

# Customer Disposition to Value Co-Creation Activities. The Case of the Clothing Industry

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The willingness of consumers to engage in co-creation activities is affected by multiple factors, including intrinsic motivation, firm-level factors, and expected outcomes of the participation in co-creation process. However, the final decision of customer engagement in co-creation is determined by the level of brand attachment and love experienced by customers, product category, and the type of needs satisfied with the object of co-creation. The current research proposes a holistic view of the abovementioned factors and variables by exploring their relationships and mutual influence.

**Methodology:** This study analyzes the results of qualitative research on the dynamics between positive client attitude toward a brand and the willingness to engage in co-creation activities.

**Results/Findings:** The study reveals that the willingness to engage in co-creation activities is strongly related to the level of brand attachment except for when people conduct such activities to experience the process itself. The level of customer satisfaction from participation in co-creation processes influences their future sense of brand love and attachment. Moreover, the way and strength of customer engagement in co-creative projects are affected by the product category. The authors especially stress the importance of a strategic approach toward designing and implementing co-creation projects and the key role of appropriate communication with participants.

**Keywords:** brand attachment, brand love, value co-creation, motivation, brand engagement

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## Introduction

The role of consumer participation in the development of successful products gained significant strength over the recent years. The potential of building reciprocal company-client relationship caused a shift in the marketing paradigm from “product-centered” to “service-centered” that, in turn, allowed businesses to develop products and services precisely tailored to the needs of narrow customer segments. In markets oversaturated with similar offers, this approach shaped the competitive advantage that influenced such important aspects as brand value and corporate reputation.

In the last decade, numerous studies sought to advance our understanding of the value co-creation concept. The first stream focused on the nature of the phenomenon (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a; Grönroos, 2008; Brodie et al., 2013) and the pillars of value co-creation (Bharti, Agrawal and Sharma, 2015). This vein shed light on many important areas, particularly those concerned with customer motives to engage in co-creation activities (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Mazurek, 2014), the distinctive systems of value creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b; Vargo and Lusch, 2004), and the role of social media in the facilitation of co-creation activities (Piller, Vossen and Ihl, 2012; Kaplan and Mazurek, 2018). The theoretical background was enriched with the concept of service-dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Edvardsson et al., 2011) that considers consumers as value-creating entities and resource integrators.

Simultaneously, the second stream of studies deep dived into the practical application of the new approach. Research studies reveal a few main areas under investigation: internal consumer motivators, firm-based factors, and the outcomes of value co-creation (Hoyer, Chandy, Dorotic, Krafft and Singh, 2010).

When it comes to consumer motivators, the researches focused on defining specific factors and psychological reasons that facilitate customer willingness to engage in the co-creation activities. Among others, these include social esteem and self-efficacy (Nambisan and Baron, 2009), reputation and social standing (Chen, Marsden and Zhang, 2012), altruism (Fuller, Hutter and Fries 2012), recognition (Henning-Thurau, 2004), financial rewards (Zwass, 2010; Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2012; Chen et al., 2012) and delayed rewards (Lerner and Tirole, 2002).

We know relatively little about the variables that determine customer willingness to engage in co-creation activities. Besides motivation factors, other powerful attributes influence their decision-making, such as attitude toward a brand, duration and nature of previous engagement with a brand, and belonging to the specific product category.

Although different studies appeared that scrutinized each of these issues separately, we still must investigate the interrelationship of these issues and their mutual influence on customer disposition to engage in value co-creation activities.

Therefore, this paper aims to contribute to the understanding of reciprocity between brand love, value co-creation engagement, and the nature of their cross-feeding interactions through the case of the apparel industry. Moreover, this research considers the role of product category and type of needs satisfied as the impact factors of predisposition to the co-creation activities.

## Theoretical Background and Research Questions

The aim of this section is to give a comprehensive overview of the existing theoretical background related to the following concepts: the value co-creation construct; the brand engagement and brand attachment theories; the concepts that explain customer motivations to engage in co-creation activities; and the theories that explore relatedness between belonging to particular product category and willingness to engage in co-creation.

