report, 2017).

Within the last two decades, marketing discourse has evolved from goods to include service. As has been suggested, the evolution has moved value from embedding in goods to service (Chandler and Lusch, 2015), and from being firm-centric to including customers' participation in the design and delivery of service (Osei-Frimpong, Wilson and Lemke, 2018). Consequently, service is presented as being a joint collaboration (Lusch and Vargo, 2014), interactive (Gronroos, 2008) and a dynamic process (Payne, Storbacka and Frow, 2008), where employees' and customers' active participatory roles have been recognised as contributing to successful joint value creation (Santo-Vijande, Lopez-Sanchez and Pascual-Fernandez, 2018). In this study, participation means employees' and guests' willingness to exchange and obtain the service for use, in order to realise the benefits, which ultimately translate into the value which is assessed subjectively. While value might vary from one guest to another, and within different service contexts, it is necessary to understand employees' and guests' value judgements, because contemporary literature has shifted the discussion of the value concept from the traditional view of value-in-exchange to value-in-use (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2016) and value in context (e.g. Gronroos and Gummerus, 2014). In this case, the value realised through service becomes the basis of exchange.

Previous studies highlight service as a reciprocal activity, and thus shift attention from employees' unilateral value creation to becoming multidimensional, whereby employees', focal customers' and other potential customers' participation in joint service process has been

found critical to successful service delivery (Chandler and Vargo, 2011). In this regard, it is worth mentioning that joint participation in service processes does not only ensure joint value creation that is mutually beneficial, but also presents a conducive co-creation environment, because employees and customers can participate in each other's activities to achieve the expected service outcome. Examples of this are employees' service design or customers' service selection processes, which in some cases receive joint participation to deliver service that meet their expectations. Consequently, joint participation in service processes may not only result in beneficial value co-creation outcomes, but may also present sustainable firm practices that can become a strategic mechanism in today's competitive market (Vargo and Lusch, 2017). In this context, it could be argued that employees' and customers' participation in service processes leading to value co-creation is important, yet little empirical research has addressed the drivers of employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation and its subsequent effect on interaction and the outcome of service in a hotel setting. According to McColl-Kennedy, Vargo, Dragger, Sweeney and Kasteren (2012), co-creation does not occur in a vacuum. Central to this argument is that employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation is underlined by sense-making activities or factors which are considered to be beneficial. Therefore, understanding these factors might not only help employees and customers to better manage each other's service expectations but more importantly, hospitality service providers such as hotels will gain insights into guests' preferences for successful service encounters.

The fundamental position of value in service is acknowledged (e.g. Gallarza, Gil-Saura and Holbrook, 2011), yet extensive literature on the study of the value concept has mostly focused on customers value (e.g. Holbrook, 2006b; Sweeney, Danaher, and McColl-Kennedy, 2015). According to Gronroos and Voima (2013), value is assessed and defined differently by different actors, including employees and guests. Therefore, studying value from both

employees' and guests' perspective becomes necessary, considering that both actors perceive value differently, and that their perceived value has the potential to influence their service participation, interaction and outcome. The study fills this gap by examining employees' and guests' perceived value within a hotel service context. In this case, service may not always present itself as a linear process (Gronroos and Voima, 2013), but an understanding of the service type that delivers value to both employees' and guests' is critical to fostering successful service encounters, because it satisfies the different expectations of the actors involved in the service exchange. Actors may represent different persons, objects and service systems, such as ATM machines or online portals. However, in this study actors refer to employees (senior and middle level managers, supervisors, front-desk staff, chefs, waiters, porters, drivers) and guests (business and leisure).

Theoretical and empirical studies on co-creation have increased in different areas, but they have not provided enough understanding of the drivers of employee-guest co-creation participation within a hotel context, especially in the context of a Sub-Saharan developing African country. The study's key contribution lies in this, since it contributes to the literature by examining the drivers of employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation within a hotel context of a developing African country. In addition, the study contributes to knowledge by not only specifying value as guests, but also as employees. Further, this project is believed to be a novel work conceptualising value and value co-creation in hotel service, from employees' and guests' perspectives within the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. To address the gap in the literature, the next section presents the aims, objectives and research questions of the study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

This study had three aims. The main aim was for the study to contribute to the implementation of value co-creation practices in Ghana's hotel industry. Related to that and as a contribution to knowledge, two further aims were envisaged as follows:

- *Examine the drivers of employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation.*
- *Examine the effects of employees' and guests' motivation on interaction and service outcome.*

The study aimed to establish clarity into specific drivers of co-creation participation in the field of service marketing involving hotel employees and their guests. Hence, the study started with a literature review for understanding to be gained into existing studies, which also led to gap identification in the literature. The gaps in the literature were identified as: (1) a need for clarification of the drivers of employees' and guests' co-creation in a hotel context; (2) a need for insights to be gained into employees' and guests' motivation and the effects of motivation on co-creation interaction and service outcomes in a hotel setting at the micro level; (3) a need to provide a comprehensive understanding of value not only as guests, but also employees; (4) a need for an understanding of employees' and guests' personal characteristics and their effects on co-creation interaction and service outcomes.

The knowledge gap related to understanding the drivers of employees' and guests' value co-creation participation was considered to be core. Hence, it led to an initial study with the following objectives:

Research objective one: *To examine the drivers of employees and guests' participation in value co-creation.*

The first research objective examines the drivers of employees' and guests' co-creation activities during pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay hotel encounters. This was done through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations. Addressing this objective was considered relevant, because it might be useful for hotel management to understand and manage both employees' and guests' expectations for successful service encounters. Importantly, the objective was to examine and uncover critical factors driving co-creation participation, which might be useful for implementing and sustaining co-creation practices in Ghana's hotel industry.

Research objective two: *To examine employees' and guests' motivation and the effect of motivation on co-creation interaction and service outcomes.*

With the use of the same exploratory approach as in objective one, this objective established the effects of motivation on employees' and guests' co-creation interaction and the outcome of service. While divergent and convergent motivational factors exist between employees' and guests', understanding these factors might not only be necessary for achieving successful co-creation interactions but also for positive service outcomes.

Research objective three: *To consider employees' and guests' value expectations which influence their co-creation participation within a hotel context.*

This research objective was related to the need for understanding value perceptions that might influence employees' and guests' value co-creation participation to facilitate a service exchange which is mutually beneficial. Hence, perceived value from employees' and guests' perspectives in the context of hotels from Sub-Saharan African developing country were examined to broaden understanding of the meaning of value for successful value co-creation encounters.

Research Objective four: *To understand employees' and guests' personal characteristics and their effect on co-creation interaction and service outcomes.*

The final objective examined employees' and guests' personal characteristics and the effect of such characteristics on co-creation interaction and the outcome of service. This was done to bring to the fore personal characteristics that these actors consider appropriate for successful co-creation encounters in a hotel context.

1.2.1 Research questions

This study adopted a micro level approach, in that it examined co-creation drivers from employees' and guests' perspectives in a single study. Specifically, the research focused on employees' and guests' participation behaviours and activities leading to value co-creation in a hotel setting in a Sub-Saharan developing country, where this topic has received little attention. This encompasses early research that mainly focused on the guest from developed countries as shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. The following research questions helped address the research aims and objectives.

RQ1. *What drives employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation?*

RQ2. *What motivates employee-guest co-creation and how do the motivating factors affect their interaction and the service outcome at the micro level?*

RQ3. *How do employees' and guests' perceive value in a hotel context?*

RQ4. *What are employee-guest personal characteristics and how do they affect value co-creation interaction and service outcome?*

1.2.2 Research Approach

After an initial review of the extant literature regarding the shift in marketing thought, different logics surrounding marketing, the value concept, value co-creation and hospitality co-creation, it was decided that an empirical exploratory study was appropriate to enable the collection of data that could best address the research aims and objectives, as well as answering the research questions. The study was carried out through use of qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations with employees and guests from different hotels. Data was gathered from employees (senior and middle level managers, supervisors, front-desk staff, chefs, waiters, porters, drivers) and guests (business and leisure) from different hotels, two each from the categories of 3-star, 4-star and 5-star within the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Using Ghana as a study context was deemed appropriate, since the country was among several countries within Sub-Saharan Africa where the topic under consideration has been under-researched. Choosing the Greater Accra region of Ghana was considered to be the best option, not only because most of the targeted hotels were concentrated in the Greater Accra region, it is Ghana's capital city and the seat of government, but also considering the limited period for data collection. The following section presents the thesis overview.

1.3 Thesis Overview

The thesis structure satisfies the requirements of the topic under consideration, the philosophical approach and research design. The literature review in chapters 2 and 3 is followed by the methodology chapter, chapter 4, which addresses the philosophical foundation

of the thesis and research design. This is followed by chapter 5, which presents the research findings. Chapter 6 discusses the findings in relation to the research aim/ objectives. Finally, chapter 7 concludes the thesis by outlining the main contribution, research limitations and directions for future studies. Following the introductory chapter, a summary of each chapter is as follows.

Chapter 2 reviews the co-creation literature. The initial work explores the shift in marketing thought, taking into account how marketing has evolved from the 1900's to the present date. It traces the evolution in marketing logics, moving from Goods dominant logic to Service dominant logic, Service logic and Customer dominant logics for marketing. In addition, the change in the employee's role from value creator to facilitator; the change in guests' role from passive and end user of firms' service to active participant and collaborator in interactive value creation process are highlighted. The similarities and differences between the new logics are discussed by highlighting the criticisms of the S-D logic by Service logic and Customer dominant logic perspectives. The chapter discusses the value concept by highlighting the multidimensionality of value within contemporary marketing and co-creation literature. Thereafter, the chapter discusses value co- creation literature by highlighting co-creation, key theoretical perspectives of the value co-creation concept, the roles of employees' and guests' in the value co-creation process, and then these actors' motives that drive value co-creation activities. Finally, the chapter is summarised.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on hospitality value co-creation. The chapter begins by highlighting hospitality co-creation processes, and co-creation experiences. The chapter reviews the hospitality co-creation literature from a micro-level perspective and hospitality co-creation in developing countries. The chapter also discusses co-creation drivers related to motivation, personal characteristics, actors' participation in value co-creation and finally, the chapter summary is given

Chapter 4 introduces the research approach of the thesis. The initial aspect gives a detailed discussion of research philosophy. This study used the constructivist worldview, which seeks to promote an understanding of multiple participants' experiences and interpretations of a phenomenon or an object of study. The exploratory nature of the study required the use of qualitative methodologies including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations for appropriate data that answer the research questions. This is followed by the chapter summary.

Chapter 5 presents findings from the qualitative study related to value co-creation activities at the micro-level within selected hotels in Ghana. In this regard, co-creation is explored across the different stages of hotel service usage, from pre-arrival, arrival, stay to post-stay encounters by highlighting the various co-creation participation activities that employees and guests exhibited. In addition, the chapter presents findings on employees and guests motivations, value perceptions and personal characteristics. Further, the chapter presents the effects of motivation and personal characteristics on co-creation interaction and service outcome. A conceptual model is presented to highlight the key factors driving employees' and guests' co-creation participation during pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters, which presents diverse co-creation opportunities that both the employed and guest can explore.

Chapter 6 discusses the research findings in detail. The chapter discusses value by highlighting the similarities and differences associated with employees' and guests' perspectives of value in the context of hotel service. Different factors influencing co-creation participation such as motivation, value perceptions and personal characteristics are discussed. Further, the effects of the driving factors on co-creation interaction and service outcome are presented.

Chapter 7 gives a summary of the research findings. In addition, the chapter presents the main contribution of the study including further understanding of value in a more holistic manner.

An integrative model to achieve a comprehensive conceptualisation of value co-creation, showing that employees' and guests' value perceptions, motivations and personal characteristics drive co-creation participation across the different stages of service, including pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay co-creation encounters. In addition, the chapter presents the drivers of co-creation and their effects on service interactions and service outcomes. The chapter concludes by presenting managerial implications, the thesis limitations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SERVICE-CENTRED VIEW OF MARKETING

2.1 Introduction

The change in marketing from goods to service has emerged as a distinct area of study and a focus of discourse among researchers and practitioners. As such, service is emphasised as the fundamental component of economic exchange, while goods become channels for service provision (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). This notion does not only place service as central to transaction (Fisk, Brown and Bitner, 1993), but also as the change continues, service becomes multifaceted with embedded value. In this respect, although value is often determined subjectively by the beneficiary, it is the shared view that the service perspective for marketing broadens the scope of value to include tangible and intangible dimensions of the firm's processes (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2017; Gronroos and Gummerus, 2014). Under the evolved logic for marketing, service may be defined as "the application of resources for the benefit of oneself or another actor" (Lusch and Vargo, 2014, p. 56). However, while the definition highlights the prominence of actors' resource capabilities in service, the emergence of service presents a need to advance knowledge about the logic behind marketing's shift which emphasises co-creation as central to successful service delivery. This study considers the shift to be important because it leads to the development of service-based concepts and models to facilitate successful service exchanges. The study begins with a review of the dominant logics for marketing, then perceived value and value co-creation. Doing this was considered to be relevant, since it gives readers the opportunity to understand the evolution in marketing, the rationale behind the evolution and their relevance to theory and practice.

2.2 Searching for relevant literature

The specific literature search was as follows. The first step focused on keywords of articles such as perceived value, co-creation, value co-creation from electronic databases including Google Scholar, Emerald, Sage and Elsevier. Complementary literature searches were made using documents, archives, videos and references from articles detected in the first search. Having gathered enough articles during the first and complementary searches, articles relevant to this study were classified by subject area, author(s), research type, focus, research design, methodology and results. The final step concentrated on narrowing the focus to seminal articles related to (a) value co-creation as the main topic, (b) co-creation in the field of marketing, (c) co-creation within hospitality, and (d) co-creation within other subject areas.

2.3 Overview of the dominant logics of marketing

Contemporary discussion around marketing has shifted from goods dominant logic towards different perspectives such as service-dominant logic (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2008a), service logic (e.g. Gronroos, 2008a) and customer dominant logic (Heinonen et al., 2010). These logics have not only been widely debated as forming the very foundation of contemporary service theory (e.g. Saarijarvi, Puustinen, Yrjola and Maenpaa, 2017), but also attracted a great deal of interest from scholars and practitioners because they play a critical role in broader marketing theory. Although, the different logics share similar view about the shift in marketing theory, they represent different schools of thought with different interpretations in the literature, which in most cases, have tended to distort the idea behind the evolution. Hence, authors have proposed the importance to understand the similarities and differences (Saarijärvi et al., 2017), to be able to develop a more coherent and consistent theory that is represented by a wider view

(see, Ballantyne, Frow, Varey and Payne, 2011). The next sub-sections identify the similarities and differences between service dominant logic, service logic and customer dominant logic.

2.3.1 Goods Dominant logic

Within the context of goods dominant logic (G-DL), value is embedded in the distribution and exchange of tangible commodities. In this regard, although firms' and customers' established preferences and reasons for exchange through a "monetary system to measure units of output captured by price" (Vargo et al., 2008, p. 145), the G-DL view did not only give management and marketing absolute control over value creation in terms of developing and distributing standardised goods. Also, the use of price as the only means to measure and verify the value of a product helped determine value objectively on some pre-determined standard (Zeithaml, 1988). This had a positive impact not only on management and marketing, but also customers, since it simplified the evaluation and determination of value based on "gives" and "gets" regarding the actual price paid and the technical benefits realised (Zeithaml, 1988). However, studies show that as marketing kept evolving, the goods dominant logic and for that matter the price of a product could not explain value objectively, logically and exhaustively (e.g. Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), since perception about value resulting from service continued to gain attention both in theory and practice (Gronroos, 2008). Accordingly, this not only suggests that G-DL projects a narrower focus of value, but also the idea that customers mental and physical resources were not recognised as being critical to firms' value propositions (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

The issue related to why the customer is always placed at the receiving end of the firms' value creation activities for profit purposes was not only raised by earlier studies (e.g. Goldstein, Johnston, Duffy and Rao, 2002), but also later scholars sought to clarify why the goods dominant logic fails to provide enough support and explanation of firm and customer

exchanges (Ng, Parry, Smith, Maull and Briscoe, 2012). For instance, Ng et al. (2012, p.417) note that the G-D logic “does not support contemporary business thinking”, which makes the consideration of an alternative worldview necessary, not only for improving encounter processes but also for meeting co-actors expectations. In essence, the forgone explanations point to the fact that the view about value as embedding in goods, fails to address the complex and subjective nature of the value concept, hence making the evolution in marketing and the new logics for marketing useful.

2.3.2 Service Dominant Logic

In contrast to G-DL, service dominant logic (S-DL) represents one of the new logics for marketing pointing towards service-orientation (e.g. Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Gronroos, 2011), where goods become avenues for service delivery, rather than ends in themselves (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). In other words, goods are exchanged for purposes of the service they provide, and not because of the product’s technical features or characteristics per se. For instance, informed by the service dominant logic for marketing, Vargo and Lusch (2017) contend that the service rendered by the exchanged goods is a source of value. Consequently, S-DL not only suggests that service is critical to value delivery, but also emphasises service as the fundamental basis of exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2016), which obviously highlights the inadequacy of the goods-centered narrower view of marketing (Ng, Parry, Maul and Briscoe, 2012). However, while S-DL is projected as presenting a broader perspective for marketing, in practice, it is only reflected partially or not at all in some organizations (Gannage, 2014). In this case, while acknowledging the importance of marketing’s move from the centrality of tangible goods to include intangible service, where in most cases, service is exchanged for service (Chandler and Lusch, 2015), it might be useful to clarify the scope of service and how value results from service exchange for employees’ and customers’ mutual benefit.

Lusch and Nambisan (2015) highlight the importance of joint service participation as facilitating resource integration, and indicate the need for mechanisms to support the underlying actor roles and service processes. The issue of resource integration resonates with the S-D logic view, since it emphasises the inclusion of customers' resources in service design and delivery as critical to achieving a successful service outcome (Flint, 2006). However, Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber (2011) argue that in practice customers are often not given the opportunity to actively participate and contribute in service processes as portrayed in theory. This seeks to suggest that employees continue to exert full control over service design activities, which in most cases might fail to deliver on customers' expectations regarding the benefits sought. In this case, even though the SDL continues to occupy a central position in service marketing literature and justifications are provided (see, Lusch and Vargo, 2014), Gannage (2014) contend that in practice, the implementation of S-DL within certain organisations appears to be somewhat difficult. Therefore, further research of the frame of S-DL might provide fresh insights necessary for successful application.

2.3.3 Service logic

Service logic (SL) on the other hand, is proposed as a better substitute for the G-DL and a perspective for marketing (Gronroos, 2006). In this regard, while service logic supports the paradigm shift in marketing, it does not subscribe to the idea that the customer is always a co-creator of value; value is co-created only when firms and customers participate in joint actions during direct service interaction in a joint sphere (Gronroos and Voima, 2013). Unlike S-DL, which suggests the customer is always a co-creator of value (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2008b), SL posits that the customer is the value creator through use of the firms' resources (e.g. Gronroos, 2011). Hence, Gronroos and Voima (2013) propose that firms offer service activities that support customers' value creation processes through the use of a firm's resources. That is,

despite sharing the view that value is jointly created by firms and customers, the SL perspective for marketing follows the notion that value-creation involves three distinct sub-processes: (1) the firm acts alone in facilitating the customers' creation of value-in-use through the firm's provision of value-in-exchange; (2) the customer acts alone by integrating available resources in a process that is closed to the firm, thus experiencing the resources and creating value-in-use for him or herself; (3) the firm and the customer act together in a merged, coordinated, dialogical and interactive process to create value for the customer, the firm and others (Gronroos and Ravald, 2011). In this context, the service logic provides clarity about firms' and customers' value creation activities as well as the firm-customer value co-creation process. However, in practice it might sometimes be difficult to identify the boundary between the three processes because they are abstract in nature. Hence, further studies might be useful for not only broadening knowledge, but also for fitting individuals service expectations to different value creation and co-creation processes.

2.3.4 Customer dominant logic

Customer dominant logic (C-DL) presents a similar view to SL. However, C-DL places value and value co-creation in the customers' process or lifeworld (Voima, Heinonen and Strandvik, 2010), where the customer takes full responsibility over value creation, determination and the value co-creation process (e.g. Heinonen, Strandvik, Mickelsson, Edvardsson, Sundstrom and Andersson, 2010). Suggesting that value is best understood from customers' subjective reference points (Heinonen et al., 2010), and co-created to benefit only the customer (Schlager and Maas, 2012), C-DL seeks to limit the benefit from value co-creation to the customer through firms' support. In this context, while practicing the C-DL perspective for marketing might be best in attracting and retaining customers, it tends to strengthen the extant literature's focus on value as being customers, rather than all the actors involved in the service exchange.

However, the evolution highlights how marketing's focus has been shifting from the prominence of unidimensional value creation from one actor (e.g. the firm) to a multidimensional approach involving others, such as the customer in creating their own experiences (Sweeney et al., 2015).

2.3.5 Criticisms of S-D logic

The different perspectives of marketing seem to agree that co-creation requires the participation of two or more actors. Importantly, the view about joint participation largely reflects in both SL and SDL, both of which use a service-oriented perspective. However, surprisingly, SL appears to be criticising S-DL for operating within the traditional G-DL (e.g. Gronroos and Gummerus, 2014). This implies that despite their support for the shift in marketing, SL and S-DL operate under different principles. For instance, while Vargo and Lusch (2004) had preferential treatment for value-in-use as the only right dimension of value, Brown and Patterson (2009) and Gronroos (2008) note that Vargo and Lusch (2004) had not considered previous work done on value as embedding in exchange of goods. Therefore, in their view, opting for the value-in-use approach to service presents a partial or even selective conceptualisation of value. In line with this, Brown and Patterson (2009) contend that both value-in-exchange and value-in-use are not new, therefore, there is no reason why exchange value should suddenly be dropped in favour of value-in-use. Similarly, O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2009) assert that the S-DL is neither logically sound nor a perspective to displace others in marketing, and thus contend that the broader definition of S-DL as encompassing all marketing activities blurs the operational meaning and the notion of service. That is, criticising S-D logic as encompassing all marketing activities, seeks to suggest that it is not, or cannot be one best way and a single unitary perspective for marketing.

Further, it is argued that S-DL tends to misdirect marketing altogether, since service is not over 60 percent of the gross national product in most countries, especially those from the non-western economies (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2009). This seeks to suggest that S-DL could only be applicable to developed economies, where service provision dominates the business sector. Indeed, it is evident from the literature analysis that the service perspective of marketing seems to be gaining increasing research attention from the developed world, while attention from developing countries remains sparse, especially those from Sub-Saharan Africa. In this case, the question arises about whether the increasing research interest in developed countries concerning evolution in marketing is due to service dominance. Questioning this does not mean that current studies around marketing evolution from developed countries are not useful to developing economies. However, applying the findings from these studies to different markets might be challenging, especially in developing countries where the service sector might not be as vibrant as in the developed world. Therefore, it is necessary for further studies on the new frame of marketing to establish the relevance of the evolution in other contexts, especially developing economies from Sub-Saharan African countries, where the relevance of the evolution is yet to be proven.

While certain service elements might require employees and customers to have direct interaction for value to be co-created, others might not. In this regard, although the different logics might offer practitioners varied options, the successful implementation of any of the options might depend not only on the firms' approach to service delivery but also customers needs within different contexts. This presents the need for further research to clarify which option fosters successful co-creation practices between employees' and customers within different service settings. For instance, studies suggest that hospitality service occurs through direct and indirect interactions between employees and customers (e.g. Navarro, Garzon and

Roig-Tierno, 2015). This means that exploring S-DL might be useful, since it broadens the scope of co-creation through direct and indirect interactions, which the other views do not.

This study considers the understanding of value co-creation from the S-D logic viewpoint as essential, since it projects a wider service perspective to include employees and customers participation in value co-creation, through all marketing activities. This does not mean the other logics are not relevant to the shift in marketing rather, S-DL provides broader insights into the dynamics of the marketing and service exchange process, which helps employees to understand a customer's needs, preferences and expectations, and vice versa. Further, the S-D logic broadens understanding of the roles of employees and customers in service encounters within different contexts, which highlights the shift in marketing from goods to include service. To this end, while acknowledging the importance of S-DL to marketing, it is worth emphasising that all the foundational premises of S-DL may not be applicable to all service contexts. Hence, making necessary further studies that aim to clarify the applicability of the foundational premises underlining S-DL in different service settings. The next section highlights the S-DL foundational premises and those that are applicable to this study.

2.3.6 Foundational premises and Axioms of service-dominant logic

While being criticised, S-DL provides initial foundational premises (8FP's) to underpin and justify its position as a better perspective for marketing and value co-creation. However, considering the limitations raised by the critics about the need to provide consistency and precision to the original lexicon of S-DL (Vargo and Lusch, 2008), modifications were introduced to increase the FP's to 10. Further, in defence of the relevance of S-DL to marketing, the 10FP's were subsequently classified into two themes. In this context, where the first five FP's reflect a service-centered orientation, the remaining five underpin the concept of

value co-creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a). Classifying the FP's into two themes not only portrays the fundamental thoughts about service as the basis of exchange and value as always being co-created (Chandler and Vargo, 2011), but it also highlights the integration of actors' resources for the benefit of oneself and others. In addition, the two themes seek to emphasise not only the centrality of service and value co-creation, but also point towards the act of resource sharing among actors in the new era in marketing (Belk, 2009). Thus, it is this which tends to differentiate S-DL from G-DL. As shown in Table 2.1, below, further refinement of the foundational premise resulted in 11FP's and 5 Axioms.

Table 2.1. Foundational premises and Axioms of S-DL

Foundational Premise	2004	2008	Update
FP1	The application of specialized skills and knowledge is the fundamental unit of exchange.	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange	No Change AXIOM STATUS
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental unit of exchange.	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange.	No Change
FP3	Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision.	No Change	No Change
FP4	Knowledge is the fundamental source of competitive advantage.	Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage.	Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit.
FP5	All economies are service economies.	No Change	No Change
FP6	The customer is always the co-producer.	The customer is always a co-creator of value.	Value is cocreated by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary. AXIOM STATUS
FP7	The enterprise can only make value propositions.	The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions.	Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions.
FP8	Service-centered view is customer oriented and relational.	A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational.	A service-centered view is inherently beneficiary oriented and relational.
FP9		All social and economic actors are resource integrators.	No change AXIOM STATUS
FP10		Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary.	No change AXIOM STATUS
FP11			New Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements. AXIOM STATUS

Source: Vargo and Lusch (2016, p. 8)

The introduction of the actor-to-actor perspective modified the lexicon to reflect a broader scope beyond the firm-customer perspective (see, Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2017). Therefore, as shown in Table 2.1, above, five axioms including FPs 1, 6, 9, 10, and 11 have been directly connected to the four core concepts (service, actors, resources, and value)

that embody the lexicon of service dominant logic. Table 2.2 explains further the Axioms and their justifications.

Table 2.2. Axioms and justifications

Axiom	Premise	Explanation/Justification
A1	Service is the fundamental basis for exchange	The application of operant resources (knowledge and skills), “service,” is the basis for all exchange. Service is exchanged for service.
A2	Value is always co-created by multiple actors including the beneficiary	Implies value creation is interactional and combinational
A3	All economic and social actors are resource integrators	Implies the context of value creation is networks of networks (resource integrators)
A4	Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary	Value is idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual and meaning-laden.
A5	Value co-creation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements	Institutions provide the glue for value co-creation through service-for-service exchange

Source: Lusch and Vargo (2014, p. 240)

The derivation of five axioms from the eleven foundational premises helps to further strengthen the argument for the paradigm shift, especially the Axiom 5, which extends the understanding of service provision, actors’ network and value creation to include actor-generated institutions and institutional management (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). However, Axiom 5 is of less significance to this research, because this research focuses solely on the micro level interaction between employees and customers for a better understanding of value and value co-creation (Neghina, Caniels, Bloemer, and van Birgelen, 2015). According to Vargo and Lusch (2008b), co-creation occurs for the purposes of integrating actors’ resource directly or indirectly to mask the fundamental unit of exchange. This is highlighted in Axiom3/FP9, which suggests that all social and economic actors are resource integrators through direct and indirect means. This resonates strongly with hospitality service design and delivery; which is characterised by both direct and indirect exchanges (Navarro, Andreu and Cervera, 2014). However, while resource integration provides the basis for understanding employees’ and customers’ resource

capabilities as being integral to mutual service exchange, the literature is limited regarding specific resources required by employees and customers to facilitate successful service exchanges within different service contexts.

Axiom 1/FP1

A discussion of Axioms 1/ FP1 is necessary because it assumes greater importance in this study. Under the S-DL lexicon, Axiom1/FP1 presents service as the fundamental basis of exchange (Chandler and Lusch, 2015). The modification of the existing FP's capture FP1, FP2, FP3, FP4, FP5 and FP6 under Axiom1 to project actor awareness of the primary nature of an offer in exchange with other actors (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). In this case, although the foundational premises captured under Axiom 1 differ, service exchange remains the core focus. According to Lusch and Vargo (2014), for purposes of mutual benefit service exchanges are necessary due to the unequal distribution of operant and operand resources around the globe. Similarly, Strandvik, Holmlund and Edvardsson (2012) contend that customers not only integrate resources, but also consider how well they fit their service needs within context. This implies that customers share and use resources for the purpose of exchanging them for the service they expect but for which they do not have the requisite resource.

Axiom 3/FP9

Axiom 3/FP9 states that "all economic and social actors are resource integrators" (Lusch and Vargo, 2014, p.74). This not only suggests that marketing involves a series of social and economic processes, but also Axiom3/FP9 emphasises the importance of making resources available to the marketplace to influence service outcomes (Osei-Frimpong, 2016). In this regard, it might not only be appropriate to recognise exchange processes as often backed by

individual actors' expectations and collective goals (Epp and Price, 2011) or value co-creation as not only characterised by active interaction between firms and customers (Gronroos, 2008), but also that resource integration presents a dynamic process where firms and customers work together to achieve an expected co-created outcome. Co-creation in this context is actualised when actors draw on tangible and intangible resources, such as skills and competences, which are also mentioned by Vargo and Lusch (2004). Baron and Harris (2008, p.115) define resource integration as a "process by which actors deploy resources as they undertake bundles of activities that create value directly or facilitate subsequent consumption" This implies that the availability of the required resources may create enabling platform for customers to continuously provide creative and valuable ideas, which are often not found within the firm (Witell, Kristensson, Gustafsson and Lofgren, 2011). In addition, the definition seeks to suggest that actors' expectations of service influence their resource integration in the exchange encounter (Mele, Russo and Colurcio, 2010). Further, together with Axiom3/FP9, this definition reaffirms how actors' social roles and interactions present opportunities for stocks of resources for value creation (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to understand not only customers' resource integration and how that could be used to support a firms' competitive strategy, but there needs also to be an understanding of the resources that the customer may require for a successful co-creation encounter.

2.4 The value concept discourse in marketing

This section follows on from the previous section's focus on evolution in marketing, which is represented by different views of value and how value is co-created through service. Collectively, the diverse views challenge firms to provide a conducive environment that enables customers willingness to pay to obtain service for use (Jacoby and Olson, 1977),

because service has no value until it has been used or experienced (Payne, Storbacka and Frow, 2008). It is especially the case with hospitality service, which is experience-driven and actors' participation in creating their own experience is noted to be a source of value (e.g. Campos, Mendes, Do Valle and Scott, 2016). This section reviews the literature to provide insight into how the value concept has been studied.

Within a marketing context, the value concept is of interest to practitioners and researchers; since it can explain consumer behaviour (Gallarza, Gil-Saura and Holbrook, 2011), influence purchase intention (Seegebarth, Behrens, Klarmann, Hennigs and Scribner, 2016) and be a source of competitive advantage to an organization (Vera and Trujillo, 2013). However, while these studies highlight the significance of value, the literature review indicates that value not only means different things to individuals, but also has different definitions within different contexts (Lindgreen and Wynstra, 2005), which often makes it difficult to understand. In addition, despite the fact that value has been a focal topic of several studies for over three decades, the research has depicted the difficulties associated with its definition and the understanding of it (e.g. Sanchez-Fernandez and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2006). Zeithaml (1988, p.14) defines value purposely from customers perspective as the "overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given." While this definition tends to highlight value as customers, Blocker (2011, p. 534) conceptualises value as the actors' "perceived trade-off between benefits and sacrifices within relationships." In both cases, value is highlighted as assessed and defined differently, however, Blocker (2011)'s use of "actors" tends to extend the definition of the concept of value from customers to include other actors, including employees. This emphasises the view that value is of prime concern to all actors involved in exchange. Hence, studying value from both employees' and guests' perspective might become necessary, considering that "actors" not only perceive value differently, but also

their perceived value has the potential to influence their service participation, interaction and outcome (Caru and Cova, 2015).

While value is often assessed subjectively by different customers, the utility of perceived value is conceptualised as the benefit received from the price paid for a good/service use (Gallarza, Gil-Saura and Holbrook, 2011). In this context, although utilitarian value can stem from individuals' desire for efficient, rational and task-oriented efforts relevant to the service encounter process or service usage (Babin and James, 2010), meeting such expectations might largely depend on gaining insights into how individuals perceive and assess value. Thus, further study into value has been suggested, considering its significance to firm and customer exchanges (Ng and Smith, 2012).

Customers' perceptions about value can be found in different studies. According to Flint, Woodruff and Gardial (1997), customers' assessment of value created and given by the firm is in the balance between benefits and sacrifices that are relevant in certain use circumstances. While this research finding may be significant to firms, it is important to emphasise that individual's assessment of the value of the same service may differ within different contexts, as mentioned by Mathwick (1999). According to Boksberger and Melsen (2011, p. 230), the term value refers to "a preferential judgement of either a single transaction or an ultimate end-state." This definition not only highlights how value is determined based on a single transaction, but also considers the relevance of the whole transaction. In talking about the ultimate end-state, the definition is also linked to the multidimensional value perspective, which is mostly associated with the benefits and sacrifices derived from the use of goods. In this context, perceived benefit is the perceived quality offered by internal and external features of the goods and other psychological benefits, which consumers feel they have received from consumption (Flint, Woodruff and Gardial, 2002). However, perceived quality can be viewed as the basis of the functional benefits of the product (Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodríguez, and

Moliner, 2006), where in this case, functional benefits are defined as benefits resulting from the products' performance which reflect the expected quality (Jamal, Othman and Muhammad, 2011).

Sacrifices, on the other hand, consist of monetary and non-monetary costs, such as price, time, energy, effort and perceived risk which are invested in the product or service use (Bajs, 2015), which obviously can be for the purposes of achieving the expected benefits. Accordingly, both the benefits and sacrifices or the "give" and "get" attributes of a product impact on its perceived value. In this regard, while perceived value related to "gives" and "gets" or benefits and sacrifices (Zeithaml, 1988) is associated with the G-DL perspective of value, they are regarded as not absolute in the marketing literature (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). However, benefits and sacrifices related to low price or quality received for the price paid might still be relevant to hotel service exchanges, given that they are key determinants of satisfaction (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982). Therefore, there is a need to understand the sacrifices and benefits associated with similar goods or different dimensions of hotel service that result in value under the marketing shift.

Research shows that the price element of service has two sides. These are: (1) objective price, which is the actual price of a service, and (2) perceived price, which is the price encoded by the consumer (Zeithaml, 1988). While objective price might relate to customers, service providers or both, further studies to understand the factors that inform perceived price from the customers' perspective might not only be useful for helping hotel service providers determine how the customer defines the value of their market offerings, but also which factors determine their perceived value (Gale 1994). In addition, understanding the factors might also guide the firm on how to improve existing, as well as future offerings that deliver both current and potential customers' needs and expectations within different service contexts.

While the above studies relate to unidimensional value, others are associated with multidimensional value (e.g. Sanchez-Fernandez, 2007). This not only suggests that the unidimensional assessment of value on perceived price relative to benefits and sacrifice is insufficient, but also there might be other non- monetary dimensions of value which customers may consider key in exchanges (e.g. Boksberger and Melsen, 2011). For instance, within S-D logic, value is understood as value in use, and it is a phenomenological experience, defined as an “interactive, relativistic, preference experience” (Holbrook, 2006, p. 715). In addition, several studies have addressed the value concept in terms of co-creation (e.g. Gronroos and Voima, 2013; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012). While these authors have divergent views on how value is co-created through service, they share a similar view of the emergence of value and the need for it to be co-created in different dimensions. However, the different dimensions in which value is co-created have not only generated a new understanding of how value is formed, but also the change in roles played by the service provider and the customer in the value creation process. The following section addresses the dimensions of value within the marketing literature.

2.4.1 Dimensions of value

From the previous section, it could be argued that the unidimensional approach was largely based on economic foundations, where value is viewed as an independent concept that can be determined as a single variable. However, the multidimensional view presents the value concept as a construct that comprises multi-variables (Sanchez-Fernandez, 2007). In this regard, the multidimensional approach not only moves the discussion of value from the economic view to include other customer expectations, but also projects different dimensions of value that might impact on customers’ assessment of the value realised from a market offer (Gallarza and Gil, 2008). According to Landroquez (2013), gaining a comprehensive view

about how the characteristics of an offering influence customer value and experiences is important, since it helps the firm to fit service to individual customer needs. However, while understanding the factors influencing customers' value is necessary with regard to the firms' delivery of customers' expected service, it is often complex (Gallarza, Gil-Saura and Holbrook, 2011), because customers' value needs are diverse and keep changing (Mccoll-Kennedy et al., 2015). To address the complexity surrounding the multidimensional nature of value, Holbrook (2006b) developed a typology which includes extrinsic (a means to some further end) factors, intrinsic (an end-in-itself) factors, and whether it is directed at oneself or another. These two key themes have been further categorised into four basic dimensions to include economic value, social value, hedonic value and altruistic value.

- *Economic value* depicts an experiential value perspective of the self, rather than of others (Holbrook, 2006b). Although subjectively evaluated, economic value is extrinsically motivated, a consumption experience that is aimed at satisfying a goal which largely depends on the functional performance of a product or a service (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991). Holbrook (2006b)'s definition of value emphasises customers' experiences arising from service use. In effect Holbrook's definition of value builds on the work by Zeithaml (1988), which captures value purposely as "gives" and "gets". This possibly involves economic benefit, which the literature suggests has significant influence on customers' decision-making related to service participation (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). As stated earlier, in this study, participation means actors' willingness to exchange and obtain the service for use, in order to realise the benefits. In this regard, while service from a firm perspective might be of high value in terms of

benefit and quality, it might not be of value to customers if the price is very high, such that they are not willing to pay (Ashton, Scott, Solnet and Breakey, 2010). As such, Holbrook (2006b) highlights both the price and experiential elements of service as being critical to customers' value assessment, where an expected utilitarian experience becomes goal oriented to accomplish a functional or practical task (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). This implies that although economic value influences service participation, understanding of other factors such as expected experience might also be necessary. In addition, this might suggest the need for firms to focus not only on the economic benefits that the service may offer, but also whether the service can deliver customers' expected experiences, and at a price that they are willing to pay (Jacoby and Olson, 1977).

- *Social value* results from consumption behaviours aimed at shaping other actors' responses. Depicting an experiential value directed at others (Holbrook, 2006b), social value emerges when social and situational factors tend to influence the value outcome (Sheth et al., 1991). Thus, although extrinsically motivated, social value helps others to gain self-recognition (Russell-Bennett, Previte and Zainuddin, 2009), status-enhancing favourable experience (Holbrook, 2006b) and a positive image from a more satisfying, pleasurable and emotional interactions (Lai, 2014). To this end, while understanding the extrinsic factors for achieving social value is important, discussing intrinsic factors might be equally significant for a successful service delivery and subsequent value co creation participation.
- *Hedonic (emotional) value*, although this is subjective (Zeithaml, 1988) and mostly based on personal beliefs, perceptions, fun and playfulness (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994), this results from service consumption for an emotional experience that is an end in itself (Holbrook, 2006b). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) define hedonic

goods/service as those who's consumption is primarily characterised by affective and sensory (emotional) experience of aesthetic or sensual pleasure, fantasy and fun. In this context, emotional experience from service may not only play an essential role in hedonic value creation, but also facilitate the achievement of the desired service results (Babin et al., 1994) which could be for pleasure or anxiety (Sanchez-Fernandez, 2007). For example, this might be some sort of fun derived from leisure activities or aesthetic feelings about an event (Holbrook, 2006b) that are noted to evoke substantial amounts of emotional responses leading to subsequent service participation (see, Babin et al., 1994). However, while this might be useful for firms in terms of knowing which types of experiences generate hedonic value, further studies that highlight hedonic value experiences within different contexts might be useful.

- *Altruistic value* relating to one's consumption experience, affects others not only as an end in itself (Holbrook, 2006b), but also that which is directed towards others with an aim to create self-fulfilment for the wellbeing of others (Zainuddin, 2013). For instance, a benevolent activity can result in creating value or excitement for others, in which virtue is its reward (Holbrook, 2006b). In this regard, the idea that actors may engage in certain practices for altruistic purposes should call for the development of additional models to inform context-specific service practices, be it for oneself or for others' satisfaction and pleasure. Developing additional models does not seek to suggest that existing ones are irrelevant, however, they are less useful in many respects because they appear to be more generic. For instance, the customer value hierarchy, as proposed by Woodruff (1997), and Blocker (2011) conceptualisation of value as the actors' "perceived trade-off between benefits and sacrifices within relationships are significant for reflecting the complexity and dynamics of the value concept, yet they fail to delve into the various components of altruistic value. Similarly, Sheth et al. (1991) make a

substantial contribution to the study of value, because it defines a complex multi-dimensional structure for the concept. However, their discussion of value is limited to intrinsic dimensions, thereby leaving out some important sources of value that are extrinsically motivated within the context of co-creation. Hence, it is imperative for further studies to increase understanding about altruistic value sources that describe different customer expectations and experiences within different contexts.

Apart from the value elements mentioned above, the literature highlights the *experiential value* dimension as being important to employees' and customers' encounters and it can be considered to be based on individuals' subjective preference experiences in relation to a contextual comparison of one object with another (e.g. Holbrook, 2006b). Also, value has been studied at individual actors' inter-subjective and intra-subjective levels (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001) or as a means-end model (Woodruff, 1997), to explain how the different dimensions of value influence customers' purchase decisions (Fang, Chiu and Wang, 2011). However, other studies suggest that value transcends the functional aspect to include experiential components (Lai, 2014), where actors' interactions with service is perceived to generate unique and memorable experiential value (Wu and Liang, 2009). Although these studies confirm how the concept of value has been redefined beyond economic dimension, it is important to emphasise that the literature analysis shows that the changing needs of customers and the complex global market suggest a further shift in the discussion of value from a product-centric economic view to a more experiential perspective. Experiential value is a customer's perceptual and relative preference for service arising from the individual's interaction with a consumption setting that facilitates or blocks the achievement of their goals or purposes (Andrews, Drennan and Russell-Bennett, 2012). This definition highlights experiences as being different and unique to customers, yet the relevant literature on experiential value within specific contexts, such as hotel industry, is rare. In addition, the definition suggests that customers seek to maximise

value through memorable experiences as much as possible (Campos et al., 2016), however, how the customers' creation of a memorable experience contributes to achieving competitive advantage (Bolton et al., 2013), especially in the hotel industry, is limited. Thus, making it imperative for further studies in the hotel industry to increase understanding of the components of experiential value to enable firms to align the experiential value concept with their strategies. Within contemporary marketing literature, there are not only different meanings of the value concept, but also the term "value" describes different experiences for different people. For instance, within service marketing, contemporary literature around S-DL places phenomenologically, experientially determined value at the core of value discourse. In Vargo and Lusch (2008b), the 10th foundational premise posits that value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary. Although the meaning of "beneficiary" is not made explicit under S-DL, in the work of Vargo and Lusch (2008b), beneficiary is ascribed to the customer. However, according to Chandler and Vargo (2011), the beneficiary can be any actor in the service phenomenon, such as an individual, household, firm, or nation in a specific context. While the explanation of the word "value" tends to contradict the initial study of Vargo and Lusch (2008b), the view that anybody can benefit from service, depending on context and the actors involved in the activity, highlights Axiom 4, which states that "value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary" (Lusch and Vargo, 2014, p.240).

Phenomenology is the study of human experience related to the ways in which things present themselves through such experience (Moran, 2001), including perception, imagination, thought, emotions desires and actions (Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlstrom, 2012). It means that a phenomenological approach to value assessment strengthens the multidimensional value discourse, since it considers value from lived experiences that spans through previous and future anticipated service experiences. In addition, the experiential perspective of value

improves the G-DL view of value, because it moves the value discourse beyond tangible goods as the sole source of value to include intangible service experiences. However, it tends to compound the complexity associated with value determination, because value from service experience is subjectively evaluated by individual customers. For instance, within contemporary marketing and co-creation literature, value is largely understood to be customer value, stemming from different dimensions through value-in-use. Value-in-use reflect a service perspective, where value results from service use within different contexts (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). This implies that value might not only be perceived differently based on different frames and the point-of-view adopted by an individual (Gummerus, 2013), but also how service is approached within different value co-creation encounters.

The literature review revealed that Holbrook (2006b)'s typology is very comprehensive since it captures economic, social, hedonic, and altruistic components of perceived value. In this context, while the typology might still be relevant, it is not exhaustive, because value is unique and dynamic. For instance, the typology has been explored extensively to study value and co-creation under hedonic and utilitarian dimensions (e.g. Hoyer et al., 2010; Fuller et al., 2011). However, whether the hedonic or utilitarian dimensions of value, and consequently the trade-offs between them drive actors' co-creation participation has not been explored. Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2013) argue that customers' choices of products or service are increasingly based on the extent to which they fulfill their higher-order needs for social, economic, and environmental justice. This means that customers' service motives move beyond intrinsic and extrinsic goals to support Holbrook's (2006b) value typology, which this study considered very useful due to its multidimensionality. However, further studies might be necessary to reveal other experiential motives that drive individual's participation in different value co-creation encounters.

This study examines value from the service dominant logic perspective. Thus, value will therefore be explored as value-in-use and value-in-context, considering that value-in-exchange is associated with GDL, where value only embeds in goods. In addition, hotel service is largely experiential in nature (Prebensen and Xie, 2017), and earlier works on experiential marketing have highlighted emotions, contextual, symbolic and non-utilitarian dimensions of consumption as important to customers value determination (Arnould, 2007). Further, previous studies have discussed value from the customers' perspective, because under G-DL, firms created and pre-determined the potential value which the consumer tends to realise from a product upon consumption. However, under the service perspective for marketing, both employees and customers play active roles in the proposition and determination of value, which is largely influenced by their value perception. This suggests that exploring value from customers' view-point might not present a holistic view about value. Therefore, this study examines value from both employees' and customers' perspectives to address the gap in the literature. In this study, perceived value describes the overall assessment of the benefits received and the sacrifices made by employees and guests in the hotel service encounter from both functional and experiential perspectives.

2.5 Value co-creation in service marketing

Value co-creation has gained increasing attention in the service marketing literature over the last three decades. As a key concept in marketing, co-creation projects the view that value is not solely created by employees, but also with customers, through interaction (e.g. Jaworski and Kohli, 2006) and collaboration (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Consequently, although a better conceptualisation of co-creation is yet to be achieved (Neghina et al., 2015), the concept has emerged as a strategic mechanism (Vargo and Lusch, 2017), where firms and customers may seek to jointly participate in the creation of value for mutual benefit (Gronroos, 2011a).

