

Demonstrate the Role of Customer Engagement in Organizations on Innovation through the Basic Concept of Engagement

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Abstract: In the past few years, customer participation has emerged as a topic of great importance for officials and consultants in various organizations in the field of marketing. The present study analyzed the engagement of the company's stakeholders as an organizational capacity, in which case this capacity represented the independent variable of the research. The value of Services is not limited to the tertiary market, but rather applies to other areas such as the manufacturing sector where businesses provide different services, alongside their concrete goods. Services are a crucial part of most developing economies. Thus, innovating in services becomes a demand and enables a new and/or better offer to be generated which will cause the business to become a leader in its industry. Based on these aspects, this analysis would examine how consumer involvement impacts service creativity. In order to do this, we examine the position the customer can have as knowledge source (CPI) and co-developer (CCP), as well as how each affects creative service agility. We also examine the impact of CPI and CCP on creativity in processes and services. Likewise, shared confidence as a potential precedent for customer engagement was studied. In this respect, it suggested a theoretical model related to the findings and the historical factors in innovation in the CPI and the CCP. This model was contrasted in the structural equation model by a sample of 25 Iraq firms operating in the service sector. Results show that the CPI and CCP encourage creative resilience and that this cooperation is enhanced by confidence. Innovative versatility also has a beneficial effect on creativity in processes and services. Therefore this paper attempts to address this void. Few articles have considered this topic in a service sense. It is worth emphasising that product innovation, as its intangible essence, intrinsically differs from service innovation, which is why the emphasis of this analysis was solely on service firms.

Keywords: Engagement of customers, people management, service sector, Iraq.

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, the innovative agility of the company is imposed by the competitiveness of the market, since it must adapt to the constant changes and needs of its customers. Therefore, innovation and the

development of products and services, with a high perceived value, become an indispensable requirement for any company that wishes to continue competing (Xu, et al 2019). The literature identifies customer orientation as a key success driver of the innovation process. Involving the client in these innovation processes has the main objective of creating a new offer or improving the existing one based on the information provided by the client himself. Many are the authors who affirm that companies do not have to see their customers only as users, but as subjects of interest, information providers and also as co-developers (Cui,et al., 2018). However, the vast majority of existing research on customer engagement in innovation focuses on tangible products, leaving service innovation in an “unexplored” place despite the importance of services for the economy and the business. This transcendence is not only valuable for those companies in the service sector, but also for other companies in the rest of the sectors that offer their clients various services. The objective of this paper is to assess the significance of consumer involvement in service advancement and stress two role played by the customer: customer engagement as an information source (CPI) and customer involvement as an information source (CCP). This consists in that the client is involved in the process of developing new projects, sharing and providing information and knowledge, which may have an impact on the innovative capacity of the company. This collaborative process includes activities, tasks and information flows necessary for the company to conceptualize, develop, evaluate and prepare (Sawhney, et al., 2005);Ghouri et al. (2010)

an offer not previously available in it, resulting in a change or improvement of the service. All this enables the company to create agile innovation, that is, it involves taking advantage of its internal and external capacities, or the generation of new ones in order to respond quickly to changes in the environment. This innovative agility makes it possible to replace, expand or generate services, reducing development and market launch time. For this cooperation to be successful and last over time, it is essential to create a relationship based on trust and thus improve the interpretation and use of shared information (Anning -Dorson, 2018).Once the concept of participation is known, it is important to carry out an analysis of the environment that allows knowing an approximation of the level of acceptability. The acceptance by the client of an increase in participation in the production of the service can be very different depending on various factors: the culture of the service, the service situation the consumer is in, certain characteristics of the client, the relationship domain between the client and the company, etc. (Thakur, 2016).

