Beneficial for Whom? Customer Motive Attribution in Coproduction Contexts and its Consequences for Maintaining Successful Customer Relationships

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Abstract

Marketing scholars and practitioners emphasize the importance of two benefits associated with the engagement of customers in coproduction: (1) higher profits and (2) better satisfaction of customer needs. However, previous research has neglected to investigate how attributions of these coproduction motives shape customers' attitudes and behavior towards the firm. In light of this neglect, the authors develop a conceptual framework to investigate how customers' attributions of profit- and customer need-driven coproduction motives affect important marketing outcomes over time. Results from latent growth analyses of longitudinal data comprising information from more than 12,000 customers show divergent effects of both motive attributions that follow different temporal patterns: Whereas the favorable effects of need-driven motive attributions decrease over time, the detrimental effects of profit-driven motive attributions remain highly persistent. The study further reveals how companies can shape customers' motive attributions by managing the degree of intensity and freedom of design of coproduction offerings.

Keywords: *coproduction; motive attribution; longitudinal design (latent growth modeling)*

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