Indeed, co-creation is now considered a new business practice, whereby customers work with employees to jointly create value for themselves and others (Gronroos and Voima, 2013). According to Gummerus (2013), co-creation provides an alternative approach to value creation through an firm-customer collaborative relationship (Payne et al., 2008), where firms' and customers' value creation activities merge into a dialogical, interactive service process to achieve an expected outcome (Gronroos and Gummerus, 2014). In this regard, although co-creation presents employees and customers as working together, their joint participation in different activities involves distinct roles. For instance, Brodie et al. (2013) studied consumer engagement to understand how co-creation processes occur in service encounters. The study found that the consumer engagement process involves different sub-processes and reciprocal roles reflecting consumers' interactive experiences within online brand communities, and value co-creation among community participants. Yi and Gong (2013) researched into the customer perspective of co-creation and found that customer value co-creation behaviour is a multidimensional concept consisting of two higher-order factors, including participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour. Similarly, Merz, Zarantonello and Grappi (2018) examined how customers value the co-creation process. The findings reveal that customers' co-creation of value is a multidimensional construct consisting of two higher-order factors and seven dimensions: customer-owned resources (including brand knowledge, brand skills, brand creativity, and brand connectedness dimensions) and customer motivation (comprising brand passion, brand trust, and brand commitment dimensions). Collectively, these studies not only add to the existing body of knowledge on how different actors' assume different roles in co-creation encounters, but also suggests actors' likelihood to co-create value may differ and context driven. Essentially, these studies emphasise how customers contribute to a firm's value proposition to derive co-created value. However, in doing so, they tend to focus mostly on value co-creation from the customers' perspective, and how customers could be exposed to

unique experiences (Shamim and Ghazali, 2014). In addition, while employees and customers may participate in co-creation with the common goal of creating value, value may reflect different actor expectations (Vargo and Lusch, 2017), that come to bear on the joint service process and outcome. Therefore, focusing on customers alone leaves a gap in the literature. Thus, making further studies that examine co-creation from the perspective of other actors, especially employees very necessary.

McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012, p.375) define co-creation as “benefit realized from integration of resources through activities and interactions with collaborators in the customer’s service network.” Gronroos (2011b, p. 290) defines co-creation “as joint activities by parties involved in direct interactions, aimed at contributing to the value that emerges for one or both parties.” In an earlier study, co-creation has been referred to as “any act of collective creativity initiated by the firm, customer or both” (Sanders and Stappers, 2008, p. 6). While the other definitions emphasise the joint activity between actors, Sanders and Stappers (2008) focus more on “collective creativity of the involved actors” (p.11). Meanwhile, other studies suggest co-creation is about collaboration (Vargo and Lusch, 2016) interaction (Gronroos and Voima, 2013) partnership (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012) and knowledge combination towards co-innovation (Kristensson, Matthing and Johansson, 2008). In this regard, it could be argued that value can be co-created using a variety of methods, yet employee-customer interaction and active participation in service have been emphasised (Gronroos and Voima, 2013). Active participation in value co-creation is necessary, since it not only offers employees new ways of connecting with customers for successful service delivery (Terblanche, 2014), but it could also be explored for service innovation and improvement (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012). In essence, the different definitions highlight interaction, collaboration and how both could be explored to gather knowledge about actors’ needs, and for appropriate resource integration towards value co-creation. However, there are still challenges associated with the different

conceptualisations. For example, these authors concede that value results from service exchange, yet they disagree on a unified process and a central foundation for value co-creation. In this context, while Gronroos (2011b) conceptualisation of co-creation is limited to direct, face-to-face interactions, McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012) conceptualised co-creation as involving interactions and collaborations through direct and indirect forms, which resonates with Vargo and Lusch (2004)s' conceptualization of co-creation as an all-encompassing marketing activities of the firm with customers and other service networks. This does not only suggest that the different conceptualisations highlight different logics and dimensions of value co-creation about who and when it occurs, but also the approaches to the encounter process. In this case, while the debate continues regarding how co-creation occurs, there is a call to understand how actors' can be motivated to interact or collaborate for value co-creation activities (e.g. Roberts et al., 2014), which might also require a new conceptualisation of value co-creation to increase understanding. This study conceptualises value co-creation as the joint use of the resources provided by the employee and the customer in an interactive and collaborative service process, to generate experience to benefit the actors and others through direct or indirect means. This definition addresses the challenges which the different logics for marketing give in relation to co-creation, which most often present problems in understanding what researchers refer to as value co-creation.

Co-creation is presented as an experience concept with a focus on customers' interaction or collaboration with organisations. Three important elements are highlighted, namely, the customer, the firm and the interaction/collaboration (see, Payne et al., 2008). Firstly, customers become more informed, empowered and connected than before, because co-creation requires that actors interact, collaborate, learn to use and adapt the service offering to their needs and usage behaviours in an effective manner (Vargo, 2008), thus, making customers' contribution more relevant to the firms' business processes, and vice versa, in order that value may result

from service (Vargo and Akaka, 2009). This emphasises the idea that successful co-creation encounters require the combination of customers' and the firms' resources (Mccoll-Kennedy et al., 2015). That is, it is important to emphasise that as much as the application of firms' resources is important to successful service encounters, so are the customers' resources, since both actors are service providers (Lusch, Vargo and O'brien, 2007). However, while recognising that co-creation fosters the achievement of customers' and firms' service expectations, further studies into employee-customer co-creation is necessary. This is because both actors participation in service is not only important for value to be co-created, but also their expectations and value perceptions could influence the service process and outcome.

In addition, firms learn from service encounter processes to enhance and to create future value propositions (Homburg, Wieseke and Bornemann, 2009) hence, interactions become avenues for understanding individual customers and their value preferences (Payne et al., 2008). In this regard, value could result not only from firms' and customers' interactive or collaborative service processes (Chandler and Vargo, 2011), but also from how employees understand and fit customers' preferences into the service design (Kowalkowski, 2011) to facilitate co-creation of their customers' experiences. With regard to interaction, Gronroos (2011) argues that it helps to better understand the concept of value and co-creation. Consequently, although interaction is acknowledged to be a necessary condition for successful service design and delivery, co-creation interactions are diverse, and may change depending on market and actor dynamics (Neghina et al., 2015). In addition, not all interactions result in value co-creation (Echeverri and Skalen, 2011), and there is still the view that actors interact based on agreed mechanisms for value to occur (Yi and Gong, 2013). This means that, although actors' expectations related to value might not be the same and equal, interactive approaches to co-creation present a need to understand how co-creation occurs in different service encounters, especially activities constituting the value co-creation at the micro level (Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2012).

Consequently, further studies might not only provide insights into the different co-creation interactions within different service contexts, but also might become a new source of competitive advantage to firms (Gummerus, 2013).

Existing studies have examined co-creation interaction from the firms' point of view (e.g. Grisseemann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012) and the customers' perspective (e.g. Navarro et al., 2015). However, less research exists including both the employees' and customers' perspectives in a single study, especially about the hotel industry within the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. To date, most studies on co-creation have focused on the meso level, such as international firms and their local agencies (e.g. Lusch and Vargo, 2011), the macro level which comprises professional bodies and their members (e.g. Wieland, Polese, Vargo and Lusch, 2012), and the micro level, involving firms and customers (Chandler and Vargo, 2011). Research suggests that the micro level interaction often sets the building blocks for better understanding of co-creation in more complex settings (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). However, existing studies provide few answers regarding the drivers of employees' and customers' participation in value co-creation at the micro level. To this end, and considering the changing nature of actors' needs within different encounters, especially in hotel settings, this study proposes that understanding how employees and guests assume active roles, to jointly create value through direct and indirect interactions across different stages of hotel service at the micro level might be useful. Using the micro level interaction has the potential to broaden understanding about co-creation activities and how they occur in different hotel service contexts.

2.6 Employees' and customers' roles in the co-creation process

It is a shared view among the different schools surrounding value co-creation that, in the context of value co-creation, both employees and customers assume roles and enact them

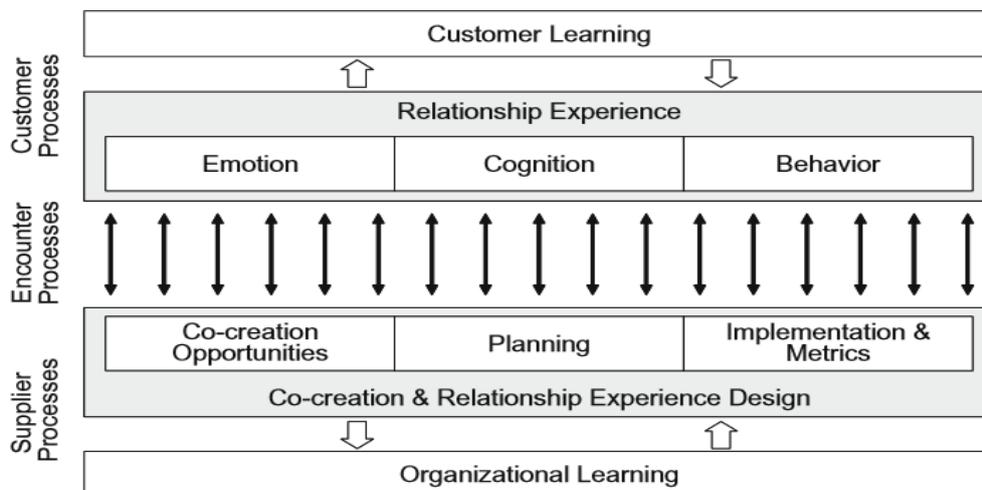
depending on the expected benefits to be realised from service. According to Lusch and Nambisan (2015), this explains the different types of value that are co-created. However, while service logic for marketing limits an actor's role in co-creation to direct interactions, S-DL assumes that an actor's role in co-creation spans across both direct and indirect interactions. In this regard, S-DL changes the firms' role, which hitherto related to value creation and determination (de Ruyter, Wetzels, Lemmink and Mattson, 1997), to becoming resource integrators and facilitators of value co-creation (Lusch and Vargo, 2014), which often spans beyond the firm's physical boundary. In this context, firms' resource integration and value facilitation might include the provision of tangible resources, such as the physical environment, staff and intangible resources, such as skills, knowledge and the competence of the actors involved in the service exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2008b). Of more pertinence is that, the new role does not stop firms' from performing the traditional function in value proposition, neither does it prevent customers as end users of the firm's goods or service. Rather, the context of co-creation confers on both firms' and customers' a joint role in value proposition that delivers value to them and others (Gronroos, 1990).

The important position of firms' and customers' roles in service has been recognised in previous studies. Normann and Ramirez (1988, p. 116) note that "a defining aspect of a service perspective is the role that the firm plays in helping customers to create value for themselves." Similarly, Gronroos and Voima (2013, p.138) note that "failure to recognise the role of the customer as the creator of value for mutual benefit, the role of the firm grows out of proportion, thus, reverting the evolution from value-in-use to value-in-exchange". While these authors highlight a need to understand actors' context-specific roles in service encounters, Gronroos and Voima (2013) emphasise the need to understand the change in firms' and customers' roles which the evolution in marketing presents. For instance, understanding of context specific activities, such as the development, design, manufacturing, delivery, back-office and front-

office activities may inform actors of the resources or input required during the interactive service process. Against this backdrop, it could be argued that a lack of understanding of employees' and customers' context-specific roles might prolong the complexity surrounding co-creation in the literature.

Roles connect the firm, the customer, and possibly other actors in an interactive process for a successful value co-creation process (e.g. Payne et al., 2008). This implies that roles might not be directly related to the service use. However, as suggested by Holbrook (2006), the assumption of specific roles may relate to a broader service context, where individuals such as employees enact roles for the benefit of themselves and others. Figure 2. 1, below, explains further how co-creation encounter processes present different roles to the customer and the firm.

Figure 2.1. Framework of value (co)-creation process with different roles.



Source: Payne et al. (2008, p. 86)

The framework demonstrates the repetitive nature of co-creation. The double-headed arrows at the centre depict the various interactive processes and practices between the customer and firm, occurring at different times and within different contexts of value co-creation. The relationship experience and customer learning arrows depict roles performed by the customer using their emotions, cognition and behaviour, which often influences both current and future value (co)-creation activities. Similarly, the arrows between co-creation, relationship experience design and organisational learning depict how the firm learns more about the customer to be able to develop current and future co-creation opportunities. This may also afford opportunities for the firm to further improve the relationship experience and to enhance service design and value co-creation with customers (Zwass, 2010), which according to the framework occur in the firm's sphere.

Gronroos and Voima (2013) note that actors interact to co-create value through service encounters. Three broad types of encounters, including communication, usage and service have been proposed as facilitating co-creation (e.g. Payne et al., 2008), which obviously present roles. For instance, communication encounters may aim to connect and promote firm-customer dialog through billboards, brochures and other means of correspondence, usage encounters are customer practices related to actual service or product usage, whereas service encounters involve interactions between focal customers and a firm's customer service personnel (Payne et al., 2008). Although these encounter activities provide practical insight into how value co-creation occurs, they are sometimes difficult to implement because they are more generic.

In addition, the use of emotions, cognition and behaviour in the model suggest that actors might respond differently to a range of encounters, due to differences in their expectations, roles and experiences in encounter processes. In this regard, although firms learn more about customers through encounter processes to be able to plan, create and implement more co-creation opportunities (Payne et al., 2008), the idea that specific needs, expectations and experiences

drive service participation within contexts (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014) present a need for further studies into factors that drive actors' co-creation participation, especially within the hospitality sector, where service is experience driven. In addition, while significant research has been conducted into how firms and customers understanding of their roles in the value co-creation process has led to service improvement for mutual benefit (e.g. Osei-Frimpong, Wilson and Owusu-Frimpong, 2015), research is sparse on how employees and customers joint roles in co-creation process might lead to service improvement, which both actors see as beneficial. The roles played by employees and customers form an important element in value co-creation process as it offers explanation into activities that might not deliver value. This study extends on Payne et al (2008)'s conceptual framework for value co-creation between the organization and the customer, and applies the concept in a hotel service design and delivery involving employees and guests. Importantly, this study uses Payne et al. (2008)'s framework and how it might inform successful co-creation role-play, involving employees and guests across the different stages of hotel service encounter.

2.7 Understanding the underlying motives of employees' and guests' that drive value co-creation activities

Under the paradigm shift in marketing, it is actors' joint participation in service and the value creation process that differentiates S-DL from the G-D logic view, and a growing number of actors have become active participants in value co-creation for several reasons (e.g. O'Hern and Rindfleisch, 2010). With regard to motivation, often a distinction is made between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. However, there are difficulties in understanding the service elements that deliver value to meet actors' extrinsic and intrinsic expectations due to differences that exist among individuals. Whereas one actor may be motivated specifically by intrinsic

motivation, another actor may need a reward from his or her external environment, and as such, be driven by an extrinsic motivation. Motivation is an antecedent of human behavior, explaining why people behave in certain ways, what provokes these behaviors, and what directs subsequent voluntary actions (Deci and Ryan, 1985). This implies that motivation is a critical factor that influences actors' actions and behaviors. Similarly, motivation is explained as a single construct with an inherent appeal concerning energy, direction and persistence (Vallerand, 2000). In this regard, although motivation is a single construct, the differences in its appeal places a distinction between self-determined motivation which occurs naturally in a person to exhibit natural tendencies to cognitive and social development, as well as motivations that are determined by others or which are externally driven. In addition, whereas actors' intrinsic motivations may centre on self-interests, curiosity, care, or abiding values (Wang, Khoo, Liu and Divaharan, 2008), extrinsic motivation (non-self-determined) touches on performance of an activity to attain some separable outcomes (Vallerand, 2000). This implies that extrinsically motivated actors might feel compelled to perform certain behaviours towards the attainment of certain pleasurable outcomes (benefits). Consequently, the expected benefits become the drivers or the factors that collectively influence actors' actions in co-creation encounters. In this study, motivation is considered to be one of the factors, and for that matter, a subset of the co-creation drivers, since other factors might drive actors' co-creation participation. That is, co-creation drivers are the overall theme and motivation is a subset of the drivers.

Actors, especially customers, are considered to be a valuable resource in service and their joint active roles are getting more attention than the previously firm-centred view under the goods dominant logic. However, under S-DL, actors' participation in service is primarily motivated by the belief that different benefits will result from engaging in certain resource exchange activities (Nambisan and Baron, 2009; Engstrom and Elg, 2015). For instance, within certain

co-creation situations, actors predominantly act out of commitment to voluntarism or reciprocity (Mathwick, Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2008). This is supported by Jaakkola and Alexander (2014), who contend that customer engagement behaviours are driven by their own purposes and intentions rather than those generated by the firm. This means that such individuals may be interested in participating in joint activities to create value for themselves rather than others. In this regard, although such intentions and purposes are complex and driven by a variety of motives, it is imperative to understand them, because they often present challenges as firms strive to adequately fulfil them. Subsequent sections discuss in detail these motivational factors that are commonly found across the value co-creation literature as driving actors' participation in service encounters (see, sec. 3.4).

2.8 Chapter Summary

The value concept remains a key construct in service marketing, yet different interpretations has generated complexity about value. While one school of thought presents a unidimensional approach to the study of value, another school suggests that value is best understood when studied as a multidimensional construct. However, notwithstanding the different views shared about value, it is a shared view that, under the shift in marketing, value results from service rather than tangible goods. Consequently, service becomes the basis of exchange between employees' and customers, where both actors play active roles for value to be co-created for themselves and others. The different views have not only influenced how value is co-created through service, but also clarify who benefits from the value that is co-created. While value can be created and determined differently, co-creation requires the participation of two or more actors in a joint service process. Importantly, co-creation projects joint participation of employees and customers being as critical to successful delivery of value through service.

CHAPTER THREE

HOSPITALITY VALUE CO-CREATION

3.1 Introduction

Within the last three decades, co-creation has gained attention across different sectors, of which hospitality is no exception. Hospitality co-creation reflects employee-guest joint participation in service design and delivery, rather than employees or guests acting independently in value creation. In this respect, while expectations and resource capabilities may differ, co-creation has become the dominant theme because employees and guests now wish to jointly create value through an interactive service process. The interactive approach to service design and delivery continues to receive attention from academia and practitioners. However, little attention has been given to the factors that drive employee-guest service interactions in a hotel context. This study addresses this gap by examining the drivers of value co-creation in hotel setting at the micro level. The following sections review the hospitality co-creation process, hospitality co-creation experiences, micro level co-creation experiences, then hospitality co-creation in developing countries. Thereafter, employees' and guests' motivations as co-creation drivers, employees' and guests' personal characteristics, co-creation participation and a summary of the entire chapter are outlined.

3.2 Hospitality co-creation process.

Co-creation is an integral part of the hospitality service process (Shaw, Bailey and Williams, 2011), which includes procedures, tasks, mechanisms, activities and interactions that connect employees and guests in value co-creation (Payne et al., 2008). However, while some of the processes may be known to these actors, research shows that they are diverse, and move beyond

employee-guest distinct activities (Gummerus, 2013) to interrelated activities within dynamic service environments (Frow, Mccoll-Kennedy and Payne, 2016), aimed at fostering a relationship for mutual benefit (Akaka, 2011). This means that understanding the different co-creation processes that deliver different expectations can be complex due to divergent interests of the actors within different contexts. For instance, Agarwal and Basu (2014) contend that the amount of effort exerted by customers is influenced by the perceived relevance of the service process in achieving the desired service outcome. Similarly, Vargo and Lusch (2017) assert that it is the activities emanating from other actors through transmission of service that represent the source of value and thus, the purpose of the exchange. This implies that, per the actors' desired outcomes, they may approach value co-creation differently. Thus, for delivery of a better service that meets the desired outcomes, it is important to identify and understand specific processes fostering not only customers, but also employees' willingness to co-create, since both actors' desired outcomes influence their joint participation.

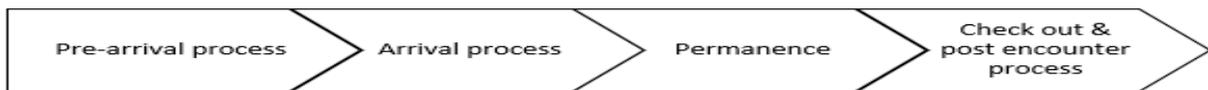
In discussing the necessary conditions required for successful co-creation, Jaakkola and Alexander (2014) note how a firm's willingness to integrate customers' resources into the service design positively affects the value co-creation process. This might also require the firm not only to identify its customer segments that are able and willing to integrate resources, but also how it can channel resources to customers that might require or provide a better fit with the firm's service (Farquhar, 2014). Consequently, the ability of actors to integrate and also access the right resources in the co-creation process might not only facilitate successful interaction but also service outcome, which resonates with Payne et al. (2008) s' assertion that the co-creation process enhances firm-customer interactions when it is properly understood and managed. Similarly, understanding the important role of the co-creation process has been recognised, considering the fact that co-creation affects not only the hotel (Navarro et al., 2015) and the focal guest (Ranjan and Read, 2016), but also other actors (e.g., friends, family

members and fellow guests) (Oliveira and Panyik, 2015). However, while these studies highlight the need for increasing knowledge about the co-creation process, existing models often do not provide enough understanding of the co-creation processes, pertaining to successful co-creation with the different actors within different hotel service contexts.

Within the hotel sector, previous studies identify four co-creation stages, namely, the guests' pre-arrival, arrival, stay and hotel check-out processes (Brunner-Sperdin and Peters, 2009; Morosan, 2015; Navarro, Garzon and Roig-Tierno, 2015; Campos et al., 2016). Although co-creation does not happen in a linear manner (Gronroos and Voima, 2013), identification of the different stages in a diagrammatical and linear manner may help hotels to facilitate a successful co-creation process with guests. In addition, while the type of hotel service might determine the appropriate process for interaction (Lazarus, Krishna and Dhaka, 2014), introducing the linear process may not only aid accurate information sharing about all the service stages (service touch points) that are important to potential guests, management and marketers, but also how to effectively manage guests' expectations at the different service stages for a successful co-creation outcome. In essence, a hotel service process, such as website set-ups, may enable information sharing through online interactions related to accommodation, food or airport pick-ups for enhanced service. However, the acquisition of information might not be the only factor driving guests' willingness to choose a hotel service, making available such information through different avenues may facilitate appropriate and timely sharing of resources, which is core to co-creation. According to Vargo and Lusch (2014), resource sharing (information shared) might be a source of value, since it creates a conducive environment for guests' participation in the service to create their own experience, thereby making them responsive, because they are able to decide on how to participate in the contextual service elements that are likely to enhance their desired experience. In this case, while guests' value experiences get enhanced through shared information (Brunner-Sperdin, Peters and

Strobl, 2012), value may also accrue to the hotel through increased sales and profitability, which may positively affect future service quality. Figure 3.1, below, illustrates the various stages in a hotel co-creation process.

Figure 3.1. Value co-creation process touchpoints in a hotel setting.



Source: Adapted from Navarro et al. (2014)

Navarro et al.'s (2014) framework identifies multiple co-creation process touch points within a hotel context. The study examined the factors influencing the co-creation process at different stages of a disabled guest-employee interaction. This study not only suggest that the application of the model can help with the effective management of co-creation, but also shows that hotels take special interest in their guests' needs across the different touchpoints, to maintain contact for first-hand information about their service expectations. According to Wikstrom (1996), access to guests' desired service information complements the hotel's knowledge and resources for personalisation or customisation. Even though most hotel services are standardised, the use of pre-arrival contact for first-hand information could become a strategy to help hotels receive inputs and suggestions that enhance service design (Prebensen et al., 2015) to facilitate successful service consumption and value actualization through value-in-use. Guests may have accumulated their own resources and capabilities towards successful encounters yet, they may require technical and other support from the hotel at the third stage, for their effective resource integration. Research shows that guests are not only sources of information but also resource integrators in the co-creation process (e.g. Lusch and Vargo, 2014). Therefore, it is proposed

that hotels provide appropriate resources to create an enabling platform for guests' resource integration. This might relate to the development of procedures that allow for guests' complaints and suggestions at all service stages, while also taking into account other comments generated about the hotel through social media platforms (Komarova and Solnet, 2013), through Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and the hotel's website as essential. While it is recognized that some of these comments may generate positive effects, Etgar (2008) suggests the need for hotel service providers to gain considerable understanding of the risks likely to be generated through the co-creation process. An instance is where the joint effort by employees and guests might present risks of complex processes (Campos et al., 2016), due to the varied domains (physical, mental and virtual) reflecting different value dimensions for which value co-creation is undertaken. However, the joint effort and intense participation at every stage of co-creation process is considered critical to service exchange (Chandler and Vargo, 2011), considering the fact that co-creation of value is influenced by actors' personal goals (Fuller, 2010). To this end, the literature suggests that service elements and resource types constituting co-creation processes need to be further clarified to solve the complexity surrounding the concept (e.g. Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2012). This suggests a need for further studies about the appropriate processes required within different service settings for successful co-creation.

Research has explored different frameworks to broaden the understanding of co-creation processes. For instance, the Dialogue, Access, Risk-rewards and Transparency (DART) model is considered to be the building blocks within the co-creation process (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Accordingly, dialogue is found to facilitate involvement, collaboration, learning, communication and information sharing, access is the easiest way to explore actors' resource capabilities with the goal of optimizing personalized needs, risk-rewards relates to actors' acknowledgement of the various risks associated with choosing alternative value propositions, and transparency relates to the information required for developing the trust

necessary to build a close relationship that enables successful value co-creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Dialoguing through the co-creation process fosters shared knowledge (Payne et al., 2008) and interactive learning (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006) which might result in reciprocal service exchange. Morosan (2015) used the DART model to examine US nationals that had prior hotel service experience and found that there is a significant relationship between actors' personalisation and co-creation process participation.

The process-based view framework has also been used to examine how service innovation and customisation are conceived as lying between the co-production and co-creation continuum (e.g. Chathoth, Altinay, Hrrington, Okumus and Chan, 2013). The findings show that different strategies and practices influence co-creation processes and posit that the processes are touch point activities along a continuum of co-production and co-creation, and that hotels may move between the continuum, depending on their operations, goals and co-creation orientations. This implies that hotel co-creation processes may not necessarily follow a linear pattern due to differences in actors' context specific aims, needs and expectations. As such, actors' goals may determine where and how they choose to engage in service exchange along the multiple service touch points. Although these studies increase knowledge about co-creation, little exists on how co-creation occurs at the different service touchpoints and how actors' participation influences the service outcome. In addition, the studies examined the co-creation process from the guests' perspective, which tends to limit the application of findings only to guests. Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola (2012) contend that co-creation cannot be discussed effectively without touching on both employees' and guests' subjective value interpretations or experiences at the micro level interaction. The author of this study not only share a similar view, but also recognises the relevance of developing different models that seek to shape marketing thought relating to the co-creation process within the different hotel service contexts. Further, it is necessary to clarify how and why co-creation can be useful in different service contexts involving

employees and guests, of which Desjeux (1996) proposes observation of human activity. Therefore, this study combines semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion and observation to advance knowledge of the co-creation process.

3.2.1 Experience element of hospitality co-creation.

Under the evolved marketing paradigm, employees and guests are not only interested in service use per se, but also that the experience offered is critical for value to be realised (Sundbo and Sorensen, 2013), which is pivotal for a firm's achievement of competitive advantage (Bolton, Gustafsson, McColl-Kennedy, Sirianni and Tse, 2014). Bertella (2014) conceptualises experience as the context in which interactions and activities occur. Campos et al. (2016, p.3) define the hospitality experience as "the sum of the psychological events a person goes through when contributing actively through physical and/or mental participation in activities and interacting with other subjects in the experience environment." While this definition does not specify individual actors' preferred experience environment, the role of interactions is not only recognised as influencing experience (e.g. Czepiel, Solomon, Surprenant and Gutman, 1985), but also help actors, especially guests, to have control over creating their own experiences.

Experience has mostly been studied from the customers' consumption perspective, with emphasis on different ways through which experience can be viewed (e.g. Klaus, 2014a). In this case, while co-creation experience may occur through direct and indirect interactions (Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlstrom, 2012), there is a need to re-examine not only the service context of co-creation experience and how it occurs between firms and customers (Nilsson and Ballantyne, 2014), but also drivers of the actors' participation in the experience process for value to be realised (Prebensen and Xie, 2017). In addition, previous research have studied the experience from the guest perspective (e.g. Campos et al., 2016), but the hospitality co-creation process involves employees and guests in joint activities, which might have effects on the

service outcome. It is therefore, necessary that the co-creation experience is studied from both the employees' and guests' perspectives to understand how their individual expectations might affect interaction and the outcome of service.

Bharwani and Jauhari (2013) note that hospitality co-creation experience are multidimensional takeaway impressions, resulting from guest's sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and relational levels of engagement, rather than merely on a functional level. In a similar vein, Caru and Cova (2015) opine that actors' experiences, beliefs and perceptions are essential to the value co-creation process. These studies not only emphasise the multidimensional nature of value experience, but also highlight how actors, especially guests' respond to their own experience needs, such as travel information searching, room or menu design. To provide a deeper insight into guests' experiences, Mehmetoglu and Engen (2011) proposed four types of experience, specifically, aesthetic (appreciating sensorial engagement environment), entertainment (passive fun), education (learning something) and escapism (loosing oneself through total involvement). The authors argue that an understanding of the various types of experience will enable their adaptation to meet guests' expectations. Their study extends on an earlier model that has been used to determine the relationships among realms of tourism experiences and the likelihood of guests' participation in opposing realms of service activities. For instance, in one such study, Jurowski (2009) revealed that guests who wish to participate in sensorial engagement activities are likely to participate in learning. While this and the other studies contribute to the co-creation literature regarding tourism co-creation drivers, limited studies exist to provide information about context specific activities or behaviours that drive not only guests' but also employees' co-creation participation in the different stages of the hotel service encounter.

Experience is the basis of value, especially for the guest involved in the joint service process (Navarro et al., 2014). However, the sources of value experience from hotel service cannot be

predicted or determined, because they are complex and keep changing. Therefore, it is becoming important for management and marketing to not only focus on service characteristics, but also on the provision of an experience environment that allows guests to be part of co-creating their own experience. S-DL's FP10 posits that value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary thus, value is considered to be a phenomenon related to customer experience and value in use (Heinonen et al., 2010). This implies that even though co-creation requires two or more actors, including the beneficiary (Vargo and Lusch, 2016), value is determined by an individual based on experience from value-in-use. In this regard, it is recognised that service may not generate the same experience or value to customers (Holbrook, 2006). However, the notion that value can result from shared experience seeks to suggest that, apart from individuals' subjective value experience through value-in-use, there is the tendency that certain types of value experiences are intersubjective (Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlstrom, 2012), because they are shared by all actors involved in the service process (Fyrberg, 2013). Thus, it is no surprising that the service beneficiary, especially the guest assessment of value has moved from functional attributes to a more experiential perspective of service. However, S-DL does not explicitly highlight value-in-context as part of the persistent shift from G-DL (Helkkula and Pihlstrom, 2010).

Research shows that the hotel experience is unique and personal within different situations (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009) therefore, employees and guests might have a collective goal to co-create value, the creation of their personal experience can become the basis for joint participation in the service. Similarly, Campos et al. (2016) note that experience is personal and moves beyond routine service provision to include context specific interactions with the hotel's and guests' resources. This resonates with Vargo and Lusch (2017, p.49)'s assertion that "the value realized by beneficiary does not occur in isolation either, but rather through integration of the resources from many sources, thus best understood as holistic experiences."

While in this case the beneficiary could be a guest, an employee or both, it means that the understanding of resources required by actors within different service contexts might be useful for co-creating memorable experiences. Understanding this might not only be beneficial to guests and employees, but also to other stakeholders within the hotel industry, where service remains experience driven.

3.2.2 Hotel co-creation from a micro level perspective

Co-creation may present diverse processes at different service levels to deliver unique value needs to the actors involved (Brach, Walsh, Henning-Thurau and Groth, 2015), yet co-creation at the micro level has gained researchers' attention over the last two decades. This is because the micro level interactions not only explain how employees and customers engage in value co-creation at the basic level of direct and indirect interactions or help to develop customer data as input for the firm's processes (Saarijarvi, Karjaluoto and Kuusela, 2013), but can also set the building blocks for better understanding of co-creation in more complex settings involving different actors and interactions at the different firm levels (Neghina et al., 2015). Similarly, Echeverri and Skalen (2011) argue that examining co-creation process at the micro level provides a better description of who really co-creates value with whom. However, Desjeux (1996) contends that to understand co-creation through empirical research, a researcher can focus on the meso or micro levels. In this context, while the meso level co-creation moves beyond employee-customer to include organizational-wide systems and structures, micro level interaction is limited to employees and customers. Although the co-creation interaction process at the micro level may differ in different service settings, and interaction might shift the meaning and process of value co-creation from the customer-employee centric to the entire hospitality firm or industry, the micro level perspective underscores the practical importance of understanding interaction involving actors service

expectations (Sweeney et al., 2015), which might also help to effectively and efficiently manage service encounter processes (Fitzsimmons, 2008). To this end, it is important to note that within the hotel setting, researching the co-creation process at the micro level of interaction might be useful, considering that micro level decisions relating to value propositions are mostly taken between employees and guests. In addition, value co-creation is considered to be complex, with different dimensions (Neghina et al., 2015), hence, understanding the employees' and guests' co-creation process and the drivers of co-creation participation at the micro level might provide insights that can help the successful implementation of organizational-wide co-creation practices.

While differentiating the micro-level interaction from the meso and stating that examining co-creation at the micro level is important, there are further questions to be answered regarding how employees and guests interact in a hotel context to co-create value. Employees' and guests' interaction, collaboration or information sharing might not always result in value co-creation (Echeverri and Skalen, 2011). In addition, authors have highlighted the risks associated with closer employee-guest collaborations (e.g. Rust, Moorman and Bhalla, 2010), considering the idea that their value needs vary and are subjective, which can make the implementation of a successful co-creation process very difficult.

The micro level interaction facilitates guests' self-selection and use of the hotel's prescribed processes and resources to solve a particular problem. In this context, the use of firm processes or resources might not guarantee positive outcomes (Terblanche, 2014), because negative implications may result from guests' lack of requisite knowledge and skills that complement the hotels' service design and value proposition process. However, putting in place prescribed processes or resources might create an opportunity for employee-guest participation in service delivery (Campos et al., 2016) and shared inventiveness (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012), which

might also suggest a reduction in management's total control over the service process and outcome.

Hotel service often takes the form of face-to-face, service-for-service exchange, whereby employees and guests tend to use direct service exchanges to draw on each other's operand and operant resources (Hardyman et al., 2015), to generate value that meets each other's expectations. This study considers the micro level approach as a means through which value and value co-creation can be understood to develop future co-creation strategies and capabilities. In this regard, employees' and guests' direct interaction might not only lead to joint design of websites to facilitate self-service, such as guests' hotel room check-in or check-out, but might also provide orientation for guests' service usage, because both participated in the design of the service process. Consequently, the employee-guest participation in the service process at the micro level might contribute to reducing service failures and thus, increase productivity and profitability. In addition, it is recognised that this approach to value co-creation might not always result in meeting guests' ever-changing needs (e.g. Chathoth et al., 2013). However, it is important to note that understanding the micro level approach is not only important to understand actors', especially guests needs, but also the risks associated with guest differences, and how that might reflect different roles, interactions and outcomes within different service contexts.

Grissmann and Stokburger-Sauer (2012) investigated how hotel support affects the degree of guests' co-creation in an Austrian travel agency and revealed that guests who were satisfied with their co-creation activities spent more on their travel arrangements, even though they were less satisfied with the hotel. The study not only increased knowledge regarding co-creation participation outcome and its effects on guests' travel expenditure, but also about the applicability of co-creation within the travel agency industry. However, it is necessary for further research on co-creation in a hotel context involving employees and guests to understand

how co-creation activities are carried out in this context. Navarro et al. (2014) examined how hotel and guest value co-creation influences the attitudes of guests with physical disabilities towards the host. The study aimed to find the value creation processes of the hotel and the guest, as well as value co-creation processes during their interactions (encounter processes). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten physically challenged guests staying in six hotels who had had similar hotel service experiences in the previous year. The findings revealed that hotels adapt poorly to the needs of guests', especially persons with physical disabilities. This means that this segment of the hotel market might not be satisfied with such hotel service because their needs were not met, which might rob these hotels of future co-creation opportunities with such guests. The study generates insightful information on co-creating with persons with disability. However, further research might be useful since different service contexts might require different co-creation practices between employees and guests.

3.2.3 Hotel value co-creation in developed and developing countries

The extant literature indicates that co-creation research and knowledge keeps broadening (Vargo and Lusch, 2016; Campos et al., 2016). However, literature analysis shows that hotel co-creation research in developing countries is limited, while that in developed countries is abundant in size and scope. For example, the process through which actors co-create and share value has been examined and it has been found that online tourist operators in Italy achieve superior performance when there is a strategic fit between their value co-creation initiatives and that of their customers (Cabiddu et al., 2013). Prebensen et al. (2015) examined how co-creation influences guests' length of stay in vacation destinations in northern Norway. The results indicate that gender, income, motivation, perception of the destination and perceived experience value exert varying degrees of influence on guests' length of stay. Morosan (2015) investigated how hotel guests develop intentions to co-create value in hotels using their mobile

devices in the United States of America. The findings show that perceptions, trust, and personal innovativeness influence guest's degree of involvement, using mobile devices, which are also instrumental in the development of guests' intentions to engage in specific co-creation behaviours.

The literature analysis also indicates that hospitality co-creation research is flourishing in Asian developing countries. As such, while firms have made use of the co-creation concept to involve customers in service design, customers from Asian countries not only want to connect with firms, they also want to collaborate with them through information technology to co-create value (Bughin, Chui and Manyika, 2013; Rai, Singh and Tapas, 2016). For example, research shows that in Asia, 6 out of 10 social media service users are connected with firms; 90% of these customers want to participate in co-creation activities (Dey, Pandit, Saren, Bhowmick and Woodruffe-Burton, 2016), while firms such as Unilever, Nike, Heinz, Heineken, Philips and IKEA have explored co-creation for online collaboration with customers in China, India, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016). This implies that as co-creation impacts these communities of customers, the above-mentioned firms may in turn look to these Asian markets for growth opportunities. To this end, it could be argued that customers and marketers from Asian countries may experience the benefits associated with the ongoing shift in marketing, because they interact and collaborate to generate mutually expected service experiences.

The literature analysis revealed that there have been fewer co-creation studies in Africa, especially employees' and guests' co-creation in hotel setting. For example, Baka (2017) examined how actors enact open technology co-creation at the local governance level in Zambia. The study indicates that cross stakeholder communication, social value, transparency and openness drive civic participation in co-creation at the macro level. Maduka (2016) examined the effects of customer value co-creation on customer loyalty in the service industry

in Nigeria and found that there is a significant relationship between customer loyalty and customer co-creation. Similarly, Osei-Frimpong, Wilson and Lemke (2018) investigated patients' desire to seek healthcare information through internet usage and found that pre-encounter information searches impact positively on improved service engagement. These studies suggest that the concept is gaining research attention from other sectors, such as health, IT and governance in developing countries. However, no research exists on co-creation drivers in a hotel setting at the micro level, within the context of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The studies from Table 3.1, p. 65, imply that comparatively, co-creation research in developed countries keeps advancing faster than that in developing countries. In addition, while these studies push forward co-creation knowledge, their application in different markets could be problematic, not only because of business and contextual differences, but also given that co-creation presents different scenarios based on actors' needs within different service environments (Fang, Chiu and Wang, 2011). Furthermore, the small amount of co-creation research within the context of Sub-Saharan Africa might tend to suggest that firms within the sub-region may have to adapt dominant business model logics from developed countries and adjust them to their cultural, economic, institutional and geographic features (Baka, 2017). This may not only affect how firms and customers collaborate to contribute complementary capabilities to co-create value, but also have implications on interaction between firms and customers towards effective service delivery. In addition, although existing studies might be useful in terms of providing industry and context specific information, further studies might be necessary since it might be difficult for implementation of the findings from previous studies in other settings or sectors. Table 3.1, in p. 65, provides further information on how hospitality co-creation has been studied within the context of developed countries.

Table 3.1. Analysis of key hospitality value co-creation research.

	Main Topic	Theme	Focus	Paper Type	Sector	Study context	Findings	Author(s)
1	Aspect of service- dominant logic and its implications for tourism management: Examples from the hotel industry	Innovation and co-creation in the hotel industry	Experience	Empirical	Hospitality	UK's hotel industry	It revealed that hotels that aim at development through service innovation are strongly reliant on implementing co-creation strategies with customers	Shaw et al. (2011)
2	Customer co-creation of travel services: the role of company support and customer satisfaction with co-creation performance	Co-creating a travel package	Process	Empirical	Tourism and Hospitality	Austria's travel agency	The finding indicates that there is a significant relationship between company's support for the customer to co-create and the degree of co-creation	Grissmann and Stokburger-Sauer. (2012)
3	Responding to Online Reviews: Problem solving and engagement in Hotels	How hotels handled online reviews,	Experience	Theoretical	Tourism and Hospitality	Western US	Shows that hotels within the same brand category can have completely different response rates and patterns.	Park and Allen (2013)
4	Managing value co-creation in the tourism industry	How firms and customers co-create value	Process	Empirical	Tourism and Hospitality	Italian online tour company	It found that synergy is a key factor for value realisation. Hence firm's knowledge on how to appropriately combine resources helps to achieve more operational efficiencies.	Cabiddu et al. (2013)
5	Value- creating assets in tourism management: Applying marketing's service dominant logic in the hotel industry	Applying S-D Logic to examine Intellectual Capacity (IC) disclosures	Process	Theoretical	Tourism and Hospitality	European and US Hotels	Hotels acknowledge IC assets in value embeds in their brands. However, their disclosures on generic items of guest and employees indicate they are overlooking the capacity for value creation from such IC.	FitzPatrick et al. (2013)
6	Co-creation with clients of hotel services: the moderating role of top management support	The effects of new service (NS) co-creation with customers	Process	Empirical	Tourism and Hospitality	Spain's hospitality sector	It suggests that there is a positive direct relationship between customer co-creation in the hotel industry and new service (NS) market outcomes.	Santos-Vijande et al. (2015)
7	An Empirical Analysis of intentions to co-creator Value in Hotels using mobile Devices	Co-creation mechanisms in hotels	Process	Empirical	Hospitality	US Hotel	It found that perceived personalisation is a strong predictor of co-creation involvement.	Morosan (2015)
8	Length of Stay: A Case of Northern Norway	Determination of length of stay in destinations behaviours	Experience	Empirical	Tourism and Hospitality	Culture-based visitor attractions in Northern Norway	It revealed that actors that share similar values in terms of travel experience and expectations, enjoy a high degree of cohesion and socialization	Prebensen et al. (2015)

9	Value co-creation among hotels and disabled customers: An exploratory study.	People with disabilities (PWD's) experience of hotel services.	Process	Theoretical	Hospitality	Hotels in Spain	It was found that operant resources in the integrative value co-creation process determine the variation in value co-creation opportunities	Navarro et al. (2014)
19	Co-creation and higher order customer engagement in hospitality and tourism services: A critical review	Moving from co-production to co-creation	Process	Theoretical	Tourism and Hospitality	manufacturing, sales, consumer marketing, mass customization, co-production and co-creation in a factory system	Several aspects (ex-ante, in-situ and ex-post) of co-creation change in the process of creating experiential value for customers	Chathoth et al. (2016)
11	Co-Creation Experiences: Attention and Memorability	attentional processes and their influence on memorability	Experiences	Theoretical	Tourism	Portugal, a marine life and water theme tourist park	The co-creation experience influences memorability by focusing on the tourist's attention	Campos et al. (2016)
12	Co-production versus co-creation: a process-based continuum in the hotel service context	Moving from co-production to co-creation	Process	Theoretical	Hospitality	General review and analysis of key themes/ debates on co-creation	The paper suggests that there is a continuum from co-production to co-creation. Firms may choose to stand and operate anywhere depending on the sector, operational life cycle and production type.	Chathoth et al. (2013)

3.3 Value co-creation drivers in a hotel setting

Different factors drive actors' participation in service encounters. According to Bitner, Faranda, Hubbert and Zeithaml (1997), participation drivers include service type, employee behaviour, attitude, service environment, interpersonal relationships and technical quality. However, within the last two decades, other studies report about collaborative/design efforts, self-service (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), perceptions of persuasive marketing communications (Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzeri, 2013), service benefits (Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides and Brunink, 2014) and service systems (Ranjan and Read, 2016). While most of these studies relate to customers' general experiences with service firms, there are a few that specifically relate to employees' and guests' in sub-Saharan hotel settings. For instance, Brunner-Sperdin and Peters (2009) investigated the importance of guests' emotional states during service consumption of high-quality hotels in Europe, and found that a hotel setting has a strong influence on the emotional state of guests. The study suggests demographic factors such as the age, gender and marital status of guests have no influence on their emotions during the service process. In this case, while findings were limited to guests from eight 4 to 5-star hotels in a typical alpine spa-oriented tourism service, the service environment is highlighted as crucial element of a hotel's strategy that might require the active participation of employees and guests.

Hemmington (2007) examined hospitality service management in a commercial experience environment. The study charts a course through contemporary discourse between theoretical and practical domains, to identify the strategic and operational implications for hospitality service. The study found that hospitality firms that provide personal and memorable experiences that add value to guests' lives, could gain competitive advantage. Although the study tends to be conceptual, it broadens understanding of how hospitality service experience

in a commercial environment affect a firm's market position, because it suggests a list of antecedents as driving co-creation. Walls, Okumus, Wang and Kwun (2011) examined various elements of the co-creation experience in the context of luxury hotels, and identified not only frontline employees competence as enhancing guest experience in the hotel industry, but also highlighted that front-line employees in hotel settings require emotional, cultural and experiential intelligence for successful service delivery. Thus, it becomes relevant for hotel front-line employees to understand guests' expected situational experiences in a hotel setting within different settings. These studies suggest that co-creation studies in the hospitality industry continues to receive attention. However, further studies in other contexts, such as hotels in Sub-Saharan developing countries, might not only be useful to capture native factors and constructs leading to value co-creation in specific contexts, but also the factors that might drive employees' and guests' participation in the service process for value to be co-created.

3.4 Motivation as a value co-creation driver.

Actors' motivations may tend to vary across different service stages and contexts, due to differences in expectations and service benefits. Accordingly, motivation is an antecedent of human behavior, explaining why people behave in certain ways, what provokes these behaviors, and what directs subsequent voluntary actions (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Thus, as a crucial component of behaviour, motivation has been studied extensively in co-creation literature, to understand actors' motives for participating in joint service design and delivery (e.g. Shaw et al., 2011; Cabiddu et al., 2013; Navarro et al., 2014; Prebensen et al., 2015; Campos et al., 2016). In this regard, while actors' voluntary co-creation participation is acknowledged (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012), it is claimed that others participate in order to contribute to solving service-related problems or learn more about the service design (e.g. Trischler, Pervan and Scott, 2017). In addition, motivations, such as actors' goals, resources

and expectations of the service outcome (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012) or perceived value (Hollebeek, 2011), have been identified. For instance, co-creation research from the health sector has examined actors' motivations in terms of social, psychological satisfaction (Alazri and Neal, 2003) and image (Barros and Machado, 2010). Similarly, other studies have looked at service innovation and Information Technology-related co-creation (Chebiyyam, Srivastava, Aggarwal and Gupta, 2016) and the effects of top management's service participation on customer satisfaction (Ordanini and Pasini, 2008). Within hospitality, scholars have identified relevant economic and demographic factors, such as income, distance, transportation mode and age as driving actor's co-creation participation (e.g. Thrane and Farstad, 2011; Thrane, 2012). With the use of internet-based survey, Thrane and Farstad (2012) examined domestic tourism expenditure's effect on guests' length of stay in a Norwegian setting at the micro level. The results revealed a positive but diminishing relationship between length of stay and tourism expenditure, and a convex relationship between travel party size and tourism expenditure. In addition, the paper sought to address the gap in the co-creation literature by finding out how nationality, age, spending patterns and other trip related characteristics affect guests' length of stay in destinations. However, it was limited to international summer visitors' leisure trips in the Norwegian context.