1.1 Innovation as a process

Hidalgo Nuchera says that, because its absence leads to a real inadequacy of the company in producing new goods and processes, the innovation aspect has become a strategic vector that enables the company to increase its competitive position. In this context, companies should integrate into their strategic behaviour to manage the so-called innovation processes to gain greater adaptability, and, above all, to anticipate and even cause breaches which will allow them, at the right time, to renovate their competitive advantages. Without a method, there is no product or service. Likewise, without a good or service there is no method. Innovation is often believed to come from a moment of creativity or only a happy few with extraordinary talents can achieve it. Innovation, though, is made in several ways, such as in the manner in which a product can be delivered for the consumer, how it is linked to other enterprises (for instance, strategic alliances) or the way it is sold. However, progress must be not only focused on new innovations, but often, and most often, by implementing incremental changes in goods or processes: ongoing change (Lin, et al 2010).

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of our work is to study how the client's degree of involvement in the company can condition its innovative agility, which will affect the innovations achieved by the company both at the level of services and processes. At the same time, we want to demonstrate that the degree of customer involvement in the company can be conditioned by the level of mutual trust achieved in the collaboration process between company and customer.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Market orientation and new product development theories, supported by resource dependency theory (TDR) create the theoretical and empirical framework that supports our approach, according to which customer participation contributes to the improvement of the business innovation. In fact, according to the TDR theory, companies are considered as open systems and dependent on the contingencies of their external environment (Karam, 2018). The information and knowledge provided to orient themselves to the market lead to understanding, discovering and satisfying the needs and desires of their customers (Elbeltagi, 2014). While the vast majority of works have focused mainly on tangible products, this work studies and details how customer participation (CPI and CCP) affects innovation efforts, focusing only on innovation in services. In addition, we study the trust variable looking for a factor that conditions this participation and thus complement our study on the role of the customer in innovation.

2.1. TRUST AND ITS RELATION TO CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION IN THE TRANSFER OF INFORMATION (CPI)

Trust arises when one of the parties fully believes in the reliability and integrity of the other party and this increases the commitment of their relationship. Trust is the mechanism by which companies expand their circles of relationships and is widely recognized as an essential factor that enables the company to be successful in its inter-organizational relationships, helping to create cooperative behaviour (Court right, 2009). Thanks to this climate of trust, the company can collaborate with its clients in order to innovate in services. In this sense, the client, in addition to being a consumer, can play the role of provider or source of information.

In this work, we use the two types of client that Alam, et al (2013) adopts, that is, as an information provider (CPI) and as a co-developer of services (CCP). CPI has an important weight in the success of innovation, because this participation provides a more accurate and complete assessment of customer needs. This proactive orientation contributes, to a great extent, to facilitating innovation by companies and to their success. This consists in that customers share information from their circles of distributors and retailers, communicating their preferences and needs through interactions with the company in order to obtain an improved service. Customers therefore become valuable sources of ideas and knowledge for the company, and by combining these resources, companies co-create value with their customers. In this way, the following hypothesis is established:

H₁. Trust favors customer participation as a source of information in the development of the new service.

2.2. TRUST AND CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION AS A CO-DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW SERVICE (CCP)

Beyond customer orientation aimed at obtaining information and knowledge, the customer can perform the task of co-developer. The co-development of the new service refers to the extent to which companies interact with their current or potential customers during the development process, that is,

the frequency with which both parties meet, the level of consultation and of presence in the development team of the new service. Ghouri & Khan. (2012) This process of developing new services is a set of interconnected activities and tasks, it includes information flows necessary for the company to conceptualize, design, evaluate and prepare new intangible values for the client, which are translated into a new service and its subsequent market launch(Wagner, 2007) as shown in figure 1.



Figure 1. Phases of the new service development process

In the literature that analyzes customer involvement in the process of developing new services, the idea emerges that if companies are trying to involve and involve their customers in their development processes, they will have to consider them as fully legitimate and participating customers active in defining the meaning of services and suggesting further changes. Neuhofer, (2016) states that “if a company involves its clients, it has to place them within the organization and transform them into employees or part of the product development team.” Innovation in services is being based on the new role of the client as co-Creator and resource when innovating in services. In this case, trust is a facilitator of this cooperative behavior. Trust favours the participation of partners in collective activities in which both parties have a common collective orientation. These arguments have led us to formulate the following hypothesis:

H₂. Trust favours the client's participation as co-developer of the new service.