### The Concept of Value Co-Creation

The first definition of value co-creation was proposed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) who treated value as an outcome of the joint creation process between brand and customer. The main idea behind this is the assumption that both brands and customers were the only agents who performed their roles in the process. The scholars also emphasize the role of the company management team in designing and implementing the co-creation processes. Thus, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004b) state that “value co-creation implies a holistic management strategy focused on bringing distinct agents together to produce mutually valued outcomes.” This statement manifests the open innovation approach in which the producers collaborate with customers within new service development activities. In doing so, companies can equally well cooperate with single consumers or entire communities in both business-to-customer and business-to-business context. In such case, the company contribution lies in ideating, designing, producing, testing, and distributing new or existing products. This definition was extended by Gebauer, Johnson, and Enquist (2010) who emphasize that value co-creation should not be limited to problem resolving, but it is an effective tool for problem identification. They also propose a term “experience environment” to describe the space in which customers “can have active dialogue and co-construct personalized experiences” (Gebauer et al., 2010). In terms of the current study, the emergence of this conception

is important as it gives priority to customer experience over the outcomes of sheer value co-creation. Thus, satisfaction from the co-creation experience significantly affects customer attitude towards a brand and, therefore, it is vital for companies to ensure this satisfaction over the co-creation process lifetime.

### Types of Needs and Motivations to Engage in Co-Creation Activities

The theory of self-determination suggested by Deci and Ryan in 1980 claims that the strengths of personal engagement in a specific activity are determined by three inherent psychological needs, which are the following:

**Table 1.** Types of needs according to self-determination theory

Type of need	Essence of need	Type of motivations related to the need	Possibility of facilitation
Autonomy	Ability to choose while performing a task	Intrinsic motivations	Inherent to the person
Competence	Ability to find the solution to a difficult task		
Relatedness	A sense of common goals and mutual respect	Extrinsic motivations	Can be facilitated by brands

Source: own elaboration based on Ryan and Deci (2000); Hsieh and Chang (2016).

As summarized in Table 1, these needs establish an initial level that determines customer willingness to engage in co-creation activities that influence both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Companies may reinforce this by offering certain financial rewards or appealing to the hedonic customer needs – such as the experiential need – as well as establishing personal relationships (Zwass, 2010). Another impulse for customers to participate in the co-creation processes may come from the access to reputation and social standing (Chen et al., 2012). Besides that, involvement in co-creation activities enables customers to satisfy their self-expression and self-efficacy needs, which mean being valuable to oneself (Bandura, 1995). The next research stream integrates hedonic motivations, such as when people seek joy by doing what they love (Nambisan and Baron, 2009).

Special mention should be made of research dedicated to the interrelation between brand co-creation experience and engagement, that is, the theory of implicit self-esteem suggested by Greenwald and Banaji in 1995. The definition below proposed by Bosson,

Swann, and Pennebaker in 2000 explains the phenomenon as follows: “implicit self-esteem is spontaneous, natural and unconscious evaluation of the self that affects unprompted responses to self-relevant stimuli.” The researches assert that specific circumstances entailing psychological self-involvement like in self-design activities could cause the establishment of connections between the self and the self-produced object. Bearing in mind that people possess positive associations about themselves, this bias may lead to the growth of positive evaluations about the self-produced outcome. In terms of value co-creation, it means that the consumers who feel emotional ownership of the product and brand are likely to be more engaged in brand co-creation activities. We analyze the above theories and concepts below and integrate them in the following scheme.

To summarize, when customers engage in co-creation processes under the influence of extrinsic motivations and to satisfy lower-order needs, their ultimate motives are such practical things as financial rewards or job advancement. When they still strive to meet lower-order needs yet are motivated intrinsically, consumers participate in co-creation activities due to another set of practical goals related to pleasure from performing creative tasks and learning. In the case of higher-order needs, consumers are interested in relatedness when they follow extrinsic motivations like building personal relationships, accessing social capital, or gaining popularity. Finally, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-expression act as key motivators to satisfy higher-order needs for intrinsically motivated consumers.

Although this inference stems from a solid theoretical background, it still requires further empirical research. Therefore, we propose the following research questions:

*Q1: If customers are motivated to co-create by extrinsic factors, would they prefer the product-oriented tasks?*

The term “product-oriented task” implies that a task aims to create a tailored product for further use of the customer who engaged in the co-creation process.