Prebensen et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between motivations for travel and how it may be linked to destinations, satisfaction and destination loyalty. The study found that destination types may influence not only guests' selection, but also how much time they may spend at the destination. Using a cross-sectional survey of guests, the results revealed that gender and income influence guests' length of stay. In addition, motivation, perception of the destination and perceived experience value also exert varying degrees of influence on the length of stay. Mehmetoglu and Engen (2011) empirically studied how motivation improves status, psychological wellbeing and firm-customer satisfaction within an experience economy. The

study used survey methods and convenience sampling to select 193 respondents from music festival and museum contexts in southern Norway. Their study increases knowledge about how different experiential dimensions of music festivals and museums influence visitors' overall satisfaction in different contexts. Mustak, Jaakkola and Halinen (2013) examined customer motivations towards participation or how they interact with co-created offerings to create value. The research enhances understanding of co-creation and perceived value outcomes in different service encounters through extensive, systematic literature review of 163 articles on customer participation studies published over the last four decades. In addition, the study brings to the forefront how customers' hospitality service participation has evolved in terms of motivation, nationality, age, gender, income and expenditure level. However, their work does not establish which of the variables drive employees' and guests' co-creation participation within different hotel service contexts.

A study into online communities revealed that actors' intrinsic motivation results mainly from their sense of altruism (Wirtz et al., 2013). Here, altruism (other—intrinsic) depicts forms of value for any given product, service or activity. Even though natural tendencies are likely to motivate actors' altruistic behaviours (Vallerand, 2000), it is necessary for both extrinsic and intrinsic service participation factors to be understood, since they may have a direct or indirect impact on service encounters and outcomes. Fuller (2010) observed that customers expect to achieve intrinsic playful tasks (hedonic benefits, that is self—intrinsic), development of new ideas, skills and competences (cognitive benefits), establish contacts with like-minded actors (social benefits, that is other—extrinsic) self-efficacy and status recognition (personal benefits). Suggesting that 'benefit' can be thought of as a broader depiction of 'customer value, for example, in economic terms (price paid vs. benefit received), Fuller (2010) argues that co-creation participation is contingent upon whether the perceived benefit is achievable with reasonable expended effort. Meanwhile, McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012) posit that not all guests

are willing to engage in co-creation, whether there are benefits or not. This not only leaves firms in situations of guessing when, what, how or why guests participate in co-creation, but also engaging customers in service encounters will continue to remain a challenge, due to the lack of understanding about what value means to them.

The wider literature on service encounter, and specifically co-creation research centres on the benefits of service exchange (Chandler and Vargo, 2011). This affirms Fuller (2010) who argues that the combination of extrinsic (hedonic), intrinsic (economic) and internalised extrinsic (social, cognitive and personal) benefits drive actors' co-creation engagement behaviours. This may imply that expectations in terms of intrinsic or extrinsic rewards could propel actors to follow socially accepted values, attitudes, norms or regulatory structures (Hoyer et al., 2010) to affect co-created value outcomes thus, making further understanding of these factors, such as the following, essential.

3.4.1 Economic factors

Co-creation involves actors' monetary and non-monetary costs such as time, physical and psychological efforts. In this context, while some actors may compare benefits in relation to the cost of engaging in co-creation activities (Etgar, 2008), others may be more willing and able to engage productively in co-creation processes with no expectations of reward (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012). This resonates with Hoyer et al. (2010)'s argument that actors that willingly participate in co-creation are not simply motivated by money, but choose to 'freely reveal' ideas and share efforts before, during and after the service encounter. Meanwhile, research suggests that guests are motivated by financial rewards, either directly in the form of monetary prizes and profit sharing, or in terms of discounts or cost reductions (e.g. Bendapudi and Leone, 2003). For instance, Etgar (2008) notes that cost reduction related to carrying out an activity can be a major motivator, because customers may replace the utilization of a more expensive resource with the lower cost resource. For this reason, customers may opt to

purchase groceries directly through internet-based web sites at reduced costs, instead of buying the more expensive ones from the shops, for the performance of the same activity. In addition, guests may indirectly receive rewards from the firms' intellectual property or through their recognition of their contribution in co-created activities.

Guests' co-creation participation could render productivity gains to the firm (Payne *et al*, 2008), when their subjective preferences, based on situational comparison of objects or events are met (Holbrook, 2006). This means that an understanding of guests' subjective preference expectations related to benefits is vital towards a successful service delivery. In this regard, a major reason for the non-application of co-creation could be due to firms' misunderstanding of guests' preferences, with their accompanying trade-offs.

3.4.2 Social factors

The literature on service-dominant logic has highlighted the central role social context plays in enhancing co-creation encounters. Accordingly, actors are not only connected to service through social context exchanges, but also receive social benefits, such as titles or other forms of recognition, for their valuable contributions to service delivery. Thus, it should be taken into consideration that the giving of recognition for uniqueness in social settings tends to be rewarding (Hoyer, Chandy, Dorotic, Krafft and Singh, 2010) and that increased status, social esteem and good citizenship, can strengthen the ties between firms and customers (e.g. Nambisan and Baron, 2009). In addition, having in place social benefits might even become avenues for firms to elicit favourable responses from guests (Holbrook, 2006). For example, Amazon. com's formal recognition of the Top 100 Reviewer was a source of pride to the recipients of such titles (Hoyer et al., 2010). Specifically, recognition presents visible symbols for customers' uniqueness relative to others, which consequently creates a bond between the firm and the customer in question, which may eventually impact positively on the joint service

delivery process and outcome. However, the literature analysis shows that research in this direction has received little attention in hotel settings.

3.4.3 Psychological factors

Actors may participate in the co-creation process for psychological reasons, such as innovation or creativity. Accordingly, such innovative and creative pursuits are likely to enhance intrinsic motivation, a sense of self-expression (Etgar, 2008), and enhance the positive affect (Hoyer et al., 2010) and enjoyment of contributing successfully to value creation (Nambisan and Baron, 2009). In addition, co-creation may arise from the fun, enjoyment, excitement and delight associated with the past, current or future service participation (Holbrook, 2006). It means that some actors may participate in service purely from a sense of previous or future pleasure. Hoyer et al. (2010) assert that guests' co-creation participation might be due to opportunity for high involvement, dissatisfaction with the service or genuine belief in a hotel's goals, efforts or the utility that is expected to be derived from participating in the co-creation process. Campos et al. (2016) note that psychological factors, such as personalisation may be a significant reason for a guest's participation or avoidance of a risk related to the service consumption, which may harm the person's self-esteem or how they are perceived by others (Etgar, 2008). This suggests that guests may not necessarily want to engage in a co-creation activity, except for gaining or avoiding of the risk that is associated with the service consumption. In this case, understanding of the actors, especially guests' motives for participating in a service might be critical to successful service delivery (Hoyer et al., 2010). It is argued that "for a guest to be willing to engage in co-creation, certain prior conditions should be established" (Etgar, 2008, p.99). However, within the context of hotel service in sub-Saharan Africa, the literature lacks information on which conditions the guests consider critical to co-creation engagement hence, making further research to establish those conditions very essential.

3.4.4 Cognitive factors

Co-creators may reap important cognitive benefits through information sharing, acquisition and learning (Nambisan and Baron, 2009). According to Hoyer et al. (2010), Blackberry, Lenovo Think pad, and many other firms have online forums that attract customers who participate in all stages of the firms' co-creation process to gain technological knowledge, ideas and inputs from others from the online community in return. It means that these guests will put more effort into the co-creation activity because they are motivated by the expected outcome (Cook, Cheshire, Rice and Nakagawa, 2013). Clearly, this is revealed in the literature, where customers voluntarily participate in co-creation activities due to cognitive benefits, such as learning about the service, personal value status and self-efficacy (Nambisan and Baron, 2009). The benefits become intrinsically enjoyable or stimulating experiences to drive guests' participation in the co-creative activities (Fuller et al., 2011). However, there is little information on how cognitive benefits drive actors, such as guest's co-creative participation and the outcomes within different hotel service contexts.

3.4.5 Behavioural factors

In hospitality settings, actors' behaviours may directly or indirectly affect the experience of others, because co-created experience occurs in a shared environment. Behaviour occurs by virtue of actors' interactive experience with a focal person, place or object to generate some level of perceived value (Campos et al., 2016). Co-creation participation behaviour is defined as "actors' behavioural manifestations towards a brand, firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" (Van Doorn et al., 2010, p.254). This implies that co-creation participation may occur through actors' spontaneous and discretionary actions beyond the selection of certain service options. These may include behaviours, such as making suggestions to improve consumption experience, helping and coaching service providers, and helping other customers, which are all aspects of co-creation.

The literature discusses behaviours that affect actors service encounters as including customer satisfaction (Palmatier et al., 2006), brand commitment (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999), trust (De Matos and Rossi, 2008), brand attachment (Schau, Muniz and Arnould, 2009) and brand performance perceptions (Mittal, Kumar and Tsiros, 1999), which may influence co-creation motivation level and consumption goals. In this regard, specific goals, such as maximizing consumption benefits (e.g. getting the best deal during a hotel stay) or maximizing relational benefits (e.g. getting involved in other customers or brand community during a vacation) can influence how the firm is perceived and/or used by actors. Table 3.2, below, presents analysis of the hospitality literature related to guests' co-creation drivers in hospitality settings.

Table 3.2. Existing knowledge of co-creation drivers in hospitality settings.

Author(s)	Economic	Social	Personal	Psychological	Demographic	Behavioural	Environmental
Hemmington, 2007		Host–guest relationship				theatre and performance; lots of little surprises	Safety and security
Etgar 2008; Hoyer et al., 2010	Sacrifices vs. cost, risk reduction, appropriate services	Opportunities for social contacts	Better status and social esteem	Enjoyment, fun, excitement			
Brunner-Sperdin and Peters, 2009		Involvement, relationship			Age, gender, marital status	Empathy, Expertise, Responsiveness, Ability to take part in the service delivery process	Interior design Lighting Colour Scent, Sound
Thrane and Farstad, 2011					Income, distance, transportation, age		
Alazri and Neal, 2003 Barros and Machado, 2010 Prebensen et al., 2015		Satisfaction Involvement, satisfaction, socialization	Destination loyalty, Brand Personality	Image Escape and relaxation	Gender, age, income		
Mehmetoglu and Engen, 2011		Satisfaction		wellbeing			
Walls et al., 2011b Mustak et al., 2013 Morosan, 2015	Perceived Security	Interaction Interaction need for interaction and involvement	personal innovativeness	Perceived value attraction		Trust, perceived personalization	physical environment

As shown in section 3.4, while some studies suggest motivation to participate in value co-creation is limited to economic, social, psychological, cognitive and behavioural factors, the literature analysis shows that the drivers of value co-creation move beyond these factors to include personal, demographic and environmental factors. In addition, sections 3.2.3, 3.4 and Table 3.2, of the literature analysis shows that co-creation drivers have mostly been explored within the context of developed countries. For example, in regard to study participants and context, Brunner-Sperdin and Peters (2009) used guests from hotels in Europe, Morosan (2015) selected hotel guests from the United States of America, while Prebensen (2015) used guests from Northern Norway. While these studies push forward knowledge about value co-creation practices, they tend to be skewed towards customers from the developed world. Further, the Table 3.2, above, shows that research on factors that drive employees and guests value co-creation participation in a hotel setting has received little attention, especially studies within the context of sub-Saharan developing countries. Thus, making this study necessary since it focuses on employees and guests from hotels within the context of sub-Saharan developing country to increase knowledge about the topic under consideration.

Furthermore, the Table 3.2 suggests research in social factors seem to be relatively high, they are mainly centered on actors' relationship and interactions. Other factors, such as culture and technology, are scarcely considered in the literature. Importantly, factors such as personal characteristics and how they affect co-creation interaction and service outcomes have not been captured in previous value co-creation studies, involving employees and guests in a hotel setting. The next section discusses the role of actors' personal characteristics in hotel service encounters.

3.5 Employees' and guests' personal characteristics

Actors' personal characteristics in service encounters have been highlighted as having influence not only on co-creation interaction but also the outcome of service (Brunner-Sperdin and Peters, 2009). Literature analysis revealed that personal characteristics have received intense research attention in the healthcare sector (see, Osei-Frimpong et al., 2015; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012), and have been found to influence the service encounter process and perceived experiential value. Within hospitality sector, a study carried out in the hotel industry provides evidence to suggest that a series of guest perceptions reflect innate characteristics that could be used to predict co-creation participation (Morosan, 2015) however, research on the desired personal characteristics across different stages of hotel service is sparse. Although, Bove, Pervan, Beatty and Shiu (2009) report that actors' co-creation participatory behaviours could depend on personal characteristics in the social exchange, however, Anton et al. (2017) suggest a need for further studies in this direction, since personal characteristics may determine not only the social interaction, but also actors' perceived value of service encounters.

Co-actors' personal characteristics may not only influence decision making in the encounter processes or co-promote active service participation, but also trigger future co-creation activities (Van Doorn et al., 2010), or strengthen subsequent interaction and the processes that facilitate them. In this regard, an understanding of actors' personal characteristics might not only become relevant for staging successful service encounters, but also aid service to be adapted to meet actors' different co-creation expectations. It may also help to appreciate the activities and factors that tend to drive actors' behaviours positively or negatively (Bove et al., 2009; Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Although interactions may differ within different service settings, Chathoth et al. (2013, p. 13) report that interactions should be managed in such a manner so as "to co-create value with customers, while addressing customer-specific idiosyncratic needs." In this context, it could be

argued that co-creation may be successful when actors' personal characteristics are better understood. This is where hotel firms are expected to use their guest-employee contacts for interactions that centre on skills, information and knowledge sharing (Shaw et al., 2011) to develop competencies that move significantly beyond the sector's traditional service, which is normally controlled by employees (Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber, 2011), to a more dialogical and interactive approach (Perera, Albinsson and Shows, 2017), towards achieving the required level of service expectations.

Previous studies have attempted to address this gap through the development of actors' experience constructs (e.g. Morosan, 2015). However, the literature shows that hotel experience are personal and subjective (Morosan, 2015; Campos et al., 2016), thus making further studies using a qualitative approach through face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and observations within different contexts necessary.

3.6 Employees' and guests' participation

Co-creation is a central theme in the service management literature (Lusch and Vargo, 2016), because it plays a significant role in bringing together actors for service improvement or new service design. However, while the coming together of actors presents co-creation as a joint activity or process between service provider and customer towards the creation of value (Gronroos, 2011b; Vargo and Lusch, 2014), the co-creation process or activity has attracted diverse views on how it occurs. Consequently, these views have resulted in different constructs to explain the co-creation of value.

This part of the thesis discusses some of the frequently used constructs in the value co-creation literature to capture the coming together of actors in a service process. These include involvement, engagement and participation. For example, Hollebeek, Juric and Tang (2017)

examined co-creation from the perspective of actors' engagement, Carbonell and Rodriguez-Escudero (2014) studied co-creation through involvement, while Yi and Gong (2013) used participation. While some authors argue that the terms "involvement", "engagement" and "participation" are synonyms, especially when describing the co-creation of value and how it occurs at different stages of service (e.g. Chang and Huang, 2016; Dong and Sivakumar, 2017), others contend that the different constructs are used differently to achieve different outcomes (e.g. Yi and Gong, 2013). For instance, Chang and Huang (2016) view involvement as a synonym for participation, while Dong and Sivakumar (2017), on the other hand, suggest that participation and engagement are synonyms, which explains why the above terms have been used interchangeably.

To illustrate how co-creation occurs, Etgar (2008) uses engagement to demonstrate co-creation between actors at the production stage of service before consumption. However, Gill, White and Cameron (2011) use engagement to highlight guests' activities in service design leading to consumption. In this context, although previous studies highlight engagement as necessary condition in the service consumption process, engagement has been used to represent different things to the actors in different studies (see, Etgar, 2008; Gill et al., 2011). Thus, making necessary the need for understanding the meaning of such terms and how they relate to actors joint service encounters. Bendapudi and Leon (2003) define engagement as the degree to which the customer is involved in producing the offering for themselves. The definition does not explicitly pay attention to the importance of the employee-guest joint process in value creation, where the employees get involved in guests' value creation activities and vice versa. In this case, the focus on guests' activities leading to consumption reflects guests' value creation activity, rather than being considered as a joint creation process involving both guests and employees. Guests' engagement in service leading to consumption is contained in studies using participation (e.g. Chang and Huang, 2016). However, unlike Etgar (2008) and Gill et al.

(2011), Chang and Huang (2016) use the terms “engagement” and “participation” to highlight the joint process involving employees and guests in value creation activities to benefit one or both.

In a related study, Polese, Mele and Gummesson (2014) propose “involvement” as a better description for co-creation, because they consider it to be a broader term that spans the various stages and functions of service involving guests. Involvement is defined as “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests” (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342). In this case involvement becomes a relative standard based on individuals’ experiences and the importance of a task or object. Involvement has different categories. For example, Perera et al. (2017) note that customers’ involvement in the service process occurs at different levels, moving from idea generation and development to end use stages of service. Similarly, Zaichkowsky (1985) identified three dimensions of involvement: personal, physical and situational. In both instances, the notion of involvement moves interaction between employee-guest to a more encompassing process involving different actors within different contexts.

The author of this study posits that it is not always the case that employees will allow guests’ involvement in their entire service process. However, they might seek guests’ involvement at different stages of service, when they deem it necessary. An extensive literature review suggests the involvement could take the forms of input, comment, suggestion, physical, cognitive or emotional factors (e.g. Bettencourt, 1997). In most cases, the variables have been studied from either the employee or the guest perspective. For example, Oertzen et al. (2018) claim that, increasingly, studies using involvement are mainly suggesting outcomes for employees. Magnusson et al. (2003) observed that involvement contributes to guests’ perceived value in terms of cognitive, economic and pragmatic experiences, while Li and Hsu (2017) claim guests’ involvement in service has a positive effect on their moods. To this end,

although the different constructs have been used to describe co-creation to achieve specific objectives, the constructs are used with a common goal of achieving positive effect on the service process and outcome.

According to S-D logic, guests are always active participants in exchanges to co-create value with the employees (Vargo and Lusch, 2008b). Participation is defined as “the degree to which the customer is involved in producing and delivering the service (Dabholkar 1990, p. 484). In this regard, participation is viewed as a process consisting of the integration of physical activities, mental efforts and socio-psychological experiences (Prebensen et al., 2017), rather than a single act. This study views co-creation as a joint activity involving employees’ and guests’ mental and physical participation in the experience-creation process. While participation can be physical or represents actors’ degree of active participation in the experience activity and mental participation related to actors’ level of interest in the activity (Yi and Gong, 2013), in this study, participation means actors’ willingness to exchange and obtain the service for use, in order to realise the benefits, which ultimately translate into the value which is assessed subjectively. In this case, participation in the service process might either be initiated by the employees, guests or both, to satisfy a set goal.

The concept of participation is not particularly new however, the S-D logic perspective on service recognises that employees are providers of partial inputs into the guest’s value-creating processes, with input from other sources including the guest’s own activities (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012). As shown above, the definition highlights participation in value creation as shared inventiveness involving employees and guests, which resonates with Lusch and Nambisan (2015) s’ observation that co-creation involves shared inventiveness for the purpose of innovation, which is fundamental to the current marketplace. This view supports Chesbrough (2011)’s assertion that participation denotes shared inventiveness to develop new solutions, where individual actors have equal opportunity to influence the service outcome.

Also, participation in co-creation activities has been emphasised as a competitive market strategy (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), because it enables firms to fit their service to guests' needs. However, while these studies seek to highlight participation as being important to co-creation encounters, research suggests that participation in service might not always lead to co-creation of value (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012) or for that matter, innovation (Chesbrough, 2011), but also co-destruction of value might result from joint participation in service (Echeverri and Skalen, 2011). Thus, it becomes necessary to understand how participation could be harnessed for a successful value co-creation process.

To better understand co-creation techniques, Durugbo & Pawar (2014) developed a unified model of co-creation that integrates the functions of service providers' and consumers' participation based on value-in-exchange and value-in-use. Similarly, Yi and Gong (2013) s' study conceptualised value co-creation behaviour as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of two factors: participation and citizenship behaviours in relation to the concepts of in-role and extra-role behaviours respectively. Participation touches on the required behaviour necessary for successful value co-creation. In contrast, citizenship is a voluntary behaviour (e.g. Tung, Chen and Schuckert, 2017), not a necessary condition required for co-creation to occur. However, both participation and citizenship behaviours may provide extraordinary value to the employees, guests and the firm. Accordingly, participation behaviour consists of four dimensions: information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviour and personal interaction, while citizenship behaviour comprises feedback, advocacy, helping and tolerance (Yi and Gong, 2013). Participation and citizenship behaviours in value co-creation have been explored further in related studies. For example, Li and Hsu (2017) examined how customers participate in the restaurant service decision-making process. Nonetheless, using participation to conceptualise co-creation within different contexts has become increasingly complex (Dong and Sivakumar, 2017), especially as new types of service environments, and new ways of value

creation emerge. In addition, the literature analysis shows that the three constructs (involvement, engagement and participation) give different, but related meanings. Hence, there is frequent emphasis on gaining insights into involvement, engagement and participation constructs on the joint customer–provider creation, because the three terms are necessary conditions for co-creating value (e.g. Oertzen et al., 2018). However, this study examined employees’ and guests’ co-creation participation activities at different stages of hotel service for the reasons discussed below.

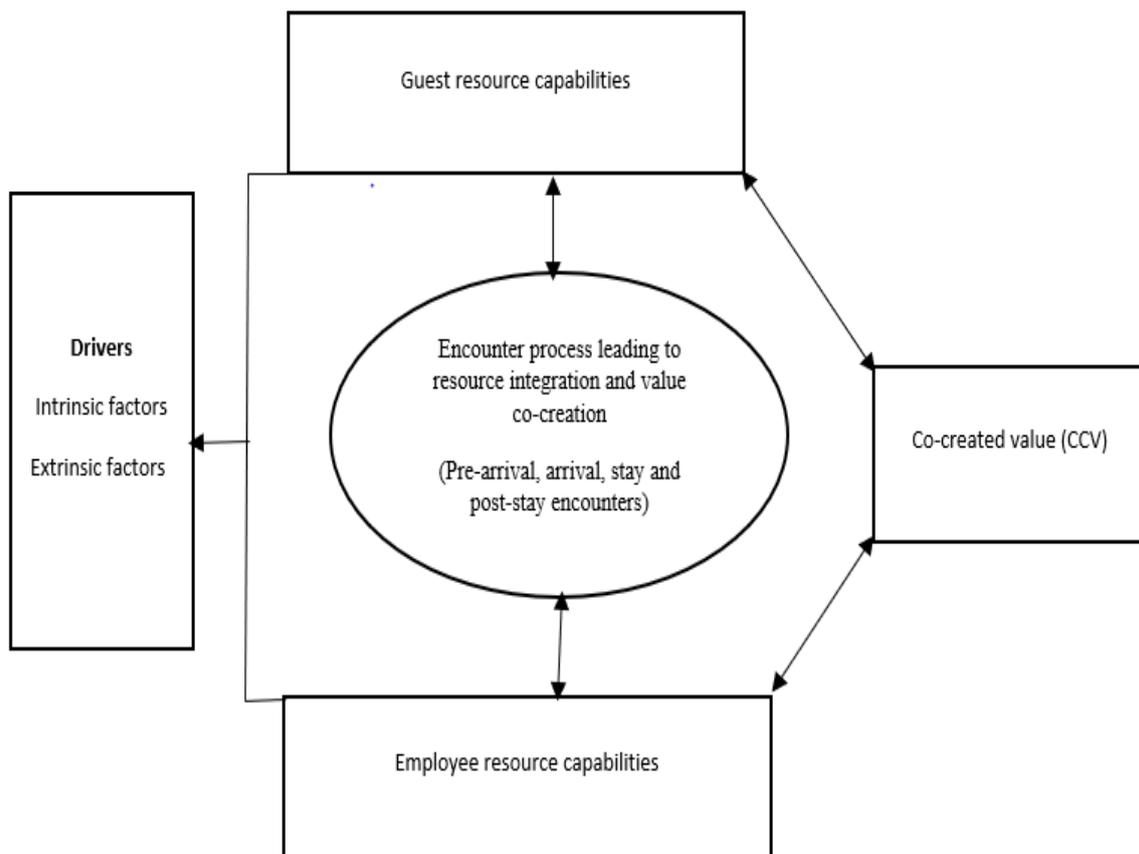
In discussing service as an interactive activity towards joint value creation, the actors’ participation in the service processes has been highlighted as enhancing perceptions of service quality (Karpen, Bove and Lukas, 2012). A participatory approach not only promotes openness, information exchange and shared decision making, but also creates an enabling environment for actors to move beyond passivity to assume active roles, and access service in-use through interaction. However, conceptualising participation under different contexts of value co-creation has become increasingly complex, especially as new types of service environments and new ways of value creation emerge. Therefore, clarity is necessary for helping service firms that aspire to use the participatory approach in service delivery within different contexts. Conceptual clarity might not only help alleviate the risk associated with employee-guest joint service design, it might also provide an understanding of what actors do, or are required to do, whenever they participate in value co-creation. This study draws from Yi and Gong (2013) to highlight the drivers of employee-guest co-creation participation in a hotel setting at the micro level.

3.7 Chapter Summary

Within the hotel context, co-creation could foster the collective creativity that is shared by employees and guests, aimed at a value that is jointly created. By inference, co-creation is a

dialogical, collaborative and interactive value creation process where employee-guest joint participation, involvement and engagement has been emphasised as aiding mutually beneficial encounters. However, given that actors may participate in service encounters with varied expectations, authors have advocated for a better understanding of what drives participation to enable successful value co-creation encounters (e.g. Etgar, 2008; Hoyer et al., 2010; Fuller et al, 2011). In response to this call, previous research have mostly studied drivers of co-creation participation from the customers' perspective. While such studies broaden knowledge about the drivers of co-creation participation, understanding participation from the employee-guest perspective might not only help actors to be more informed and connected than before, but also help to understand how actors uniquely and phenomenologically determine value, which is vital for preventing value co-destruction. In addition, given that service is evaluated differently, using varied value judgements regarding “gives” and the “gets” from service exchanges, it is advised that actors, especially firms allocate appropriate resources to customers in order to generate a greater marginal value in return (Farquhar and Robson, 2017). The author of this study holds the view that value is jointly created through employee-guest resource integration, and it is phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary, where in this case the beneficiary can be the guest or the employee. As such, value co-creation can be fully understood through a micro level interaction involving these actors, and researchers have pointed out the need for this (e.g. Hardyman et al., 2014; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). Therefore, this study conceptualizes participation in value co-creation at the micro level as involving employee-guest resource capabilities, encounter activities from pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters driven by context specific factors, as shown in Fig. 3.2, below.

Figure 3.2. A tentative conceptual framework of the drivers of value co-creation in a hotel setting at the micro level.



From Fig. 3.2, it is argued that actors involved in hotel service exchange have value preferences before arrival, during arrival, stay and after-stay encounters (Navarro et al., 2014), which is represented by the double-headed arrows. The double-headed arrows connecting employee-guest to the encounter stage depict interaction (Gronroos, 2008), collaboration (Vargo and Lusch, 2008b) and a dialogical process (Payne et al., 2008; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) leading to resource integration for value to be co-created. In this regard, the employees' and the guests' value expectations might serve as a measure of the value that is co-created. In addition, as value co-creation requires the integration of resources (Maglio, 2010), and interactive efforts of the involved actors (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014), a number of factors are likely to drive and affect the encounter process as well as the service outcome as shown in table 3.2. There is therefore, the need for further research to establish a better theoretical clarity to support firms that aspire to adopt co-creation processes and practices.

Bridging these gaps in the literature, this study adds to existing knowledge by examining co-creation drivers in a different context – a developing country from Sub-Saharan Africa, since existing studies related to co-creation drivers are limited to developed countries. Secondly, the study contributes to the understanding of co-creation, using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations in a single study at the micro level, which most single studies within the hotel industry have ignored. Thirdly, the thesis develops a model to inform practice at the micro-level of hotel service design and delivery.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted value co-creation as a focal element of service marketing that has gained attention from academics and practitioners over the last three decades. However, the literature review shows there are few studies that have examined co-creation drivers in a hotel setting involving employees and guests, especially within Sub-Saharan African context. Although these studies have used qualitative approaches, none has used phenomenology, focusing on the micro level of interaction involving employees' and guests, combining semi-structured interviews, focus groups and observations within the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. Given that the creation of value depends on the co-construction of individual value judgments, it was therefore appropriate to conduct an empirical qualitative exploratory study around this topic. This chapter presents the philosophical and methodological approaches for the research and, in more detail, the way in which the study has been designed. The chapter is divided into the following 3 sections.

The first section reminds the reader about the aims, objectives and research question to then explain the methodological choices made. This section locates this research within a constructivist approach and an interpretive paradigm. The research design section follows and reports the methods used, the sampling and the justifications. The chapter concludes with a series of reflections about ethics and trustworthiness, followed by a chapter summary.

4.2 Research aims, objectives and research questions

This study has three aims. The main aim is for the study to contribute to the implementation of value co-creation practices in Ghana's hotel industry. Related to that and as a contribution to knowledge, two further aims are envisaged as follows. The first aim was to:

- **Examine the drivers of employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation.**

Based on the review of the literature, the reason for this overall aim was to explore and understand the role participation plays in the process of value co-creation by identifying the drivers and factors which might influence the interaction. The concept of co-creation is particularly important when actors, especially customers, can be part of creating their own experiences (Chathoth et al., 2016). As such, studies have examined the influence of co-creation participation from a variety of contexts involving customers and have found that participation influences appropriate service behaviour (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014), service intentions (Sweeney et al., 2015) and improves the service outcome (Osei-Frimpong, 2017). Authors suggest a need for further insight into drivers of co-creation participation in the hospitality context (e.g. Chathoth et al., 2016), especially within the hotel sector (e.g. Shaw et al., 201; Prebensen et al., 2015). However, given the subjective nature of value, further studies into what value means to employees and guests might not only aid successful management of value co-creation encounters in a hotel setting, but also be useful for adapting service to meet different actors' needs, preferences and expectations.

While identifying the drivers in the value co-creation process was a necessary aim, it is not sufficient to understand fully how co-creation works. Therefore, the second aim was to:

- **Examine employees' and guests' motivation and the effects of their motivation on interaction and service outcome.**

This aim was considered important for understanding actors' motivation for co-creation participation, and the effects of motivation on interaction and service outcome. A focus on understanding the effects of value co-creation and the motivation behind participation was deemed important not only to produce practical recommendations, as suggested by Schau, Muniz and Arnould (2009), but also to sustain the practical relevance of employee-guest co-creation activities in a hotel service context. The fulfilment of the two key aims was achieved by pursuing the objectives listed below:

- To uncover the critical factors that drive co-creation participation.
- To identify the effects of motivation on employees' and guests' co-creation interaction and the outcome of service.
- To understand the value expectations that might influence employees' and guests' co-creation participation to facilitate service exchange.
- To provide insight into the personal characteristics that employees and guests consider critical for successful co-creation encounters, and whether such characteristics have effects on the interactions and service outcome.

The following questions helped to address the research aims:

RQ1. *What drives employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation?*

RQ2. *What motivates employee-guest co-creation and how do the motivating factors affect their interaction and the co-creation outcome at the micro level?*

RQ3. *How do employees' and guests' perceive value in a hotel context?*

RQ4. *What are employee-guest personal characteristics and how do they affect value co-creation interaction and service outcome?*

Because the literature argues that value is a subjective assessment of one's experience, exploring value co-creation required engaging with subjective views of value. Therefore, it was important to design the study in a manner which allowed for both subjective assessments of value and the context in which such a value was created. In this regard, although the choice of method depended on the research aims, objectives and questions, placing the research within its right philosophical context was considered equally important. Thus, the subsequent section discusses constructivism and the rationale for choosing it for the study.

4.3 Philosophical Approaches

Choosing a methodology required the researcher to answer the question as to whether it had the potential to address the research aims, objectives and questions. While this may tend to differ from one research project to another, two main worldviews of positivism and constructivism are often discussed as opposing views on the continuum of research (e.g. Morgan, 2007), which influence researchers' philosophical and methodological choices. These worldviews not only operate within a set of assumptions that describe the researcher's beliefs that guided the research action, perceptions of reality, approach to the research process, the tools and methods of data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2013), but also has implications for methodology that the researcher employs in order to meet the study's

objectives. In this regard, while the positivist approach holds that the nature of reality is objective and singular in relation to things out there that a researcher can discover, in contrast, the constructivist takes a stance that reality is subjective and socially constructed through multiple views (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Thus, taking the constructivist approach implies focusing on participants' judgements about their social life which is based less on objectivity and facts about reality (Neuman, 2007).

While philosophical assumption is typically the initial idea in developing a study, Creswell (2013) suggests the need to assess where it fits within the overall process of the research. Four philosophical assumptions, namely, ontology (reality), epistemology (knowledge), axiology (ethics) and methodology (inquiry) have been identified (e.g. Guba and Lincoln, 2005). As such, these assumptions not only underpin a particular study's approach or reflect the methodology and methods used in the study (Crotty, 1998), but also highlight the idea that different studies embrace different assumptions about reality and knowledge (Howes, 2017). Co-creation is a social phenomenon which cannot be separated from its reality hence, the aims and objectives of this study would be difficult to achieve by taking a positivist approach which claims to be objective, logical and value-independent.

4.3.1 Constructivism

In this study, the ontological, epistemological and the methodological stance favoured constructivism, which is often described as interpretivism (e.g. Creswell, 2013). The researcher's position was justified by the nature of the research topic, the objective and the constructivist view that the world is socially constructed, that reality is subjective and that it has multiple dimensions (Flick, 2009). In addition, the constructivist worldview was used not only because it has been developed as a viable and extensively used research approach (Denzin

& Lincoln, 2011), but also the opportunity it presented for the researcher to take an insider position in the research process for knowledge to be co-constructed with participants. Further, considering that meaning is generated from a process of interaction, a constructivist approach offered an opportunity for using open-ended questions to allow participants to construct meanings (Turner, 2010) about co-created service situations and how they result into value, and to create an opportunity for the researcher to listen carefully to what people said or did in their life setting. Consequently, participants' subjective views were negotiated socially through interactions (Flick, 2009) to understand how they developed subjective meanings into value and co-creation experiences spanning through pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post stay encounters.

The researcher assumed a constructivist approach rather than the positivist worldview, which is associated with quantitative methods that suggest the need not only to develop and test a hypothesis, but also analyse data objectively to enable generalisation of the findings. This constructivist position not only aligned with the exploratory techniques that are part of qualitative methods, where the researcher achieves a deeper understanding of complex concepts such as value and value co-creation, but also aided the combination of interviews, group discussions and observations to ensure data quality and transfer of findings. The constructivist approach not only allowed the researcher to pay particular attention to the context within which value co-creation occurred between the employees and the guests, but also studying co-creation activities in a natural context was considered useful to understanding employee-guest motivations for co-creation participation, their value expectations and personal characteristics, which often defined the context of the value co-creation.

Ontologically, this study explored reality with different employees and guests from different hotels, which suggests embracing the idea of multiple realities (Creswell, 2013). This not only contributed to eliciting participants' subjective meanings, views and experiences about the

topic under consideration (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), but also helped the researcher to gather varied and multiple meanings to address the complexity surrounding value and co-creation, rather than narrowing the meanings into a few ideas (Creswell, 2013). Consequently, subjective meanings were negotiated socially through interaction, which made the development of a relationship with the participants, to foster a sense of belonging in the research process necessary for shaping understanding (Roger, Bone, Heinonen, Schwartz, Slater and Thakrar, 2018). Exploring the study's philosophy from different worldviews not only presented deep, rich and interactive data collection (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), but also provided an alternative means of gaining insight into reality and knowledge from the diverse participants' perspectives within different hotel service contexts.

The researcher's ontological stance determined the epistemological position regarding the perception of the world and the relationship between the knower and the known, or between the researcher and the researched (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Epistemologically, this study believes knowledge is co-constructed by the participants and the researcher, and this underpins the role that the researcher assumes in relation to the world. As such, the researcher places greater importance on how meaning is given by individuals' experiences to reflect reality within different hotel contexts. Easterby-Smith (2015) asserts that knowledge and truth are shaped through the lived experiences of individuals to make sense of reality. To achieve this, face-to-face interactions were used by the researcher to get as close as possible to the participants being studied (Creswell, 2013), and gather first-hand information about the complexity surrounding value and co-creation for gaining depth insight. The researcher's insider position, that is, studying the topic within the natural context created opportunity for understanding the contexts and what participants said (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). While the forgone reasons tend to highlight the advantages, limitations were also anticipated, because the researcher's involvement in the research process suggests that the study's findings were not only influenced by

participants' values and beliefs, but also the researcher's regarding subjective judgements and potential biases.

Three research methodologies, inductive, deductive and abductive were identified (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This meant that the study topic could be investigated under different traditions, which might not only require the researcher to weigh the implications of selecting from the three approaches, but also how the selected approach might aid the collection of rich data for a holistic understanding of value and value co-creation drivers. Easterby-Smith (2015) identify three reasons for choosing from the available options: (1) it helps the researcher make informed decisions about the research design regarding data collection and analysis procedures; (2) making methodological choices that yield successful results and those that do not, and (3) adapting research design to the study's limitations. This implies that the researcher's ability to identify and select the right research direction was not only critical to successful implementation of the right approach, but also for the development of mechanisms necessary to address any limitations of the study.

According to Awuzie and McDermott (2017), the idea of choosing different approaches has led to polarisation of researchers along deductive lines, inductive or a mixture of both. However, Easterby-Smith (2015) argues that choosing is essential, since it determines the structure and design of the study. Meanwhile, Blaikie (2007) proposes that the choice of research approach should be based on how it answers the research questions effectively. To this end, an inductive approach, which is associated with qualitative methodology, was deemed suitable for exploring the nature of value co-creation drivers at the micro level in a hotel setting. The use of the inductive approach means that the research topic is studied within its context, using an emerging design that allows participants' definitions and meanings about events and activities related to the drivers of value co-creation. However, despite the advantages, the researcher was aware of the limitations of the constructivist research paradigm and qualitative

methods used in this study, and section 7.8 discusses the limitations in greater detail later in the thesis.

4.4 Methodological choices and research strategy

While there is no single best method in social science studies, research suggests that the central point of a study's reference should relate to the appropriateness of a method to the study topic (Flick, 2009) and the central interest of the researcher. This study adopted qualitative research not only because it is naturalistic in nature (Merriam, 2009) and can take a face-to-face approach (Pierre, 2017), but also because it is consistent with value and value co-creation literature in terms of participants subjective views, meanings and experiences. Qualitative studies involving people's experiences can be presented descriptively or as a narrative (Merriam, 2009), with the aim to not only increase understanding of how employees and guests described, interpreted and attributed meanings to their experiences within different hotel settings, but also how they constructed their worlds (Creswell, 2013). In addition, because the study was exploratory in nature, qualitative approach was applied for the purpose of exploring the study topic through face-to-face interaction involving employees and guests within a hotel setting. In this case, employees' and guests' from the different hotels became the unit of analysis rather than the hotels. Qualitative methodology is discussed in detail in the subsequent section.

4.4.1 Qualitative method explored in this study

Research, whether qualitative or quantitative, involves systematic approach to investigation, using the most appropriate method to answer the research question. However, in doing so, authors highlight that consideration is given to how the chosen method achieves the aims and

objectives of the study (e.g. Creswell, 2013). In this regard, it is worth mentioning that qualitative research is best used when little is known about a phenomenon involving peoples' experiences, such as value and value co-creation drivers at the micro level in a hotel setting. According to Gephart (2004), qualitative study addresses questions about how social experience is created and given meaning. In this study, while social experience might take direct and indirect forms, qualitative face-to-face interactions between the researcher and participants created an opportunity to explore the complex textual descriptions of how people experience value and value co-creation within different hotel contexts. In addition, qualitative research aligned with the researcher's constructivist belief about acceptable knowledge, which results from different conceptualisations in diverse situations from different people. Although this qualitative approach generated volumes of data and thus, required a longer period of transcription and analysis, it helped to capture not only the multidimensional meaning of value and co-creation regarding the intra-subjectivity and inter-subjectivity of employees' and guests' experiences (Helkkula et al., 2012), but also encouraged participants' personal expressions to generate rich data from a broader context. Further, qualitative research was chosen to extend theory as supported by authors (e.g. Easterby-Smith, 2015), and to develop a new model to support co-creation practice in Ghana's hotel sector.

Both quantitative and qualitative studies present a range of flexibility (Creswell, 2013), but qualitative research was deemed more flexible, for not only giving an indication of how rigorous the study could become, but also having the flexibility to adapt different techniques to explore and understand the research topic that was being pursued (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The open-ended nature of qualitative interview questions implies that participants were free to respond in their own words, and that these responses tended to be more detailed than yes and no answers. In addition, the interviews took the form of interaction hence, the researcher had an opportunity to immediately probe to clarify what participants said by tailoring subsequent

questions to the information that the participants had provided, to which, in most cases, the participants responded more elaborately and in greater detail than is typically the case with quantitative research.

Different approaches of qualitative inquiry, including narrative research, grounded theory, ethnography, case study and phenomenology have been suggested. However, it is worth noting that these approaches suit specific studies. For example, narrative research begins with the experiences as expressed in the lived and told stories of individuals, in which “narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an action or series of actions, chronologically” (Czarniawska, 2004, p.17). This means that using this approach requires the researcher to follow a procedure to study one or two individuals, gathering data through the collection of their stories, reporting individual experiences and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences (Creswell, 2013). Given these procedures and characteristics, narrative research might present challenges in terms of collecting and reporting extensive information chronologically, not only about participants, but also about the context of the individual’s life.

While narrative research focuses on individual stories told by participants, a grounded theory moves beyond description to generate a theory from a unified theoretical explanation (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Consequently, a theory will be developed, but it will be grounded in data from participants who have experienced the service process. This might not only present the advantage of inductive investigation that allows the researcher to follow a systematic approach to data collection and analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) to generate a general explanation of an interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants (Creswell, 2013), but it might also present a challenge where the researcher needs to ignore as much as possible any theoretical ideas so that an analytic, substantive theory can emerge (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Unlike a grounded theory which develops a theory from examining many individuals who share in the same process or interaction, ethnography not only focuses on the meaning of the behaviour, the language, and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013), but also involves extended participant observations of the group, in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the participants. Hence, the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group (Harris, 1968). This means that using this approach might be challenging in regard to cross section research, because the researcher needs a longer and different periods of data collection to understand not only cultural anthropology, the meaning of a social-cultural system, and the concepts explored by those studying cultures (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), but also needs to collect extensive data in the field.

In addition, although a culture-sharing group in ethnography may be considered to be a case, it has a different purpose to determine how the culture works, rather than gaining understanding of a single case or multiple cases (Creswell, 2013). Case study can be a methodology or a research strategy on organisation (s), for example, hotel(s). This study examines employees' and guests' from the different hotels and not the hotels per se. Therefore, using a case study will not allow the researcher to examine participants' real-life experience about the contemporary phenomenon of value co-creation, using multiple sources of data collection to generate the required information.

Contrary to the above, phenomenological study describes the common meaning from several individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology "reduces individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence" (van Manen, 1990, p. 177). This means that this approach does not only take the researcher's value judgement completely out of the study rather, it sets the researcher aside as it focuses on the experiences of the participants in the study (Creswell, 2013). From the forgone explanation

into the different research approaches, it is clear that each study might require a different strategy that suits a specific research problem. In addition, while noting that each of the approaches could be used for this study, phenomenology was not only considered appropriate strategy for understanding the subjective perspective of value, which in most cases tend to influence employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation encounters, but also useful for knowing what value co-creation activities that they might want to participate. Phenomenology has been treated in earlier section of the thesis (see, section 2.4., pages 35-37).

Value is not co-created until resource integration into the joint service process translates into actors' expected value (Sweeny et al., 2015). In other words, it is the need to satisfy such value expectations which drives participation in co-creation. Consistent with the constructivist ontological paradigm, the researcher obtains the understanding of a complex phenomenon, such as value co-creation, not only by immersion in contextually determined data, but also defining reality from participants' views and interpretations based on observable empirical data. Thus, using phenomenological provided an opportunity for practical insights into how value is framed and co-created between employees and guests in a hotel setting. According to Dubois and Gaddes (2002), the interaction between a phenomenon and its context is best understood through in-depth examination of individuals experiences. Of more pertinence was that this approach not only allowed the researcher to focus on gathering data about the complexity surrounding value and co-creation, but also gave necessary attention to the context within which value and co-creation occurred. While the author of this study does not suggest the completeness of phenomenology, it is worth mentioning that this study aimed to explore rather than explain. In other words, the study aimed to increase knowledge about value and co-creation drivers from the employees' and guests' perspectives within different natural hotel contexts, rather than through the extant literature. In addition, while one type of strategy is not presented as inherently superior to another, research suggests that an adopted strategy

determines not only the plan of action regarding how the questions are answered or analysed, but also determines which design is most appropriate (Creswell, 2013). This study employed phenomenology to provide extensive answers to the research questions related to participants' real-life experiences within different hotel contexts. This implies that rather than hotels, using employees and guests from different hotels to constitute units of analysis, both within and across, helped to create a more convincing theory grounded in several elements of empirical evidence (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Phenomenology not only presents inherently built-in flexibilities for massive documents to be generated, but also requires much longer time and analytical skills for accurate presentation of findings. Thus, while this justifies the use of phenomenology for exploratory research, the lack of a well-defined approach for phenomenological research, especially studies related to value and co-creation required the researcher to exercise control over the questioning process at all levels in order to generate relevant data.

4.5 Methods for data collection

In this study, choosing a qualitative method was not only important for achieving the research aims and objectives, but also provided an opportunity for combining the qualitative techniques necessary for collecting appropriate data to answer the research questions. Amongst the available techniques was the Critical Incidence Technique (CIT), which was not only useful for investigating critical incidence related to the research topic (Roos, 2002), but also necessary for understanding critical elements of service within a hotel context (Stauss, 1993). CIT is further explored in detail in the following sub-section.

4.5.1 Qualitative data collection methods using the Critical Incidence

Technique

The exploratory nature of this study required the use of methods that allowed the researcher to interact with employees and guests within a hotel setting. As such, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations were used as primary data collection methods, which allowed the researcher to have face-to-face conversation to capture the dynamics of participants' views of the research topic. While these methods are discussed in more detail later in this chapter, this sub-section presents the application of Critical Incidence Technique (CIT) in this study.

Critical Incident Technique (CIT) has been applied in a variety of studies. The method is not only useful for collecting interviews and observations data (Flanagan, 1954), but also useful for exploratory studies that seek to describe a phenomenon for thorough understanding (Grove and Fisk, 1997). For instance, Osei-Frimpong, Wilson and Owusu-Frimpong (2015) employed CIT to explore patients' experiences in co-creation activities in healthcare service delivery, Moeller et al. (2013) used this technique to uncover collaborative value creation patterns and corresponding customer roles in service contexts, while Gummerus and Pihlstrom (2011) adopted it to examine mobile services value-in-use. While the above studies found CIT useful for uncovering incidents that participants considered critical and could recall when asked about their service experiences in retrospect, not much has been heard about its application and usefulness in hotel co-creation studies, especially within the context of sub-Saharan Africa. This study addressed the gap through use of CIT to answer the research questions, which yielded much information to address the aims and objectives of the study. CIT can be done through: (1) experts observation of participants' in co-creation encounter activities or (2) by having individuals recall from memory incidents or experiences that occurred in the past (Flanagan, 1954). This study not only adopted the two approaches as proposed by Flanagan

hence, information or an incident were deemed critical if they were recalled and described in detail by participants (Woolsey, 1986), when asked to share views or experiences on the study topic in regard to encounter activities that impacted on co-created value. They include:

Pre-arrival

Information seeking, Information sharing

Arrival and stay

Helping, Learning, Adapting, Co-designing, Innovation, Suggestions, Comments

Post-stay

Feedback, Suggestions, Comments

The aim of applying CIT in this study was justified, because it helped to gather critical incidents that allowed the detailed examination of employee-guest co-creation drivers in a hotel setting, and in a holistic manner. In this regard, while CIT could be used for different research purposes, the researcher's initial focus was to ask participants to describe incidents which were critical and had had effects on their co-creation interaction and the outcome of service. The research questions were framed from theory (see, Appendix 5), and CIT was used for all the data collection methods for exploring detailed information (Hughes, 2012) about value and how it could be co-creation between employees and guests. According to Helkkula and Pihlstrom (2010), the critical importance of CIT is revealed through customers' real experiences in service encounters. In this regard, although existing knowledge suggests that researchers mostly seek to explore customers' information relevant to the research questions, in this study, rather than seeking only customers information, CIT was used to elicit information about both employees' and guests' co-creation experiences, which provided insight into factors that employees and guests considered relevant for driving their co-creation

participation. Flanagan (1954) asserts that CIT related studies prioritize the number of critical incidents to be observed, collected and recorded from participants. Therefore, in addition to the above, the researcher observed other incidences considered critical and relevant. They include:

- Participants' motivation, nature of service participation, objects and actions that fostered co-creation to deliver on their value expectations.
- The hotel service environment, restaurant, bar and the food served.

Although CIT has evolved and changed over the past 50 years (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson and Maglio, 2005), its flexibility and set of rules remain the same. According to Flanagan (1954, p.335), CIT “does not consist of a single rigid set of rules governing data collection, and thus should be thought of as a flexible set of principles that must be modified and adapted to meet the specific situation at hand” This not only highlights the fact that rules could be followed to modify and adapt the technique to meet the objectives of a study, but also present these rules as major steps in CIT application concerning: (1) ascertaining the general aims of the activity being studied, (2) making plans and setting specifications, (3) collecting the data, (4) analysing the data, and (5) interpreting the data and reporting the results. Drawing from the steps, the study's design started with deciding the aims and research questions, its specified methodology, its methods for data collection, the data type deemed critical for addressing the aims and research questions, analysis and the reporting approaches to be used. The CIT “explores what helps or hinders in a particular experience or activity” (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 268). Therefore, unlike quantitative research that defines and measures observable variables that form a reality, in this study, CIT as a qualitative research method, helped to define reality based on actors' hotel experiences, both positive and negative, because they were considered to be critical to the encounter interactions and the service outcomes. This means that the use of CIT not only affected how processes were followed to achieve rich data collection, but also highlights the use of an extensive set of credibility processes that were intended to increase the

trustworthiness of the study's results, which is discussed later in this chapter. The next subsection discusses the study's sampling.

4.6 Sampling

Sampling was geographically limited to hotels operating in the greater Accra region of Ghana where the researcher comes from. While what constitutes appropriate sample size in qualitative methods is debated (e.g. Mason, 2010), Critical Incidence Technique (CIT) studies prioritise the number of critical incidents collected and recorded as being a suitable sample size of the participants to be interviewed (Spencer-Oatey, 2013). According to Creswell (2013), sampling should enable the selection of participants that are more willing to openly and honestly share information about their experiences in a more comfortable manner. Although this might not always be the case with all studies, in this study, sampling was important for setting out the boundary about participants that were suitable and those that were not. Different sampling strategies can be used to obtain qualified candidates that will provide the most credible information to a study (Creswell, 2013). However, in this study purposive sampling was explored in taking the sampling decisions (Flick, 2009) about the hotels, employees and guests. This implies that participants were selected based on pre-defined criteria relevant for answering the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the field of study, potential participants that met the set criteria which is highlighted later in this study, were approached to elicit their participation. While some guests declined for genuine reasons of a language barrier (e.g. French speaking nationals and other Ghanaians that could not speak English fluently), others declined because of personal reasons. However, on the part of employees, in most cases, non-participation was due to their busy schedules.

4.6.1 Selecting hotels

Previous studies not only highlight the need for defining the participants or the study context, but also suggests that the logic behind every move or decision in the research process should conform with the theoretical proposition explored (e.g. Van Manen, 1990; Wilson, 2012). This means that researchers should be able to provide justification for actions taken in the research process. In this regard, while a study participant can represent a country, organization, employees, customers, event, place or process, this study focused on employees' and guests' from six hotels in Ghana. The selection process not only considers hotels that are deemed appropriate to address the research aim, but also hotels that best capture the phenomenon under investigation (Gerring and Cojocaru, 2016). Selection refers to the method through which participants are chosen for an intensive investigation (e.g. Gerring and Cojocaru, 2016). In this respect, considering that the literature on value co-creation drivers within a hotel context, from the developing country is limited, the selection of employees' and guests' from different hotels was not only based on the likelihood that they were appropriate for gathering insightful data (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007), but also because generating diverse information from different contexts is critical for clarifying the complex nature of value and co-creation.

In addition, Ghana was selected because there was no known research on co-creation drivers in a hotel setting from a Sub-Saharan developing country. Selection of participants was geographically limited to hotels, 2 each from 3, 4 and 5-star hotels operating in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. This is because Accra provided a cosmopolitan area and a densely populated market made up of national and international customers that patronised hotel service. In addition, the Greater Accra region serves as both an administrative and an industrial hub of the country, and hotels in this region attract guests from other parts of the world for purposes of business or leisure (Narteh et al, 2013). Further, the Greater Accra region is not only cosmopolitan in terms of hosting lots of people of varying nationalities, but also has the largest

concentration of all categories of hotels in Ghana (Mensah, 2006). Hence, limiting the study to hotels in the geographical location was not only because of easy access to the participants, cost effectiveness or to achieve the desired, credible hotels for the study within a manageable time frame, but also the differences among guests and employees presented diverse value perceptions and co-creation encounters worth exploring.

While the above reasons provided enough justification for limiting the research to participants from Ghana's hotel industry, choosing the hotels was more complicated, since selection was based less on the uniqueness of a given hotel, and more on the contribution within the set of participants for understanding the study topic (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). As part of the hotel selection process, the researcher had to seek permission from the President of the Ghana Hotels Association, then gate keepers (Directors) of the targeted hotels. This was done through delivery of official letters, direct calls, e-mails and personal visits, not only to maintain fairness during the study but also to prepare the ground for quality data collection.

Afterwards, the researcher had to establish rapport with the participants, by using ice-breaking exercises, which was considered essential in order for participants to open up and share their experiences. In this case, although letters were sent to fourteen hotels to introduce the researcher, the research topic and to seek access, subsequent meetings were held with management of targeted hotels for purposes of getting to know each other better. While meetings mostly centered on self-introduction by the researcher and management, explanation of the general aim of the study and other relevant information as stated in the participants information sheet (see, Appendix 2), there were instances where some hotels requested that the researcher give a presentation about the study. It is worth noting that all of these activities contributed to creating an enabling environment for data collection. After meeting the management of the 14 hotels, 8 agreed to participate in the research. Of the 8 hotels, one hinted that their policy did not allow their guests to be interviewed. This implied that only employees

could be included in the study. Another, hotel suggested that the researcher could come for data collection only on days that the hotel management was able to select participants for the study, which the researcher knew infringed on confidentiality. Thus, the remaining 6 hotels took part in the study, as shown in Appendix 6. The researcher's exposure during the study's field data collection period not only offered valuable experience on how firms collaborate with researchers, but the researcher also learned negotiation skills, effective communication and presentation skills that might be leveraged to guide future research. For reasons of anonymity, the study's hotels were named H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6. Table 4.1, below, gives a description of the hotels and their categories/stars.

Table 4.1. A description of selected hotels.

Category/ stars	Hotels	No. of years in hotel service business	Core service	No. of Staff	Headed by	No. of rooms	Target	Nearness to National airport
5	H1	More than 40 yrs.	room accommodation, food and beverage, conferencing and banqueting	300	Expatriate	More than 200	Business and Leisure guests	6km
	H2	Less than 10 yrs.	room, food, beverage service with conference and banqueting as complementary.	280	Expatriate	180	Business and Leisure guests	2.5
4	H3	More than 40yrs	room accommodation, food and beverage, conferencing and banqueting.	270	Expatriate	278	Business and Leisure guests	2km
	H4	More than 40yrs	accommodation, food and beverage, conferencing and leisure facilities	378	Ghanaian	328	Business and Leisure guests	5.7
3	H5	More than 10yrs	room accommodation, food and beverage, conferencing and banqueting.	150	Expatriate	90	Business and Leisure guests	1km
	H6	More than 10 yrs.	offers room, food, beverage, conference and banqueting service.	130	Ghanaian	81	Business and Leisure guests	½ km

4.6.2 Selecting employees

Employees working in a hotel in Ghana during the data collection period that had an opportunity to interact with guests were most preferred, since the literature seemed to lack research in this area. Hotel employees, including Directors, senior and middle level managers, supervisors, front desk, receptionists, waiters, chefs, porters, and drivers were most preferred. Occupying those positions suggested that they had some level of employee-guest encounter experience, whether direct or indirect, and that they understood the entire value (co)-creation process involved in their respective roles. The researcher ensured that the management of the selected hotels fully understood the purpose of the study, the types of information needed for the research, as well as the time needed for each interview. This was aimed at eliciting their maximum support in the data collection process. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, employees were asked to sign a consent form prior to the interviews. The selection of the employees followed same process as that used for the guests.

Because there did not seem to be a simple answer to the sample size appropriate for a study, the researcher had challenges in considering the appropriateness of the study's sample size throughout data collection. That is, deciding upon the number and type of participants required to address the research questions and aims. According to Flanagan (1954), if the activity being studied is relatively simple, it may be satisfactory to collect only 50 or 100 incidents. This study not only considered Flanagan's recommendations, but also that, given the overall description of the participants, it was not possible to estimate the sample size, considering the exploratory nature of the study. Therefore, sampling continued until saturation was reached to allow the researcher to address the aims and research questions. A total of 60 participants were recruited for the entire study.

4.6.3 Selecting guests

The nature of this study required access not only to the hotels but also, and more importantly, to their employees and guests, both business and leisure. Guests aged 18+, whether on business or leisure and gender representative, were selected to ensure that participants were mature enough to make informed decisions about their participation in the research. It was anticipated that adults within that age category have had motives for choosing one hotel service rather than another, which provided the basis for selecting guests who had prior hotel experience, to maintain the dyadic nature of the study. The concept of value remains dynamic therefore, guests on business, leisure or both were selected to participate, since their diverse needs and value preferences were considered to be critical factors influencing their hotel choice.

In choosing participants, the study followed the steps in CIT to make participation in the research process flexible (Flanagan, 1954), whereby participants are able to articulate their views in a comfortable manner. Hence, using the above criteria, potential participants that were present at the selected hotels' reception, car park area, pool side, bar, café, pastry shop, gym and restaurant were approached for interaction towards participation in the study. While some participants accepted and, therefore, were interviewed, others requested that prior arrangements be made for their interview on a specific day and time. Using the CIT, the selection process began with the sharing of an information sheet for participants to read and gain understanding about the study and its possible implications to ensure data quality (Stauss, 1993). Participants were offered the opportunity to ask questions for further clarification of the information provided (Chell, 2014). The confidentiality of the participants was ensured through anonymization and the withholding of any private information given. Potential participants were not forced or coerced into the study, and they were all briefed that participation was voluntary. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, participants were asked to sign a consent form prior to the interviews (see, Appendix 4). With guests' permission, each interview was

digitally recorded to allow for a more natural exchange and information flow, to ensure uninterrupted interaction.

4.7 Interview design

The study aimed to examine the drivers of employee-guest co-creation participation to understand how these drivers affect interaction and the outcome of service in hotels. Considering that the study used a micro level approach to co-creation, employees and guests were both selected and interviewed to gain insight into how value co-creation activities result from service encounters. According to Butterfield et al. (2005, p.270), “one important objective of CIT interviewing is to explore the same content areas at the same level of detail with all participants.” While this does not mean asking the same questions in an orderly manner, to achieve this aim, research suggests the importance of preparation of how the intended interview instrument elicits the required data to provide maximum benefit to the proposed research (e.g. McNamara, 2009). In this regard, Wilson (2012) recommends a pilot test to refine data collection plans and to develop relevant lines of questions. Similarly, Chenail (2011) proposes that pre-interview exercises are undertaken to improve the data collection instrument and to address potential biases. In this study, interview questions and procedures were test-piloted, and the responses led to refinement of the questions for further development and clarification of the research instrument (Patton, 2002). The interview protocol (see, Appendix 5) was initially pre-tested on fellow students who had once been guests. This happened between 20th July to August 10th, 2017. The second phase of the pilot test happened in hotels in Ghana between December 5th to 10th, 2017 with different employees and guests who were not part of the actual study. This was aimed at identifying ambiguity and inconsistency in the interview guide for necessary corrections before the actual data collection started from 10th January to 22nd March 2018. In addition, the pre-testing was critical not only because it provided early feedback for the researcher (Easterby-Smith, 2015) and identified potential issues related to the

trustworthiness of the data to be collected, but it also allowed corrections and additions in the discussion guide, which enabled the researcher to improve the probing in the course of the interviews.

While the extant literature suggests varied interviewing steps, it notes that the interviewing sequence is not fixed, thus, allowing the researcher to change the questions asked, the sites chosen and the topic to study (e.g. Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Drawing from this, the study's interviewing process used the following steps:

- Deciding on the open-ended questions that elicited most useful information to answer research questions.
- Identifying potential participants who could best answer these questions based on one of the purposeful sampling procedures mentioned in the previous discussion.
- Designing and using interview protocol which included main and sub-questions about the research topic, captured in a way that interviewees could understand.
- Determining the place for conducting the interview, that is, a quiet location free from distractions.
- Obtaining consent from the interviewee to participate in the study, as well as having the interviewee complete a consent form before the interview starts.

Other issues in the interviewing process concerned possible benefits and risks, the interview process, confidentiality, allowing an opportunity for participants to withdraw from interview at any time, the amount of time required to complete the interview and plans for using the results from the interview (see, Appendix 2). This marked the initial interaction between the researcher and the participants; hence, the purpose of this activity was not only to create a conducive environment, but also to develop a rapport, where participants felt comfortable to share views on the study topic (Flick, 2009). Drawing from CIT's flexible interview approach (Flanagan, 1954), face-to-face interaction was used to ask participants to recall and describe their experiences. Using the principles of CIT not only affected the data collection in terms of its richness, but also how critical incidents were identified from the actors' responses. As such, respondents were asked to recall and describe certain critical incidents in relation to the

following questions: (1) drivers of co-creation, (2) motivation for co-creation and its effects on interaction and service outcome, (3) value expectations and (4) personal characteristics and its effects on interaction and service outcome.

At all interview stages, the researcher provided follow-up questions, prompts or probes when necessary, to ensure that optimal responses were obtained from the participants (Keats, 1999), which also assisted in extracting the required information. For ethical reasons, participants were not coerced, their willingness to participate in the study was ensured before the interview started. To ensure that the participants felt comfortable to share their experiences, a confidentiality note signed by the research assistant was shown. For a copy of the confidentiality note, see, Appendix 7. Information or an incident were deemed critical if they were recalled and described in detail by participants when asked to share views or experiences on the study topic (Woolsey, 1986). As indicated earlier, this is the strength of CIT over other research techniques. However, as with all forms of inquiry, CIT application in this study presented limitations, because it tended to focus more on memory work, as participants' ability to recall and describe in detail past events and experiences was very important. By this, authors contend that CIT has a built-in bias towards incidents that happened recently (e.g. Butterfield et al., 2005). In this regard, lack of ability to recall and describe can prevent participants from participating in CIT studies (Gremler, 2004). Limitations might not have resulted only from participants' unwillingness to divulge information, be it negative or positive for fear of getting exposed, but also critical incidents that have been inaccurately or untruthfully recalled might have tended to affect the quality of the study. However, such limitations can be overcome, depending on the research questions being considered (Gremler, 2004). In this regard, although the study used an inductive approach, a thorough knowledge in the study area can help the researcher to understand not only the content of the answers that participants have provided, but also what they mean. Hence, when addressing subsequent questions, the researcher is able

to ask the same questions in different ways, depending not only on how the participants' answered the initial questions, but also on their understanding about the topic under consideration. Further, the researcher might enter a field of research with certain opinions about what the study is all about and what is to be investigated. However, as with all qualitative studies, establishing an agenda for assessment of subjectivity suggests an opportunity for participants to share their thoughts in open-ended questions, which might not only result in an increased understanding of complex phenomena such as value co-creation, but also a broader view is generated about the study topic. This interview design applied to both semi-structured and focus group interactions. Tables 4.2, and 4.3 below, present the breakdown of the study participants' attributes.

Table 4.2. Breakdown of guests' attributes

	Guest Attributes	Frequency (n)
Gender	Male	23
	Female	6
Age	21-30	5
	31-40	11
	41-50	8
	51-60	4
	More than 60	1
Nationality	American	1
	Belgians	2
	Beninois	2
	Greece	1
	Srilankans	2
	Zimbabwean	1
	Canadian	1
	Ivorians	2
	Kenyan	1
	Lebanese	1
	Indian	1
	Liiberian	1
		Ghanaians

Table 4.3. Breakdown of employees' attributes

	Employees Attributes	Frequency (n)
Gender	Males	18
	Females	13
Age	18+	
Nationality	Ghanaians	
Job position	Managers	13
	Supervisors	5
	Waiters	12
	Porter	1

4.7.1 Pilot test

A pilot study is vital to any research because it serves the function of helping to detect possible flaws in the measurement instrument. In this study, the pilot test of the questions helped not only to identify unclear or ambiguous statements in the research protocol (Dikko, 2016), but also added value and credibility to the entire research project (Van Wijk and Harrison, 2013). Sekaran (2013) argues that interviewees can bias the data collected if they do not understand the questions asked. Drawing from these studies, pre-testing of the data collection instrument not only helped to refine the questions in order to forestall problems associated with understanding and answering, but also helped to ascertain how well the research instrument could work in the actual study. Using the data collection instrument on a small number of participants having the same characteristics as those in the main study, helped the researcher to appreciate participants' level of understanding about the study topic, which was useful during actual data collection. The pilot study first used fellow students in the UK who had once been guests. The second phase included guests from the selected hotels in Ghana. The test focused on the following activities:

- Finding ambiguities in the questions.
- Determining whether the questions elicited relevant and adequate responses.

- Noting the time taken to complete the interview to determine whether it was reasonable.
- Establishing whether replies could be properly interpreted in relation to the required information.
- Determining whether the researcher incorporated all the questions necessary to measure value and co-creation concepts.
- Determining whether the layout was clear regarding question content, wording, sequence, form, layout and question difficulty.

Comments received provided the researcher with prior knowledge about likely responses to the research questions and how long it took to answer each question in real time within the real interview context. Instances where participants hesitated to answer or sought clarification about a question gave an indication of the need for attention, since such questions might be too long, difficult to answer or have ambiguous meanings. This helped the researcher to re-phrase or simplify the questions before using them during the real data collection.

4.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

Previous studies not only emphasise the need for a well-considered combination of sampling and data collection in a more defensible manner, but also a need for the study design to align with the chosen methodology (e.g. Sandelowski, 2010). In this study, data collection methods included semi-structured interviews to facilitate the collection of multiple sources of information. While most co-creation studies within the hospitality sector have used qualitative methods (e.g. Shaw et al., 2011; FitzPatrick et al., 2013; Prebensen et al., 2015; 2017) and online surveys (e.g. Morosan, 2015), these studies did not combine semi-structured interviewing with focus group discussions and observation. This study favoured semi-structured interviews not only for presenting open-ended questions that enabled participants to construct the meanings of value and co-creation (Creswell, 2013), but also to explore the primary means of data collection for obtaining participants' subjective opinions about the study topic. Wilson

(2012) posits that such interviews are not only flexible, but also evolutionary, because questions are adapted to explore more personal information from each interviewee. In this context, although the data collection instrument remained same, the interview process was adapted to fit each respondent's level of understanding about the study topic. This approach not only provided a conducive environment for seeking clarifications of the interviewees' views and issues that were unanticipated at the start of data collection (Flick, 2009), but also fostered an iterative process which aided researcher-participant discourse towards the collection of relevant data to address the research questions.

Using a semi-structured interview not only offered a more effective way to obtain data to reduce data ambiguity (Turner, 2010), but also allowed for optimal information collection to discover interviewees' perspectives of the research topic (e.g. Dikko, 2016). However, Flick (2009) contends that every research method has good and bad features. Hence, in this study, while the advantages of semi-structured interviews in terms of gathering optimal information lay along one side of the continuum, the disadvantages on the other side of the continuum might include bias due to the researcher's subjective selection of the participants, how participants were engaged, the questions asked, as well as the participants' recalling of critical incidents related to the study topic.

Interviews were conducted during weekdays, weekends and within working hours, with participants that had already been spoken to concerning participation in the study, and who were in the hotel within the time frame of the data collection. Interviews took between 30 to 40 minutes in a serene environment within the hotels' premises.

4.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

Apart from the interviews, focus group discussion was another method used to gather rich and descriptive data from the participants (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). This study not only

considered group discussion as a different qualitative technique for bringing together a group of employees and guests to interact about co-creation, but also as a useful means to generate both individual and collective meaning about value and co-creation. In this regard, the simultaneous involvement in interaction by different participants in the group discussions not only contributed to the generation of insightful data that might have been difficult to access through other research techniques (Sekaran, 2013), but also participants' found the sharing of a range of opinions, feelings, perceptions and experiences to be beneficial for subsequent co-creation encounters.

While most studies do not describe in detail the process of conducting groups discussions, the steps the in CIT approach (Flanagan, 1954), not only allow the researcher to examine participants' experiences about the study topic, but also to create an opportunity for exploring the context and interactional dynamics among different groups, and how they contributed to the broader discussion about value and co-creation. Most productive focus group discussions are invariably those in which participants have strong opinions drawn from personal experiences (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). This not only suggests that group discussions are unlikely to achieve research objectives if the wrong types of participants are selected (Wilson, 2012), but also that there may be an environment where participants are unable to freely express their views due to large numbers of participants making up a group. In this context, while Wilson (2012) suggests 8 to 12 participants are appropriate for discussing one topic, Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) argue that it need not contain a fixed number of participants, although fewer than 4 may jeopardise the valuable group dynamics the study seeks to obtain.

This study used 6 participants, 3 employees and 3 guests from each hotel to explore the topic over 30 to 60 minutes. While ensuring that participants did not overstay beyond the agreed time, the selected time frame gave the moderator sufficient time to establish rapport with the participants and, to fully discuss the research issues of interest. To limit the problems of taking

notes during the interview, Patton (2002) suggests the employment of another person to write responses, while the researcher moderates discussion and the group. Therefore, questions and prompts were moderated by the researcher during the discussion sessions, while a research assistant, who had earlier signed a confidentiality form and introduced to the participants, wrote notes (see Appendix 8 for a copy of the confidentiality note). A total of 6 focus group discussions were held in the entire study. Moderating and attentive listening to the critical incidents enriched the data analysis.

4.7.4 Observations

Co-creation is a social activity requiring two or more actors' participation in a service process (Chandler and Vargo, 2011). Thus, to understand how co-creation occurs, observation was used as a means for collecting first-hand information from a naturally occurring social environment. Bryant (2017) posits that qualitative research observation is a method of data collection in which a researcher observes a phenomenon within a specific research field. Similarly, Williams (2008) suggests that observational research involves the planned watching, recording and analysis of observed behaviour as it occurs in a natural setting. However, it is worth noting that observation as a qualitative research technique is different from everyday observation, because the researcher focuses on what the researcher intends to investigate through a systematic approach, rather than being casual in the observation process (Berger, 2010). Hence, the researcher used a well-planned checklist of specific activities and behaviours to be observed, which are mentioned later in this section. In addition, a research assistant was engaged to help with the recording while the researcher concentrated on writing the observed incidents, both of which contributed to the trustworthiness of the study.

Creswell (2013) defines observation as the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site. This implies that certain procedures

must be followed before successful observation can be achieved, which resonates with Flanagan (1954, p.327), as he lists a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviours to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems. Although CIT has been frequently used to collect data on observations previously made which are reported from memory (e.g. Butterfield et al., 2005), this study used the technique to aid the collection of past and recent co-creation incidents that occurred during the field study. Drawing from Flanagan (1954), four specifications were decided upon during the observations to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. These were: (1) defining the types of situations to be observed; (2) determining the situation's relevance to the general aim; (3) understanding the extent of the effect the incident has on the general aim; and (4) deciding who will be making the observations. While the application of these specifications might be relative depending on the research project (Butterfield et al., 2005), this study's observations checklist included: (1) who to observe (e.g. porters, drivers, waiters, receptionists, supervisors, relations managers, business and leisure guests; (2) what to observe (e.g. employee-guest co-creation interactions, layout of physical environment, resources used, actors contribution in service activities); (3) where to observe (e.g. hotels' entrances and open spaces such as car parks, reception, bars, restaurants and poolside); (4) forms of recording (e.g. paper, audio, video), and (5) what should be the role of the researcher and the research assistant (for instance deciding on when to be a participant or non-participant observer).

In terms of determining the relevance of observation to the study's aims, observing recent incidents were preferred because it provided insights into actual co-creation practices in a hotel setting. In addition, it not only allowed participants' actions and behaviours to be observed, evaluated, classified, and recorded while the facts remain fresh in the mind of the researcher for recall during analysis (Flanagan, 1954), but also defining and understanding how co-creation activities occur at the micro level and their effect on service outcome was necessary to this

study. To this end, the researcher found it useful to undertake the observations not only for verifying participants' views and meanings in the study, but also for effective reporting of the findings.

The study found participant observation and non-participant observation useful for gathering the data required to answer the research questions. Employees and guests expect their needs to be met in service encounters, therefore, what happened in the service encounter process was considered critical to delivering such expectations. In this regard, participant observation mostly happened in the mornings between the hours of 9am to 10am at the hotels' pastry and coffee shops, which allowed the researcher to become a guest. This not only enabled the researcher to write notes and take pictures whilst taking part in the observed activity of service exchange (Creswell, 2013), but also to examine how the service exchange impacted co-creation interactions and service outcomes. Observations were not only limited to how events and sequences constituting value co-creation translated into employees' and guests' subjective value to meet their individual goals, but also emotions expressed in specific service situations were observed closely.

Non-participant observation was used to allow the researcher to observe employee-guest service exchanges and joint service design related to menu, bar, room or place. This mostly occurred in the hotel reception, restaurant bar and at the poolside from 11am until the day's work was done. Of more importance to this activity was to know how these actors participated in the service design, information sharing and information seeking to affect the outcome of the service. In addition, the study took a key interest in context-specific physical objects that the literature suggests facilitate indirect co-creation interactions (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). In this study, these objects included the architectural design of the hotel buildings, hotel location, landscaping, room decor, lighting systems and how their use contributed to meeting the service expectations of the involved actors. Both participant and non-participant observations used

audio and video recording to enable a more accurate and detailed record of events to be obtained than using only field notes, which reduced the impact of the researcher's prior biases (Guba, 1981).

4.7.5 Analysing the data

The transcribed data was uploaded into NVivo 11 software for analysis to uncover connections, work more efficiently and save time in ways that were not possible manually. The focus was on participants' views hence, data analysis was done inductively to allow themes to emerge from participants' meanings and interpretations (Boyatzis, 1998), through systematic coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994), and to use CIT to describe the data in an efficient manner so that it could be effectively used for many practical purposes (Flanagan, 1954). This affected the data analysis in terms of: (1) determining the frame of reference, (2) categorising similar incidents, (3) and determining the level of specificity or generality to be used in reporting the data based on actors' experiences, views and meanings.

Coding and categorisation started with data reduction where the researcher "sorts, discards, and organizes data in such a way that final conclusion can be drawn and verified." (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.11). This included a process of selecting, simplifying and assigning table units to the interviews and focus group discussions data, whether it was a single statement or a longer answer from more than one participant (see Table 4.5). This not only aided connections and patterns to be made between different parts of the data, but also to classify it according to similarities and differences (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in the stages 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the analysis. The process included not only comparing the relative frequencies of themes within a data or code co-occurrence displaying a relationship, but also identifying the most significant meaning from different themes and relationships between the constructs and factors in order to create a reasonable and logical chain of evidence (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The analysis had three goals: (1) to uncover statements and put them into their context, (2) reduce the original text by summarizing and categorizing and (3) to identify and analyse patterns of meanings in the dataset (Clarke and Braun, 2014). Using Clarke and Braun's (2014) 6-step framework, the data was analysed in a specific order. Firstly, the data was iteratively read for purposes of familiarisation before analysing separately. Secondly, relevant codes were generated from the employees and guests from the different hotels, and texts with similar characteristics placed under themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Thirdly, within and cross analysis was done to deepen understanding (Miles & Huberman, 1994), then findings from interviews and focus group discussions were merged for a holistic understanding of the study topic. Accordingly, this stage of the process led the researcher to focus on parts of the data set from interviews and focus group discussions rather than attempting to analyse all of it in an indiscriminating manner (see Table 4.5). Incidents were considered critical when they represented participants' views of hotel experience and also appeared to address the research questions (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). At the fourth step, data was reviewed and grouped to help develop emerging concepts, which were not only compared for similarities and differences for further categorization into main and sub-themes, but also how they helped in addressing the research questions. At this stage, the data was enriched because participants views from interviews and the focus group discussions have been put together for broader insight into the study topic.

For example, the analysis of interviews and focus group data suggests that employees' and guests' hotel service expectations were different, both indicated that value for money was key and critical to their joint participation in value co-creation encounters. The term "value for money" emerged not only from interviews, group discussions and interpreted differently at certain times, but also had interpretation that was common to the employees and the guests. Thus, highlighting a need to understand the inter-subjective and intra-subjective value judgements (Helkkula et al., 2012), by the employee and the guest at the different stages of hotel service for successful co-creation encounters. In addition, at the group discussions it was observed that some employees' and guests' repeated some of the points they gave during

interviews to emphasise not only the criticality of those incidents to their hotel service encounter but also the influence those incidents had on value co-creation encounter participation. Although some waiters and the porter were not as vocal as they were during the interviews which might have hindered some of the information required to address the study's questions and objectives, the group discussions generated information which employees and guests considered very useful to their subsequent service encounters for successful co-creation to occur. In subsequent sections, the views from employees and guests, both subjective and common have been reported. In the fifth step, themes were refined and developed. This stage required the setting up of limits for themes, sub-themes and setting boundaries for the range of items that were factored into the analysis. The sixth step, which was the concluding part of the analysis procedure suggests saturation, because no additional themes were found from any additional data (Ando, Cousins and Young, 2014), thus, becoming possible to report the findings. As an example, tables 4.4 and 4.5 below, demonstrate how the researcher brought down the long list of codes to a smaller list. While table 4.4. illustrates the stages 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the coding processes, table 4.5. presents the stage 2 of the coding process aimed at gaining a holistic understanding of what value means to employees' and guests' in a hotel setting. The key findings from interviews and group discussions on employees' and guests' meaning of value in a hotel setting generated five broad themes as shown in Table 4.4, including value for money(Economic value), location and physical evidence (Environmental value), Internet and Wi-fi (Technological characteristic of service), Quality and variety of food Cultural value), mutual respect and appreciation (social value). The same process was used to address the other research questions of the thesis.

Table 4.4. Stages 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the coding processes

Familiarisation with data (Stage 1)	Coding of actors expected value across different hotels (Stage 3)	Sorting and coding for similarities and differences pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters. (Stage 4)		Categorising/ grouping of main and sub-themes (Stage 5)	Themes on employee-guest value expectations in a hotel setting (Stage 6)
<p>What does value mean to employees' and guests' in a hotel setting</p>	<p>Employees' value expectations: . 3-star hotels (H5, H6) . 4-star hotels (H3, H4) . 5-star hotels (H1, H2)</p>	<p>Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . The person should come in and then as he/she is leaving she knows that whatever money she spent is worth what she got from us regarding total experience . Returns on investment, what the guest is paying for and what they get, . The location regarding proximity of the hotel to the airport . Reception, cleanliness, lighting, seating arrangement, the room space and smell, bedding, bath accessories, pool, gym . Food and beverage quality and variety . Protect the guest, staff and other property from any form of attack . A free wi-fi service, consistent internet service . Recognition and mutual respect 	<p>Focus Group Discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Value means what the guest has managed to exchange for service and so what you offer determines the value of money the person gives to you . <i>The term value is that you are able to exceed the expectation of what the guest is paying for</i> . <i>My value expectation is that if I loose the guest.... I am not going to have the number of room nights sales or my revenue at the restaurant</i> . The location of a hotel in terms of proximity to the central business centre and airport . The hotel facility . We will make sure that you are safe . <i>Sometimes you serve a menu and you have guests that are allergic to some things which we did not really specify, it becomes a problem, and you have to change</i> . <i>Quality and varieties of food to choose from</i> . <i>In terms of value, I think that we have more room for improvement Because you have consistent guest reviews that says, slow internet, sub-standard food. That is a clear indication, do something about it.</i> . Even though having a 24/7 Wi-Fi service is expensive, we have no choice but to invest in it. 	<p>Total experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value for money - Returns on investment - "Gives and gets" - Hotel location - Closeness to the airport - Closeness to business site - Physical Evidence - Tangible facilities within the hotel - Safety and security - General safety and security of the destination - Internet - Wi-fi - Recognition - Mutual respect 	<p>Total experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Hotel environment Cultural Technological characteristics of service Social
	<p>Guests' value expectations: . 3-star hotels (H5, H6) . 4-star hotels (H3, H4) . 5-star hotels (H1, H2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . <i>Value is based upon what you paid and the total experience that you get</i> . Money paid and the experience enjoyed, returns on my investment . The hotel should be near to the airport . The physical things we see, the cleanliness, the bedding, recreational facility, a gym, a swimming pool, an environment to sit and relax if not working, the general maintenance of the hotel, the rooms, comfortable environment, the quality of the place, the ambience, the setting, meeting rooms, air-condition must be everywhere in the hotel. . Food and beverage, quality of the food, food for nationalities, the list of food, the bar and buffet . Wi-fi is very important, the internet service should be very good" . General safety and security of the destination . Recognition and mutual respect 	<p><i>Value is when you expect to pay certain level of money for the service that you expect, so the point I am saying is that if the total experience, the ambience, what we call the physical evidence'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . <i>When you talk about value, this country I have never been happy with the hotel industry, the service vis-a vis the prices of good and services as compared with other countries</i> . <i>Value is when I feel that my total experience, you know vis-a vis what I paid for</i> . <i>If you are not able to offer a particular service, don't demand for a certain amount of money</i> . <i>Nearness of the hotel to the airport and work-place</i> . <i>Varieties of local and continental dishes</i> . <i>Like when you and my sister appeared, the security guys are there to assist and to scrutinise and to check.</i> . <i>There is going to be a snowball effect because the service provider is not getting that contribution, where contribution here means respecting him, showing appreciation and recognition</i> 		

Table 4.5. Stage 2 of the coding process – what does value mean to employees’ and guests’ in a hotel setting

Interviews
<p>Employee perspective <i>“whatever the guest is paying for, and what the guest getting for what he is paying” “what they have been promised and for what they are requested to bring in their money” “when somebody is paying 100 dollars for the room and then he enters the room the ambience, the experience is great” “giving guests value for their money” “if somebody is given out something that is hardly earned” the money the guest manages to exchange for service and what is offered, “the hotel ensures that the guest gets value for the money” “something that somebody expects to get from what he has paid for” “When I give you money and I need something, I should get it in the way that I want it”, “the service price” “The person should come in and then as he/she is leaving she knows that whatever money she spent is worth what she got from us” “the person he gets the value for what he is paying” “service that matches the money the customer is spending” “we give value for the money you are spending” “whatever I am giving out and whatever I am looking for, I am getting the best at a minimum cost” “I am looking at those attributes from a service that will make a guest be willing to pay money to have” “what the guest is paying for a service” “value is a win-win affair, if I give you something worth let’s say 10 million and you are able to pay the 10million and you are okay”</i></p>
<p>Guest perspective <i>“In a hotel setting value is when I feel that I paid less for what I got” “when a person is entering a hotel, he has the perception to be satisfied, so when she/he receives value for what he has paid for or whatever service that he has enjoyed” “value is based upon what you paid and the total experience that you get” “returns on my investment” “my value has to do with value for money” “if you get great experience for the money you are paying” “if you get great experience for the money you are paying” “the total experience” “if I come to this hotel and I am spending 10 Ghana Cedis, I need to get a return for investment” “value for money” “value to me equates to the return to what I paid for, the services I am getting”</i></p>
<p>Employee perspective <i>“the building, the room” “the bed, the television” “how explicit our place is to the guest “ “in the industry so far it will be the room” “when the guest enters the room, and he says everything is intact” “the ambience” “exceeding the guests’ expectations” “good air conditioning” “the laundry service” “no pillows that are smelling” “not having a bad smelly pillow, bedsheets are changed every day” “the mattress and the towels in the room should be clean” “It should not be like any other room or any other place he has gone to or as normal as her or his room, it should be something extra ordinary” “air conditioning is our priority” “the ambience, the freshness of the room, how the bed is neatly laid, have tea amenities in the room such as the kettle for the guests’ comfort if before breakfast or even after a breakfast they want to take coffee water can be heated, then we have the room telephone so that the guest can reach us or the reception, then we have a manual like a book showing some selected menu, what we serve in the restaurant and then the extensions to call in case of anything that the guest may need, the towels, the shower items like the gel, shampoo, we have the hair dryer also to make the guest comfortable”</i></p>
<p>Guest perspective <i>“the amenities should be up to the standard” “the ambience should be great, the bed, the bathroom, everything” “the environment in general”, “the physical things that we see” “the cleanliness” “the bedding, you have recreation, you have a gym, you have a swimming pool, you have an environment where I can sit and relax if I am not working” “the general maintenance of the hotel facility, the rooms” “clean, comfortable environment” “the quality of the place, the ambience, the setting” “my room should be comfortable” “my room being cleaned” “If they have a pool” a gym, other meeting rooms, a pool in this case” “how I could even watch TV in my hotel room” “value means good environment” “good environment” “the bed was comfortable and I very much appreciated it” “air-condition must be everywhere in the hotel”</i></p>
<p>Employee perspective <i>“the location of the hotel facility” “our proximity to the airport”</i></p>
<p>Guest perspective <i>“The hotel should be near to the airport because the concerned business partners is near this place, my working place is also near” “I will very much appreciate spending a shorter time to get back to the airport”</i></p>
<p>Employee perspective <i>“food and beverage” “the restaurant, our food” “even though people cook in their home, you can’t have it exactly the way you want it, so you go out to have variety and I think that is the major area where value is mentioned” “I will say value is basically about food and beverage” “the kind of meals that we have in the menu is another thing” “Value is the food we provide, we give you some part of Asian delicacies, we give you some part of African delicacies, we give you some part of European” “Somebody too, food becomes the value” “we place value mostly on the quality of food service” “value is guests should have an array of food collections they can choose from, so it should be vast” “you have the food and its taste” “restaurant”</i></p>
<p>Guest perspective <i>“the quality of the food” “value is about the food, the food should be tasty” “Nice, delicious food” “the list of food” “value is the quality of the food” “the quality of food aspect” “the variety of food that they are able to provide” “the restaurant” “the food setting, how is the food arranged, how did it taste” “when I come to the table they bring me hot water, lemon and ginger and that to me is value” “ what food I can get from this hotel” “the bar and buffet” “food for nationalities I think the manager must take into account of all the individuals from the different nations in the hotel” “if they would make a bag of plantain chips available around with the tea, I think that would not be bad at all” “Kenkey, I saw you only one time”</i></p>
<p>Employee perspective <i>“a free wi-fi service” “the internet facility might mean a lot” “the internet should work for them to do business. So that is their number 1 priority” “you have Wi-fi” “what bandwidth of internet that you should have” “when the person is here and want to work online and our internet service is not that good, I don’t think the person will feel comfortable”</i></p>
<p>Guest perspective <i>“wi-fi was very important” “the internet service” “is the internet, the wi-fi, because I am a businessperson, I want to get on it” “the internet service should be very good”</i></p>
<p>Employee perspective <i>“Upon enquiring from a employee, he explained that the aim of the checks is to protect the guest, staff and other property from any form of attack. It is also to provide maximum security to everybody on that premises, especially the guest” “if the laptop cannot be kept safe, then I do not think they feel safe in a hotel”</i></p>
<p>Guest perspective <i>“An all-round security” “value is that the hotel provides safety and security” “the staff are able to provide me guidance, including the taxis that I will need within the various sessions, where I should and shouldn’t go” “the security” “security”, “particularly appreciated the safe gym”</i></p>
<p>Employee perspective <i>“at least to recognise or to emphasise the fact that they are part of the Airport View hotel family” “Value in this context would clearly touch on how best the hotel values your presence” “When they travel, they want to feel a part of the culture that the people have with the music, dance or the food” “Trying to find out about their problems, what we can do to improve on what we are doing and all that”</i></p>
<p>Guest perspective <i>“when you arrive they make you feel like a family” “everybody recognising me as a guest by name”</i></p>
<p>Employee perspective <i>“somebody who comes and at the first hand is met with rude behaviour of a sort, I bet you that person might never like to come here again” “we are trying to render a service to make them happy, in return, the best they can do is to accord me that respect”</i></p>
<p>Guest perspective <i>“they are respectful, and it tells you what they want for you as a customer” “somebody is actually respecting me as a paying guest in the hotel” “normally when the guest is there, is not the guest who firstly greets, but we greet first” “there are a lot of things that I am being exposed to here that I never dreamt about, especially the issue about respect. I think it is one thing that is lacking, but unfortunately the service providers don’t bring it out” “The respect and the patience they give me” “You know, they’ve got to respect themselves. So, I will say, is it necessary, you don’t have to talk to the staff like that. And they are like, who are you and I will say I am a guest here and I don’t like you talking to the staff like that, if you don’t respect them, leave them alone”</i></p>

Focus Group Discussions

Employee perspective

"When we say value, we say whatever the guest is paying for, is the guest getting for what he is paying, is the service top notch, does it meet their expectation, or does it exceed their expectation, "Value is a win-win affair. If I give you something worth let's say 100 million and you can't pay and you prefer to pay me for 6million, for you it will be value but for me giving you the service, it will not be value for me"

Guest perspective

"Value is the cost of service", "Value is when I feel that I paid less for what I got, when I feel that the service, the totality of the experience is far bigger than what I paid for", "If I spend any amount in Ghana Cedis in this hotel, I need to get a return for investment, value for money or whatever it is", "Value has to do with value for money...returns on investment", "Value means what a person has managed to exchange for service and so what you offer determines the value of money the person gives to you",

Employee perspective

"Value means satisfying the guest. For me satisfaction is like providing a good service to the guest. Good service is timely delivery of service like the food on time, everything on time", "Value is the satisfaction that the guest has to derive in terms of what they want", "Anytime that value is being mentioned in hotel, what comes into my mind is, guests are suppose to be satisfied, I need to delight my customers, give them value for their money", "Value is about somebody being delighted or satisfied about something. When a guest is entering a hotel or whenever somebody is buying a thing, the person has the perception to be satisfied with the particular thing, so when he gets satisfied, then he receives value for what he has paid for or whatever service that he has enjoyed", "Value is when the guest is satisfied with total service such as the swimming, eating, room, bed. When she finishes her stay in the hotel and speaks well about whatever she is looking for, then we can say value is delivered because the guest is satisfied"

Guest perspective

"Value is based upon satisfaction from what you paid and the experience that you get, if you get great experience for the money you are paying or returns on your investment, if you are satisfied with that, that is where you have value", "Value is the happiness and the joy from the service that has really met my expectation"

Employee perspective

"I can look at the value from the three elements, the product, the service and then the environment", "In a hotel setting value is what really goes into the service you provide to your guests anytime they come here, the tangibles and the intangibles", "Value for us as service providers, we are always looking at offering services that go beyond the expectations of the guests", "What value mean to me is that we will give the guest something special away from home such as serene environment, the restaurant, the laundry service and our food", "If the guest says they have enjoyed the service, reception is warm, the ambience is cool, I think the service is well delivered and the value is given"

Guests' perspective

"Value is where the people provide a service not just as a tangible or intangible, but I will go for more of the intangible experience like a good smile, friendly people and environment", "What I expect as value is that the hotel primarily provides the safe, clean, comfortable environment experience so I can sleep at night, smooth check-in, smooth check-out, the staff are able to provide me guidance, including the taxis that I will need within the various sessions, where I should and shouldn't go", "Value is about location, so the reason for choosing H5 was the proximity to my office", "My perception of value or how I measure value when I come to any hotel is two folds. One is about the quality of the place, the ambience, the setting, the quality of the food if I decide to eat and the experience"

4.7.6 Reflexivity/Bias

Qualitative researchers today are much more self-disclosing about their study than they were a few years ago (Creswell, 2013). In so doing, qualitative researchers not only become reflexive about their own work, but also their continual examination of the impact of the study at all points during the research process is necessary. Reflexivity pertains to self-awareness (Lambert, Jomeen, McSherry, 2010) and the recognition that the researcher is part of the social world that they study (Jootun, McGhee and Marland, 2009). In fact, reflexivity is a continuous process of reflection by researchers on their values, beliefs, experiences and of recognizing,

examining, and understanding how their “social background, location and assumptions affect their research practice” (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p.17). Hosking and Pluut (2010) discuss reflexivity from the relational, rather than personal perspective, which became apparent in the course of directing the research process. That is, it was noticed that some participants perceived that the researcher was more experienced and educated. Therefore, these participants took advantage of their participation to express their joy at seeing a Ghanaian lady researching into a topic that would benefit the industry.