*Q2: If customers are motivated to co-create by intrinsic factors, would they prefer the imaginative and creative tasks that do not necessarily bring any tangible outcomes?*

On the other hand, both mentioned theories could be applied in the context of customer purchasing decisions. Bearing in mind that customers satisfy their lower-order and higher-order needs with purchased products, it is logical to assume that they will

expect similar outcomes from their co-creation activities. Thus, we propose the following research questions:

*Q3: If the co-created product satisfies lower-order customer needs, would they prefer the product-oriented tasks while co-creating value?*

*Q4: If the co-created product satisfies higher-order customer needs, would they prefer the imaginative and creative tasks?*

In this case, we focus not on the type of product-buying motives in order to keep a clear view on the relatedness between the type of needs satisfied by the product and the way of customer engagement in co-creation activities.

### **Brand Engagement and Value Co-Creation**

The scope of the current research includes the categories that determine customer willingness to engage in co-creation activities with a particular brand.

In this respect, we should consider a consumer-psychology model of brands (Schmitt, 2012) that presents the whole picture of relatedness between customers and brands. This model is based on the assumption that consumers demonstrate different levels of engagement with brands depending on the combination of goals, needs, and motivations (Schmitt, 2012). Therefore, the model explains the relationship between consumers and brands as a three-tier composition that comprises object-centered, self-centered, and social-level customer engagement.

### **Brand Love and Value Co-Creation**

According to the conceptual study conducted by Kaufmann et al. (2016), experiencing the sense of brand love positively influences customer attitude towards participation in co-creation activities.

According to Loureiro, Kaufmann, and Vrontis (2012), “brand love is the emotional outcome of self-expressiveness and brand attachment.” Experiencing brand love provokes a wide range of favorable emotions towards a brand, which may help to predict the path of post-consumption behaviors among clients who show this emotion. Some researchers developed the concept and concluded that the triggering of positive associations may result in the development of repurchase intentions, the decline of price sensitivity, and favorable word-of-mouth promotion of the brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012).

Researchers disagree on the attributes and factors of brand love. Thus, certain scholars suppose that brand love can be explored through the lens of interpersonal love by claiming a fundamental similarity of both concepts (Ahuvia, 2005). However, there are some principal differences between these phenomena, which are important in terms of their influence on disposition towards value co-creation. Batra et al. (2012) notice the following key differences between these concepts:

1. The perceived excellence of product/brand is a prerequisite for experiencing brand love by contrast to interpersonal love, which is rather unconditional and altruistic.
2. Reciprocity of love is not perceived as compulsory because companies are not expected to demonstrate emotions. However, consumers motivated by intrinsic or extrinsic factors want to feel the appreciation of the brands and feel as if they listen to them.

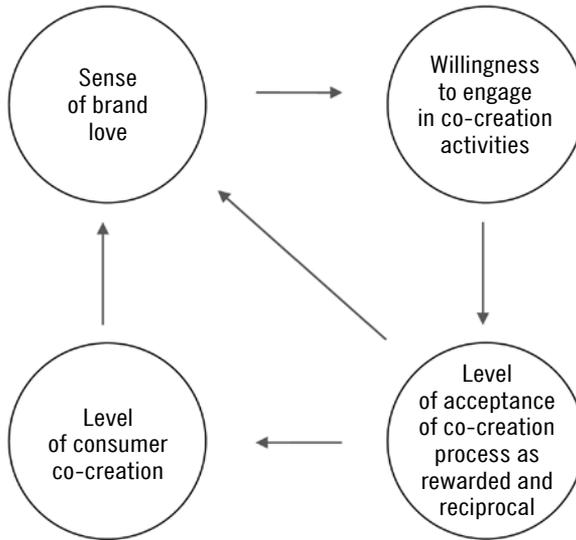
In this context, the following research questions emerge:

*Q5: Do customers who experience brand love more willingly engage in co-creation activities?*

*Q6: Is it true that participation in rewarding co-creation activities is positively related to future brand love and brand attachment?*

*Q7: Is it true that consumer brand co-creation engagement is negatively related to the lack of perceived reciprocity from the brand?*

Q5 and Q6 imply mutual influence between the level of brand love and participation in co-creation processes. Thus, experiencing a sense of brand love facilitates customers' willingness to engage in co-creation activities for a particular brand. At the same time, satisfaction from obtained co-creative experiences contributes to the reinforcement of brand love. However, the opposite is true as well. Dissatisfaction with participation in co-creation projects may adversely affect customer brand love. In order to illustrate these interrelations, we propose Model 1.