In this study, there were no particular issues of bias to be reported concerning the researcher’s background and how that influenced either the relationship between her and participants or the interviews and observations process administration. However, there were issues not only about the complex and relatively novel nature of value co-creation, but also the subjective nature of value and how the abstractness of both concepts could be discussed with every participant to enable understanding and rich data collection. To avoid the interviewer from biasing the study’s findings, it was decided that aspects of the interview guide relating to both concepts would be explained to each participant before the actual interview. This aided the extraction of relevant data, which became useful during analysis stage of the study. It is also recommended that researchers observe any ethical issues arising from their study (Creswell, 2013), which the next section presents.

4.7.7 Ethical considerations

This study followed the University of Northampton code of ethics to maintain ethical procedures throughout the research process. As part of the procedures in this study, the researcher read the University’s research ethics guidelines (2015) and understood them before applying for ethics approval from the University of Northampton’s Ethical Review Committee (ERC). The study did not involve any vulnerable individual, however, it was still important to

consider ethical issues to protect the identity and confidentiality of the respondents. The study's process also avoided any issue of covert research, which would have violated participants' privacy (Easterby-Smith, 2015). Further, the researcher made every effort to ensure the anonymity of all participants throughout the study, which is in line with ethical standards in research (Creswell, 2013). The researcher addressed the following ethical issues:

Permission requirement. The researcher used official letters, emails, and personal visits to seek access to the hotels. As indicated earlier, the researcher initially approached the gatekeeper in Ghana's hospitality industry, that is the President of the Ghana Hotels Association to introduce the topic and study aim to seek support and approval. Subsequently, hotels were contacted after support and approval had been received. In all, 14 hotels were contacted, but access was gained to 8, of which one hotel suggested that the researcher interview only employees as the hotel policy did not allow guests interviews. Management of the other hotel suggested that the researcher come for data collection only when management had identified participants. However, knowing the implications of their request on data quality and confidentiality, the researcher declined. After the researcher had gained access to the hotels, participants were sought for from the car park, reception, garden, bar and poolside areas.

Informed consent. To maintain informed consent, the researcher not only informed participants about the study's topic, purpose and interview process, but also provided detailed information about the researcher's identity and the email address of the study's 1st supervisor before the face-to-face interview. The same procedure was followed during the group discussions.

Protection of hotels and participants identity. The researcher analysed the data on the basis of anonymity by capturing hotels and participants names with codes (Neuman, 2007).

Protection of confidentiality. The researcher did not mention in the findings the name of any hotel, participant or any details that may have led to a breach of anonymity and confidentiality

(Flick, 2009). In addition, participation was voluntary therefore, participants had the opportunity to withdraw from being interviewed at any time.

Researcher bias. The researcher took steps to avoid biasing the study's findings by keeping neutral during the interviews, and by not showing any sign of appreciation or disagreement in the course of the interviews (Flick, 2009). At the end of data collection, a letter was sent to notify and thank the selected hotels about the completion of the study.

4.8 Assessing the quality of this study

The quality of research is mostly determined by the process followed in the study design regarding matching methods and questions, selection of subjects, measurement of outcomes, protection against systematic bias, non-systematic bias, and inferential error (Boaz and Ashby, 2003). Consequently, these have become criteria for assessing standards for quality research, whether quantitative or qualitative, regarding credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), data dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity) in social science research (Lincoln, 1995). However, per the qualitative nature of this study, its quality could be assessed based on its trustworthiness in terms of transferability and data dependability.

4.8.1 Trustworthiness

Researchers use different strategies to provide evidence in support of what they claim to be studying or examining in a study, to demonstrate trustworthiness. However, while trying to achieve this, Flick (2009) argues that researchers might be wrong in seeing what they think they see or measure and thus, points to the fact that there could be potential errors during the research process which the researcher might not have noticed. Three types of errors may occur in qualitative research: to see a relation or principle where they are not correct; to reject them

when they are indeed correct; or to ask the wrong questions (Kirk and Miller, 1986). This highlights the fact that there are strengths and weaknesses with qualitative methods, especially in the framing of questions to explore social realities, such as value co-creation which is inherently complex to be understood in its entirety (Polese, Mele and Gummesson, 2017). To ensure trustworthiness, different actions were taken in this study to develop evidence. This included using multiple data sources to address the limitations associated with each method used for gathering detailed account representing participants views (Myers, 2009). In research methodology this is referred to as triangulation, a term used to name the combination of different methods, study groups and different theoretical perspectives in dealing with a phenomenon (Flick, 2009). Specifically, triangulation was not only used to compensate for the weaknesses of other data sources in order to have a holistic view of the topic under consideration, but also to increase the study's validity through incorporating several viewpoints (Krefting, 1991).

4.8.2 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other settings or participants (Guba, 1981). The extant literature suggests difficulties involved in transferring qualitative research findings across different locations, since the study sample and context might differ from others. However, Bitsch (2005, p.85) posits that the “researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through thick description and purposeful sampling”. This is consistent with this study because the researcher provided a detailed description of the enquiry, and participants were selected purposively to allow comparison of this context and participants to other possible contexts, to which transfer might be contemplated (Guba, 1981), in order to facilitate transferability of the findings. In this study, thick description included methodological choices, methods for data collection, the sampling approach, the study

context, data analysis and reporting of the findings. In addition, detailed description of the study covered the approaches to the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations for the purposes of transferability.

4.8.3 Data dependability

In this research consistency was considered to be a significant testing instrument, because it ensures the same results could emerge when another researcher adopts the same research design. According to Bitsch (2005, p.86), dependability refers to “the stability of findings over time”. To achieve this, the research process, design and methods used have been explicitly outlined. Interviewing instruments were developed and tested through sound procedures to address any ambiguity which may likely affect consistency of the data and subsequent findings. Participants’ consent was sought, and they read the interviewing procedure to become familiar with the research tools even before participation. The case examination protocol provided multiple sources of evidence from the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and the observations on different employees and guests within different hotel locations. Consistent with the observations, photographs were taken as proof of the co-creation activities, objects and resources used within the hotel settings. This study followed the necessary procedure to maintain consistency related to the participants’ interviewing environment, the amount of time, anonymity and safe data storage to enhance the quality of data. Further, to address the problem of applicability, the researcher has presented sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison.

4.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter outlined the aims, objectives, research questions, philosophy, methodologies and methods of the study. Specifically, constructivism was adopted as a research paradigm to explore qualitative methods, using Critical Incident Technique. This approach was considered

to be appropriate not only because it helped to address the research aims, but also because the research questions were qualitative. Data collection employed semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations of specific hotels. Phenomenology provided an appropriate means of data collection at different times but interpreted together as one study through triangulation. The focus group discussions followed the same process to discuss the four research questions with the employees and the guests, from the six 3 to 5-star hotels in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. The quality of this study regarding trustworthiness, was assessed using transferability and data dependability.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Value co-creation can result from joint participation in the service process. However, it presents different perspectives, processes, activities and actors might choose to participate, depending on factors such as value expectations, motivations, personal characteristics which in most cases affect actors' willingness, ability or service expectations. While one or all of these factors might drive co-creation participation to affect the interaction and outcome of service, within the hotel sector little research has addressed the drivers of co-creation participation, especially those involving employees and guests, and their effect on interactions and service outcomes. This study addresses the gap by reporting from interviews, focus group discussions and observations data about the drivers of employee-guest value co-creation activities in a hotel setting. The first part of this chapter focuses on employees' and guests' co-creation participation activities in a hotel setting, and then co-creation activities during pre-arrival process, arrival process, permanence, check-out and post encounter process. Next, employees' and guests' motivation and the effects of motivation on interaction and service outcome are presented. Thereafter, employees' and guests' value expectations in hotel service encounters, personal characteristics and the effects of personal characteristics on interactions and service outcomes are analysed. This is followed by the chapter summary.

5.2 Value co-creation activities in a hotel setting

This sub-section reports on actors' value co-creation participation activities that occurred during pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters at the hotel destination. The broader

aim was for the study to contribute to the implementation of value co-creation practices in Ghana's hotel sector. Hence, it is imperative to understand the co-creation activities that employee-guest might participate in during hotel service encounters. The study revealed a number of co-creation activities, which in some cases had common underlying factors, were interconnected and tended to exert influence on actors' participation and the service outcome. In this study, participation means actors' willingness to exchange and obtain the service for use, in order to realise the benefits. The study conceptualises value co-creation as the joint use of the resources provided by the employee and the guest in an interactive and collaborative service process, to generate experience to benefit the actors and others through direct or indirect means. Although co-creation activities remain complex, the findings suggest that employees' and guests' co-creation participation activities were jointly carried out during different service encounters through direct, face-to-face and indirect interactions, which is consistent with Vargo and Lusch (2008b) s' conceptualisation of value co-creation under the S-DL perspective, as encompassing all marketing activities through direct and indirect forms. In addition, the complexity and non-linear nature of co-creation activities supported (Gummerus, 2013), however, it was necessary to report critical incidents representing participants' views about co-creation in a linear manner to help promote effective application of the findings. As such, the next section reports the broad themes that reflected different types of employee-guest value co-creation activities spanning through pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters. They included collaborating, interacting, helping, learning, co-designing, innovating, comments, feedbacks, suggestions, adapting service, exchanging information, all of which are obviously part of the drivers of value co-creation in a hotel setting.

5.2.1 Pre-arrival stage encounters

The pre-arrival stage of a co-creation encounter not only provided opportunity for employees and guests to influence each other's service activity to achieve an expected outcome, but also both actors saw the need to collaborate towards service improvement before the arrival stage of the actual hotel encounter. A male manager stated:

*We review our booking process. Let me say 2 weeks ago we even had to bring guests to check into our booking procedures again to see how best we can make it easier for our guests.***MM1-H5**

The above quote not only projects the guest as an active participant in the service, but also the guest becomes “endogenous” in his own and the employees' value creation process (Vargo and Lusch, 2008b), thus highlighting the interdependent roles and behaviours that employees and guests assume in co-creation encounters to ensure the achievement of an expected service outcome. From the above excerpt, it could be argued that bringing the guest into the hotel facility to collaborate was of much importance, because it bridged the spatial gap between employees' and guests' for enough resources such as time, effort and information to be generated in order to improve the booking process. In addition, the findings suggest that employees and guests engage in indirect pre-arrival co-creation interactions for purposes of personalising service to meet individual guests' needs. A female manager reported:

*He requested for petals to be put on the bed, and also requested for a particular type of champagne to be put in the room ... So, as he is coming in tomorrow, he knows that this is the drink that I have in my room.***FM-H1**

The above data shows that in some cases, employees do not independently design value propositions rather, they take special interest in seeking guests' views for purposes of fitting service to guests' needs. A male manager from a different hotel shared a similar view:

We have portals that clients go and review us and it is upon the review that we increase our service, that we do changes to our service just to meet the value they want. MM-H2

The above illustration suggests that employees not only use different platforms, such as portals to elicit guests' views for service improvement, but also to understand how guests evaluate service, which might aid the facilitation of a subsequent service process for value to be co-created. This might indicate that within the hotel industry, the guest is not only a source of information, but also an active participant in the firms' service processes. In addition, the findings show that employees not only learn to understand guests' needs and preferences through chatting, but also use chatting to co-create value. A female manager revealed:

When it comes to service you might not know exactly what the guest wants. But through chats the person let you know that this is how it is supposed to be done... then we agree on that then we move on. FM-H3

The above excerpts show that regardless of the category of service, employees considered it important for guests to take part in certain activities which were traditionally regarded being those of employees, which Yi and Gong (2013) contend demonstrate responsible behaviours and duties towards successful service delivery. However, while employee-guest pre-arrival collaboration through face-to-face and indirect approaches provided opportunity for improving the service process, which the findings suggest was a source of value to the actors, the study did not find much of pre-arrival, face-to-face collaboration activities. This might indicate that, pre-arrival collaborative co-creation probably was not fully leveraged by the actors, especially employees, or it was in the early stage of practice within a hotel context.

5.2.2 Arrival and Stay Stages Encounters

At the arrival and stay stages, especially at the airport and prior to hotel arrival, the findings showed that co-creation activities occurred through helping the guest to move safely into the hotel premises. Consequently, the joint activities such as airport pick-ups not only delivers value that met guests' expectation, but also provided a source of value to employees because they strategized around "helping" to absorb guests directly into the hotels' service process for value to be co-created. A male porter from a 4-star hotel revealed:

At the arrival stage our first point is the airport, which is the main avenue for absolving the guest. We come in to assist you by carrying your bags, welcoming you and so on, and then we bring you. MP-H4

The above quote suggests that guests' evaluation of value was not only based on service per se, but also on the co-creation experience of receiving help in relation to carrying their luggage to the hotel. This approach to service tended to prioritise not only guests' subjective value expectation, but also formed the basis of value co-creation, where actors strive to deliver service to meet each other's expectations. Value co-creation has been defined differently in the literature around processes and activities (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Gronroos and Voima, 2013), but the work of McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012) grouped co-creation activities primarily into being firm-focused and guest-focused. In this context, it is worth mentioning that while the findings show that some co-creation activities were strategically initiated by employees, there were equally important ones that guests initiated. Thus, while a co-creation activity, such as helping the guest, was based in the firms' perspective and largely informed by a strategic objective, the guests' perspective was evident as they became inputs in the hotels' service processes. Inserted below is a picture taken during the researcher's observation, which confirms the above point on how employees and guests participated in value co-creation at this hotel's reception entrance.

Figure 5.1. Employee-guest participation in a joint service process during hotel arrival



Source: Dora Yeboah

The above picture not only depicts an aspect of the co-creation process where the actors get involved in some sort of merged activity, but also as highlighted by Yi and Gong (2013), some actors, especially employees' put up responsible behaviour to foster successful co-creation encounters. The researcher's observation suggests that the employees were specifically placed at the hotel entrance, where the single arrow points to as being the context of co-creation, while the double arrow points to the employee-guest and the co-creation activity that they were engaged in. From the above picture, one could argue that employees were simply providing customer service. However, under service dominant logic (S-D logic), co-creation has been discussed under the lens of varied, but inter-related service activities and roles (Lush and

Vargo, 2014), which could best be described as service-in-exchange for service by the actors involved in the encounter process. In this context, the above picture highlights a direct form of co-creation, whereby the actors' joint activities became inter-twined or merged during a face-to-face service encounter, which is fundamental to value co-creation in service transitions. In addition, the results show that certain participatory activities, such as comments, fostered joint creation and delivery of service that was mutually beneficial:

Some of the things we do over here are still shaped by guests' comments. Initially we were not having tea sets in the room, but guests come out at dawn feeling hungry, want something to just quench his hunger. So now we have incorporated tea-set items in the room. MM2-H6

A male manager from another hotel said:

When we started this hotel, we were not having heater inside the swimming pool, but repeated guest request that when they bring children over here in the raining season the pool becomes cool, so they can't come, so now because they raised those issues, we added heater. ...it is warm and they are patronising it because of the warmness of the water. MM2-H5

The above excerpts suggest that the arrival and stay stages of service not only created appropriate environments for guests' voices to be heard, but also that employees explored the arrival and stay encounters to jointly re-design or solve service-related problems with the guests. At this stage, although employees might facilitate the co-design of service for mutual benefit, the findings show that guests' value expectations and preferences mostly influenced their participation interactions in the joint process. In addition, face-to-face interaction was found to be important service approach, because it provided an opportunity for actors to understand each other's concerns, which was central to successful service delivery. A male manager shared:

*Through face-to-face interactions we get to know their needs and we provide it for them and it creates the value that they expect from the hotel. **MM1-H3***

Participation is relative, especially in the hotel industry where guests' needs keep changing. However, the above quote shows that the joint value creation process requires meaningful contributions from actors, especially the guests. The illustration not only resonates with Auh et al. (2007)'s conceptualisation of co-creation as constructive guest participation in the service design and delivery, but also Payne et al.'s (2008) co-creation process framework, whereby both actors learn to understand each other's expectations in order to maximise service use. However, in this study, employees indicated that a direct, face-to-face service participatory approach can be explored for not only knowing guests and their expectations, but also to be able to provide service that delivers the right value to the guest. In addition, the findings suggest that employees learned about guests and their expected service to design a value proposition that can attract future co-creation opportunities. A male guest reported:

*I was asked several times by the different management levels as to how to improve their services, and I will say that for instance room service there is no need to improve anything... the restaurant needs to be improved and the quality of the food materials. **MBG1- H6***

A male manager from another hotel mentioned:

*Now sometimes the guest walks in, he goes through the menu and there is nothing. Now I sit with the guest and say I don't mind give me a recipe and I will have it done for you to meet your satisfaction. **MM1-H5***

The above quote not only illustrates a shift from being provider-centric to guests' preferences, but also embraces the idea of co-creation, where guests are not only valued based on monies paid for the service but also, as mentioned by Gronroos (2012), joint participation in service design was necessary to delivering tailored or customised service to the guest. In this study,

quotes indicate that bar and restaurant encounters provided opportunity for actors active participation in co-creation activities aimed at delivering customised service during guests' stays. A female supervisor reported:

*Maybe they can tell you the pepper is too much; the salt is too low, you know this kind of thing... you know you grab that information so when the food comes to the person he gets the value. **FS2-H5***

A female guest from another hotel shared:

*I drink hot water, lemon and ginger every morning. And as soon as I stayed here for 2, 3 days they realised that. So, every time they know this is what this lady likes. Yes, when I come to the table they bring me hot water, lemon and ginger. **FBG1-H3***

The above quotes not only point to an approach to service where the employees created the necessary environment for guests to co-create value based on specification, but also notwithstanding the fact that both activities happened in different hotels, the employees and the guests highlighted how a new guest is given the opportunity to exercise their innovative capabilities for service personalisation. The findings suggest that such interactions were not only positive, constructive suggestions or comments, but also took the form of complaints:

*Sometimes they make those suggestions during stay.... they sometimes complain about lack of variety and sometimes request from the kitchen if they can get this particular menu. **MM-H4***

*They can say maybe your breakfast menu had more of this food.... then the room amenities add this. Whatever feedback or information they give, it is actually considered very highly important then we try to do that **FS-H5***

The above illustrations might not only highlight how direct co-creation interactions allow feedback, comments or complaints related to existing service, but also suggest a new era where

actors want to launch a partnership in service design and delivery, which the findings suggest that actors mostly preferred direct interactions. The following quotes are justification of employees' and guests' preferences for direct, face-to face co-creation interactions.

*Having that one-on-one interaction with them, they are able to come out on their own to tell you their experiences and through that we are able to gather enough information to improve on what we are doing. **MM1-H6***

*You know exchanging emails is different from meeting the person face-to-face. Sometimes we go the extra mile of inviting the person over to the hotel to talk over lunch. Because sometimes when you are exchanging emails with the person... the understanding is not really there. So, we do the face-to-face. **MM-H4***

Further, a female manager from the same hotel revealed that direct interaction with a guest led to service innovation or improvement for mutual benefit:

*A guest used our gym and recommended a rowing machine, which after some months we were able to purchase, and the guest was maximumly satisfied and he now comes here more regularly than before. **FM-H2***

Although service is different and specific, effective delivery can occur with co-creation interactions, with the employees' and guests' suggesting that a direct form of interaction is mostly preferred for the above reasons. Consequently, the above quotes not only show that the employee's ability to satisfy the guest's needs and expectations became possible through a direct interaction, but also highlight the criticality of interaction and suggest the need for hotels to consider "environments where guests and employees act as operant resources" in service interactions that are mutually beneficial (Lusch et al., 2007, p. 8). Further, the results highlighted direct interaction as not only effective mechanism for understanding the dynamic nature of the actor's needs, but also how interactive activities could be used to adapt service to

meet the changing circumstances of the employees' and guests' involved in the service process.

A manager from another hotel gave a similar report:

So, we have dinner with them ... to listen to their concerns. We have health walk every 3 months, so we do not limit that to our employees, but we do add our guests as well. So, during that period ... we also take that opportunity to ask questions to know what we can do to enhance on whatever service we render. **MM1-H6**

How I want the service to be packaged, actually I did, ..., because I am quite fussy, I didn't want the sauce all over the meal, and I said everything should be separate, so yes, they were asked to, because it wasn't in the menu. **FBG1-H6**

The above quotes indicate that bar and restaurant co-creation did not only occur for service improvement or food variety, guests that desired specific food made suggestions and the hotel catered for them. This might not only be beneficial to the guest but also employees, because the co-creation interaction offered an opportunity for employees to gain innovative ideas from the guests to develop current and future value offerings. In addition, the findings suggest that employees that sought and understood guests' needs through direct interactions were not only successful at co-creating value with the guests, but also encouraged guests' participation in creating their own experience. The above quotes are also indicative of the actor's willingness to use dialogue not only for addressing current service-related problems but also to facilitate future co-creation participation. In this study, although employees and guests emphasised the importance of value co-creation through direct interactions, participation varied based on employees' and guests' needs and the context. Consequently, the use of activities such as information sharing, comments and suggestions within the different hotel service contexts clearly explained a new era, whereby both actors' voices were brought to bear on service design and delivery.

The above quotes suggest that different service processes provided a structure for employees and guests to actively participate in the service and become co-creators of value through face-to-face and indirect encounters. In this respect, although co-creation happened during direct face-to-face encounters, there were instances where co-creation occurred through indirect interactions, either before guests' arrival or after their stay. This highlights the fact that although service might remain the same, co-creation might vary, due to changes in service approach and context. Thus, making this study necessary because it clarifies employee-guest co-creation activities within different contexts and forms, and occurring through direct or indirect approaches during pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters. A male manager said:

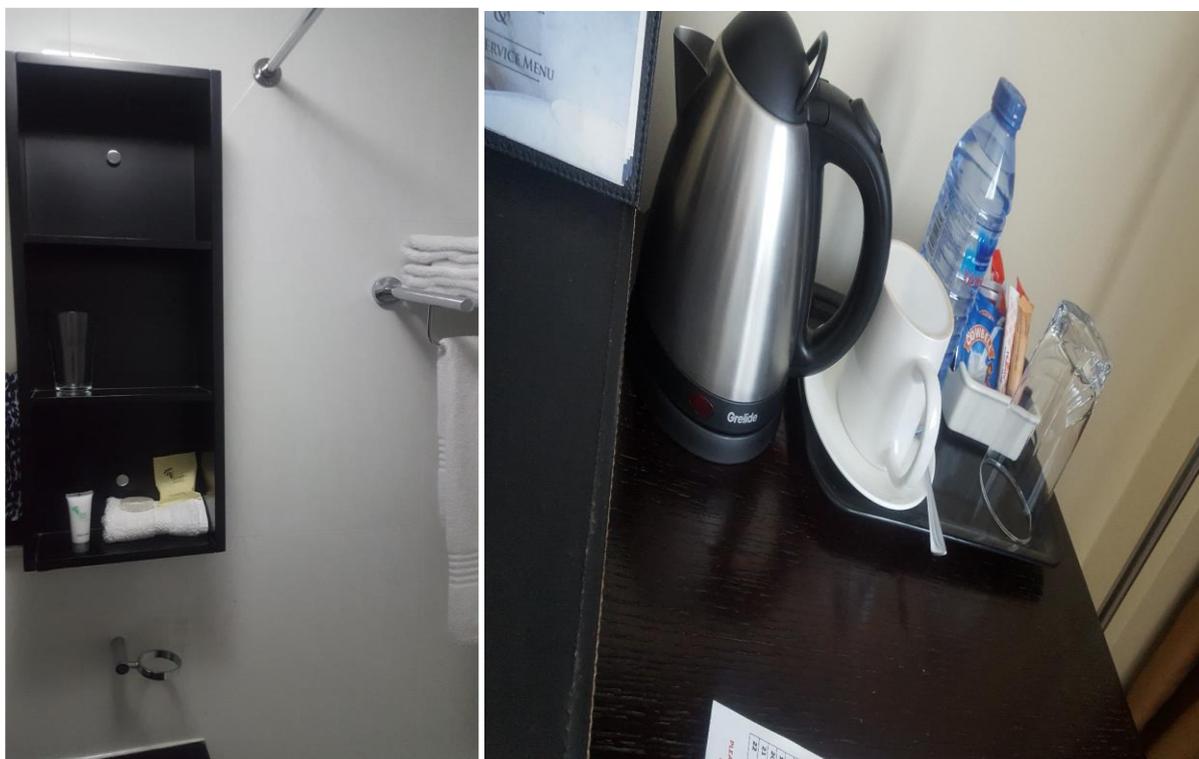
So, when a feedback is given we receive it... and we look at the loophole that were there... before we even go to give the guest feedback... and assure the guest that a, b, c has been done to make sure this never repeats itself. **MM2-H3**

The above quote supports service dominant logic, which holds that the service provider cannot independently create value, guests are always part of the value creation process (e.g. Vargo, 2008). While this was the case as indicated by employees, the findings suggest that co-creation at the pre-arrival stage was made possible, because employees provided conducive environments, in terms of clearly defined procedures, to foster the joint and dialogical process of service development and delivery. In this case, a conducive environment might concern a flexible service process that encouraged guests' suggestions, inputs and comments into the service design.

It was not only the findings that suggest co-creation participation take direct and indirect forms, but also the researcher's observations suggested that certain forms of co-creation activities required guests' physical presence in the hotel before participation could be made possible. In most cases, such co-creation activities were facilitated by service objects or amenities, as

shown below. Unlike figure 5.1, above, where the employee-guest direct participation reflected a joint and merged activity, figure 5.2, below shows indirect participation, where the firms' tangible resources (operand) in the form of objects, amenities and service systems joined the employee and the guest in the service process, which in most cases clarified employees' and guests' roles in the value co-creation process.

Figure 5.2. Hotel service amenities and objects to facilitate employees' and guests' participation in service process



Source: Dora Yeboah

The above images are examples of some hotel resources (bath gel, towels, cups, creams) that provided an opportunity for employees and guests to be linked through service. In this case, although value co-creation occurs under complex and dynamic contexts through value-in-use, as highlighted by Jaakkola and Alexander (2014), and experiential value as mentioned by Holbrook (2006b), co-creation might require the guest to apply operand resources such as

knowledge and skills for value to be realised. This not only highlight the importance of understanding value co-creation from a holistic point of view for successful service, but also the need for actors to possess the appropriate resources to undertake the necessary role enactment in such encounters. In this regard, although employees and guests played the role of resource integrators to enable joint participation in the service process, findings show that within a hotel context value is not only determined differently by the actors, but also the complexity surrounding co-creation tends to increase because value is subjectively determined by the beneficiary. Consequently, a question not only arose as to how co-creation of value resulted through the employees' and guests' use of the resource, but also it became necessary to understand the mechanisms through which value could be co-created among employees and guests through use of each other's resources. In this case, although the literature highlights the need to understand the effects of guests' participation in service encounters on hotels' performances (e.g. Shaw et al., 2011), this study suggests that guests' co-creation participation during hotel stay encounters, whether direct or indirect could be considered to be new ways for improving a hotels' performance, because both offer opportunities for employees and guests to participate in the service process to influence the outcome, which in most cases can be positive. However, to achieve a positive outcome, findings suggest that actors, especially the guest might require orientation about how to apply skills, knowledge and capabilities to the hotels' resources, to generate value, which has potential effects on subsequent co-creation encounters.

5.2.3 Check-out and Post-stay Stages Encounters

While noting that direct interaction helped to provide useful ideas to facilitate value-in-use during guests' stays, the following quote shows that participation was not only limited to guests' stays in the hotel. Even at the check-out and post-stay stages, co-creation occurred to highlight the view about value-in-context. A female manager shared:

When the guest is ready to depart, some guests would park their things from the room. But mostly, we prefer it this way, that they call and we assist them with their luggage and come downstairs. FM-H2

Another male staying business guest from a different hotel echoed:

The check-out stage what I consider most is ...at times we sit down, they ask you about some of the things you saw over there that are not good and what are those you liked so we can improve them. MBG3-H3

The above excerpts provide evidence that even at the check-out stage, when guests were preparing to exit the hotel, employees considered it beneficial to engage guests with the aim of seeking their opinions in order to improve existing service and to foster future co-creation opportunities. In addition, the data revealed that employee-guest co-creation participation moved beyond the pre-arrival, arrival, stay, check-out stages to post-stay encounters. Such interactions mostly occurred through use of Trip Advisor, feedback, comments and online reviews, and they have been proven worthwhile. A male manager narrated:

Normally, after they had checked out, we have the guest relations department sending out mails to them, to thank them first and foremost for coming to stay with us, and also we take the opportunity to find out if there is something more that we can do to improve on our service, so that the next time they come they are very okay. MM1-H6

This view was not only expressed by a manager from a 3-star hotel, but also by the manager of a 5-star hotel:

Aside that we have a system called guest revo. Guest revo, immediately you check-out of the room, automatically we send you message, telling you to rate the hotel and tell us what went right and what went wrong. So, day-in-day-out we are improving our service. MM-H2

The above illustrations highlight how employees' saw the need to foster guests' joint participation in service design and delivery, even after the direct encounter. Consequently, online employee-guest interaction was not only considered useful for reviewing past service experiences, but also as it was seen as a conducive environment for understanding future service expectations. A female supervisor reported:

*People leave without talking so we send a mail and then ask them to give a feedback. Sometimes if it is the Trip Advisor like, the Trip Advisor is an online that rate them, so we send you the link to share your feedback with us. Because individuals differ so we do that just to gather or to improve upon service. **FS2-H5***

Although co-creation confers equal roles on the actors, the above quote suggests that at the check-out and post-stay stages of a hotel encounter, employees assume a broader role which in most cases moves beyond the boundaries of the hotel. A male manager from a different hotel stated:

*When the person checks-out and maybe the person gives us a comment stating that the room was not freshened up, we take those comments and we reply back to them and we assure them that the next time they come, all these things would be done. And we make sure we put a cap on the lid... the next time the person checks-in...we make sure we do whatever he requested for. **MM-H2***

While the above quotes might require employee's cooperation and acceptance of guests' directions, in the following excerpts, it could be deduced that not every interaction resulted in value co-creation, but rather co-destruction, since some guests' did not show the ability and willingness to participate in the joint service process:

*You know sometimes some of these interactions happen and you get to know the person is not really interested. He is just there to test the waters, okay. Sometimes it is important to just withdraw from interacting and just forget about it and just let go, and we do that.***MM-H4**

A staying guest shared a similar view in relation to guests' co-creation participation:

I think for some people; you will not get them to open up and co-create. And many people go to hotels on holidays or for meetings and they are not interested in co-creating. They just want to get the service. **FBG-H2**

While acknowledging that some guests' are only interested in the service rather than co-creating with employees, the same person shared a view regarding a need for employees to encourage and motivate guests that consider it useful to engage in co-creation, whilst leaving out those that are unable or unwilling to co-create:

But this co-creation, what I am saying is that not necessarily every guest is able or willing to step into it. It is therefore important for employees to encourage guests who want it and leave those that are not interested. **FBG-H2**

The above quotes not only reveal instances where guests do not show the willingness to co-create, but also reflects how guests choose to interact with employees within specific experience environments. Research stresses the role of guests as co-creators of their own experience (e.g. Prebensen et al., 2015). In this case, although co-creation portrays an approach to service in which the actors become part of their experience creation, value is evaluated differently. Hence, understanding the experiences that guests consider valuable and how that influences their co-creation participation is important, because it might help employees to develop appropriate activities that guests' will be more willing to participate to create their unique experiences. Appendix 9 summarises some key employee-guest co-creation activities

in a hotel setting that facilitated successful encounters. The next sub-sections consider other factors that might drive employee-guest participation in value co-creation in a hotel setting.

5.3 Motivations, value expectations and personal characteristics that drive co-creation participation in a hotel setting at the micro level

As shown in the previous section, co-creation occurs through actors' willingness to participate in joint service activities, which is often influenced by different expectations. The findings show that motivations, expected value and personal characteristics are antecedent conditions that trigger actions based on the expectation of achievable results. This study suggests that such actions are diverse, both externally and internally driven, and often occur through direct or indirect encounters. However, regardless of the form that value co-creation occurs, the findings show that a set of common and diverse motivators, value expectations and personal characteristics underpinned the employees' and guests' co-creation participation activities. In addition, the results indicate that motivations differed across co-creation activities and that they can take extrinsic and intrinsic forms. As an antecedent of human behavior, motivation explains why people behave in certain ways, what provokes these behaviors, and what directs subsequent voluntary actions (Deci and Ryan, 1985), which the findings from this study support. For analysis and reporting purposes, the following sub-section outlines intrinsic motivation, while the next sub-section presents extrinsic factors that drove the employees' and guests' co-creation participation.

5.3.1 Intrinsic motivation to co-create: employees' and guests' perspectives

Employees' and guests' motivations to participate in value co-creation can be distinct or common within different contexts, whether the service process takes direct or indirect form. In this context, Nambisan and Baron (2009) posit that perceptions of the tangible or intangible benefits accruable from such service encounters underpin actors' participation decision. This

implies that actors' motive to interact or collaborate to the process might differ across service stages and levels. Thus, making necessary studies that seek to determine the benefits motivating actors, especially employees and guests to jointly participate in different forms of hotel service for value to be co-created. In this study, employees' and guests' motivations to co-create are mainly categorised into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsically, the data shows that employees' and guests' motivation for co-creation participation arose partly from passion, belongingness, relationships, satisfaction, shared and enhanced experience. Although research shows that an intrinsic motive is a goal driven expectation to satisfy a personal need (e.g. Holbrook, 2006b), it is not specific on the individual actors' goal driven expectations that satisfy their personal need. The data shows that within the hotel setting, employees and guests had a common intrinsic motivator related to passion, which the next sub-section discusses in detail.

5.3.2 Passion

Employees and guests expressed a common goal that passion drove their participation in the joint service process. In this regard, although actors might pursue different goals in service, passion triggered their collaborative and interactive activities for value to be co-created. Passion is defined as the positive and strong feeling a person develops towards an object or activity (Albert, Merunka and Vallete-Florence, 2013). In this context, although the literature's definition of passion includes objects and activities, the employees and guests indicated that their passion mostly sparked from expected satisfying experiences derived from service encounters. For example, a male business guest from a 5star hotel revealed:

Honestly in everything you do you, you must have a passion for it, and so what I do, I am passionate, ... I get 100% satisfaction when I have delivered. MBG2- HI

A male manager from a 3-star hotel shared

I am passionate about my work. My motivation is that, once my guests are happy, I am also happy. **MM1-H6**

The above quotes suggest the employees and guests mean the same thing with regard to passion. Even though the actors' interests regarding value may have differed, the basis for service was to "give" and "receive" something of value. Consequently, while the actors' interpretation of passion mainly focused on the contentment resulting from meeting other co-actor's service expectations, such contentment was altruistic in nature as suggested by Holbrook (2006b), because they were directed towards another's wellbeing for self-fulfilment. In this study, there was evidence of passion exhibited by actors, especially the employees, even when they did not use the word passion to explain their actions. This was evident through the researcher's observation when employees ushered guests into the hotel, welcomed them with the use of a local language "akwaaba," meaning you are welcome, how some relationship managers made time to visit guests in their chalets to check if everything was okay, and how they interacted with guests at the restaurant by showing and explaining to them some of the local menus, recipes and how they are consumed.

5.3.3 Relationships

The actors indicated the importance of relationship to their co-creation participation. Relationships may not only contribute to the co-creation experience, but also facilitate ideas and information sharing which otherwise would not be accessed through other means. Relationship is where actors feel that a special bond is established among them, as noted by Gronroos (2011a). In this study, as noted by Gwinner et al. (1998), the relationship behind employee-guest service exchange became a focal unit of analysis regarding service performance in relation to the value realised. While this might be relative from one actor to

another or across different service levels, it is important to understand how actors regard relationships as a critical factor driving their co-creation encounters. Understanding is particularly necessary within a hotel setting, where service is experience driven. A male business guest from a 3-star hotel mentioned:

Once you develop that relationship, it does not happen all the time... they become very friendly, the smiles go on here in creating the perception, they greet me by my name, it creates a really personal relationship. MBG1-H5

A female business guest noted:

Most hotels want you to check-out by 12mid-day or 1 o'clock.... But lately because the hotel knows me, maybe I feel special as well, they always grant me that..., they always make room to accommodate me till departure time. FBG1-H3

The above excerpts reveal that relationship development does not happen in every service encounter, yet service encounters were made much better in instances where a relationship existed between guests and employees. In this case, although the context of the relationships differed, the above views support the fact that service could be mutually beneficial when the actors knew each other or when there was a relationship between them, as mentioned by Deighton and Grayson (1995). A male manager echoed:

My motivation is I want to settle on a long- term relationship with the guest. MM2-H3

The above view suggests that the main aim behind this employee-guest interaction was not only about service delivery, but also to develop a “long-term” relationship with the guest. Previous studies highlight a need for understanding the relationship between actors in the value co-creation process, activities and their outcomes (e.g. Neghina et al., 2015), which this study emphasises, since a relationship might translate into actions for strengthening the connection between employees and guests for engaging in current and future co-creation opportunities.

Further, the findings suggest that there is a link between belongingness and relationship, because if actors felt that they belonged, the better was the relationship that existed between them, which could also foster future co-creation encounters.

5.3.4 Belongingness

The data suggests belongingness is critical to employees' and guests' co-creation participation. Research shows that the interpersonal relationships between guests and employees leads to higher levels of belongness (e.g. Reynolds and Beatty, 1999). In this context, although the findings suggest that co-creation in a hotel context might not always reflect employee-guest interpersonal relations, yet actors' sense of belongingness is a key to successful co-creation, because it creates a conducive environment for actors, especially the guest to feel that they belonged to the hotel community and, therefore, contribute to making the service process successful. A male staying business guest from a 5-star hotel reported:

If you have come to a hotel that provides that service to you and you find something wrong that is not giving you the value, because of that co-share, you have a responsibility to draw attention of the hotel. That is why I was saying that what drives me to co- create that value with the hotel is the sense of belongingness. MBG1-H2

The male business guest attributed his sense of belongingness to the responsibility bestowed on him as a co-actor, whose contribution to the encounter process might not only be required to create a service that delivered on their expected value, but also as an obligation to make the service a success. This might not only highlight Yi and Gong (2013), who termed such actions voluntary and citizenship behaviour assumed by actors, especially the guest as co-creator of value, but also as a key player with the responsibility to forestall service failure. A female business guest from a 4-star hotel shared the following:

The time they give me and the service they give me. They look at me as part of their property.

FBG2-H3

A male manager noted:

The team spirit motivates you to probably make sure value is co-created at each point you meet guests. **MM1-H6**

Contrary to the male business guest's view on belongingness, the female business guest's feeling of belongingness was explained in relation to the time, the service and how she was treated as though she was part of the hotel, which service dominant logic suggests portrays the guest as an active, rather than passive buyer and user. In this context, the female guest's feeling of belongingness might not only foster positive participatory and reciprocity of service, but also might increase her level of satisfaction, and subsequently, the value realised from service. The view about belongingness was not only expressed by guests, but also employees, as the male manager noted that team spirit was a critical and necessary condition for co-creation. Consequently, although actors may have different encounter expectations, belongingness might have implications not only for employees' and guests' service interactions and outcomes, but also on employee-guest relationships. In this study, belongingness manifested, for example, through interactive comments, feedback and inputs to positively influence the service processes and service outcomes, which employees could focus on to attract economic value.

5.3.5 Shared and enhanced experiences

The actors reported that shared and enhanced experiences motivated their co-creation participation. S-DL presents a reciprocal service provision in which value is dynamically co-created between employees and guests as either value-in-use or value-in-context, which the findings show connected the actors in a social context to draw on each other's resources for an

enhanced service experience. In this case, the social context not only became an avenue for service to be exchanged for service for shared and enhanced experience, but also a conducive environment for value to be co-created. A male leisure guest said:

The only thing that truly drives me is to create a shared experience to enhance my experience.

MLG- H2

A female supervisor observed:

*So, like oh tomorrow is your birthday, happy birthday in advance. ...We normally prepare this fruit platter, wine and add a birthday card to it to surprise the guest... In the morning just before the guest goes for breakfast, we tell them (co-guests) today is his/her birthday. Just arrange for a small cake and sing birthday song for her/him. **FS-H1***

In the above quotes, the guest indicated being part of a shared and enhanced experience drove his participation in the co-creation process, while the employee demonstrated how the hotel carries out co-creation activities related to shared and enhanced experiences. This finding aligns with Pine and Gilmore (1998), who assert that experience can be staged around tangible and intangible service offerings. This strengthens the argument for the shift in marketing as actors' tend to focus more on the experiences that both tangible and intangible dimensions of service offer, rather than only the tangible offering which tended to be the main focus of the Goods dominant logic of marketing. Further, the finding suggests that hotel experiences may not only include service objects, such as a fruit platter, wine and a card, but also intangible service experiences, such as birthday songs and other social interactions to explain how value not only embeds in tangible goods.

5.3.6 Satisfaction

The actors observed that satisfaction from the service encounters not only motivated them but was also critical to service participation. Accordingly, guests' highest level of satisfaction

resulted from co-creation participation, because they were able to contribute to the design and delivery process to ensure that service was adapted to their needs. To this end, gaining insights into actors' sources of satisfaction might be useful, bearing in mind that participation preferences in service encounters vary. A male guest reported:

Value would always come with satisfaction that is why I am hitting on the satisfaction which I get from paying for the hotel's service. MBG1-H2

A male manager reported:

It is the satisfaction that we get from the guest who is paying for our service and being happy..., happiness and the reviews that guests give on trip Advisor and other websites about their wonderful experience make me happy. MM1-H3

Satisfaction is relative, because employees and guests interact differently under diverse conditions and reasons. However, the findings show that despite the context of service, satisfaction may not only have positive or negative effect on guests' and employees' joint service participation, but also staff performance on the job. Thus, it becomes necessary to highlight not only the different ways through which service could be designed to satisfy different customers as highlighted by Franke and von Hippel (2003), but also imperative to understand the factors that strengthen employee-guest interdependence in service towards achieving mutual satisfaction.

5.3.7 Reputation development

The above factors reflect employees' and guests' views on intrinsic motivation. However, reputation development represents only the employees' views. The data suggested that the employees did not only expect to derive satisfaction from joint service encounters with guests, but also to fulfil the intrinsic aspiration of reputation development. Reputation is the perception

others hold of a person (Fombrun and van Reil, 1997), or associated with how the guest and other actors perceive employees and the value of the employer (Perez, 2009), which in this case was the hotels. A female waiter reported:

You might not know where you will meet the guest. So, good reputation from the hotel brought joy, it opens ways and doors for you everywhere that you go. Maybe you will serve the person here, and if you go outside you might meet the person also there. FW-H2

The findings show that employees derived value from working in a hotel that had a good reputation and image, because that reflected positively on them. This is evident from the above view which suggests that reputational value translated into benefit for the female waiter from the 5-star hotel. However, the female manager and the male manager from H2 and H3 respectively, considered the development of their personal reputation worthwhile, considering the positive impact it had on them and their social interaction with guests. Meanwhile, the literature review revealed that the concept of reputation development has mainly focused on the firm (hotel). In this case, while the employees could make strategic use of the hotels' reputations to signal their attractiveness, as mentioned by Fombrun and Riel (1997), this study shows that the employees from the hotel industry were also interested in the development of their own reputation. This opinion was not only expressed by the female waiter from a 5-star hotel, but also by a male manager from a 4-star hotel:

It is my reputation that I need to uphold, and which is what I am praying for and what I keep developing myself for. MMI-H3

The above quotes show that employees' effort in service encounters might not only be geared towards meeting guests' needs; they may also be aimed at generating value to meet their own personal aspirations, such as reputational development. According to Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), employees' sense of identity with the hotel not only guides them in defining

what the hotel stands for, but also their approaches to interacting with key stakeholders is affected, especially interactions with the guest. This implies that a hotel's good reputation might not only enhance employees social standing, but also translate into benefit for employees because it helps them to relate positively to guests outside the boundaries of the hotel premises. However, review of previous studies show no information on employee reputation development, thus, making this study's findings imperative, as it draws hotel management's attention to the need for employees' reputation development to increase their appeal to external stakeholders, such as guests.

5.4 Extrinsic motivation to co-create value: employees' and guests' perspectives

Apart from intrinsic factors, the data suggests that employees' and guests' extrinsic motivations influence their participation in value co-creation. Although motivation to co-create may converge or diverge within different hotel service contexts, in this study, the data revealed three themes around extrinsic factors, namely, openness, communication and rewards. Openness and communication were views shared by employees and guests, while reward represented only the employees' views.

5.4.1 Openness

Openness was a generally expressed view across both the employees and guests. Openness is the logical sequence of actions that open a given organization's business environment and process to other stakeholders aimed at creating value for the organization and customers (Adamik et al., 2018). While this definition tends to highlight openness from the firm's perspective, the notion of openness as expressed by the employee and the guest not only suggests a broader depiction of their willingness to engage in a joint value creation and delivery through commitment to be as open as possible (Randall, Gravier and Prybutok, 2011), but it

also depicts an era where actors show the ability and willingness to make available and also access other resources that meet a set goal based on a co-actor's openness. A female guest shared:

I will say the key things I look for are the openness.... when the staff of the hotel have to show that they are interested in their customers that entices me to actually have an exchange with them. **FBG-H6**

A female supervisor from another hotel noted:

How open the guest is, you are able to go closer to them. We interact better with those who open up. **FS-H1**

The above quotes show how the employees and guests were able to better co-create value when there is openness. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), openness can help actors to draw closer to accelerate dialogue, access each other's resources, risk-assess the co-creation process and remain transparent in the co-creation activities. In this context, even though employees and guests might have different service expectations, the above quotes have the same meaning that openness is critical to service exchange, because the actors indicated that they reciprocated openness and interaction when a co-actor opened-up. Consequently, a co-actor's openness might not only become necessary to facilitate interactions in co-creation, but also to explain the changing nature of service, whereby the guest and the employee propose openness towards a joint service delivery. However, while openness was highlighted across the employees and guests as critical to joint service participation, and there are studies on employees' openness (e.g. Peters, 2014), its relevance for guests and employees, especially those in the hotel sector is not presently in the literature, and this, therefore, is an important contribution.

5.4.2 Communication

Guests mentioned communication as a key factor that motivated their co-creation participation. Neghina et al. (2015) posit that communication is the passing on of information with the purpose of creating an understanding of thoughts and feelings. This implies that the nature and content of service can be more successful when there is effective communication between actors, aimed at exchanging information for understanding. Thus, it was not a surprise when guests noted that they were able to interact better in joint service with employees that communicated effectively. A female business guest reported:

Their communication skills, the way they accommodate or accept you, the way they apologise makes me feel free to interact with them. **FBG1-H3**

The above quote not only suggests that guests were more willing to interact with employees that exhibited appropriate communication skills, but also encouraged guest's expression of views about the service. This implies that communication contributes not only to the success of value co-creation by helping actors to align their goals and actions to co-creation activities that are linked to the problem-solving process, but that it can also be considered as an effective tool for accessing guests' resources, regarding time and effort in service encounters. The criticality of communication to co-creation was not only highlighted by the female business guest, but also by a male business guest:

I can decide to come from my house, but why will I have to leave my house to come and sit here, it is because of the communication I have here, how employees from this hotel communicate makes me feel like coming here always **MBG2-H5**

From the above quote, it could be noticed that the guest not only attributed value to the service consumption, but also to the experience with employees that communicated in the way the guest expected. Although the literature shows that communication enables employee-guest

inter-dependence in the service process for mutual benefit (e.g. Payne *et al.*, 2008), the above quote highlights communication as not only critical towards the guests' use of a hotels' resources, but that it also enabled service to be tailored to solve guests' problems. Further, findings suggest that an employees' communication capability has the potential to positively influence the future service consumption decisions of guests.