**Model 1.** Cross-feeding interactions between brand love and co-creation

Source: own elaboration.

### Product Category and Value Co-Creation

According to K. Heine (2012), “luxury brands are regarded as images in the minds of consumers that comprise associations about a high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness and a high degree of non-functional associations.” When it comes to mass market products, researchers traditionally share the view that customers base their choice primarily on the relationship between price and quality (Gallarza, Saura and Holbrook, 2011). However, Lloyd and Luk (2010) emphasize other important factors of the decision-making process related to the cognitive and affective nature of value. The latter holds particular significance in the case of luxury products.

The benefit theory suggested by Vershofen in 1959 claims that there are two types of benefits conveyed by products, which are basic and additional; that is, either related to utilitarian features of products or to psychological and social benefits. Despite the fact, that additional benefits play a certain role in the decision-making process related to mass media products, this is not comparable to their pivotal position in the case of luxury products.

Schreier (2006) notices the following key benefits that consumers frequently gain from participation in co-creation and customization activities proposed by luxury brands: “functional benefit, perceived uniqueness, the process benefit of self-design, and pride

of authorship.” The last two benefits directly refer to co-design process values that comprise hedonic values and the “creative achievement value,” which appeals to the pride from the creation and personalization of own product (Merle, Chandon, Roux and Alizon, 2010). At the same time, customer motivations to engage in co-creation processes with mass-market brands differ from the above and could be described as follows: motivations base on experiential needs, enjoyment-seeking, striving to establish personal relationships (Zwass, 2010), self-efficacy needs (Bandura, 1995), and altruistic motivations (Kollock, 1999).

Therefore, one may conclude that belonging to different product categories results in the difference between motivations for customers to buy the products and participate in co-creation activities. Thus, the final research question is:

*Q8: Is there relatedness between the way of customer engagement in co-creation processes and the category of product?*

## Methodology

The subject of current research is the dynamics between positive client attitude toward a brand and the willingness to engage in co-creation activities. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore consumer motivations in undertaking co-creative tasks and how the following variables influence one’s willingness in this area:

- The level of brand attachment and love that customers experience before engaging in co-creation activities;
- The particular category of product (luxury or mass market);
- Types of needs satisfied with the product.

Simultaneously, this study aims to find empirical evidence of the mutual influence between brand love and participation in co-creation processes, when the former acts as a precondition for the latter while satisfaction from engaging in co-creation activities affects the future strengths of brand attachment and love.

## Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected with semi-structured interviews to gain a deep insight into the personal attitude and impressions from each respondent. For the empirical part

of the research, we conducted fourteen interviews with informants from nineteen to twenty-eight years old from the United Kingdom. After each interview, we analyzed it to include all the relevant extra issues that emerged in the successive interviews. (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

The interviews happened via Skype and lasted from forty-five to sixty minutes. The respondents participated in co-creation activities before. The group of interviewees was represented by ten women and four men with a level of education ranging from a bachelor's to master's degree. Each interview asked nineteen questions. The first fifteen open-ended questions concerned the topic of current research, while the last four focused on the demographic characteristics of the interviewee.

## Research Findings

### General Characteristics of the Co-Created Products and Performed Tasks

The first mentioned industry was that apparel, following by food and beverages and furniture. The apparel industry leads in the ranking regardless of the gender of respondents. Some of them stated that they participated in co-creation activities within more than one industry, whereas the majority claimed that their current experience was limited to one attempt.

Then we analyzed the responses related to the content of performed tasks. Participation in the specific forum discussions occurred was most frequent. The respondents mentioned both the self-created forums and those sponsored by the brands. The majority of them stated that "ownership" of the forum makes no difference for them in terms of their willingness to co-create value: "I do not mind to voice my opinion to companies and often discuss their products with other forum members. I also like to suggest new ideas and I am interested to know the ideas of others" (P4).

In spite of its popularity, this type of activity almost always was mentioned along with contiguous activities such as posting ideas on social platforms or voting for a product.

The respondents also mentioned naming the products as one of the co-creative activities they involved themselves in. This activity happened across the different industries and often occurred along with participation in forum discussions.

Product customization was mentioned separately from other activities. The respondents claimed that they participated in it to create a unique product for their personal use:

“My body shape is not standard and most of the standard designs do not fit me. That is why I am interested in buying cloth that I can tailor to my needs and taste” (P7). “I cannot afford to buy designer clothes, which is why I appreciate the possibilities to make mass market products more personalized, such as put my own motto on the T-shirt or add some special elements for the selected bracelet” (P12).

The respondent who declared regular purchase of luxury goods shared the following opinion towards customization of such products: “I pay extra price for luxury items as they were created by well-known designers. For this reason, I prefer to keep them as they are. I do not mind changing them a bit according to my style as long as they stay recognizable” (P4).

Designing own product and participation in special “brainstorm sessions” organized by brands appeared in responses least often. The possible explanation for this may lie in the significant level of brand engagement necessary to persuade customers to invest their efforts and time.

### 1. Key Motivations to Participate in Co-Creation Projects

The next point of the study was dedicated to the exploration of different motivation factors that contributed to a positive decision to participate in co-creation processes. The motivations mentioned were the following:

1. strong positive emotions to brand or product that induced the desire to cooperate with the favorite brand; and
2. effort to prove oneself as a creative person.

The first point is related to the sense of brand love and has not appeared in any narration individually. Rather, this motivation emerged as a co-factor that follows other incentives like entertainment-seeking, social engagement, or even following own curiosity. At the same time, more than half of the respondents claimed that their positive attitude toward a brand exerted a certain – often significant – impact on their final decision to participate in a co-creation activity. The rest of the respondents stated that, though they experienced some positive emotions associated with a brand, this did not influence their decision significantly: “Once I became interested in joining such a project, I started looking for the interesting options. The main things for me were those related to the nature of task and future interaction with brand” (P3).

All of the respondents engaged in co-creation processes related to designing the own product mentioned the value of customization of that product as the most powerful

incentive. This enables us to assume that utilitarian motivation plays the prominent role in the decision-making process of those customers, whereas such high-ordered motivations as self-identity or social standing are perceived as less important.

Noteworthy, there are two other factors concerned with self-interest that emerged from the conducted interviews: career and networking opportunities. However, the respondents claimed that this motivation played a prominent role only in the case of well-known companies like Microsoft or Google.

## 2. The Level of Brand Attachment and Love Before and After Participation in Co-Creation Processes

This section aimed to investigate relatedness between the level of brand attachment and willingness to engage in co-creation processes. According to our assumption, the initial level of brand attachment partly defines customer disposition to co-creation activities, whereas satisfaction with that activities influences customer willingness to engage in future co-creation projects that eventually impact their attitude to brand and level of brand attachment (see Model 1).

Keeping in mind this assumption, we analyzed the responses to the following questions in a specific order to showcase the consequent changes in the expressed emotions and attitudes. All interviewees revealed *a quite positive or at least neutral initial attitude towards the brand* with which they engaged in co-creation activities. The great majority of respondents demonstrated positive emotions towards that brand. Those interviewees noticed that they started engaging in the project because it has been initiated by the brand they really like: "I love designer clothes, exclusive accessories, and so on. This brand has never disappointed me. I believe it is worth its price" (P4).

At the same time, those respondents who declared a neutral attitude towards a brand before engaging in co-creation activities admitted that they have been motivated by curiosity or entertainment-seeking: "I can't say that I'm a fan of that brand. However, I should admit that their idea to design new packaging jointly with the customers is quite interesting" (P11).

The next question was related to participant satisfaction from the co-creation process. Some respondents declared a very high level of satisfaction, whereas the majority claimed that they were generally satisfied with the process: "It was not boring. The activities were organized in keeping with the spirit of the brand and I treated them as entertainment" (P7). "I like my special boots designed as per my guidelines. The very process was a bit complicated to me, but I'm happy with the results, so that there is no reason to complain" (P9).