5.4.3 Rewards

The findings show that the employees attached value to the rewards that are received while offering service. Fuller (2010) notes that rewards become bound into the social exchanges that actors engage in, which the findings of this study provide evidence. In the hotel setting, the results suggest that employees' motivation to expend reasonable effort in such encounters might be contingent upon the perceived achievable rewards. A male manager revealed:

At the end of the year I am going to get a bonus, I am going to get an increment, why wouldn't I just do it. MM-H4

A male waiter from the same hotel echoed:

You know sometimes we do give out this employee awards. Whenever you are awarded...like say last year a guest rated me on Trip Advisor which gave me that mileage, I felt very good that no, I could still do more, you understand MW-H4

Another male waiter from a different hotel said:

My source of motivation is that you get promotions from guests' comments MW-H2

The above excerpts represent the views of employees from different hotels to suggest that expected rewards influence their service encounter actions. However, whereas the male manager highlighted bonus and salary increment as rewards for active joint service participation, the male waiters from different hotels shared the common view about being

awarded from guests' commendations, which the female supervisor from another hotel repeated:

What motivates most staff is we have an award we give at the end of the month.... if somebody does something good, we have a platform to mention the person ... then people praise that person. I am sure someone would also like to be also mentioned there so it makes everybody works whole heartedly. FS1-H5

While the above quotes from the employees gave different meanings to the notion of reward, the main emphasis was on how the rewards impacted positively on employees' interaction with guests. Research shows that there is a relationship between motivation and employees' job performance (Gagne and Deci, 2005), which the data supported, because the employees indicated that rewards drove their actions towards reciprocal service exchanges to positively affect service outcomes.

5.5 Effects of motivation on interaction and service outcome: guests' and employees' perspectives

Understanding the role of motivation in service encounters might not only provide an opportunity for fitting service to employees' and guests' needs, but also it might facilitate the provision of necessary resources that support continuous co-creation participation. The findings suggest that motivation (1) improved employee-guest co-creation interactions; (2) increased guests' service purchase; and (3) led to positive service outcome.

5.5.1 Motivation improves interaction

Drawing from the above quotes, it could be concluded that employees' and guests' motivations play critical role in co-creation encounters, regardless of whether they were employees or

guests. The findings also suggest that despite the convergence and divergence in the employees' and guests' expectations of service, their motivation for co-creation participation improved interactions. A male manager shared:

Motivation actually improves the interaction because ... if the guest is open enough it brings out a different sort of interaction, if the guest is not open it results in another form of interaction.... This impacts greatly on the service outcome **MM1-H3**

The data analysis revealed that motivation had effects on employees' interactions with guests. The study's findings suggest that internally, the hotels had mechanisms in place to recognise and appreciate employees, which in turn motivated employees to give of their best in service. Thus, gaining insight into the motivational factors and their effects on employee-guest service encounters is important, especially within the hotel industry, where interaction goes beyond direct encounters between the focal dyad. The following sub-sections elaborate further on the effects of actors, especially guests' motivation on service encounters in a hotel setting.

5.5.2 Motivation affects service outcome

As shown in the following quote, motivation affected service outcome. In this regard, understanding the different motivators might not only contribute to successful co-creation interaction, but also a positive service outcome. A male business guest reported:

Motivation has the potential to affect the service that is supposed to be provided. There is going to be a snowball effect because the service provider is not getting that contribution, where contribution here means respecting him, giving him the tip, showing appreciation and contributing intellectually. **MBG1- H2**

A male staying business guest shared a similar view:

How motivated the co-actor is, has in a way or can in a way affect the service outcome that we all enjoy. For instance, if I talk about the attitude, the people's reception of the service providers. MBG1-H3

The above quotes indicate that motivation has effects on service outcome, which is directly linked to total service or total experience. In this regard, although the employees' and the guests' motivations varied across service contexts, the fact that motivation affected the co-creation interactions, employees' job performance, guests' repurchase intention and total service outcome, suggest a need to understand actors' motivation across all service stages. This might not only help managers to best manage co-creation interactions for successful service outcome, but it might also be useful for employees that might want to explore co-creation for competitive advantage.

5.5.3 Motivation affects re-purchase intention

In the context of hotels, the data suggested that participation in service was based on service reciprocity, which had the tendency to affect employees' and guests' service outcomes and consequently the total service. A male manager mentioned:

Ambassador club is to reward every guest that booked our hotel. So, with every booking that you make, you have points that you win, and you could redeem those point for frequent flyer mile, for room night or you could give it to any charity of your choice... So, the more you stay the more points you get. MM2-H3

The above illustrations provide evidence of the effects of motivation on co-creation interaction in a hotel environment, by showing that a positive outcome from service interaction was not only leveraged internally, but also leveraged externally by hotels to maximise guests' patronage of the service. In addition, the findings show that individuals' participation in service

encounters depended on the belief that the desired outcome could be achieved, which obviously has influence on future encounter decisions of the actors, especially the guest.

5.6 Employees' and guests' value expectations in co-creation encounters

Actors are likely to evaluate differently the value of a service, due to diverse participant expectations of value in co-creation encounters. In this study, some views were unique to specific participants, while others were shared across all participants. However, while this suggests convergences and commonalities in value expectations among employees and guests, in most cases, both actors associated co-creation participation with their derivation of certain value or benefit(s). As mentioned earlier, in this study, value describes the overall assessment of the benefits received and the sacrifices made by employees and guests in the hotel service encounter from both functional and experiential perspectives. For example, the price paid versus service received was one common reason that actors mentioned as determining their participation in hotel service. This means that employees' and guests' value expectations drove their participation in co-creation within different contexts. The following sub-section outlines some of the views shared by employees and guests regarding value for money as a critical factor driving their co-creation participation.

5.6.1 Value for money: guests' and employees' perspectives

Understanding of value co-creation cannot be complete without insight into employees' and guests' value expectations in service encounters. The study found value expectations key to employee-guest co-creation participation. One of the shared perceptions among all participants was mutual benefit related to monies paid or received for service. For analytical and reporting purposes, this section focuses on guests' and employees' elaboration on the meaning of value

for money, while the next section pays attention to how the same concept is viewed as part of the total experience. For example, a guest from a 5-star hotel reported:

*My perception about value... if I give you something, I need something in return... money is more or less my value. So, you need to give me something in return that measure up to my value. **MBG1-H1***

Perceived value being linked to the price of a service was not only considered to be core by the guest in a 5-star hotel H1; it was also a shared perception by the guest from another 5-star hotel H2:

*Your true value is based upon what you paid and the experience that you get... if you are satisfied with that, that is where you have value. **MLG-H2***

The above quote suggests that the guest expected the value of a hotel service to match up to the money paid for its consumption. This not only supports the literature, which shows that value is personal (Zeithaml, 1988), determined differently within different contexts (Holbrook, 2006) and has diverse contextual meanings (Zeithaml, 1988), but also that guests' comparative price-service analysis is subjective and experience driven. The subjective nature of value became clearer when different guests' assessment of the monetary appeal of a hotel service tended to differ. In this case, while the guest from H2 was particular about how the service price was commensurate with the service experience, the guest from H1 touched on how the service functions to deliver the expected value. Thus, while the leisure guest's interpretation of value reflected hedonic value, which usually emerges from the pleasure and fun that a service offers, the business guest's meaning of value stemmed from his desire for an efficient functioning of service. That is, the utilitarian dimension of value was relative to the amount paid for service use. The monetary value of service not only reflected guests' but also

employees' expressed monetary value expectations. As such, they enacted different resources to derive monetary benefit, such as profit from service. A male waiter revealed:

Value, I will say is something that somebody expects to get from what he has paid for. MW-H4

A female manager and a male manager from different hotels mentioned:

I will say from the client's perspective is value for money paid, and then in our perspective it is the revenue that we get. I mean the service we will be providing should meet that expectation.

FM-H1

Value in a hospitality setting are those attributes from a service that will make a guest be willing to pay money to have. MM-H2

Similar to the guests, the above excerpts revealed that the employees also perceived value for money differently, and this influenced their co-creation participation at different stages of service. Zeithaml (1988) defines value as what is given and received in terms of service. In this case, while the male waiter from a 4-star hotel perceived value from the guest perspective, the perception of value of the female manager in a 5-star hotel reflected value to the hotel from revenue generated from service. For instance, the male waiters' perception of value for money highlighted its utility value, that is, how the service functioned to deliver value that matched the service price paid by guests for consumption. However, the female manager's view of value for money focused on both its utility value and its altruistic value, where value was directed towards others with an aim to creating self-fulfilment for the wellbeing of others, thus, making evidence-based studies on value expectations useful for further insights addressing the concept's complexity. The complex nature of value was repeated by the employee and guest to suggest that challenges still exist in terms of meeting actors' expectations related to value for money. A manager from a 3-star hotel revealed a challenge faced by the hotel towards delivering value for money to guests:

I will say we are lagging. Ghanaians still believe they are doing the guest a favour by serving the guest, we still believe we are doing the guest a favour and we are more into the money than the experience that the person is coming to have. MM1-H5

The above quote reveals the employees' awareness about the idea that the guest is the sole beneficiary of service. Thus, serving the guest means favouring them, which according to the employee has resulted in lagging. In addition, the employee highlighted the idea that they are concerned about the money (profit) from the business rather than delivering the experience that meets guests' expectations. While this might suggest an approach that some service providers in Ghana's hotel sector have adopted to ensure they recoup returns on their investment, it might not support successful value co-creation encounter. Because co-creation thrives on employees' and guests' resource integration in service encounters, which they both perceive might generate mutually beneficial experience

Obviously, the above finding not only suggests a wake-up call to all service providers regarding delivering on employee-guest expectations in service encounters, but also highlights the new perspective of marketing where all hotel service activities including pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay, involving employees' and guests' need to centre on service-for-service exchange, as suggested by Chandler and Lusch (2015). Thus, making this study very useful because it highlight the need for hotel service providers to focus not only on the profit from the business but also the necessity to deliver service that both employees' and guests' expect and consider beneficial. Consequently, such expectations might have the potential to drive not only their active participation but also service outcome. A female business guest from a 5-star hotel reported:

I am thinking that the meals are quite expensive for people who are coming from African countries and some of the countries I know they are coming from, it is really hard. FBG-H2

A male business guest from a different hotel repeated:

*Sometimes maybe the food could be expensive so we have to drive to eat cheaper food from outside. Maybe they have to work on the cost of food if really it is going to meet up with all the visitors. **MBG1-H1***

Touching on the challenges in the hotel industry, the employee (MM1-H5) indicated that the hotel was more concerned about its monetary gains than the experience that the guests expected to derive from the service usage. Guests, FBG-H2 and MBG1-H1, shared a similar view by suggesting that value for money was not being achieved, since the price aspect of service in terms of meals was quite expensive. Research shows that one can understand a given type of value by considering its relationship to other types of value (e.g. Holbrook, 1999). In this case, the guest not only considered the price element of service as the only factor that was core to their co-creation participation, but also kept comparing the prices of hotel food and consumables with the others offered by competitors. Thus, understanding becomes necessary, because it might not only help employees to consider these factors for continuous service improvement but also for gaining competitive advantage.

5.6.2 Non-monetary dimension of value (total experience): employees' and guests' perspectives

The previous section suggests that value for money is considered critical to employee-guest co-creation participation in a hotel setting at the micro level. However, as noticeable from previous quotes about how guests understand value, value for money was not the only way in which guests assessed value. This is to say that employees and guests also reported that varied non-monetary dimensions of value drove their co-creation participation. They mentioned hotel location, safety and security, quality and variety of food, physical evidence, technological

characteristics of service, respect and appreciation as being critical, not only to co-creation participation, but also for the delivery of the “total hotel experience”. Different participants reported mixed views regarding value perceived from service in terms of experience, which they indicated influenced their joint service participation. For example, a female leisure guest revealed:

*But most importantly what one looks at is the experience... is how people greet you, is how people attend to you.... the experience brings about the value. **FLG - H6***

A similar view was given by a female waiter:

*No, money does not always give value. But it is part of it, the experience is just indescribable, it is a joy to meet people. **FW-H2***

Service involves different actor influential factors. Despite the subjective nature of value, the above views suggest that the guests and staff tended to associate value with the total service experience. Thus, while the leisure guest made explicit the experience value in terms of the smiles, greetings and the attention received from employees, the waiter’s value from the experience resulted from meeting people. The findings show that experiential value is mostly context-based with different meanings. However, the findings suggest that the context-specific nature of value underlies service as the fundamental basis for employee-guest co-creation encounters. In other words, employees’ and guests’ willingness to participate in value co-creation was informed by their expectation that value will be realised from the service exchange. Further, the findings suggest that actors developed their own methods for assessing value by focusing on diverse and context-specific variables to make an overall evaluation of value from the service. In this regard, while previous studies capture the multidimensional nature of value mainly from the guests’ perspectives (e.g. Babin and James, 2010), this study’s

findings suggest value is the ultimate goal which drives not only guest service participation but also employees.

5.6.3 Hotel location

Both the employees and guests mentioned that hotel location was critical to service participation and for that matter value co-creation because it contributes directly to the delivery of a memorable experience. However, because experience is relative, both gave different views on hotel location. Below are the excerpts representing guests' and employees' views on hotel location. A male guest revealed:

*The hotel should be located in a very serene atmosphere or environment. Not too many traffic to disturb whatever business transaction you want to carry on with your client. Secondly, it should be at a central location of the city. **MBG3-H2***

A male supervisor from a different hotel shared:

*The hotel location should be near to the airport and to the central business site. **MS-H5***

The above quotes show the location of a hotel influences service participation, especially on the part of the guest. The extant literature presents a variety of value conceptualisations (e.g. Zhang and He, 2014), of which value as an interactive relativistic preference experience has been highlighted (e.g. Holbrook, 2006b). Thus, considering the significance of experience to value assessment, it was expected that the experience derived from hotel location would tend to influence guests' value assessment and their future participation in co-creation encounters.

5.6.4 Physical evidence

Apart from location, the findings support previous studies that a hotel's physical environment is a key factor which drives actors, especially guests, to enter into joint service participation (e.g. Suntikul and Jachna, 2016). The following are some of the views shared by employees and guests about a hotels' physical environment:

What I look for in value or what I expect as value is that the hotel primarily provides comfortable environment so I can sleep at night. MBG1-H4

The above quote suggests that the business guests' preference for environmental quality is defined by the comfortable sleep which the hotel offers at night. Meeting such an expectation might be considered critical to the business guest's hotel choice, as a comfortable sleep has a greater impact on the guest's experience. Similarly, employees gave the following meaning to perceived value related to hotel location:

I can look at value from the environment, the physical things that we see, the building, the room, the bed, the television MM3- H3

Although the above views are similar, the employees sought to suggest that value from the hotel environment should touch on the physical appeal of the hotel facility. However, the guests' perceived value from the hotel environment focused on the functional value that the hotels offered. In this case, the same word but different meanings about value provides the basis for understanding people's perception about value within different contexts. This is especially the case with guests' whose future hotel service participation might be determined by how service was delivered to satisfy their diverse needs and experience expectations during the first encounter.

5.6.5 Mutual respect

Mutual respect emerged as a critical factor that influenced the actors' experiential value. Employees and guests revealed that respect was core and a key driver to co-creation participation. The interviews below indicate instances where the guest and the employee expressed concerns about respect as being critical to joint service participation:

The customer is only thinking about his value that he is expecting from the service provider, forgetting that the person providing the service also deserves some respect, some appreciation

MBG1- H2

A male manager from the same hotel reported:

*We are trying to render a service to make them happy, in return, the best they can do is to accord us that respect, but some customers sometimes when they come to the hospitality industry, they think maybe we are like the maids or houseboys in their house.***MM-H2**

The above views from the guest and the employee not only depict how important respect is to both actors in hotel service encounters, but also suggests that a lack of respect among actors might become a barrier to successful interactions and a service outcome. Value co-creation stresses the importance of designing and delivering service together to benefit all the actors involved. However, the findings show that employees do not always communicate their expectations of service in relation to respect:

Especially the issue about respect. I think it is one thing that is lacking, but unfortunately the service providers don't bring it out. **MBG1-H2**

The above quotes not only show that guests' lack of respect was due to their selfishness, or subjective judgement of value, but also suggested a portrayal of employees' weakness and frustrations, which most often impacted negatively on the value co-creation process and the

outcome of the service. In addition, it is worth mentioning that practitioners and researchers seem to have ignored the obvious impact of guests' attitude, such as disrespect on employees' willingness to participate in joint service with the guest. A female business guest from a 3-star hotel recounted her experience:

*So, for me value is knowing your customer's needs, knowing their circumstances, address them with respect and they will address you back with respect. **FBG2-H3***

The above view revealed that joint service participation is problematic, and how it does not become mutually beneficial in cases where a co-actor, especially the guest fails to acknowledge that respect was a co-responsibility. In this regard, actors might not only require the ability to explicitly express expectations, but also to demand certain behaviours in co-creation participation, especially issues related to respect, which might serve as a guide to enhance social connections. The establishment of respect among actors might open them up for information sharing, moving towards successful value co-creation.

5.6.6 Appreciation

Employees and guests not only stressed the importance of respect in service, but also highlighted appreciation as being critical to creating memorable experiences. However, whereas the manager's focus was on respect, a waiter expressed a dissenting view by saying appreciation in the form of "tips" was very important to their joint service participation. He asserted:

*Certainly, and I could not agree with MM1-H2, more also on the respect, but let me just chip in that one thing ...the tips as a form of appreciation is important. **MW-H2***

The waiter indicated that he derived value from receiving “tips” (showing appreciation in cash and in kind) and therefore, called for it. However, the guest noted that one cannot just show appreciation, but upon meeting the condition under which the giving of ‘tips’ is considered appropriate. The guest said the following:

My definition of value is when I feel that my total experience, vis-a vis what I paid for, my experience exceeds even what I paid for, that is where you give a big “tip” to the waiter as a form of appreciation **MBG1- H2**

The above quotes suggest that a better understanding of the conditions of service exchange might empower actors for better interaction in service encounters, and for that matter employees’ giving of tips to guests as a form of appreciation. However, understanding the conditions might also raise concerns, because the giving of ‘gifts’ or ‘tips’ in exchange for service is not compulsory. Thus, it becomes necessary to understand how value is perceived by guests and employees under different conditions, but also under what conditions employees and guests expect “tips” to be give or received, and how and when.

5.6.7 Safety and security

Another factor which the employees and guests highlighted as being critical to joint service encounters was safety and security as part of the hotels’ service offering. This supports the argument that guests’ service choice is based on the extent to which it fulfills their social and environmental justice experience (Kotler, Bowen, Makens and Baloglu, 2006). However, in this study, safety and security issues were of concern not only to the guests but also to the employees. The following quotes suggest that such experiences include instances where the employed can provide a safe and secured service environment, and that the guest can access safe and secured service, which they perceived would enhance their experience:

The most important thing is the security. **FBG2-H3**

A male business guest from another hotel echoed:

I derive value from safety and security of the hotel. **MBG1-H6**

The findings suggest that both male and female business guests associated value with safety and security. However, the female business guests tended to be more concerned about safety and security within a hotels' facilities. In this context, the above views not only help to clarify the importance attached to hotel safety and security by the male and female business guests, but also that suggest hotel service has moved beyond the provision of "luxury" to include experiencing an environment that enabled guests to leverage the hotels' resources (e.g. facilities, safety and security checks) to create personalised value experiences. Further, prior to the selection of service, guests considered the security and environmental responsibility that those services exhibited. This is highlighted in the following quote:

Security were all over. You cannot enter through the premises; you will be checked before you enter... they have to search through to know whether he is coming with a harmful object or not. **MBG3-H1**

From the above quote it could be deduced that, although the employees did not explicitly mention safety and security in their deliberations, the guest found it useful to share his experience in terms of the hotel's measures that had been put in place to ensure safety and security on their premises. The researcher's observations confirmed this assertion, and it was one of the critical activities undertaken on all persons before entering the hotel premises.

5.6.8 Quality and varieties of food

Value from experience was also linked to a hotel's ability to offer good quality and varieties

of food. The data showed that the guests not only expected to realise value from experience through security and safety of the hotel, experience resulting from food quality and variety also influenced guests' hotel choice and subsequent participation. This view was expressed by female leisure guests and male business guests from the same hotel:

*My perception of value or how I measure value when I come to any hotel is two folds. One is about the quality of the food. **FLG - H6***

*I need to see food, the good value of their food varieties. **MBG2-H6***

The above views indicate that the guests' value expectations related to food quality and variety were diverse, and so were their experiences. Although value is relative and context specific, guests' emphasis on the quality and variety of food not only pointed to new ways for differentiating a hotel from its competitors, but also broadens the understanding of value from tangible products to including intangible experiences.

5.6.9 Technological characteristics of service

Both the employees and the guests indicated that the technological characteristics of service influence their value expectation. The quotes below provide examples of how technology related service influenced participation, service outcome and the value realised.

*What I like here is their internet system. It is very good to the extent that you can use it everywhere.... so anytime I am coming here I am so happy, I use to pile all my job, so I will stay for 2 days and finish with all my job. **MBG3-H3***

The above quote shows how critical technology-enabled service was to the guests' service participation. S-D logic highlights the importance of service systems (e.g. Spohrer and Maglio, 2010), which includes technology that connects actors in service exchanges (Akaka and Vargo, 2014) to enable online service participation for value to be co-created. An

employee said the following to emphasise the criticality of technology in hotel service delivery:

Especially on wi-fi, I mean usually you will get about 90% of the people coming. I am here on a business, you said you are a business hotel, we need wi-fi, we need wi-fi, we need wi-fi. Even though that is expensive, we have no choice but to invest in it. MM2-H3

A male manager from another hotel reported:

Now the guest who comes around, it is not about luxury. The internet should work for them to do business. So that is their number one priority. MM-H4

The findings bring to the fore the actors, especially guests' growing interest in the technological characteristics of service. Importantly, the relevance of technology in supporting open access to information, service processes, and possibly its use, has been highlighted (e.g. Stoten, Oliver, O'brien and Swain, 2018). This study's findings suggest that technology (Wi-Fi, internet) was one of the critical components of hotel service, because it facilitates quicker, faster and continuous interactions to encourage joint service participation.

5.7 Desired personal characteristics in hotel co-creation encounters: employees' and guests' perspectives.

The findings suggest employees and guests should possess certain desired personal characteristics to ensure successful co-creation encounters in a hotel setting. The desired characteristics common to employees and guests included being understanding, approachable, transparent, confident and paying attention to details. For analysis and reporting purposes, the desired characteristics common to employees and guests are reported first, followed by a discussion of the desired characteristics unique to guests and employees.

5.7.1 Approachability

While acknowledging that actors' expectations in service encounters might differ due to their unique personal characteristics, employees and guests noted that being approachable was an essential condition for co-creation participation, since it fosters interaction among actors. The following are examples of employees' and guests' views on approachability:

*Approachability is one word to put it, meaning friendly, open to dialogue, has time for you, you know all those things have fun. They look at me and smile say (name withheld) welcome back, how was your flight and all that you know it immediately puts you at ease and you feel that you are at the place that you are comfortable with. **MBG3-H5***

*If you are welcoming, approachable... Yes, the room might not be nice, but you could relate to me, you are vibrant person, you are a joyful person then I will feel at home. **MBG2-H4***

A male waiter shared:

*Approachable, ... I like to interact a lot. So, whenever my guests come around and I feel oh, they want to talk, I engage you, we talk, and some of them even go more into personal things that they are not even supposed to share with you. But because of ... they are able to interact personal things with you. **MW-H4***

The above quotes highlight the changing nature of service, where the guest becomes active rather than a passive user of the hotels' service. However, in playing an active role, the guest not only hoped that the employee was approachable, to enable easy access to service information, but also the employees expressed a similar view. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) highlight access as one of the building blocks that facilitates dialogue among actors at the micro level, since it provides a better understanding of value and how it could be co-created

in a more complex setting through intense interaction. The findings support this because they showed that being approachable was not only value in itself to the actors, especially the guests, as employees approachability made guests feel at home, which in most cases informed their choice of a particular hotel.

5.7.2 Transparency

In their original work, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) point to four building blocks of co-creation being dialogue, access, risk-assess and transparency. Although all the four building blocks are important in co-creation encounters, the participants emphasised the specific importance of transparency. A male business guest reported:

I think transparency. If the hotel is transparent to discuss affairs, that is fine. Because it gives you that kind of trust and if there is trust you feel easy to come back to co-create value with the hotel. MBG4-H2

A male manager from a different hotel repeated this idea:

We have to be transparent. If we had a particular guest who was abusive, then we would find an appropriate way to explain to the guest that the environment that they find themselves, that will not be acceptable... We speak to the guest to make them understand that this is an environment that you find yourself in, this is acceptable and that is not acceptable, and then you kind of keep the interaction going. MM2-H3

The above excerpt shows that employees and guests wanted to have full access to all information pertaining to the service process, and for that matter, co-creation encounters. In this regard, although value co-creation is a complex process, and thus, requires actors to exhibit unique characteristics that encourage co-actors active participation, it may include having

transparent discussions to disclose all confidential information as noted by McCole, Ramsey and Williams (2010), in order for a service to be designed to fit the actors' desired experiences. Apart from the above, there were other views that was shared by guests and employees, respectively.

5.7.3 Understanding

Understanding actors' service encounter needs was an emerging theme from the data analysis. Guests across the hotels indicated that an individuals' tastes and preferences reflected their value and their anticipated benefits in service encounters. Therefore, employees' understanding of these factors might help the delivery of a service that delivers value to guests. A guest said:

You should know the guest; each guest is going to have their own taste and sense of value and so you should have that understanding. MBG1-H2

Another guest from another hotel repeated:

The service provider must make a frantic effort to understand the customer and what he/ she wants. MBG3-H2

Guests expressed views on understanding as being a critical condition required for successful co-creation encounters. Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that value starts with an understanding of actors' value creation processes. This means that employees might not only be required to gain understanding of their guests' needs to be able to adapt their service to support co-creation activities, but also effort may be necessary for employees to grasp the guests' meaning of value at every service encounter. A female supervisor reported:

You have to know and understand the mood of the people that you encounter, that at any point in time you can be responsive to those moods in a positive way MBG2-H3

From the above quote, it was noted that to understand the guests' needs it was necessary for the employees to know who the guest were in terms of mood swings, and be responsive to that, which may help employees to take the right decisions in managing guests' behaviours during joint participation. In this case, joint participation might become a strategy for gaining further insights into guests' behaviour and needs for future co-creation encounters.

5.7.4 Attention to detail

The employees noted that attention to detail is very important in co-creation encounters. Attention is defined as the selection of particular stimuli out of the many pervading an environment, for that reason facilitating mental processing of some while inhibiting others (Campos et al., 2016). The joint sphere in co-creation might not only require actors, especially the employees' attentive listening capabilities to facilitate the understanding and knowing of the guest's service needs and expectations, but also paying attention helps employees to do things correctly by delivering the right service that delivers the right value. A female manager and a male manager from different hotels reported:

It has to be attention to details. Before you can do the right thing you need to know what the person wants. If you don't listen to what the guest wants for details, it's like doing nothing at all. I mean you can't give that value you prospected. FM-H1

Attention to details, in that if I pay attention to detail I can better understand someone. MM1-H3

A male manager from a different hotel shared:

If you are a talker and you are not a listener, you will always have issues, because it is a service-oriented institution. For service-oriented institution, you listen more and talk less.

MM1-H2

A male waiter from the same hotel repeated:

Your attentiveness can change a lot of things. **FW-H2**

The above comments suggest that attentiveness helped the actors to determine how value is jointly created. Apart from the fact that the employees played a specific role to facilitate the joint value creation process, being attentive could also become a mechanism for understanding guests' specific needs and preferences, which could also help in knowing who guests are.

5.7.5 Confidence

Co-creation is about service exchange processes that offer opportunities for resource integration for mutual benefit. In this context, the co-creation service encounter is expected to benefit both the guest and the employee, however, findings suggest that the confident employee can deliver positive service experience to the co-actor, especially the guests' involved in the co-creation encounter. Consequently, in this study, employees' confidence was highlighted as being very critical to successful co-creation encounters with the guests:

You see before you talk to somebody you should have confidence in yourself, you know what you are doing or what you are suppose to say, you don't have that kind of fear in you, you talk openly to voice whatever you have to say just to make the guest believe in you. **FS2-H5**

A female manager from another hotel mentioned:

To put it in a nutshell, I think that we (employees) should have confidence. **FM1-H2**

From the above, it could be deduced that confident employees can affect service outcomes positively, because they are able to voice their views openly during co-creation encounters. Shaw et al. (2011) highlight the importance of employees' ability to facilitate co-creation, which this study's findings support. However, while employees' confidence emerged as being critical to co-creation interactions, this is yet to be addressed in the literature. Thus, making this study useful, since it increases understanding about employees' confidence as a critical antecedent necessary for successful co-creation encounters.

5.7.6 Effects of personal characteristics on interaction and service outcome: employees' and guests' perspectives

The findings suggest that the actors' personal characteristics played a significant role in service encounters. According to Holbrook (2006) actors' enhanced personal characteristics promote successful service encounter interactions. The study showed that personal characteristics affect (1) service interaction, (2) service design, delivery and (3) influence co-actor's actions. Accordingly, these factors attracted actors' participation in the co-creation process to affect service outcome. A male manager reported:

Guests characteristics have effects on interactions and service delivery. For instance, Nigerians, we have a certain way of marketing to them than marketing to a Ghanaian. To a Ghanaian businessman, all he needs is a nice place to put his head. To a Nigerian businessman, he needs a nice place to put his head, at the same time he needs a place in the evening he can go and sit and enjoy and then after, he can go to the work. So, in marketing to a Nigerian man, I will first market this place first before I market my room. In marketing to a Ghanaian, I will market my room first before marketing this place. MM-H2

A male business guest said:

Even though I might know the person...but the individual characteristic you exhibit would go a long way to influence my thoughts positively or negatively about you and the service. **MBG4-**

H2

From the above quotes, it could be deduced that employees' and guests' personal characteristics help to determine who a co-actor is and their service expectations, in order to be able to fit service to their needs. Anton et al. (2017) suggest the need to understand employees' and guests' personal characteristics, since it may help determine not only their social interaction needs, but also employees' and guests' participation or perceived value. In this regard, although researchers have found co-creation to be complex due to its multidimensionality (e.g. Neghina et al., 2015), the findings suggest that prior knowledge of actors' personal characteristics could enable a service to be pre-defined to facilitate intense interactions in areas that require employees and guests participation.

5.8 Chapter Summary

To summarise, the study suggests that co-creation can occur through direct and indirect service processes, spanning through pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters. However, regardless of employees' positions and guests' reasons for visiting a hotel, both preferred direct co-creation interactions. Within the context of hotel service, employees' and guests' motivation can be intrinsic, extrinsic and context-driven because of differences in actors' goals for participating in service. However, in most cases, the data suggests that employees' and guests' motivation influenced co-creation participation and service outcome. The findings suggest that employees' and guests' value expectations were subjective. However, despite the differing perceptions and meanings in value, the data shows that monetary value and experiential value of a service exerted a greater influence on actors' value co-creation participation. Value for

money reflected a common interest, because employees and guests considered it to be critical for assessing value from hotel service. Further, employee-guest personal characteristics were key, since they tended to affect interaction, service design and delivery, and consequently, service outcome. In this regard, while understanding that different factors might be useful for explaining why actors opt to participate in different types of hotel service activities in different ways, it also aids the understanding of what employees and guests expect from co-created service exchanges. Hence, reflecting on these factors is important, since they have implications for employees' and guests' participation in co-creation encounters.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The main aim of the study is to examine co-creation drivers in a hospitality setting, using a micro level approach. To achieve this, previously, Chapters Two and Three reviewed the extant literature, while Chapter Four outlined the research design by highlighting and justifying qualitative methodology as being appropriate for collecting data to best answer the research questions. This chapter discusses the themes that were found from the qualitative data analysis which the previous Chapter Five highlighted. The chapter begins with an overview of the conceptual framework developed from the study's findings, followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to the aims and objectives of the study.

6.2 Overview of employee-guest value co-creation drivers in a hotel setting.

The study examines drivers of employees' and guests' co-creation participation in a hotel setting at the micro level, the findings of which have been integrated to develop a framework. Unlike previous studies that have mostly focused on guests' value and co-creation activities, this study contributes to knowledge by providing a holistic and a better understanding of the drivers of value co-creation participation from both the employees' and the guests' perspective. Specifically, the framework highlights how employees' and guests' willingness to participate in co-creation is based not only on intrinsic or extrinsic motives, but also the opportunity to interact and be part of creating their own experiences.

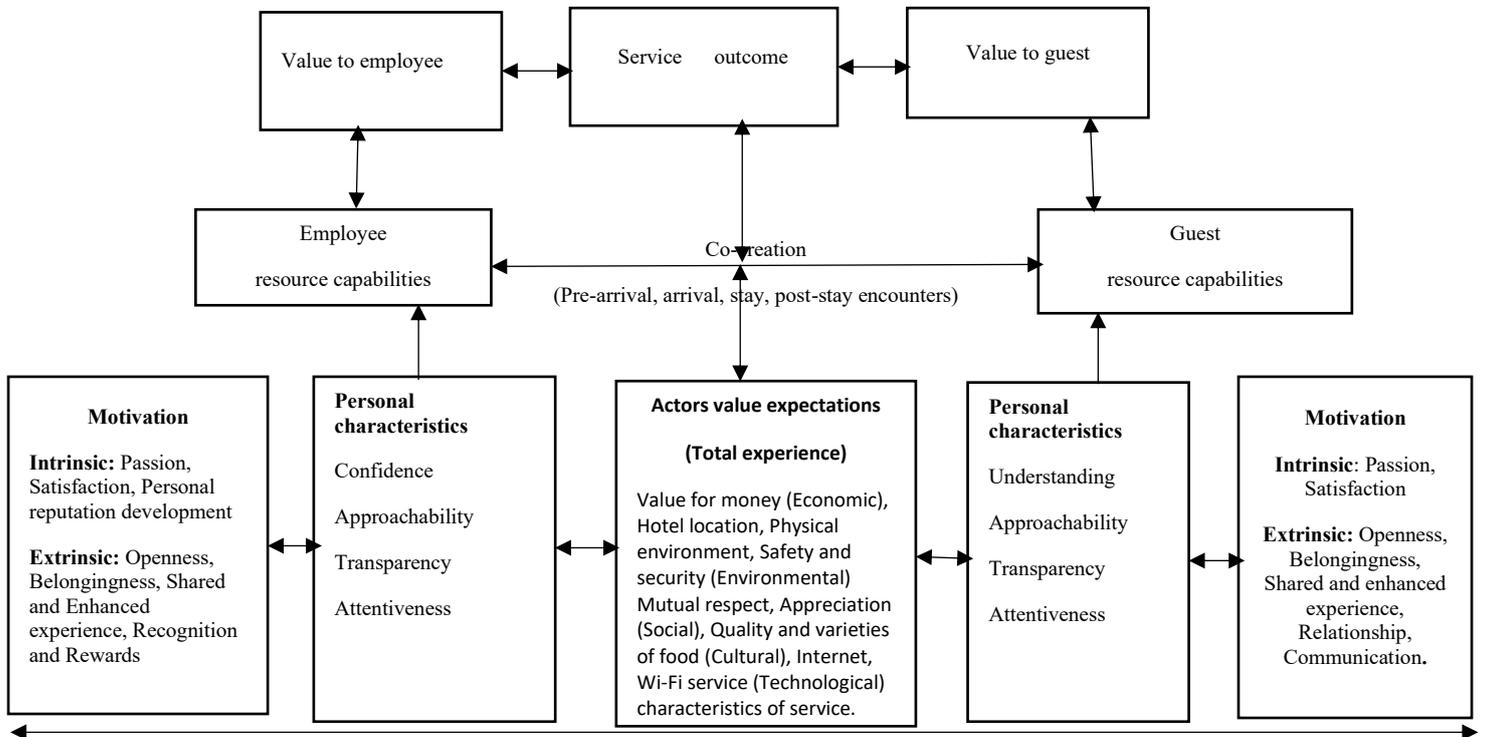
In addition, within value co-creation discourse, the actors' active participation is highlighted as facilitating interaction and resource integration, which are critical to successful service encounters (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2008b). However, unlike previous co-creation process framework that suggests co-creation occurs only when the firm has an opportunity to participate in the customers' value creation process through direct interaction (see, Gronroos and Voima, 2013), this study shows that within a hotel setting, co-creation happens in both employees' and guests' spheres, because they participate in each other's service activities within different contexts to create their own unique experiences. This study's model extends on Payne et al (2008)'s conceptual framework for value co-creation between the organization and the customer and applies the concept in a hotel service design and delivery involving employees and guests. The findings support the argument that value co-creation does not occur in a vacuum (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012), thus, suggesting a need to highlight actors' expectations in the service processes that are critical to their co-creation participation.

The findings show that the employee and the guest joint participation in service processes is necessary, because it might not only facilitate interactions and resource integration for value to be co-created, but also facilitate understanding and the achievement of expectations that reflect the actors' unique value preferences. In this regard, although value is subjectively determined, the findings indicate that the employee and the guest value preferences not only reflect inter-subjective or intra-subjective judgements, but that they are also context driven and spans across pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters. As such, actors' needs within different contexts might tend to drive their participation in service exchange. In this study, it is argued that employees' and guests' motivations, value expectations and personal characteristics, not only drive co-creation participation but also affect interactions and service outcomes.

Under the S-D logic perspective, it is suggested that for a firm to remain competitive, it has to devise mechanisms to add its resources to the customer's in terms of competence and capabilities (Vargo and Lusch, 2017), or to create a conducive environment to influence the service process such that the customer is able to use the firm's available resources more efficiently and effectively (Payne et al., 2008), which is evident in this study. Importantly, as highlighted in the previous chapter, an understanding of the factors that drive actors' service participation helps to understand not only their expectations but also the exchange of appropriate resources to facilitate the co-creation of memorable experiences. Unlike the initial model which was developed from extant literature (see, Figure 3.2, above), the framework below (Figure 6.1) was developed from both the literature and the findings from the qualitative research, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations. Thus, providing a depth insight into not only what co-creation means and how it occurs, but also the critical factors that drive employees and guests participation at the micro level in a hotel setting.

As shown in Figure 6.1. below, the empirical framework not only conceptualises the key factors that drive employee-guest participation in co-creation, but also the effects of these factors on interactions and service outcomes. This framework extends the initial model which was presented in Figure 3.2, because it expands not only existing knowledge on for example, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, or resource capabilities necessary for successful co-creation encounters, but also highlights the value expectations that are exclusive to employees and guests as well as that which are common to both. The findings suggest these factors are not only critical for driving successful co-creation encounters in a hotel setting, but also highlights the common and differences in the factors that drive employees' and guests' might help hotels' effective resource allocation to efficiently integrate employees and guests resource capabilities for successful service encounters.

Figure 6.1. An empirical framework of employee-guest value co-creation drivers in Ghana’s hotel setting



6.3 Drivers of employees’ and guests’ value co-creation participation activities at different stages of hotel service.

This part of the thesis addressed the first research question “*What drives employee-guest participation in the co-creation?*” The objective for considering the question was that, although employees’ and guests’ expectations influence the co-creation process and outcome, increasing research on hotel co-creation has mostly focused on guests. Contemporary marketing discourse highlights the importance of actors joint participation in service, because it fosters not only service innovation and improvement, but also improves a firm’s competitiveness (Vargo and

Lusch, 2017). In this regard, participation might not necessarily suggest the same functions rather, employees and guests become co-actors in service exchange process in such a way that the value which is co-created is mutually beneficial. Thus, presenting a need for further studies involving both employees and guests for a holistic understanding of their expectations, which obviously drive these actors participation in value co-creation within a hotel setting.

Over the last three decades, service-dominant logic has taken a series of significant theoretical turns to advance knowledge about service, by moving even more broadly to a general theory of value co-creation through employees' and guests' joint participation in service process. In this context, S-D logic not only shift attention from value-in-exchange through tangible goods to value in-use through service (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), but also presents service as the fundamental basis for exchange and value realisation. This highlights a foundational premise in S-D logic which holds that, the guest is always a co-creator of value (FP6), through use of the service offered by the firm. However, while this might be true within certain service contexts, within the context of hotel service, this study shows that it is not always the case that the guest accepts or is willing to actively participate in the service process to become a co-creator of value. For example, the findings revealed instances when employees recognised the need for co-creation, but the guest was not ready for it. Importantly, the findings show that employees' and guests' goals for service participation might tend to converge or diverge within different hotel service contexts. Consequently, while some guests' noted that helping, interactions and joint participation in the service processes is value in itself, others mentioned that realising economic value, i.e. value for money was key to their service participation and for that matter value realisation. In this case, to achieve successful service exchange through value-in-use between the employee and the guest, it is appropriate that both actors not only understand when each of them is willing, but also able to participate in the service process and become a co-creator of value.

In addition, in both cases, guests' indicated that achieving "total experience" was core to their service participation, which also aligned with employees' expectations in hotel service encounters. Thus, becoming necessary for employees' and guests' to understand what total experience means within a hotel setting. For instance, based on the findings, actors' total experiences was less about the individual service elements and more about the holistic benefit that the total service offers, in which case they can adapt the service processes to their unique needs and expectations.

As indicated in the findings sections, actors' expectations in service tend to differ at different stages of hotel service encounters. Within a hotel setting, where employees deliver service to help the guests meet their expectations, such as airport pick-ups and drop-offs, a place to stay or food to eat, the guests deliver service by providing information on how the service should be designed, delivered and also paying for service in cash or kind, in turn. While this reveals a structural approach to make co-creation at the micro-level more understandable, there was other co-creation practices that were non-linear, as noted in Gronroos and Voima (2013). This implies that there might be certain co-creation activities that are not apparent from a micro-level view, but which contribute to the value that actors realise from the service encounter. For instance, the findings suggest that at the micro level interaction, guests relied on the information provided by competitors, such as service prices in order to make informed decisions about hotel choice. Employees on the other hand not only considered the value (profit) realised from delivering the service, but also to achieve their own aspirations such as reputation development and other forms of reward. Hence, understanding these actor expectations and how they might influence value co-creation practices within different service contexts is important, especially the hotel service, which the findings of this study suggest is experience driven. This study not only addresses the call by Chathoth et al. (2016) to understand what drives actors' participation in co-creation, but also extends the seminal work by Vargo and Lusch (2008b) on

the importance of increasing value co-creation knowledge in service encounters, by identifying the different factors that drive co-creation activities between employees and guests and also showing how these factors affect co-creation interactions and service outcome within a hotel setting.

While recognising that co-creation might have a positive impact on employee-guest service outcomes (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012) and thus, joint participation in the service process is necessary, this study suggests that not every joint interaction result in value co-creation, which supports Echeverri and Skalen (2011). The study revealed that value co-creation results not only when co-actors become aware of the responsibilities and roles that the joint service confers on them, but also acting accordingly is critical. In this case, for instance, the earlier example about the co-actor's unwillingness to co-create, not only depicts the guests' shirking of responsibility as a partial employee (Ennew and Binks, 1999), but also suggests that the guests lacked orientation about responsible behaviour, such as cooperating with employees to attain a successful co-creation process. This is supported by Yi and Gong (2013) who note that little or no co-creation occurs without guests' responsible behaviour. In a similar vein, Echeverri and Skalen (2011) argue that interactive value creation practice is not only associated with value co-creation, but also with value co-destruction, which the findings from this study suggests might be some of the challenges that employees, especially front liners encounter when serving their guests. Also, previous studies suggest that co-creation presents different activities with challenges that will require varying levels of effort (e.g. Sweeney et al., 2015), which this study's findings provide evidence of the importance of actors' effort and how it influence service outcome and the value realised. In this case, it is necessary for the actors, especially employees' not only to gather information about guests' and their needs, but also to provide guests' with constant orientation about their required effort during hotel service encounters, in order that they may jointly contribute to achieving a successful co-creation process. In addition,

as noted by Lusch and Vargo (2014), identifying and understanding co-actors' resource capabilities, both operand (tangible) and operant (intangible), might be critical for successful co-creation encounters.

Using S-DL, a service-centred view of marketing is articulated, with emphasis on the actors' operant resources, which the findings of this research suggest are most prominently the skills and knowledge that are employed in service encounters by the employee and the guest. This implies that service exchange between these actors might not result in co-creation, it is only when knowledge and skills are activated on tangible resources that value co-creation occurs. According to Sweeny et al. (2015), easier and less effortful co-creation activities are preferred by customers than activities that are perceived to be more demanding and requiring more effort. While this and other studies, such as Yi and Gong (2013), suggest the need to understand customers' value creation activities to be able to provide the necessary resources for value-in-use to occur, they ignore the richness of understanding joint participation involving employees' activities in co-creation encounters. In this study, employees indicated that their value expectations such as recognition and mutual respect relate not only to service that they consider relevant to their experiences, but also necessary for service-in-exchange within different contexts, which also suggests the context specificity of value as mentioned by Chandler and Vargo (2011). In essence, this part of the study extends knowledge by not only offering new insights into guests' co-creation activities across the different stages of hotel service that they considered beneficial, but also the desired exchanges that employees and guests would like to engage in to facilitate successful encounters (see, figure 6.2), which ultimately translate into co-created value.

Although the results show that actors have different focus in service, in one way or the other, drivers of active participation by the employee-guest contributes to improving the existing service or the design of a new service. This study found that employees' and guests' understanding

of service expectations, especially the guest, in most cases, impacted positively to improve service and on the value realised, by virtue of their joint participation and resource integration in diverse forms. Consequently, co-creation participation activities which were mostly seen in the form of helping, commenting, collaborating, interacting, information seeking and information sharing, learning and chatting were not only considered necessary activities for realising mutually beneficial co-creation outcome, but also facilitated future co-creation opportunities. This also, highlights employee-guest joint role play activities that foster successful service delivery, as mentioned in Payne et al. (2008)'s framework on co-creation process. In this study for example, as part of actively participating in the service process, the actors exchanged information to perform certain roles, without which value could not have been co-created. In addition, the findings show that actors sought and also shared information to clarify service requirements (Kellogg, Youngdahl, and Bowen, 1997), due to differences in their expectations. Consequently, while employees sought information to fit the service to guests' needs and service improvement, guests provided information to create unique experience.

Information seeking or sharing among actors in the hotel sector could take the form of direct, face-to-face (e.g., direct sales/ marketing) or indirect (e.g. phone calls, emails, Trip Advisors, Booking.com) means. For instance, regarding direct information seeking, a male waiter revealed that as a guest was having his meal in the restaurant, he went to ask if the guest was okay with the meal and that if he complained about anything, he solved the problem with the guest. While this indicates how employees' initiate co-creation to elicit participation and joint creation of experience (Karpen et al, 2012), the study also shows occasions where co-creation was initiated by the guest, which highlights the non-linearity of the co-creation process.