At the same time, a few respondents also claimed dissatisfaction with their co-creative experience and the outcome they have received in turn for their efforts. Those interviewees demonstrated a negative attitude to the very co-creative process and the brand: “I supposed that such well-known company would manage to set up the process of collaboration with customers on an appropriate level. Unfortunately, I feel it was organized in haste, which is very upsetting for me” (P13).

An interesting situation was observed with respect to participants’ opinion about reciprocity they expected from the brands. Those who were satisfied with the rewards, like free credits or social media featuring, declared that they did not count on gratification: “I was happy for the victory of the dress I voted for. Besides that, I have got the credits for purchasing the stuff produced in limited edition. It’s a very nice bonus I even did not expect” (P2).

At the same time, the rest of the interviewees were divided in their opinion. More than half of them admitted that they expected some (not necessarily financial) rewards from the brand and this contributed to some extent to their positive decision about participation: “I think they [brand] could offer me some compensation in return for my ideas. It was not promised, of course, but I counted on some rewards for the most loyal and active participants” (P8). “I devoted my time to the project. It would be fairly if the company thanked me for this” (P10).

This finding leads to the assumption that consumers expect some reciprocity from brands in return for their input. Sometimes they are not prone to reveal such feelings, especially when satisfied, yet it is quite noticeable in responses of the dissatisfied.

The following section is related immediately to customers’ intentions towards future participation in co-creation activities. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the respondents who experienced positive emotions in the course of the project declared willingness to engage in similar activities in future: “I like this feeling when you see something tangible that you have made yourself. I would like to try myself again with similar activity” (P6). “This project gave me a chance to dive into something absolutely new for me. I’d repeat this experience with pleasure” (P2).

Along with that, a few interviewees admitted uncertainty in the intentions of the brand: “Most of the time, it was interesting and challenging. However, I find this project quite time-consuming and I am not sure if I am ready for such assignment in a close future” (P8).

The dissatisfied part of interviewees claimed that they would definitely not engage in such activities next time: “I expected to have a look at fresh ideas of others and to present my own ideas. But it seems that no one has been interested in this. I am not going to invest my time in such things anymore” (P13). “It looked like a promotion that was yet presented as a meaningful initiative. I’m convinced now that such activities are not my cup of tea” (P4).

The last section investigated the mutual effect of the abovementioned factors on customers’ attitude toward a brand and changes in brand attachment. The majority of respondents stated that they feel a stronger connection with the brand after engaging in co-creation experiences. The most common statements related to the changes in brand perception (that it is more creative), a moral appreciation of the co-created product, and memories about valuable time spent together. “When I’m in my dress it often reminds me that moment when I realized that I’ve won in the voting. It is unforgettable” (P6).

Some interviewees admitted that, despite the fact they were generally satisfied with their co-creation activities, they did not feel any significant changes in their attitude towards brand: “I am fine with the projects I participated in. But in my opinion, brands initiate such activities in order to increase their sales. So that I see no reason why I should like them more now” (P8). One can suppose that such opinion may stem from the interest of participants to involve in something new regardless of which brand initiated this activity.

Finally, the last group of respondents claimed that their emotions toward the brand after their participation in the co-creation project changed to the worse. The complaints concerned the poor organization of the project and the lack of support and encouragement from brand representatives. This group of respondents claimed that they definitely would not engage in such activities with the brand and would very unlikely buy its products anymore: “I understand now that this company pursues only merchant purposes. It was reflected in attitude of the company’s staff towards those who shared the ideas in course of our project” (P12).

### 3. Relatedness Between Product Category and Type of Co-Creative Actions

The majority of participants shared that they were involved in co-creation activities with mass brands. They named the following co-creation activities therewith: voting for the product of choice to make it available for purchase, naming the products, developing new ideas of products, and posting brand-related content on their personal websites and social media sites.

The majority of respondents stated that they would be interested in performing the same actions on behalf of luxury brands: “I would be really delighted if I could give a name to the designer’s masterpiece” (P3).

Simultaneously, when it came to *voting for the product*, the opinions expressed by the respondents were consentient in the perception that luxury products have to be available to the limited audience. Therefore, the great majority of respondents stated that they would not like to engage in voting for the luxury product in order to make it available for purchase because it would lead to the loss of its “unique” status: “I would not like to purchase a luxury product that is likely to be bought by loads of people” (P8).