Interaction is key to successful value co-creation, because it facilitates joint resource integration and mutual experience creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). However, the findings show that as a key co-creation driver, interaction occurs differently within different contexts,

and thus, highlights the fact that different types of activity might require different interaction among employees and guests at the micro level. This is especially important as marketing continues to evolve along the path of service exchange (Lusch, Vargo and O'brien, 2007) where interaction among actors has been highlighted as leading to positive service encounters (Bolton and Saxena-lyer, 2009). However, considering that co-creation interaction could take different forms, it is imperative for actors to also understand the mode of interaction that facilitates successful co-creation within specific hotel service environments.

This part of the study clarifies the debate in the literature about whether co-creation interaction takes a direct, indirect form or both, by establishing that within the hotel setting co-creation takes both direct and indirect forms. However, employees and guests prefer direct, face-to-face interaction because it creates an opportunity to understand service issues, enabling quick and effective service delivery. Further, the study shows that while co-creation may take indirect form, within a hotel context, certain co-creation activities require the physical presence of the guest in the hotel's physical environment for the guest to use the hotel's resource (s) to create their own unique experience.

6. 4 Employees' and guests' motivation for co-creation participation.

This section addresses the second research question in the thesis "*What motivates employee-guest co-creation and how do the motivating factors affect their interaction and the co-creation outcome at the micro level?*" The objective for choosing the question was to establish employees' and guests' motivation and how motivation influence the co-creation participation interaction and service outcome. Findings suggest that employees' and guests' participation in service might not only be influenced by financial, but also non-financial rewards. This implies that actors' participation in every service interaction might have an underlining motive which

moves beyond financial benefit. Thus, while acknowledging that motivations differ and can take either intrinsic or extrinsic forms (Holbrook, 2006), because the benefits sought are likely to differ across participants, it was necessary to distinguish between employees' and guests' motivation for participating in service encounters. The findings indicate that the employees' and guests' co-creation participation was partly driven by intrinsic motivation. However, whereas employees' motivation mostly centered on altruistic motives (e.g. helping guests in need of hotel service), in most cases, the guests were hedonic (pleasure, fun and enjoyment) from the service experience. In addition, the findings suggest that the employees and the guests had extrinsic motives related to economic and social incentives. However, the literature review revealed that majority of research has focused on customers' motivation for participating in value co-creation, whilst leaving out what factors motivate employees to engage in such co-creation activities with the guest. This not only creates a gap in the literature but also might deny firms, especially hotels from strategically managing employees and guests service interactions in a way that creates superior value for guests, employees and the hotel. An instance is where the employee expected the guest to remain open in the service interaction, which the guest also considered critical to service participation. This implies that in all cases, the employed and the guest might participate in a co-creation activity if they perceived that doing so facilitated the achievement of their set goals and objectives. Thus, making understanding of such actor motives worth considering, giving that they could affect not only employee-guest co-creation interaction in a hotel setting, but also whether the form of motivation has an impact on joint value creation process as noted by Roberts et al. (2014). In this study, employees and guests shared a common view on many factors, including passion, relationships, belongingness, interaction, openness, shared and enhanced experience, satisfaction. However, while the communication factor was unique to the guests, promotions, rewards and reputation development were raised by the employees. This means that these different factors have the possibility

of influencing employees' and guests' service encounter processes. Of more importance is that although the factors were unique and diverse, differ in terms of how they can be leveraged by hotels for different forms of co-creation encounters, there was a link between them. Therefore, there is a need to reflect on these factors.

6.4.1 Passion

Passion was found to be a common goal among the employees and guests, since they reported that passion drove their participation in hotel service encounters. The findings suggest that the employees' and the guests' passion had the same meaning and was directed towards others with the aim of creating self-fulfilment. This influenced their actions, because it made them go all out to ensure that service was exchanged in order to meet a co-actor's expectations. From the researcher's observations, an increasing proportion of employees and guests exhibited passion about working together, regardless of the efforts required of them in the service processes. Berry (1999) argues that out of passion, actors devote considerable time and effort to ensure that an organisation's goal is achieved. However, this study suggests that the actors' passion was not only sparked by their desire to deliver service to achieve an organizational goal, but also to build and sustain relationships to foster future co-creation encounters that were mutually beneficial.

6.4.2 Relationships

Employees and guests shared a common view about the need to develop relationships for mutual benefit. Given the strategic importance of co-creation to both groups, Vargo and Lusch (2008) suggest that it is critical that a relationship is developed to facilitate successful interaction. Accordingly, guests noted that most service benefits such as late check-outs and storage

facilities for their extra luggage had been necessitated by such relationships, and their re-purchase intention from hotel service had mostly been influenced by the relationship with hotel staff. Tuli et al. (2007) note that a relationship enables service solutions to be personalised to meet specific guest needs. Similarly, other studies show that the existence of an employee-guest relationship in service encounters is arguably the strongest, because it could impact positively on the joint process and service outcome (e.g. Jaakkola and Alexander, 2012). However, this study's findings suggest that a micro level relationship not only resulted in personalised problem solving, but also facilitated memorable experience creation, because the relationship enabled employees to adapt service to guests' needs. A micro level relationship is where employees and guests feel a special bond between them (Gronroos, 2007), thus promoting better interaction. Consequently, the micro level relationship behind employee-guest service interactions and exchange becomes the focal unit of analysis regarding service performance.

As shown in the co-creation process framework developed by Payne et al. (2008), employees' learn more about guests' through a co-creation relationship experience, thus creating further co-creation opportunities. This may also afford opportunities for the employees to further improve the relationship experience in order to enhance service design and to co-create value with guests. For instance, one guest mentioned that once you develop a relationship with employees, they become friendly, smile at you, and greet you by name, which ultimately enhances the total perceived value from the service. Suggesting that co-creation encounters could be made much better in instances where a personal relationship existed among actors, the relationship between employees and guests not only fostered operational flexibility, but also positive actions, especially on the part of the employees. From the data analysis, it could be noticed that the guest not only focused on the value derived from personal relations, but also recounted how employees' relational attitude compelled them to do same, which is the essence of the S-D

logic perspective on value co-creation, where actors' reciprocal actions result in service-in-exchange for service.

6.4.3 Belongingness

The relationship between actors might not only be reflected in their willingness to jointly integrate resources in service, but also in the development of a bond and a sense of belongingness, which stimulated co-creation interaction. The findings show how the employees' and guests' sense of belonging triggered and increased their desire to associate with each other, which strengthened identities, and enabled feedback, comments and suggestions from others to create new service or improve upon existing ones. Accordingly, when the employee and the guest jointly participate in the development of a new service, they not only gain a sense of belonging to the team as highlighted in the literature (e.g. Grissemann and Stockburger-Sauer, 2012), but also increase their level of satisfaction. The employee and the guest revealed that belongingness not only reflected a feeling of attachment or a sense of being part of a community, but also that the actors became interested in each other's value creation activity or process, which strengthened the bond for current and future interactions. Consequently, being part of each other's value creation process presented an opportunity for employees' and guests' interactions, spanning through pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters to positively influence service outcomes.

A feeling of belonging portrays an acceptance of each actor's contribution as being essential in the service process. In this case, belongingness could also be linked to respect, because the more the actors' felt respected and valued for their contribution, the better their participation in co-creation activities. This aligns with Campos et al. (2016), who note that social actors often place greater value on how they feel connected or perceived by others within the social

context. Such social actors are found within a broader social environment, such as hotel premises and may include friends or like-minded persons. Prebensen, Altin and Uysal (2015) claim interactions within such social environments influence actors' experience, and the findings show the extent to which guests felt they belonged, which influenced their service encounter experience. In effect, the motivational cues associated with the sense of belongingness might not only increase employees' and guests' joint participation in co-creation activities, but also increase openness in all co-creation encounters.

6.4.4 Openness

Openness to information sharing and joint experience creation is not only considered to be fundamental to all co-creation processes (Henkel, Schoberl and Alexy, 2014). In this study, openness was also thought of as a broader depiction of value during co-creation interactions. As a joint process, openness in co-creation might not only stimulate the employee-guest joint service process for shaping a firm's competitiveness, and the findings of this study suggest it offers an opportunity for employees and guests to understand each other's needs or service expectations. Noble and Philips (2004) argue that openness between employees and guests is important to service exchanges, given the intangible nature of service and the need for trust. This implies that there cannot be a successful service exchange without openness. For example, a male manager (MM2) from a 3-star hotel noted that one key thing which he looked for, to be able to draw closer to a guest for joint service was openness. According to Adamik et al. (2018), openness is the logical sequence of actions opening a given organization to its environment which occurs within the business process and aims at creating value for the organization, customers and other stakeholders. In Chesbrough (2011) openness is highlighted as a way of sharing with others and inviting their participation. In both cases, openness is characterised by transparency, access to information and participatory service processes, which also resonates

with Prahalad and Ramaswamy ((2004), who highlighted the importance of openness in co-creation encounters using the DART (Dialogue, Access, Risk Assessment and Transparency) model to indicate a range of capabilities necessary for effective value co-creation. The fourth element in the model (Transparency) is directly linked to openness, and it highlights the sharing of information as necessary for gaining guests' and employees' successful participation in co-creation encounters. While this means that openness has been investigated and has been found to be useful to successful co-creation, emphasis has mainly been on firms' openness. This study suggests that openness is not only critical to guests' participation in value co-creation, but openness should also come from the employees. Thus, while one of the guests' noted that openness in service helps to build trust, which made them feel comfortable to engage in future co-creation activities with such employees, the employees indicated that openness is a solid foundation for interaction, information and idea sharing for service improvement, innovation or shared inventiveness.

6.4.5 Shared and enhanced experience

A key characteristic of co-creation is shared inventiveness (Chesbrough, 2011), which the study's findings suggest generates shared experience. S-DL highlights that co-creating with the purpose of shared experience is the foundational part of modern marketing (Lusch et al., 2007), because it informs, empowers and connects actors to the service experiences (Caru and Cova, 2015). In this regard, although service experiences are subjective and dynamic, the literature suggests sharing and innovating jointly with others is a superior way of generating valuable experiences (McCull-Kennedy et al, 2012). In so doing, employees informed other guests within the hotel to join in a birthday celebration during breakfast. This underscores the importance of co-creation, since it facilitates actors working together to create experiences together. However, while this approach to service can be leveraged for competitive advantage,

the findings show that shared and enhanced experience may occur from the variation in service processes to allow other actors' to resource share. In this case, the notion of resource sharing might not only extend interaction beyond employees and the focal guest to include other stakeholders within the hotel facility, but also connect actors to draw on each other's resources to enhance the value and for that matter the satisfaction derived from the service.

6.4.6 Satisfaction

The importance of satisfaction from service has been highlighted, since it impacts not only on co-creation activities (Grissemann and Stockburger-Sauer, 2012), but also determines actors' long-term service behaviour (e.g. Oliver, 1980). The findings suggest that actors' level of satisfaction not only impacted on co-creation participation and service outcome, but also had the potential to affect future co-creation encounters. This supports previous studies which suggest a positive relationship between co-creation behaviour and actors' satisfaction with the service experience (e.g. Vazquez, Camacho and Silva, 2013). For example, in this study, while employees' satisfaction resulted from guests' and fellow employees' happiness with a well delivered service experience, gaining insights into the sources might be useful, considering that differences in value expectation might influence actors' assessment of satisfaction differently. Further, distinguishing between guests' sources of satisfaction might be particularly important to employees, since it can help to appreciate the impact of satisfaction on a guest's willingness to participate in future co-creation encounters.

6.4.7 Communication

Although commonalities and differences existed in employee-guest service expectations, the guests hinted that communication was critical because it provided opportunities for

understanding the different value expectations that were likely to influence co-creation encounters within different contexts. The findings suggest that communication not only facilitated information exchange or understanding actors' needs and roles, but also their preferred means of interacting. In this context, while the complex (Gummerus, 2013), dynamic (Ng, Nudurupati and Tasker, 2010) and abstract nature (Gronroos and Voima, 2013) of service interaction has been highlighted, the important role of communication in service exchange towards achieving positive co-creation outcome cannot be underestimated. Actors might not only explore communication to clarify the service process that is likely to produce the expected outcome, but also communication could foster actors' continuous participation in the value co-creation process, because it allows them to influence the creation of their experience, both now and in the future (Gentile et al., 2007). The findings suggest that communication activities were not primarily carried out to make connections, but also to promote and enact dialog for the sharing of information among actors in different service contexts. In this regard, dialogical service processes between employees and guests suggest a bidirectional approach to communication for joint participation in service. This challenges earlier research that shows that employees still operate within the G-DL view, where employees explore a unidimensional approach of communication to exert full control over the value creation process (e.g. Heinonen, Strandvik, Mickelsson, Edvardsson, Sundstrom and Andersson, 2010). In this case, not only will service processes cease to offer opportunity for guests to be part of creating the value proposition before service use, but also employees and guests might no longer be viewed as participant and facilitator respectively, in the joint value creation process for value to be co-created. Further, the study shows that guests not only realised value from the communication component of service, but they also realised the value of the employees' communication capabilities, because it created a conducive environment for free and intense interactions. Accordingly, such employee capability attracted rewards when commended by guests. This

implies that communication may not only be beneficial in terms of linking guests and employees in service, but also the mode of communication, and how it allows every actor's voice to be heard in service encounters might constitute value.

6.4.8 Rewards

The findings not only capture guests' motivation for co-creation participation, but also found rewards to be critical for employees' co-creation participation. However, while motives that drive participation in co-creation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic, the findings suggest that the employees' motivation to expend reasonable effort in joint service encounters was contingent upon a perceived achievable extrinsic motive, or benefit, in terms of promotion and rewards. Studies suggest that rewards strengthen the ties between relevant others, such as employer and employee (e.g. Nambisan and Baron, 2009); considering that the giving of open recognition for uniqueness in social settings tends to be rewarding for some employees (Hoyer et al., 2010). The findings suggest that employees' objective to achieve positive status, social esteem or rewards could impact or strengthen the ties between them and relevant others, such as guests. For example, some of the managers highlighted bonuses and salary increments as being important to their co-creation participation. However, the waiters mentioned that guests' commendations, which usually resulted in rewards such as promotions and "tips" (gifts in cash or in kind) was their source of motivation. Fuller (2010) argues that benefits such as promotions and rewards become bound in social exchange. Consequently, when such benefits are consistent with employees needs and expectations, they perceive their efforts as being rewarding. However, while rewards and promotion represented the views of employees across different hotels, differences existed in the employees' perspectives towards rewards. Thus, understanding these factors and their impact on service could help hotels to introduce service elements that facilitate more employee participation in value co-creation with guests for mutual benefit.

The next section discusses reputation development as another intrinsic factor which influences employees' co-creation participation.

6.4.9 Reputation development

While service processes can afford employees the opportunity to put in effort to facilitate value co-creation, the findings suggest that employees' efforts in service encounters might not only be geared towards meeting others' needs, but also may be aimed at generating value to meet their own aspirations, such as for reputation development. While this might suggest that employees' aspiration for participating in the joint service processes is to create value for themselves, the extant literature on value co-creation has mostly focused on distinct aspects, such as the guests' role and how it impacts the service process and outcome (e.g. Hoyer et al., 2010; Shaw et al., 2011). In this context, and considering that employees' expectations can also affect co-creation interaction and service outcome, there is a need for hotel management to develop service systems, structures and processes that satisfy not only guests' needs, but also those of their employees. Although employees' motivation differed, the findings revealed that the view on reputation development was shared across managers in different hotels. To this end, a female manager noted that a need to enhance her reputation required intensifying communication with the guest, which according to her informed management's decision for IT training for all managers in her hotel. Consequently, meeting such reputation development needs might not only be rewarding to employees, but also to guests and the hotel, considering that a positive reputation can impact on employees' job performances.

This part of the thesis advances knowledge, because it adds to the extant literature by integrating both employee and guest motivation in a single study. Table 6.1, below, summarises not

only the employees' and the guests' motivation for participating in co-creation encounters, but also key factors that are common to both actors.

Table 6. 1. Summary of employees' and guests' motivation for participating in value co-creation

Summary of employees' and guests' motivation for participating in value co-creation		
Factors exclusive to employees'	Factors common to employees' and guests'	Factors exclusive to guests'
Rewards Reputation development	Passion Belongingness Openness Shared and enhanced experience Relationship Satisfaction	Communication

6.5 Employees' and guests' value expectations in a hotel context.

This section addressed the third question of the study “*How do employees and guests perceive value in a hotel context?*” The objective for considering the question was that, despite increasing research on the subject, value remains complex. The study’s findings show that hotel service elements might be similar. However, context specific value might result from service-use within different contexts. For instance, within the hotel industry, this study’s findings suggest that employees and guests perceived value from both direct and indirect service encounters, span across hotel pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters. In this case, although value is subjectively determined by the different actors, research shows that value emerges from individuals’ lived experiences pertaining to emotional, contextual, symbolic and non-utilitarian consumptions of service (e.g. Helkkula et al., 2012). This study highlights the contextual nature of value, because it shows that value as in value for money(economic), hotel location and physical evidence (environment), internet and Wi-fi service (technology), food quality and variety (cultural), mutual respect and appreciation (social) were sources of value and thus, drove employees and guests co-creation participation. Importantly, the value that was realised from the above factors might not only play a significant

role in influencing the actors' current and future service participation, but also might predict their subsequent service encounter behaviours (Yi and Gong, 2013). Thus, unravelling the above factors was necessary to both sets of actors, especially the employees, who require understanding of the guests' expectations to be more efficient and effective for successful service encounters.

The employees' and the guests' value expectations tended to differ, yet the different value expectations were found to influence the evaluation of the service. In this respect, while previous studies mostly focused on highlighting service elements that guests used when assessing the value realised from service encounters (e.g. Gallarza et al., 2011), this study suggests that employees' and guests' value expectations played a critical role in influencing the service outcome and thus, presented the service elements that both actors considered important in their assessment of value from service. However, while understanding these factors is useful for academia and practitioners, considering that the employees and the guests had varying value expectations within different service contexts, further studies might help to understand these factors level of influence on actors to enact certain actions or behaviours to realise the expected service outcome. In addition, gaining further insight into employees' and guests' value expectations within different hotel settings is particularly necessary, given that the evolution in marketing might require employees to manage guests' expectations for successful co-creation encounters, which according to Karpen et al. (2012) can lead to gaining sustainable competitive advantage.

While value remains subjective and complex, the findings suggest that it was of primary importance and significant to both employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation. In this context, although same service might be evaluated differently by the different actors, value derived from different service dimensions becomes the primary activity and the basis for service exchange. For instance, the employees' and the guests' noted that the total experience,

related to both economic and non-economic value was core to their value assessment. However, they gave different meanings to economic and non-economic value within different hotel service contexts. In this regard, while the extant literature mostly conceptualises value from the guests' subjective perspective (e.g. Landroquez, Barroso, and Cepeda-Carrion, 2013), this study suggests that focusing only on guests' value tends to present a one-sided view of the value discourse, which might not help the delivery of a service that is mutually beneficial. Subjectivity and differences in value not only occurred among employees across different hotels, but also among employees within the same hotel. In addition, in all instances, the study's findings indicate that value was realised when the worth and the importance of an activity or experience was high. Consequently, although actors' assessment of value moves beyond current service encounters to include previous and future service experiences, there is still no accepted definition of value. However, this study is set apart from previous studies because it provides a holistic view of what value is from both the employees' and the guests' perspectives in a single study using different data sources, as shown in the methodology chapter. In this study, employees' and guests' value expectations are categorised under two themes: (a) value as in value for money – economic; and (b) non-monetary value experiences, which subsequent sections discuss in detail.

6.5.1 Value as in value for money – economic value.

The previous section indicates that the actors' value expectations in service encounters tended to differ, although the views about value for money was shared across employees and guests, and it was highly context dependent. In highlighting the context-specificity of value, Chandler and Vargo (2011) propose the need for a better understanding of the contextual nature of value, considering that service across different contexts might together constitute value or otherwise.

This implies that while the same service might be perceived to have rendered value to actors within different contexts (Sandstrom, Edvardsson, Kristensson and Magnusson, 2008), the opposite might also be true. In this case, it might be important that, in conceptualising economic value, emphasis is placed on the subjective as opposed to the objective nature of value.

Research suggests that assessing economic value based on subjectivity remains a challenge to be resolved in the marketing literature (e.g. Gallarza *et al.*, 2011), which has implications for the hotels, the employees and the guests. In this regard, although actors might continue to compare the benefits realised from the price of service, the findings show that there was no agreement upon the meaning between employees and guests pertaining to value for money. That is, value received and or given for the price of service not only remained subjective but also had different meanings. However, regardless of the differences in meaning, the actors' interpretation of value for money tended to provide a clue about what value meant at certain times, since their views point in a specific direction. For example, the findings revealed that value for money meant maximizing returns on the actors' investments, where, in this case, maximizing investments related to achieving a desirable service or positive service outcomes. Although it is still difficult to sometimes understand what desirable service in relation to maximising investments means to the actors, Gronroos (1997), for example, asserts that maximizing investment is linked to the utility derived from a specific task, which the findings show might relate to how actors were satisfied with the service quality. Satisfaction is conceptualised as an assessment of the extent to which employees satisfy or exceed guests' expectations (Kursunluoglu, 2011). Drawing from this, the question arises as to how and when do employees satisfy or exceed guests' expectations, because guests' expectations are complex and keep changing. However, this study revealed that satisfaction meant the actors' evaluation of service in terms of the money paid and the value received before, during and after service use. This means that satisfaction in hotel service encounter was the perception of the value

received, where value equals perceived service quality relative to price. Holbrook (1999, p. 4) notes that “one can understand a given type of value by considering its relationship to other types of value.” This was especially the case with guests who kept comparing, for example, prices of the hotel food and consumables with that offered by other competitors.

Following from the link between price, satisfaction and value, this study conceptualises economic value in a hotel context as actors’ satisfaction realised from the evaluation of a service relative to price. In this regard, satisfaction moves beyond the evaluation of service in terms of price, to include pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay experiences, with both sets of actors being part of the creation. In addition, the study shows that utility might reflect satisfaction with or the quality of a service, yet they are assessed differently by different sets of actors. Further, drawing from the link between economic value and service, it is obvious that in designing hotel service, employees might need to factor in resources that could easily fit guests’ value creation practices or processes to deliver the expected economic outcomes. Although economic value emerged differently, based on the actors’ expectations within different service contexts, in a hotel setting, the findings suggest that both employees and guests derived economic value from personal, face-to-face interactions. Holbrook (1999) defines value as a relativistic preference of interacting with an object (people, service, event and place), where the relativistic view is personal and situational (Prebensen et al, 2015). This implies that even though employees and guests expressed a common opinion concerning economic value, it might be realised differently. For instance, whereas one of the male guest’s assessment of economic value from a 5-star hotel service included cheaper food and a cheaper room rate in comparison with competitors, another male guest’s value for money from another 5-star hotel included the restaurant set up, food setting, food arrangement, ambience, reception, lightning, taste in the food, is it salty, is it too spicy, is it too hot or it contains too much pepper. Meanwhile a female guest from another 3-star hotel mentioned the quality of the place, the

setting and the quality of the food. The difference in relation to assessing economic value became more evident when employees, on the other hand, said they expected to make profit from room sales and event hosting activities, which provides a basis for further research to evaluate the degree of influence of economic value perspectives on employees' and guests' co-creation participation and the outcome of service.

6.6 Non-monetary value perspective – experiential value

Apart from monetary value, non-monetary value was of paramount importance to employees and guests alike. This suggests that offering a unique service experience was not only important for achieving competitive advantage, but also connected employees and guests to the experience setting. The findings show that experience in a hotel context stemmed from previous, current and imaginary future circumstances relevant to creating a unique experience (Helkkula and Pihlstrom, 2010). Consequently, while guests derived value from creating their own experience within different hotel service contexts, employees realised value from providing resources towards co-creating the experience. Anderson (2007) proposes a shared understanding of what value is and what it means to actors. In this study, the findings suggest that employees and guests expressed value in non-monetary factors, such as the hotel location, its physical environment, safety and security (environmental), the quality and variety of food (cultural) appreciation and mutual respect (social), and access to the internet/Wi-fi Access (technology). In this case, although the findings show that employees and guests characterised the hotel service offerings with price and experiential value, they perceived that the above were critical non-monetary (experiential value) factors that aided the joint participation in the service to co-create a unique experience. The findings differentiate this study from previous ones because it not only clarifies what value means to employees and guests within a hotel context, but also highlights resources which both actors consider critical to successful co-creation encounters.

Thus, an understanding of these factors can help employees' deployment of appropriate resources for co-creation encounters that are mutually beneficial.

6.6.1 Hotel environment

Value assessment differed, yet the guests tended to consider the hotel environment to be very important to their co-creation participation, regardless of whether they were a business or leisure guest, male or female. As such, whereas some business guests expressed that a hotel's central location, serene environment, and being without much traffic to disturb business transactions were key factors that influence their value expectation and hotel choice, others noted that safety and security are critical to their hotel choice and stay. This might not only imply that a male business guest is more likely to participate in the service of safe and secured hotels, but also the factors mentioned above might be considered critical to their hotel service choice. Research suggests the need to assure the business guest of consistent safety and security, considering that they rarely have limited knowledge about a hotel's physical environment to assess their true vulnerabilities (e.g. Campos et al, 2016). In this case, safety and security might reflect the hotels' ability to protect guests' and their resources from attacks or intrusion. The findings suggest that guests' perception of security played a critical role in evaluating the risk-reward dimension of service, which is highlighted in the extant literature by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004). Similarly, Gilmore and Pine (2002) found that guests' experiences with on-site objects or activities are different, in that they may be consumed in different settings for different purposes. The findings provide evidence to this, since it suggests that guests' reasons differed in terms of prioritising factors for co-creation participation. For instance, while the employees and the guests found the hotel environment necessary for successful co-creation encounters, guests noted that hotel environment was critical not only to their service choice and participation (Zhao, Chen, Zhou and Ci, 2018), but also for creating a memorable experience. Hence,

the guests had undertaken an information search from different sources, including online, websites, Trip Advisors, booking.com, friends, family members and from known hotels to become more informed about a hotel's environment before choosing or arriving at the hotel. This implies that the guest of today, has become more proactive about obtaining information about an experience, which a particular service offers, even before participation. Consequently, guests' information searches might have implications for hotel service participation, since hotels that make the necessary information available through a variety of channels are likely to attract more guests' participation, and vice versa.

6.6.2 Quality and variety of food

Apart from hotel environment, the quality and the variety of food were considered to be critical factors in co-creating a hotel experience. The quality and variety of the food mostly reflected the actors' cultures. Culture is defined as the way of life, customs, art and beliefs of a group of people (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018). The findings show that in most cases, an actor's culture influenced their ideas, value, beliefs and perceptions. This implies that, with such actor's, until the quality and variety of the food fitted their beliefs, perceptions or expectations, value had not been achieved. Vargo and Lusch (2008b, p.7) argue that value is always uniquely determined by the beneficiary. The term "uniquely" tends to prioritize the primacy of individual actors', especially guests' subjective determination of value. However, like other social interactions where actors assume certain roles, service places performance expectations on employees and guests regarding value co-creation and determination. Therefore, while it is true that employees' ability to provide good quality and varied food is critical to co-creating memorable experience, this study also shows that guests' ability to use the hotels' available resources in terms of food, was necessary to facilitating value co-creation and realisation. Further, results suggest that the employees followed standards in their efforts to comply with, maintain and

improve upon industry practice and restrictions. However, guests hinted that for hotels to maintain standards, more effort would be required regarding the quality and variety of the food to facilitate the creation of different experiences for different guests. This might require flexibility in the hotels' operations, given that guests' food preferences and expectations differ.

6.6.3 Mutual respect and appreciation

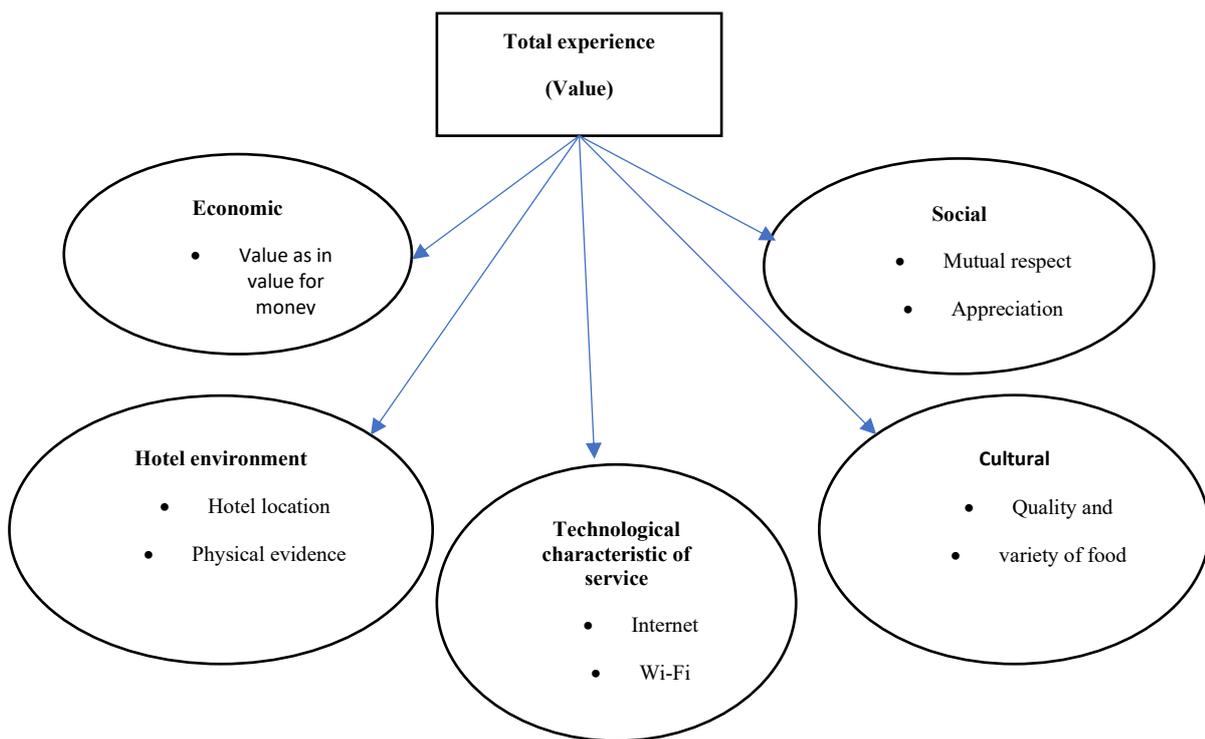
Apart from cultural factors, the study revealed that social factors, such as mutual respect and appreciation, were critical to forming experiential value. Both the employees and the guests observed that it would require mutual respect to be able to perform their respective roles in a service. According to Holbrook (2006), social value is "other" oriented in nature, since it results from behaviours aimed at shaping other actors' positive responses in service encounters, of which the findings provide evidence. In this regard, although issues about mutual respect and appreciation were shared across both employees and guests, the employees were very much concerned about being respected, since they perceived how guests' disrespect tended to affect interaction and the service outcome. Meanwhile, the findings suggest that despite the importance of respect to employees, they do not often express this expectation explicitly during service encounters, which might have negative implications for how service is exchanged for service. Accordingly, respect helps actors to gain self-recognition (Russell-Bennett et al., 2009), status-enhancing favourable experiences (Holbrook, 2006) and a positive self-image. While this might be context driven, this study highlights mutual respect as important to co-actors in the dyad, because it delivers different kinds of experience, which underscores the need for further studies to understand the significance inherent in all forms of respect necessary for successful co-creation interactions.

6.6.4 Technological characteristics of service

In previous years, service encounters occurred through physical, face-to-face interactions (Bitner, 1990). However, in recent years technology-enabled service is considered to be critical by both employees and guests, because it often facilitated actors' interaction through a virtual environment, which this study provides evidence. Technology is defined as "an assemblage of practices and components that serve as a means to fulfil human purposes" (Arthur, 2009, p. 28). This not only highlights technology as a medium of socially embedded processes that is necessary for human interactions (Orlikowski and Debra, 1992), but also emphasises technology as a means through which service could be delivered and value co-created, where for example, physical objects, such as ATM machines provide mechanisms for service (Vargo and Morgan, 2005). According to a male business guest, the technological element of service-in-use experience alone generated value, and further highlighted that the availability of internet facilities impacted positively on the value of the service. In this context, although service is an interactive process involving service systems, a configuration of resources, including people, information and technology not only connect employees and guests for value to be realised (Vargo et al., 2010) but also, the availability of the technology impacts positively on the co-creation environment, participation and the experience (Zhang, Wang and Wu, 2015). The results show that technology enabled service such as the internet and Wi-fi not only create the necessary platform for actors to configure resources, such as knowledge and skills into existing or new value propositions, but also it created a conducive environment for guests to partake in the design of their unique experience, thus increasing the employee-guest level of participation in service design and delivery. Consequently, although the technological characteristics of the service attracted attention among employees and guests, the business guests seemed to be more concerned about continuous access to technology related resources during their hotel stays in order to keep them connected to not only their firm, but also their family.

This part of the study adds to knowledge regarding: (1) capturing actors' practical value experiences to reduce the abstract nature of value for a better understanding of the concept; (2) showing that employees' and guests' value sets resulted not only from tangible and intangible objects of consumption, but also that participating in the creation of their own experiences was valued; and (3) showing that within a hotel context value could result throughout hotel pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters, Figure 6.2, below, illustrates employees' and guests' meaning of value in a hotel context.

Figure 6.2 A model of employees' and guests' meaning of value in a hotel context.



6.7 Employees' and guests' desired personal characteristics for successful co-creation encounters in a hotel setting at the micro level.

This part of the thesis answers the fourth research question “*What are employee-guest personal characteristics and how do they affect value co-creation interaction and service outcome?*”

The aim of asking this question is that, service dominant logic puts value as something that is uniquely experienced by actors through service encounters (Vargo and Lusch, 2011). In this study, findings suggest that throughout participation in the service process, there is the likelihood that employees' and guests' personal characteristics might influence service interaction and outcome. This is where the use of S-D logic might prove useful, because it seeks to project new ways to create value within service contexts, where in this case, service becomes the fundamental basis for exchange (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). However, studies around this logic have not paid much attention to individual actors' personal characteristics and how they might influence co-creation interactions and outcomes at the micro level in a hotel setting. Although S-D logic highlights actors' participation in service as indispensable for value to be created, and studies in healthcare service delivery provide evidence to the criticality of actors' personal characteristics in co-creation encounters (e.g. Osei-Frimpong et al., 2015). As part of the effort to better understand the service processes constituting co-creation of value, Hoyer et al. (2010) argue that it is necessary that actors' personal characteristics are understood as being essential for successful co-creation. In this context, although co-creation participation occurs at different service stages and context, successful encounters may require actors' unique characteristics to adapt a service to an individuals' value needs, which this study supports. Anton et al. (2017) argue that personal characteristics may affect not only perceived value and participation, but also social interactions. Hence, insights into actors' resource capabilities (Storbacka and Nenonen, 2011), related to personal characteristics, might provide an opportunity to understand how actors could be managed during co-creation encounters. This study's findings show the

personal characteristics were not only critical to co-creation participation, but also the carrying out of the different roles that co-creation confers on the actors in the service process. This study found the following personal characteristics key to co-creation encounters.

6.7.1 Approachability

The findings suggest that interacting effectively required the actors to be easily approachable. In this regard, approachability provides the opportunity for dialoguing to improve the service experience. However, the mention of approachability challenges employees that still hold on to the G-DL approach to value creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), where the guest has little or no influence on value creation until at the point of exchange (Chandler and Vargo, 2011), when a service is finally purchased and used by the guest. In the context of service, approachability tends to suppress the traditional goods dominant logic view of value, while strengthening the service dominant logic perspective, because: (a) employees' and guests' views are considered during service process (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004); (b) employees do not take full control of what, how and when value should be designed or delivered (Gronroos and Voima, 2013); and (3) there is not only one point where value could result from a service (Holbrook, 2006).

The term 'approachable' means friendly and easy to talk to, and a person's willingness to listen to others (Oxford dictionaries, 2018). This implies that understanding the term approachability might not only be useful for successful management of friendly co-creation interaction, but also, as indicated by the study's employees and guests, it can make a co-actor open up to talk or reciprocate service. Co-creation interaction might suggest that actors are connected by certain actions (e.g. communication). The actors, especially, one business guest stayer mentioned that approachability was critical to information sharing towards successful co-creation. The guest highlighted that openness reflected friendliness, and that smiles, dialogue and listening

were critical as they immediately put the guest at ease to feel that he was at a good place, and thus, felt comfortable to share views on the service received, which could be both positive and negative. While the above given explanations are similar in meaning, in the service literature approachability is linked to responsiveness (e.g. Parasuraman et al, 1985) and to access in the co-creation literature (e.g. Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), where actors, especially employees show the willingness to help design and deliver prompt service with the guest. However, while these studies highlight the importance of approachability to service and co-creation encounters, this study shows it had effects on co-creation interactions and service outcomes. Further, the findings show that the guest tended to be greatly affected when employees were not approachable.

6.7.2 Transparency

Co-creation reflects a complex process at different stages of service. In this regard, while guests and employees co-creation process could result from direct and indirect interaction (Vargo and Lusch, 2011), interactions could extend to using other service systems as opportunity for intense dialogue becomes available (Morosan, 2015). Thus, it becomes imperative to ensure transparency among actors in service encounters. Within the context of value co-creation, transparency might not only be considered to be critical for information sharing, but also it affords actors the opportunity to assess the risk-reward (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) associated with pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post stay service interactions. However, the findings show that achieving total transparency among actors is challenging, considering that certain business policies, values and ethics did not support that. In addition, individuals' value expectations and expectations of the service encounters most often do not promote total transparency. Further, achieving total transparency might be problematic, because technology-mediated interactions keep increasing in the current global marketplace, especially the hotel industry,

where most interactions occur through technology. However, according to Morosan (2015), transparency might increase with the provision of technical protections, which the findings show was necessary for achieving transparent co-creation participation, intense interaction and the sharing of confidential information.

6.7.3 Attentiveness

In this study, attentiveness applied to the employees only. The joint interaction in the service encounters required the employees to pay attention to detail. This was especially the case with employees that required attentive listening capabilities to understand their guests. As a critical learning skill, attentiveness not only facilitates the understanding and knowing of guests needs, but also helps to deliver the right service. The extant literature on the co-creation process suggests that employees learn more about guests for more opportunities to improve their service experience and for enhancing future co-creation with the guests (Payne et al., 2008). Further, they assert that learning about guests, in turn, has an impact on the guests' willingness to participate in future co-creation activities with the employees. This was evident from the findings, where attentive listening enabled the delivery of memorable service experiences, which resulted in subsequent co-creation opportunities. For instance, a female manager's view gave credence to attentiveness as core to co-creation encounters, by highlighting that before employees can do the right thing, they need to know what the guest wants, which could only be achieved through listening for details. The implication is that employees with attentive listening skills, may show high potential to render expected service, because they know the details of the guests' service expectations. However, while attentiveness helps actors to determine how value is jointly created, the findings suggest that achieving it might also require management to train and develop the listening capabilities to add to employees' pool of resources relevant to the co-creation process.

6.7.4 Understanding

While the employees and the guests shared a common view of other factors, understanding was specific to the guests, who considered it to be critical in co-creation encounters, considering that co-creation involves people from different backgrounds, cultures or nationalities. The findings show that understanding tended to influence the interactions and service outcomes positively, because it led to the delivery of the right service and allowed the guests to create a unique experience. This aligns with the S-D logic perspective, which is grounded in creating actors' unique experiences, as well as opportunities for learning and knowing actors' preferences and expectations, to be able to fit the service components to current and future service needs and expected experiences (Payne et al., 2008). Further, the findings show that understanding guests' hotel stay experience regarding food service and room preference, encouraged their active participation, since it created an enabling environment for them to participate in the service process to design their own experience.

6.7.5 Confidence

Co-creation involves employee-guest processes (Chandler and Vargo, 2011) to offer opportunities for resource integration (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) in order for value to be co-created. Value, in this case, is uniquely determined by the beneficiary (guest or employee) (Vargo and Lusch, 2016), of which employees' confidence is noted to be delivering positive experiences to guests involved in the co-creation encounter. For instance, in highlighting the essence of confidence in co-creation encounters, a female supervisor from a 3-star hotel noted that an employee's self-confidence was critical, since confidence in oneself helps him/her to

act accordingly and openly without fear. Shaw et al. (2011) highlight the importance of employees' ability to facilitate successful co-creation. In this context, employees' confidence levels might not only play a critical role towards achieving successful co-creation, but also be necessary for voicing their views openly to ensure positive interactions. This part of the thesis extends knowledge by highlighting a combination of key personal characteristics influencing employee-guest co-creation participation in a hotel setting. Table 6.2, below, summarises these personal characteristics.

Table 6.2. A summary of employees' and guests' personal characteristics affecting co-creation interaction and service outcome

Factors exclusive to employees'	Factors exclusive to guests'
Confidence Approachability Transparency Attentiveness	Understanding Approachability Transparency Attentiveness

6.7.6 Effects of personal characteristics on co-creation interaction and hotel service delivery.

An actor's personal characteristics are critical to co-creation encounters. Authors have studied personal characteristics and have found them to be important for successful service encounters (e.g. McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012). However, while studies suggest that a person's personal characteristics influence their willingness and ability to participate in co-creation interaction at certain levels (e.g. Sweeny et al., 2015), this study's findings indicated that personal characteristics not only influenced employees' and guests' willingness and ability to participate in co-creation interactions, but could also draw or cause other actors to withdraw

from participating in the co-creation process. In addition, research has attributed the achievement of positive service outcome partly to actors' personal characteristics (e.g. Anton et al., 2017). However, within the hotel context, findings show that while employees and guests work together with the goal to achieve a positive service outcome, their personal characteristics might tend to impact negatively on their interaction, and thus cause value co-destruction (Echeverri and Skalen, 2011). While this means that an understanding of employees' and guests' personal characteristics is critical to successful service encounters, it has received little attention in hotel co-creation research. There is, therefore, the need to examine their personal characteristics and how they could affect co-creation participation as mentioned by Neghina et al. (2015). Understanding of actors' characteristics might not only help to manage their actions in a more positive way, but also allow the necessary orientation to be given to shape their actions to elicit others' participation in co-creation. Importantly, the study extends knowledge, because it provides a holistic view of employees' and guests' desired personal characteristics and how they might affect co-creation participation positively. This study shows that personal characteristics: (1) affect service interaction; (2) influence co-actors' actions; (3) influence service design and delivery and, ultimately service outcome.

6.7.7 Linking employees' and guests' motivations, value expectations, personal characteristics and service outcome to the value realised from co-creation encounters.

The emergence and development of an interactive perspective on service and value creation presents a need to understand not only the key factors that drive value co-creation participation, but also how together these factors affect the outcome of service and the value realised. Although there may be some exceptions to why co-creation occurs and the factors that influence

participation and outcomes, this study indicates that different factors, including motivation, value expectations and personal characteristics, not only influence employee-guest co-creation participation, but also affect service outcome and the value realised. Thus, an understanding of the factors, which this study provides, might not only provide explanations into why people behave in certain ways during service encounters, but also explain why co-creation encounters occur within different contexts with certain outcomes.

Studies show that co-creation requires employees' and guests' participation in a joint process, where, in this case, participation may involve actors, time, effort, knowledge and other resources to generate new ideas to positively affect the outcome service (Brunink, 2013). However, this study suggests that co-creation might not only require participation, but also that an understanding of the employees' and guests' context-specific motivators is necessary as it might reflect these actors' value expectations. The findings extend knowledge by making reference to employees' and guests' value co-creation motivations in a hotel setting, namely, passion, belongingness, openness, relationships, satisfaction, reputation development, openness, communication, rewards, shared and enhanced experience.

Accordingly, these motivators reflect value expectations that have the potential to influence the total experience. The findings not only show that employees' and guests' value expectation is personal and subjectively determined, but also might have a snowball effect on co-creation interactions and service outcomes. For instance, when employees perceive that they are not respected, do not get "tips", are not appreciated or feel that guests are not contributing intellectually, or when employees attitudes related to communication, listening and good reception affect participation, service process and the service outcome. According to Osei-Frimpong (2017), individuals' participation in the service encounter process depends on the belief that the desired outcome can be achieved. This implies that the objective for achieving a set goal mostly underlies an actor's co-creation participation, which the findings of this study suggest

that in most cases such goals could be achieved when they were understood by the actors involved in service. However, issues related to the definition and meaning of value remain complex, especially employees' and guests' value expectations in a hotel setting. This study not only provides a holistic understanding of employees' and guests' expected value in hotel co-creation encounters, but also found that employees' and guests' value expectations, including economic, environmental, technological characteristics of service, cultural and social factors, affect co-creation interaction, outcome of service and the value realised.

Actors' personal characteristics play critical role by not only helping actors, especially employees, to understand guests' service preferences, but also by helping to align service to individual guest's needs in different co-creation encounters. The findings show that in most cases guests' personal characteristics reflected their needs, which could be used to predict service choice or preferences. Further, personal characteristics might not only influence the actors' behaviour in the service exchange, but could also affect co-creation participation and service outcome. Gaining an understanding is important to determining not only the social interaction, but also co-creation participation expectations or the perceived value in service encounters.

While the value realised from service encounters remains subjective, the findings show that not all co-creation activities were likely to result in value. Some activities led to positive service outcome by delivering the actors' value expectations, others ended negatively, which affected the service outcome. However, these outcomes, whether positive or negative, were mostly influenced by actors' perceived value, motivation for participation and personal characteristics. One thing worthy of note is that, despite the variation in opinions, generally the actors presented a common idea that a service exchange should be considered to be mutually beneficial. However, the abstract nature of value, coupled with different meanings, generated countless views that were illustrative of the concept's complex nature and how it could be

evaluated differently. Consequently, what may apply as value to one person may not apply to the whole group, or what may apply to the whole group may not apply to one person. This is where the development of a hotel co-creation framework becomes useful, because it might provide insight into how actors, especially employees understanding of the different factors that might aid the creation of an enabling environment for continued interaction to understand guests' expectations to improve competitiveness.

6.8 Value co-creation and employees' and guests' resource capabilities

Value co-creation comes in varied forms and activities due to differences in the factors that drive actors' participation. Importantly, the findings support previous studies which highlight a new approach to service, where each actor assumes a role to contribute to the overall service process (e.g. Payne et al., 2008), which, in most cases, require different resource integration (Vargo and Lusch, 2016) for value to be jointly created and realised. This might not only require actors to possess key resource capabilities, but also be aware of how such capabilities can be acted upon by co-actors to achieve successful and mutually beneficial co-creation encounters. In this study, both the employees and the guests identified economic resource (money), the hotel environment, its location, technological characteristics of the service, the quality and variety of the food and mutual respect as being critical to the determination of their perceived value. In addition, employees and guests mentioned personal characteristics, such as understanding, attention to detail and approachability as being necessary for successful co-creation encounters. However, transparency and confidence were unique to the employees. To this end, this study contributes to the literature by highlighting the criticality of the forgone factors as reflecting key resources that employees and guests perceive might deliver on their total hotel experience.

6.9 Chapter Summary

This part of the study has discussed the results of Chapters five of the thesis. The discussion considered the results from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The study found that employees' and guests' co-creation in a hotel setting at the micro level not only took a direct, but also an indirect approach. However, both the employees and the guests preferred direct, face-to-face interactions. Actors value expectations differed, and were complex, and context based, not only resulting from the service exchange, but also participating in an interactive process-generated value, since it enabled actors' creation of their own experience. Value expectations in a hotel setting moves beyond the economic value of service to include the actors' total experience, including the hotel environment, technological characteristics of the service, cultural and social factors. This implies that, for a service to deliver on an actor's expected value, especially that of a guest, a hotel might not only need to focus on the design of the service offering with the guest, but also need to focus on how the service attributes contribute to the creation of a total experience within different contexts. As shown in Figure 6.1, below, the study integrates the findings to design a model of how employees and guests perceive value in a hotel context. Further, the study revealed that motivation and personal characteristics are key factors that not only drive actors' co-creation participation, but also affect co-creation interactions and the outcome of service. The next chapter concludes the study by presenting a summary of the key findings, their implications and directions for future research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the overall summary and contributions of the study to knowledge. Firstly, the contributions of the thesis to the value co-creation and hospitality literature, as well as implications for practice, are presented. Thereafter, the study's limitations and directions for future research on value co-creation are outlined.

7.2 The value co-creation process: the need for understanding the nature and scope within a hotel context.

In this study, value co-creation is the main subject around which all the other themes revolve. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), value is a joint function of actors' actions and it is, therefore, always co-created (Vargo and Lusch, 2008b). The study suggests that the co-creation process is dynamic, can be initiated by the employees, guests or both, and may occur if employees and guests are able and willing to participate in the joint service process. As such, based on expectations, actors can immerse themselves in the service process and provide input (Auh et al., 2007). Consequently, while a guest can participate in employee-related service activities, such as self-check ins, check-outs or menu design to become a co-creator of value, the employees can also participate in guest activities such as designing a preferred menu, room selection or decoration.

Employees' and guests' expectations differ in service encounters. However, the study identified that the interactions provide the basis for understanding each other's value preferences.

Therefore, in most cases, actors can input and facilitate interactive co-creation processes that reflect their expectations. Gronroos and Ravald (2011) argue that interactions are reciprocal actions through which actors can affect each other's value creation activities. In this regard, while the extant literature does not provide information on context specific activities making successful co-creation interactions during hotel pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay encounters, the results of this study do that. The findings provide understanding of how employees and guests in value co-creation become linked through value propositions to offer mutual benefit at different stages of hotel service. Significantly, the findings point to the emergence of an interactive value creation process, where actors' interactive and participatory roles could facilitate integration of different resources for the benefit of one, or both. Within the context of resource integration, information seeking, information sharing interaction, helping, chatting, comments and suggestions were found to lead to successful co-creation (see, Appendix 9).

The literature suggests that apart from uncovering the latent and hidden needs of guests through co-creation participation, employees are increasingly motivated to harness the creative potentials of guests as co-actors in new service development (e.g. O'Hern and Rindfleisch, 2010). This study highlights this view because it suggests that the configuration of actors' roles and resources in the co-creation process not only help to understand their expectations, but also enhances the value resulting from co-creation activities. This provides insight into the significance of the micro level relationship between employees and guests, whereby each other's resource integration (e.g. money, time, effort) become critical to realising successful co-creation outcome. Vargo et al. (2008) argue that value is achieved through integration of operand resource (e.g. hotel facility, staff) and operant resource (e.g. knowledge, skills, competence). The findings support this as the employees and the guests noted that they may agree to integrating resources upon anticipation of the likelihood that benefits will accrue from the service

exchange, which is highlighted in Chandler and Vargo (2011). This highlights a need to understand not only the resources that actors possess, but also which ones they might want to integrate into co-creation for successful encounters.

In addition, despite the active participant and facilitator roles adopted by the guests and the employees, respectively, towards joint resource integration in service (Frow et al., 2014), most studies on co-creation have focused on the guests' resources that might foster successful encounters. This study is different, as it examined co-creation from the employee-guest perspective and how their joint resource capabilities might contribute to successful service encounters. The findings provide the basis for understanding and creating a level playing-field, whereby both actor's participation regarding resource integration could contribute to the value co-creation process for mutual benefit.

7.3 The need to understand key factors driving co-creation participation in a hotel context: the employee-guest perspective.

The extant literature suggests that value co-creation occurs through a combination of factors, which can influence the co-creation context and outcome (Roberts et al., 2014). However, making explicit those factors remains as a limited discussion in the literature, because the nature and scope of co-creation vary within different contexts. In addition, while the literature suggests that an actor's participation in service is either extrinsically or intrinsically driven, both are still considered to be generic in nature, and the two factors have mostly been explored from a guest's perspective. The findings suggest that different factors interact to impact actors' value co-creation participation, thus making explicit how understanding of the employee and guest motivations interact to influence participation in a hotel context becomes necessary, considering that employees' and guests' expectations can influence service outcome. McColl-Kennedy

et al. (2012, p.6) argue that “co-creation does not take place in a vacuum”. This implies that every co-creation activity has an underlying reason, evidence of which this study provides. The study suggests that underlying reasons mostly influence not only actors’ participation, but also resource integration in the co-creation process.

As highlighted in Table 6.1, above, the study shows that some underlying motivators are common, while others are unique to employees and guests. In particular, the findings suggest that guests’ motivation to participate in co-creation is primarily based on how the service elements function to deliver their expected value and achieve their hedonic desires (pleasurable experiences) is critical to their hotel choice. On the other hand, employees’ motivation tends to be a combination of economic reasons, that depict an experiential value perspective of the self, rather than others, and altruistic value, which relates to one’s consumption experience that affects others, not only as an end in itself (Holbrook, 2006), but also that which is directed towards others’ wellbeing with an aim to create self-fulfilment (Zainuddin, 2013). While this might be context-dependent, considering that different goals drive employees’ and guests’ service participation, it highlights the importance and criticality of having an integrative model that better illustrates the pool of factors necessary for achieving successful co-creation encounters. Similarly, Gummesson (2008) contends that it is not enough to focus only on the dyadic relationship between employees and guests. This suggests a need to understand how other unidentified factors could interact to positively or negatively affect not only the co-creation process, but also the outcome. This makes the current research relevant, since it uncovers the key factors which influence not only guests’ but also employees’ co-creation participation, and their effects on interaction and the outcome of service within a hotel context.

7.4 Understanding value expectation as a key driver for co-creation: the employee-guest perspective

An understanding of employees' and guests' value expectation is fundamental not only to hotel service but also to successful co-creation encounters, both directly and indirectly. Ballantyne et al. (2011) note that service relationships are developed and maintained successfully through value exchange. This suggests that value provides the means for developing and achieving successful employee-guest service relationships, of which research has advanced around the value concept. However, while in most cases the concept has been studied from the customer perspective, with emphasis on customer experiences, which is inherent in a firm's value proposition. This study found that value not only connects employees and customers in service, but also it is their focus when participating in service. It is acknowledged that individuals have different aspirations and expectations from service, but the findings suggest that understanding value from the employee-guest perspective provides insights for aligning value propositions to the aspirations and expectations sought in a service exchange. For instance, the extant literature conceptualises value as having extrinsic and intrinsic benefits (Holbrook, 2006), but this study revealed that value formation extends beyond extrinsic and intrinsic components to include benefits realised from an actor's participation in interactive service processes, leading to the creation of total experience. In essence, this research has broadened the understanding of value by setting out the comparative benefit sought by employees and guests in a hotel service encounter. Strandvik et al. (2012) contend that value should not only be viewed as embedded in the consumption process, but also as something that actors govern in their own consumption context. This seeks to suggest that apart from the consumption experience, actors are also interested in seeking other context-related value benefits, which this study shows are subjective. This study shows that subjectivity is at the core of value determination, and reflects differences arising from actors' value experiences within different contexts and dimensions. In this case,

the dimensions of value not only relate to experiences that provide understanding of the diverse meanings of value within the hotel context, but also explains why employees and guests “adapt service to their unique needs, usage situations and behaviours” (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, p.11). Similarly, Gronroos and Voima (2013) assert that value creation is always two-sided, which is why the understanding of value from both employees’ and guests’ perspectives must be addressed concurrently. However, in this context, it is recognised that studying or framing value from a range of different opinions from employees’ and guests’ perspectives might not only be complex, but also present difficulties in understanding individual actors’ value expectations during service encounters. For instance, this study revealed instances where actors view on value converged, while others diverged, yet it clarified these discrepancies in employees’ and guests’ expected value within certain contexts in a hotel setting at the micro level. This study has established that in most cases guests’ value expectations are influenced by culture and reasons for travel, and so reduces the conceptual complexity within the hotel industry. Further, this study provides insight into the multifaced nature of value arising from the different meanings of value perceived by employees and guests across different stages of service within the hotel industry.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, actors’ value expectations tend to be partly monetary and partly non-monetary (experiential and context-driven), spanning through pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay service encounters. Zeithaml (1988) notes that customers assess value based on the perceived total benefits offered by a product or service relative to the price paid for obtaining it and its use. This is supported by the findings, which suggests that the employees and the guests are interested in the overall assessment of service as: (a) value from monetary investment (b) value from the total experience. However, even as the value resulting, and framed from service, is evaluated differently, both the employees and the guests indicated that being part of the creation of their own experience was of value. Further, these actors mentioned

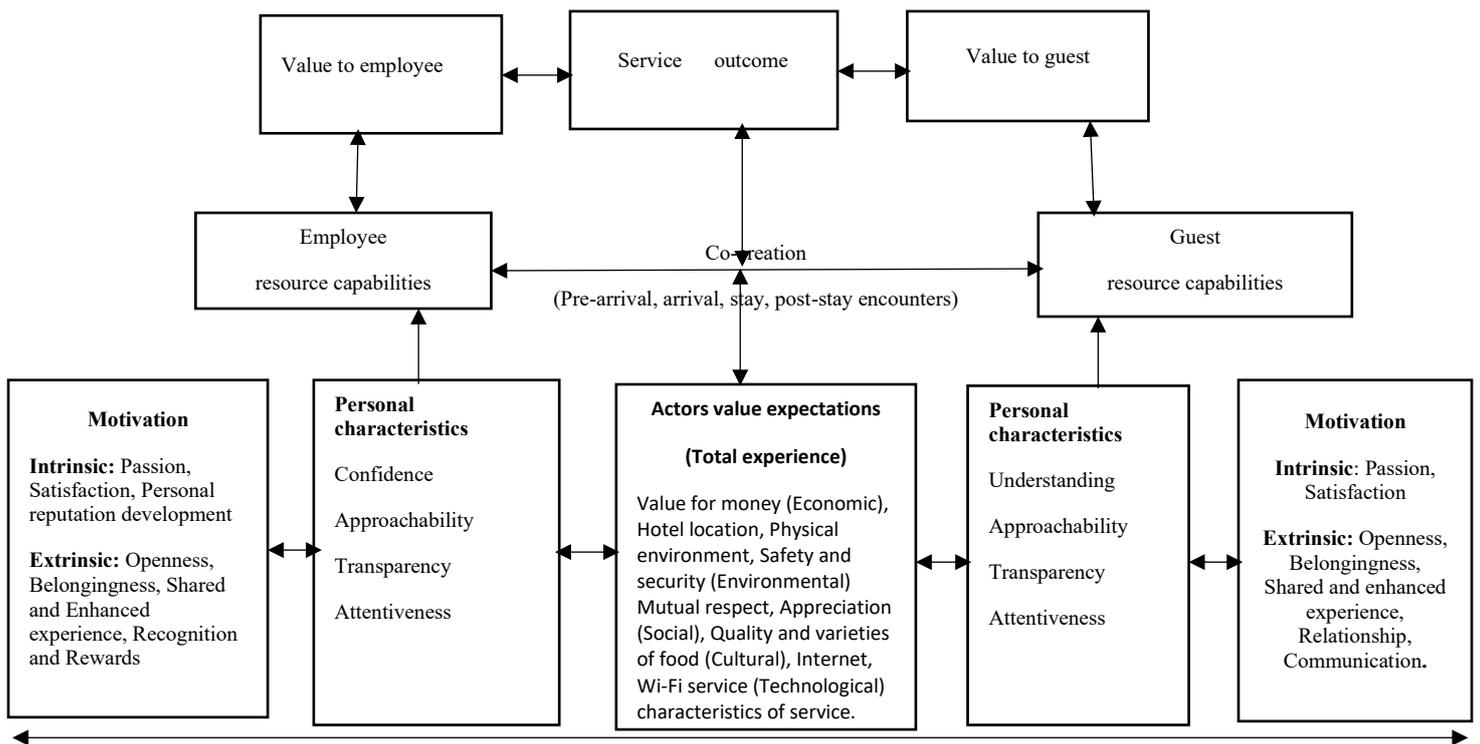
that their joint participation in the service process impacted positively on the value realised from such encounters. As shown in figure 6.1, above, the study identified actors' value expectations, motivations and personal characteristics as being key to co-creation participation in a hotel context at the micro level, which broadens understanding of co-creation in a hotel setting. To this end, it is worthy to mention that each driving factor presents a combination of attributes to determine a relevant outcome.

7.5 A framework for understanding value co-creation drivers in Ghana's hotel setting

A framework for understanding drivers of employee-guest participation in value co-creation has implications for theory and practice. The S-D logic perspective for marketing not only theorizes the role of employees and guests in the value co-creation process (Vargo and Lusch, 2011), or the combination of employee-guest resources in the form of competences, capabilities and knowledge as what underpins interactive co-creation activities, but also highlights value as essential foundation to service exchange (Chandler and Vargo, 2011). However, within the context of hotel, previous studies using S-DL have explored value mostly as how guests try to extract value from service experiences. In addition, under S-DL, co-creation not only imply that the value, which is jointly created is assessed differently by different actors, but that it is also defined differently by every actor. In this context, although the guest is perceived to be an active participant in service delivery under the service-centred view of marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), conceptualising value and value co-creation from the guests' perspective tends not to serve all actors' interests. Further, the view that service is exchanged for service under the evolved logic for marketing (Chandler and Lusch, 2015) suggests that

employee-guest participation in service is driven by expected goals. Hence, for a better understanding of the factors that drive value co-creation participation in a hotel setting at the micro level, effort must be made to understand the factors from employees' and guests' perspectives. As shown in Figure 7.1, below, this study examines value and value co-creation from the employee-guest perspective, and the findings of the study aided the development of a co-creation framework to highlight how key factors interact to drive employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation in a hotel context.

Figure 7.1 An empirical framework of employee-guest value co-creation drivers in Ghana's hotel setting



7.6 Contribution to Knowledge

Co-creation is an emerging phenomenon that has received a lot of research attention in recent years. This study contributes to the topic by examining the factors driving employees' and guests' participation through empirical research, which has led to the following contributions:

- The first contribution follows directly from the research findings, which show that both the employees' and the guests' value expectations, motivations and personal characteristics drive co-creation participation in a hotel context. These drivers tend to operate across the different stages of service, including pre-arrival, arrival, stay and post-stay co-creation encounters.
- The study developed a model for deeper understanding of value co-creation participation between employees and guests in a hotel setting within the context of a Sub-Saharan developing country, which is the thesis' original contribution to knowledge. The model's core is the key factors that drive employee-guest joint participation in co-creation at the micro level.
- The research contributes to knowledge by establishing that although driving factors for co-creation participation vary and are context-based, a set of common factors influence participation regardless of whether it is employee or guest.
- The thesis' contribution relates to how the drivers of co-creating affect employees' and guests' interaction and service outcome, which has both theoretical and managerial implications.

7.7 Managerial implications

The guest is not only endogenous to his/her own value creation and that of the employees, but also plays different roles in the service process to realise value. However, the findings indicate that while some guests have the ability and willingness to participate in value co-creation activities to realise expected value, others do not. In this regard, although employees and guests benefit from each other's service when value is co-created from the actors' resource integration, the complexity and abstractness surrounding co-creation present practical challenges for its implementation. As such, practitioners have become more concerned about the practical importance of theorising around the co-creation concept. Accordingly, these concerns centre on confusion arising from a lack of integrative studies. As shown in Figure 7.1, above, this study attempts to reduce the abstractness surrounding value co-creation in a hotel setting by developing an integrative model to enrich theoretical research on drivers of co-creation participation.

Importantly, the research provides insights that enable managers to attract both employee and guest participation in service for improvement to enhance the competitiveness of a hotel. The findings bring to the fore certain aspects of service, such as interaction, to which managers need to attach importance by viewing information sharing, information seeking, chatting, comments, suggestions and criticisms as critical to solving the actual service problems and improving the overall outcome. The results point to several avenues to stimulate successful value co-creation interaction. Among the critical issues highlighted is that an actor's participation in the creation of their own experience is value. Therefore, managers should introduce service processes, procedures and activities that encourage employee-guest joint participation. In addition, managers can devise different mechanisms to motivate both the employees and guests to co-create, by either focusing on the factors, such as belongingness, relationship, openness, mutual respect, satisfaction, rewards and recognition or monetary benefits, offered by co-creation.

For the employees, management can introduce service activities that encourage the development of employee reputation. In addition, management can institute policies, such as salary increment, promotion and rewards, such as end of year bonuses. Similarly, service firms such as hotels, can avoid service failures by developing strategies to encourage participation in service design or improvement through information sharing, information seeking, comments and feedback. The findings provide examples of co-creation behaviours that guide managers and the industry towards practicing specific types of co-creation. Further, the findings provide a guide for managers seeking to co-create value through interaction with guests. In this regard, managers' ability to identify individual guests' needs and expectations might help in focusing on a service activity that delivers the desired benefit to the employees and the guests. Furthermore, having in place policies that ensure reciprocal respect between employees and guests is necessary to successful service encounters.

Although the study guests derived value from participating in the creation of their unique service and total experience, they highlighted the provision of service dimensions, such as technology, as critical to their hotel choice and co-creation participation. However, guests were more concerned about having in place service elements that contribute to their realisation of joy, amusement and happiness.

Further, the study provides managers with information about the appropriate personal characteristics that could foster successful co-creation encounters. Understanding these personal characteristics should enable managers to match employees and guests whose personal characteristics could best interact to positively affect service outcome.

7.8 Limitations of the study

The study was constrained by several limitations due to its exploratory nature. The study was limited to a sample of employees and guests from 6 hotels in the greater Accra region of Ghana, of which two each came from 3, 4 and 5star categories. This highlights a limitation arising from a relatively small sample being used to represent the entire hotel industry. In addition, the lack of quantitative evaluation tends to limit generalising the findings to other contexts and sectors.

The industry's operators are scattered throughout Ghana, where the inclusion of other hotels from the other regions could have enriched the findings. However, the constraints related to money, time and effort hindered the researcher's ability to increase the study's sample size to include more participants from other parts of Ghana.

Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations were used to gather different data for one technique to complement the other. However, as with other studies, the researcher of this study anticipated limitations. Flanagan (1954) notes that collecting ideal data to address a study's questions seem impossible in practice. He, therefore, recommends that errors be recognised and limitations appropriately recorded, which research shows is necessary for achieving trustworthiness in a study (e.g. Butterfield et al., 2005). Despite the advantages identified above, the qualitative methods presented the following limitations:

Having access to hotels, employees and guests was problematic, because the study related to value expectations and value co-creation experiences, which hotel management often found difficult to discuss with the researcher.

Although interviews occurred at designated places within the natural context, the researcher's presence might have resulted in minimum responses and participation. It was anticipated that interviewing employees' in their office had the likelihood of putting them at ease to express

candid opinions. Although this was achieved, it created problems, such as frequent disruptions by phone calls, which in some cases distorted the process. Some group members responses in the interactions tended to affect others' reactions and actions, which in most cases led to uneven participation and aggressive responses. The interpretative position adopted in this study made analysis of observational data harder than usual, because the researcher had to make inferences about the key concepts of interest from naturally occurring conversation and descriptions. The author made every effort to ensure trustworthiness of the study by providing a detailed account of actors' views on value expectations, motivations and personal characteristics in relation to co-creation encounter experiences. In the researcher's view, the detailed account led to data saturation. However, because it was possible that findings could be distorted to achieve different results, the author explored triangulation of the data. Value co-creation is inherently complex to be understood in its entirety through qualitative investigation. Thus, triangulation was not only explored to increase the study's validity by incorporating several viewpoints, but also to deepen our understanding about the study topic. Further, a research limitation was acknowledged, because the researcher was part of the research process.

What contributed to minimising the effects of the above limitations of the study

The feedback and comments from gatekeepers suggest that the researcher's skill sets, such as effective communication, presentation skills, extensive knowledge about the study topic, professionalism in appearance and speech were necessary, and all of them might have contributed to addressing the study's limitations, especially when seeking access and participation from individuals and organisations.

Employees' and guests' feedback and comments after interviews suggest that, apart from the above skills, being sociable, respectful, attentive listener and a good moderator were useful and

might have contributed to minimising the challenges in the qualitative methods. Apart from the above, the researcher carried out the following activities to ensure that the study's limitations were minimised:

- Spent many hours in the field with potential participants to establish rapport towards rich and extensive data collection.
- Repeatedly assured participants that showed signs of vulnerability about the confidentiality of whatever information they provided. As an interim measure to ensuring confidentiality, the researcher ensured interviews took place in a quiet area in the hotel where the participants worked.

Regulated interview time to ensure that the process did not compromise participants busy schedules.

7.9 Directions for future studies

This study uncovered several areas that require further research. The new insights offered by this study suggest the need for empirical work to evaluate the drivers, to further our understanding of the underlying reasons for employees' and guests' participation in value co-creation activities. While the exploratory nature of the study focused on the drivers of employee-guest participation in co-creation, the thematic analysis revealed the emergence of co-creation beyond the dyad to include other actors in service networks. Therefore, further studies that seek to cover other actors in co-creation participation will be useful. In terms of understanding the drivers of co-creating value, the identification of other factors driving actor's participation within different service contexts might be useful, taking into consideration that actors' expectations and value expectations differ and keep changing.

The study only included five leisure guests, therefore, researchers could expand this number and take the study further. In addition, there was evidence for different drivers of males, female, leisure and business guests which different studies could consider. Further, empirical research exploring the dynamics in value co-creation activities related to what service outcomes result from having in place any of the key driving factors identified in this study will be important. The understanding of the outcomes from these factors at specific service stages could aid managers to formulate and implement strategies that facilitate the achievement of service outcomes that are mutually beneficial. The study suggests that pre-arrival face-to-face collaboration and indirect interaction contribute to service improvement and personalisation. However, unlike interaction, the study did not capture much of the pre-arrival direct collaborative activities between employees and guests, which future studies could consider.

Finally, a review of the co-creation literature suggests that little research has been conducted on how different factors, such as perceived value, motivation and actors' personal characteristics, merge to affect co-creation interaction and the outcome of the service. Most studies focus on one factor and occasionally mention other factors. This study proposes an agenda for future research by showing not only the different factors that drive employee-guest co-creation participation, but also the extent of the effects that these factors have on total service outcome. The thesis discussed important issues, such as mutual respect, reputation development, openness, safety and security, as being critical for successful co-creation encounters, and highlights these as potential areas for hotels' competitive advantage. Future studies in different contexts involving these factors might be useful for employees during the implementation and management of co-creation encounters.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Considerations



Ethical Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher has read and understood the University of Northampton’s research ethics guidelines (2015), the British Education Research Association (2011) ethical guidelines
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will be employees and guests from 3 to 5- star hotels within the greater Accra region of Ghana • They will be contacted through the Directors of the selected hotels • Each participant will be given an information sheet related to this research
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research will take place at the hotel’s premises during working hours or any safe place suitable and acceptable to the interviewee and me. It is anticipated that there will be no personal security risk to the researcher or participants • Directors, hotel supervisory team, participants and research team will be informed of the interview times, processes and locations as a precautionary safety measure
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher will have a University of Northampton ID card and Introductory letter for identification purposes • Permission to carry out the research will be sought from the hotel’s Directors, General Managers, Line Managers and supervisors where appropriate
Participants activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants would be interviewed on an individual basis. Questions to be asked will not discomfort the interviewees.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the nature of the research is exploratory, the interview session will be done at the first stage.
Data collection and storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data will be collected through interviews and recorded with a digital recording device Recorded data will be kept secured on my personal computer, flash drive and hard copied materials locked in my personal cabinet at the Northampton University The Data Protection Act will be adhered to at all times. No information will be disclosed to third parties beyond the hotel's management and participants.
Informed Consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed consent will be obtained from each participant. Please see Appendix C
Information Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An information sheet will be given to each participant, setting out clearly in writing what the research involves and what is required of the participant. See Appendix B.
Confidentiality and Anonymity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anonymity will be maintained. If that is the preference, participants will be allocated codes and their personal details will be kept separately. Names of hotels or people will be coded in the thesis. Personal contact details will be destroyed at the end of the research
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher's contact details and that of the first supervisor will be provided if any issues arise subsequently. Any subsequent issues will be handled appropriately in consultation with the hotel's management

Appendix 2: Participants information sheet



Participant Information Sheet 1 (Interview)

Name of department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship

Title of the study: An examination of value co-creation drivers in Ghana's hospitality setting: a micro level approach.

Self-introduction

The researcher or interviewer will introduce herself to the participant and establish a good rapport with the interviewee.

What is the purpose of this study?

This study aims to investigate the concept of value co-creation in Ghana's hospitality setting from the employees' and guests' perspectives. Specifically, the research seeks to understand what drives employee-guest active participation in service design and delivery, how the employees' and the guests' co-operate with each other and how these affect the quality of the service outcomes. The concept of value co-creation basically relates to the increasing role played by guests within the activities of the employees, in which case, the guest is informed and active, which is different from the past, when guests were not informed in relation to joint service delivery issues. This study seeks to understand value co-creation drivers to be able to propose ways by which the employees' and the guests could engage each other to improve on service delivery and the quality of the outcomes.

Your participation

The study attempts to examine co-creation drivers between the employee and the guest in a hotel setting. Responses from both the employees and the guests are considered important, however, taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part in this focus group discussion if you do not want to. It is therefore up to you to decide whether or not to participate. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be required to sign a consent form. Nevertheless, you can still withdraw at any point if you do not wish to continue to participate and you do not have to give any reasons for your

decision. Furthermore, if you decide to take part you are free to withdraw from the study without giving any reason up to 14 days after you completed the interview.

What you have to do

Your participation is limited to responding to the questions to be administered once. If you do require a summary copy of the report at the end of the research, please leave your email address and electronic copies of the report will be sent to you.

Any possible benefits of participating?

Although there are no immediate benefits for participating in this study, it is hoped that this research will extend the frontiers of knowledge in marketing by adding value to the substantial body of knowledge in service marketing. In addition, it is expected to bring to the fore driving factors leading to hotel-guest superior service delivery from a developing country's perspective. Furthermore, it is hoped that the study will contribute to providing the basis for subsequent action planning among other benefits by policy makers.

What are the risks?

There are no risks involved by taking part in the interview.

The interview process

Interviews will be held at any appropriate location within the hotel premises that is most suitable for the participant and the researcher. Interviewing takes the form of a face-to-face discussions, where respondents are required to provide answers to questions. The interview session will last between 40-60 minutes. The data collected will be analysed by the researcher for academic purposes.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information provided during the interview will be kept confidential. For academic purposes, the responses will remain anonymized and the data will be stored on my computer for the duration of my PhD and under no circumstances will it be leaked to other persons. Study information will also be kept secured in my office at the Northampton University.

Who is sponsoring the research?

This research is funded by Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFUND) under the Ghana government.

Who gave permission for the survey?

Permission for the administration of these questionnaires was sought and obtained from Management (Directors, Managers and Supervisors) of the hotel

What will happen if I withdraw from the survey?

If you withdraw from the survey within the 14 days cooling-off period given, all the information and data collected from you will be withdrawn and destroyed and your code will be removed from the study files. You will also not be eligible to have an e-copy of the report.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The findings of this study will be used mainly for my PhD work, and as well as any potential journal publication. In any case, no names including that of the hotel will be disclosed.

What now?

If you are happy to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form to give your permission. Signing the consent form does not mean you must take part. Even if you agree now, you can change your mind without giving any reason.

Name and address of researcher

Dora Yeboah

PhD Marketing and Entrepreneurship Student,

University of Northampton.

Email: dora.yeboah@northampton.ac.uk

Should you have a complaint about the conduct of the study, please contact Dr. Angela Rushton on angela.rushton@northampton.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Participant Information

Sheet 2 (Focus group discussion)

Name of department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship

Title of the study: An examination of value co-creation drivers in Ghana's hospitality setting: a micro level approach

Self-introduction:

The researcher or interviewer will introduce herself to the participant and establish a good rapport with the interviewee.

What is the purpose of this study?

This study aims to investigate the concept of value co-creation in the hospitality setting from the employees' and guests' perspectives. Specifically, the research seeks to understand what drives employee-guest active participation in service design and delivery, how employees' and guests' cooperate with each other and how these affect the quality of the service outcomes. The concept of value co-creation basically relates to the increasing role played by guests within the activities of the employees, in which case, the guest is informed and active, which is different from the past, when guests were not informed in relation to joint service delivery issues. This study seeks to understand value co-creation drivers to be able to propose ways by which the employees' and the guests could engage each other to improve on service delivery and the quality of the outcomes.

Your participation

The study attempts to examine co-creation drivers between the employee and the guest in a hotel setting. Responses from both the employees and the guests are considered important, however, taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part in this focus group discussion if you do not want to. It is therefore up to you to decide whether or not to participate. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be required to sign a consent form. Nevertheless, you can still withdraw at any point if you do not wish to continue to participate and you do not have to give any reasons for your decision. Furthermore, if you decide to take part you are free to withdraw from the study without giving any reason up to 14 days after you completed the interview.

What you have to do

Your participation is limited to responding to the questions to be administered once. If you do require a summary copy of the report at the end of the research, please leave your email address and electronic copies of the report will be sent to you.

Any possible benefits of participating?

Although there are no immediate benefits for participating in this study, it is hoped that this research will extend the frontiers of knowledge in marketing by adding value to the substantial body of knowledge in service marketing. In addition, it is expected to bring to the fore driving factors leading to hotel-guest superior service delivery from a developing country's perspective. Furthermore, it is hoped that the study will contribute to providing the basis for subsequent action planning among other benefits by policy makers.

What are the risks?

There are no risks involved by taking part in the focus group discussion.

The focus group discussion process

The focus group discussion will be held at any appropriate location within the hotel premises that is most suitable for the participants and the researcher. The discussion will take the form of face-to-face. Respondents are required to discuss the questions based on their understanding and opinions about each topic. This session will last between 90-120 minutes. The data collected will be analysed by the researcher for academic purposes.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information provided during the interview will be kept confidential. For academic purposes, the responses will remain anonymized and the data will be stored on my computer for the duration of my PhD and under no circumstances will it be leaked to other persons. Study information will also be kept secured in my office at the Northampton University.

Who is sponsoring the research?

This research is funded by Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFUND) under the Ghana government.

Who gave permission for the survey?

Permission for the administration of these questionnaires was sought and obtained from Management (Directors, Managers and Supervisors) of the hotel

What will happen if I withdraw from the survey?

If you withdraw from the survey within the 14 days cooling-off period given, all the information and data collected from you will be withdrawn and destroyed and your code will be removed from the study files. You will also not be eligible to have an e-copy of the report.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The findings of this study will be used mainly for my PhD work, and as well as any potential journal publication. In any case, no names including that of the hotel will be disclosed.

What now?

If you are happy to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form to give your permission. Signing the consent form does not mean you must take part. Even if you agree now, you can change your mind without giving any reason.

Name and address of researcher

Dora Yeboah

PhD Marketing and Entrepreneurship Student,

University of Northampton.

Email: dora.yeboah@northampton.ac.uk. Should you have a complaint about the conduct of the study, please contact Dr. Angela Rushton on angela.rushton@northampton.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Consent Form



Hospitality Co-creation Research – Participants’ Interview Consent Form

The purpose and details of the research have been fully explained to me. I understand that all procedures have been approved by the University of Northampton Ethical Advisory Committee.

Please Initial *

	Yes	No
I acknowledge that I have read and understood the invitation letter.		
I acknowledge that I have read and understood the project aims and objectives.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that my consent may be withdrawn at any time		
I give my consent to the interview being recorded.		
I understand that the interview will be confidential and no personal information will be disclosed.		
I understand that the researcher will ensure that my answers remain anonymous.		
I understand that reports and publications may be written about the research, and that no personal information will be disclosed in public without my prior consent.		
I give permission for my views to be used in publications from the study and I understand that they will not be used for any other purpose.		
I have read and understood all of the above points and wish to take part in the study.		

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5: Interview protocol

Interviewee presents the guests' perspective

Section A		
<p>a. Self-introduction of the interviewer</p> <p>b. Explain the purpose of the meeting</p> <p>c. Explain the purpose and objectives of the study</p> <p>d. Guide interviewee through the information sheet and consent form</p> <p>e. Introduction of interviewee (nationality, gender, age, educational background)</p> <p>f. Reasons for coming to this hotel (Business or leisure)</p>		
Section B - Experiential Value		
Please answer these questions based on either business or leisure		
RQ	Questions	Interview Guide
RQ1	How do employees and guests perceive value in a hotel context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of what value means • How do you determine value in a hotel setting? • what part of the hotel experience is valuable to you in terms of: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(i) Obtaining booking information prior to arrival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . What type of information do you require for booking before arrival . Describe how you book your holiday . Describe how you interact with a hotel employee before arrival (telephone/answering machines/ online booking/travel agency) . What is the most frequently used one and why?

		<p>. Was that useful/useless</p> <p>. Give examples of good or disappointing ways of booking</p> <p>. Describe the booking process</p> <p>(i) Arrival and hotel stay experience</p> <p>. How did you get to the hotel?</p> <p>. How did the hotel assist you to get there?</p> <p>. On arrival and prior to entering the hotel</p> <p>. On entering the reception</p> <p>. The hotel room</p> <p>(ii) What do you consider important in a hotel room</p> <p>(iii) Do you find that in this hotel?</p> <p>(iv) What do you do to ensure the right level of service is achieved?</p> <p>(information sharing, suggestions, inputs, paying extra)</p> <p>(v) Can any of them contribute to meeting or not achieving the expected level of service experience</p> <p>. What do you consider important in a hotel's dining and bar facility?</p> <p>(vi) Do you find that in this hotel?</p> <p>(vii) How could that enhance/spoil the hotel experience</p> <p>(viii) What do you do to ensure that a memorable experience is achieved from the hotel's dining and bar?</p> <p>(suggestions, inputs, paying extra, booking for a special table or special meal)</p> <p>(ix) Describe the potential that these might have in affecting the achievement or non-attainment of service expectations.</p> <p>(x) Departure</p>
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		<p>What do you consider important when checking out</p> <p>What enhances/spoils the checking out experience</p> <p>(xi) What do you do to ensure memorable checking out experience is achieved?</p> <p>(suggestions, inputs, paying extra, establishing good relationship, contacts?)</p>
RQ2	What does drive employee-guest participation in the co-creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What drives you to jointly participate with the employee/guest in creating that value? (co-creation) • How do the factors that drive participation manifest themselves
RQ3	What motivates employee-guest co-creation and how do the motivating factors affect their interaction and the co-creation outcome at the micro level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What motivates your participation in co-creation process in a hotel setting • Do you perceive motivation as having any effect on your level interaction? • Does your level of interaction bring any change in the service expectations, processes, experiences and outcomes
RQ4	What are employee-guest personal characteristics and how do they affect value co-creation interaction and service outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the employee-guest personal characteristics that drive your co-creation? • How do these characteristics manifest themselves? • Which of them do you perceive as critical to employee-guest joint value creation in a hotel setting? • Do you perceive individual personal characteristics as having effect on co-creation engagement and outcome?

Any questions?

Thank you

Interviewee presents the employees' perspective

Section A		
<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>a. Self-introduction of the interviewer</p> <p>b. Explain the purpose of the meeting</p> <p>c. Explain the purpose and objectives of the study</p> <p>d. Guide interviewee through the information sheet and consent form</p> <p>e. Introduction of interviewee (nationality, gender, age, educational background)</p> <p>f. What is your role in this hotel</p>		
Section B – Experiential Value		
Please answer these questions based on your job role		
RQ	Questions	Interview Guide
RQ1	How do employees and guests perceive value in a hospitality context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of what value means • How do you determine value in a hotel setting? • what part of the hotel experience is valuable to you in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Providing booking information prior to the guests' arrival ((Manager and Front Desk Staff) <p>. What type of information do you provide for booking</p> <p>. Why do you provide them?</p> <p>. Describe how you provide those information</p> <p>. How do you interact with the guest before arrival (telephone/answering machines/ online booking/travel agency)?</p> <p>. What is the most frequently used one and why?</p> <p>. Give examples of good or disappointing ways of booking</p> <p>. Describe the booking process</p>

		<p>(ii) Arrival and hotel stay experience (Manager and Front Desk Staff)</p> <p>. How do you assist guests to get to the hotel?</p> <p>. What do you do on the guests' arrival and prior to entering the hotel</p> <p>. On entering the reception</p> <p>. The hotel room</p> <p>(iii) What do you consider important in a hotel room</p> <p>(iv) Do you find that in this hotel?</p> <p>(v) What do you do to ensure the right level of service is delivered?</p> <p>(suggestions, inputs, paying extra)</p> <p>. What do you consider important in a hotel dining and bar facility?</p> <p>(Manager and Waiting Staff)</p> <p>(vi) Do you find that in this hotel?</p> <p>(vii) How could that enhance/spoil the hotel experience</p> <p>(viii) What do you do to ensure that a memorable experience is achieved from the hotel's dining and bar?</p> <p>(suggestions, inputs, paying extra, booking for a special table or special meal)</p> <p>(ix) Describe the potential that these might have in affecting the achievement or non-attainment of service expectations.</p> <p>(x) Departure (Manager, front desk and waiting staff)</p> <p>What do you consider important when a guest is checking out</p> <p>What enhances/spoils the checking out experience</p> <p>(xi) What do you do to ensure memorable checking out experience is achieved?</p> <p>(suggestions, inputs, paying extra, establishing good relationship, contacts?)</p>
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RQ2	What does drive employee-guest participation in the co-creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What drives you to jointly participate with the employee/guest in creating that value? (co-creation) • How do the factors that drive participation manifest themselves
RQ3	What motivates employee-guest co-creation and how do the motivating factors affect their interaction and the co-creation outcome at the micro level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What motivates your participation in co-creation process in a hotel setting • Do you perceive motivation as having any effect on your level interaction? Does your level of interaction bring any change in the service expectations, processes, experiences and outcomes
RQ4	What are employee-guest personal characteristics and how do they affect value co-creation interaction and service outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the employee-guest personal characteristics that drive your co-creation? • How do these characteristics manifest themselves? • Which of them do you perceive as critical to employee-guest joint value creation in a hotel setting? • Do you perceive individual personal characteristics as having effect on co-creation engagement and outcome? •

Any questions?

Thank you

Appendix 6: Report on field data collection

This report captures the data collection process carried out from August 2017 to 16/03/2018. To achieve the objectives of the study, a purposive sampling method was used. In order to have access to the hotels earmarked for the study, a letter was sent to the Ghana Hotels Association which happens to be one of the gatekeepers in Ghana's hospitality industry, for their support. As such, a letter from the Association to declare its support was received. Following this, fourteen (14) hotels from different categories were contacted through phone calls and they were also written to before and during the data collection period. Whilst in the field, the GM's, Departmental heads and Supervisors of the hotels were visited. Some needed just a meeting about the research, while others requested that a presentation be given on the research topic, data collection methods, as well as anticipated risks and benefits.

Carrying out such meetings and presentations was very challenging, yet they presented opportunities for me to understand both the theory and the real-world situations. In addition, the careful observation and reflection about people, places, events, and service process, as well as other activities within their natural settings, enhanced my understanding of the topic under consideration. The Table below, shows the categories of hotels that the researcher visited.

Categories of hotels visited

Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accra City hotel • City Escape hotel • Oak Plaza hotel • Airport View hotel • M Plaza hotel • Holiday Inn hotel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Premier hotel • Golden Tulip hotel • Alisa hotel (Swiss Spirits hotel) • Fiesta Royale hotel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movenpick hotel • Kempinski hotel • Labadi Beach hotel • Tang Palace hotel

From the total number of fourteen (14) hotels approached, the researcher gained access to eight (8). These were Labadi Beach hotel, Tang Palace hotel, Alisa hotel, Golden Tulip hotel, Oak Plaza hotel, M Plaza hotel, Airport view hotel and Accra City Hotel. Accra City Hotel suggested that I interview only employees, because the hotel's policy does not allow their guests to be interviewed, whilst M Plaza requested that the researcher comes to conduct interviews only when the hotel had organised participants. However, given that participants confidentiality was at stake, the researcher declined.

The actual data collection exercise was from 10/01/2018 to 16/03/2018. Twelve (12) participants from H1 took part in the research. From these, three (3) participated in both the in-depth interview and the focus group discussion. In H2, a total of twelve (12) participants were selected, but only one (1) patronised the in-depth interview and the focus group discussion. Twelve (12) participants were selected from H3, six (6) of these were involved in the in-depth interview and another six (6) participated in the focus group discussion. In H4, of the twelve (12) participants that were selected, five (5) participated in both the in-depth interview and the focus group discussion. Six (6) participated in the in-depth interview and six (6) patronised the group discussion in H5. A similar thing happened in H6, six (6) participants got involved in

the interview and six (6) in the group discussion. Data collection (observations, interviews and focus group discussions) took place in six (6) hotels as shown below, therefore the study focuses on six (6) hotels namely: H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6

Field data collection table

Category		Observations	Interviews						Focus Group Discussions
			Guests			Employees			
C5	Hi	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	H2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
C4	H3	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	H4	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
C3	H5	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	H6	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Foot notes

Symbols used and their meanings:

√ = means activity was carried out

H1 = Labadi Beach hotel

H2 = Tang Palace hotel

H3 = Golden Tulip hotel

H4 = Alisa Hotel

H5 = Oak Plaza hotel

H6 = Airport View hotel

Appendix 7: Hotels' and Participants

Guests/ Employees	Guests and employees from different hotels					
	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6
Male business Guest	Justice MBG -1 Daniel MBG -2 Kwame MB G-3 Bilo MBG -4	Philip MBG-3 David MBG-4	Mike MBG-1 Mark-MBG-2 Drew Bain MBG-3 Mensah MBG-4	Conrad MBG-1 Euclid MBG-2 John MBG-3 Danny MBG-4	Nadeja MBG-1 Vasu-MBG-2 Mohammed MBG-3	George MBG-1 Eben MBG-2 Ebenezer MBG-3
Female business Guest	Abigail FBG-1	Ann FBG-1	Alice FBG-1 Louisa FGB-2		Carmen FBG-1 Emily FBG-2	Leticia FLG-1
Male Leisure Guest		Nii MLG-1 Asare MLG-2 Fumba MLG -3				Ebenezer MLG-1
Female Leisure Guest						
Male Supervisor	Alex MS-1		Emmanuel MS-1		Emmanuel MS-1	
Female supervisor	Florence FS-1	Martha FS-1	Dina-FS-1		Heartwell FS-1 Zetu FS-2 Rita FS-3	
Male Waiter	Isaac MW-1	Samuel MW -1		Ephraim MW-1		
Female Waiter		Ruth MW-1				Matilda FW-1
Porter				Kwasi MP		
Male Manager	Martin MM-1	Sackey MM-1	Ben MM-1 Solomon MM-2	Alex MM-1	Amudzi MM-1 Laryea MM-2	Frank MM-1 Eric MM- 2 Omari MM-3
Female Manager	Phoebe FM-1	Afia FM-1	Princess FM-1 Madelene FM-2			Ursula MM-1

Appendix 8: Confidentiality form

CONFIDENTIAL NOTE

I, Audrey Yeboah Ohenevoh promise to keep any information given in the course of the interview and focus group discussion confidential being it video or audio and if done otherwise by me will be held liable as it would be contrary to the terms and conditions of the contract I have with Dora Yeboah (Mrs).

NAME: Audrey Yeboah Ohenevoh

NAME: Dora Yeboah

SIGN: [Signature]

SIGN: [Signature]

DATE: 10th January 2018

DATE: 10/01/2018

Appendix 9: Summary of employee-guest co-creation activities in a hotel

setting

Service stage/ Activity through collaboration/ interaction	Examples of quotes
Pre- arrival Information seeking Information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees' and guests' shared ideas to review and improve hotel booking process. (e.g., "Let me say 2 weeks ago we even had to bring guests to check into our booking procedures again to see how best we can make it easier for our guests." <i>"We have portals that clients go and review us and it is upon the review that we increase our service, that we do changes to our service just to meet the value they want"</i>) Exchange information through phone chats/texts for creating service that meets actors' expectations (e.g., <i>"When it comes to service you might not know exactly what the guest wants. But through chats... the person let you know that this is how it is supposed to be done... then we agree on that then we move on". "He requested for petals to be put on the bed, and ...a particular type of champagne to be put in the room, so I sent a text.... and he was able to choose one champagne.... So, as he is coming in tomorrow, he knows that this is the drink that I have in my room"</i>)
Arrival and stay Helping Information sharing Learning Adapting Co-designing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping the guest to safely move into and from the hotel premises (e.g., <i>"we come in to assist you by carrying your bags, welcoming you and so on, and then we bring you"</i>) Direct value co-creation interaction serves as opportunity to elicit guests' views on current service to improve future service encounters. (e.g., <i>"through face-to-face interactions we get to know their needs and we provide it for them and it creates the value that they expect from the hotel". "we have dinner with them and then we take opportunity to listen to their concerns. So, during that period they are there with us together and then we also take that opportunity to ask questions to know what we can do to enhance on whatever service we render"</i>) Face-to-face, direct co-creation interaction enable employees learn about guests' needs, which helps to establish joint experience creation relationship (e.g., <i>"having that one-on-one interaction with them, they are able to come out on their own to tell you their experiences and all that and through that we are able to gather enough information to improve on what we are doing"</i>) Adapting service to meet individuals' needs (e.g., <i>"I drink hot water, lemon and ginger every morning. And as soon as I stayed here for 2, 3 days they realised that. So, every time they know this is what this lady likes. Yes, when I come to the table they bring me hot water, lemon and ginger"</i>) Co-design of menu presents a new service era where guests' can be actively involved in creating their own hotel experience (e.g., <i>"Maybe they can tell you the pepper is too much; the salt is too low, you know this kind of thing and this is individual difference, some do not eat salt, some do not eat pepper... you know you grab that information so when the food comes to the person he gets the value for what he is paying". "Now sometimes the guest walks in, he goes through the menu and there is nothing. Now I sit with the guest and say I don't mind give me a recipe and I will have it done for you to meet your satisfaction"</i>) Innovating existing service through guests' comments during value co-creation (e.g., <i>"Some of the things we do over here are still shaped by guests' comments. Initially we were not having tea sets in the room... now we have incorporated tea-set items in the room"</i>) Guests' suggestions during hotel stay led to improved service quality for guests' maximum satisfaction (e.g., <i>"A guest used our gym and recommended a rowing machine, which after some months we were able to purchase, and the guest was maximumly satisfied and he now comes here more regularly than before"</i>)
Suggestions, comments Check-out and post-stay encounter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees' and guests' considered feedbacks as a means for value co-creation to address service failures (e.g., <i>"there is a feedback loop. So, when a feedback is given we receive it... and we look at the loophole that were there... before we even go to give the guest feedback... and assure the guest that a, b, c has been done to make sure this never repeats itself"</i>)

Feedbacks, comments, suggestions	
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