The same reason was mentioned by some respondents regarding the *customization of luxury products*. They claimed that such customization contributes to diluting the brand identity as the co-created products are not perceived as designer masterpieces anymore.

At the same time, the respondents expressed a positive view about customization of mass-market products: “Customization allows everyone to showcase their creativity. I think it even better fits to mass products as it is relatively cheap and simple way to get unique product” (P9).

As for *developing new product ideas and participation in brainstorm sessions*, the majority of respondents claimed that they would engage in the projects initiated by luxury brands: “I think it is a promising way for brands to be closer to their customers” (P8). However, a few respondents were of the opinion that these activities did not fit with the luxury image: “I think that luxury brands differ from others due to their special “aureole.” The main incentive for people to accept an extra price is “big names” behind each product. That’s why there is no point for them to incorporate own ideas in luxury items” (P11).

#### 4. Relatedness Between Motivations to Purchase a Product and Engage in Co-Creation Activities

In order to ensure a clear comparison, we summarize the results of interviews in Table 2.

The respondents from both groups shared a few common motivations to engage in co-creation activities, such as an opportunity to purchase a unique product, networking opportunities, and pleasure from performing a creative task. However, some motivations appeared only in responses of a particular group. Thus, interviewees from the first group declared their interest in personal rewards in return for their co-creation efforts, such as financial and non-financial rewards or job opportunities. At the same

time, the second group claimed that they have been motivated, among others, by the effort to prove their creative aptitude and opportunity to find friends.

**Table 2.** Comparative analysis of motivations to purchase a product and engage in co-creation activities

Reasons to buy products of a particular brand	Motivations to engage in co-creation processes
Functional features of a product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to purchase a unique product</li> <li>• Opportunity to receive rewards from the brand</li> <li>• Pleasure from performing a creative task</li> <li>• Job opportunities</li> <li>• Networking opportunities</li> </ul>
Intangible features of a product/brand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prestige</li> <li>• Popularity</li> <li>• Style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to purchase a unique product</li> <li>• Way to prove creativity</li> <li>• Opportunity to find likeminded fellows</li> <li>• Networking opportunities</li> <li>• Pleasure from performing a creative task</li> </ul>

Source: own elaboration.

## Discussion

This study proposes a holistic view on the factors that determine customer willingness to engage in co-creation projects. It focuses on the relations between different groups of factors, their cross-feeding nature, and mutual influence on the decision-making process.

The results obtained in the course of qualitative research support the suggested models and schemes. The findings confirm that a great majority of participants in co-creation activities experienced a strong sense of brand attachment before engaging in co-creation projects.

The conclusions indicate that experiencing the sense of brand love facilitates co-creation engagement and willingness to make a valuable contribution to the project (the answer to Q5). The study also revealed that satisfaction from participation in the co-creation project plays a crucial role in the decision-making process when it comes to further engagement in such activities. Moreover, satisfaction from co-creation engagement exerts a significant impact on customer attitude toward brands, which confirms our assumption about their mutual influence (the answer to Q6). Hence, a negative

experience makes a bigger difference than a positive one. Thus, the participants who claimed dissatisfaction with the co-creation process affirmed that they definitely would not continue their relationship with the brand and would probably resign from buying their products in the future. At the same time, the interviewees with positive co-creative experience were not so consentient in their opinions (the Answer to Q7).

Moreover, the results indicate relatedness between a particular product category and the manner of customer engagement in co-creation processes. That is, when it comes to luxury brands, the participants prefer co-creation the activities that make them closely associated with well-known brands like the possibility of naming products. In this case, customers were mostly interested in obtaining high reputation thanks to such activities. At the same time, the customization of luxury products was not perceived as an appropriate way of co-creation engagement by the majority of respondents (the answer to Q8).

This study found the relatedness between the type of needs satisfied by the product and manner of co-creation engagement. Thus, the participants who pursued utilitarian goals regarding the products mostly participated in co-creation processes that allowed them to derive concrete benefits for themselves (answers to Q1 and Q3). Simultaneously, the respondents motivated by hedonic needs demonstrated a greater disposition to perform creative tasks (answers to Q2 and Q4). However, keeping in mind that both groups also expressed interest in the same outcomes, it is worth noting that this research question requires further clarification.

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