2.3. CLIENT PARTICIPATION AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION (CPI) AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH INNOVATIVE AGILITY IN SERVICES

Agility is defined as a capacity that enables companies to respond quickly to change in a highly turbulent environment. Innovation is considered as the ability to introduce new processes, products or ideas in the organization. According to the 2005 Oslo Manual, which creates one of the most accepted definitions in the literature, innovation consists of the introduction of a new, or significantly improved, product (good or service), a process, a new method of marketing or a new organizational method, in internal company practices, workplace organization or external relations. Innovative agility can be defined as “the introduction of new services to new or existing clients and / or the offer of existing services to new clients in an agile way and thus achieve a response to market needs”. There is considerable growth in empirical research focused on manufacturing products, which studies how innovation, collaborating with customers, allows to acquire, transfer, absorb, evaluate and apply knowledge and information (Menguc, 2014). However, empirical contributions in the context of services remain limited. All this leads us to formulate the following hypothesis:

H₃. The participation of the client as a source of information in the development of the new service positively affects the innovative agility of services.

2.4. THE CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION AS CO-DEVELOPER (CCP) OF THE NEW SERVICE AND INNOVATIVE AGILITY IN SERVICES

Innovation on the part of the client complements innovation on the part of the company, helping to reduce the information asymmetry between the company and the consumer, which results in an innovation that is much easier to market, since effort and effort are avoided time spent on market surveys. Thus, new or improved services are developed more effectively and efficiently. Interaction and

contact with the consumer helps reduce the development time of the new service by providing information on customer preferences at each stage of development, which translates into the need for fewer changes and, consequently, savings time. The client, by being integrated during the service innovation process, allows a deeper understanding of the expectations and opportunities of the market, which contributes to a more precise and rapid response to the needs and requirements of the client (Roberts, 2017). It allows creating a supply of new ideas, cost reduction, quality improvement, design validation and increased predisposition to market acceptance. All of this leads us to formulate the following hypothesis:

H₄. Customer participation in the co-development of the new service positively affects the innovative agility of services.

2.5. INNOVATIVE AGILITY AND ITS EFFECT ON INNOVATION IN SERVICES

Innovative agility, being considered a dynamic capacity, entails taking advantage of the internal and external capacities of the company, or the generation of new ones in order to respond quickly to changes in the environment (Rzepka, 2018). The innovative capacity, on the other hand, consists of the company's orientation to support and promote experimentation and an openness towards new and original ideas. The capacity for innovation is the application of relevant knowledge to achieve market value and is the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization. Determines the ability of the organization to integrate, build, adapt and reconfigure its endowment of resources and capabilities in order to respond to changes in the environment, allowing the company to develop new products that meet current and future market needs. These considerations lead us to formulate the following hypothesis:

H₅. Innovative agility in services has a positive effect on innovation in services.

2.6. INNOVATIVE AGILITY AND ITS EFFECT ON INNOVATION IN PROCESSES

Based on the above considerations, innovation in services is considered as a new output or service introduced that benefits the customer. On the other hand, innovation in processes implies new tools, devices, contributions of knowledge through technologies that mediate between inputs and outputs, and that allows the management of production and operations.

Innovating in processes, as defined by the Oslo Manual, is considered as the implementation of new or significantly improved production or delivery methods, also encompassing the possibility of significant changes in techniques, equipment and / or software. Process innovation is described as the ability of the company to introduce changes and improvements in production processes, technologies or work organization. This type of innovative capacity provides the company with new tools and contributions of knowledge that allow and help to exploit, recombine and reconfigure its resources and capacities efficiently in order to improve production or orient it towards novelty. Agility contributes to redesigning and streamlining a company's business processes, allowing it to achieve higher levels of flexibility, favoring adaptation or the introduction of innovation in production processes, managing to respond quickly and accurately to any change in demand from customers (Ravichandran, 2017). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₆. Innovative agility in services has a positive effect on innovation in processes.

The set of hypotheses formulated is shown in Figure 2. The conceptual model will be empirically analyzed in the next section.

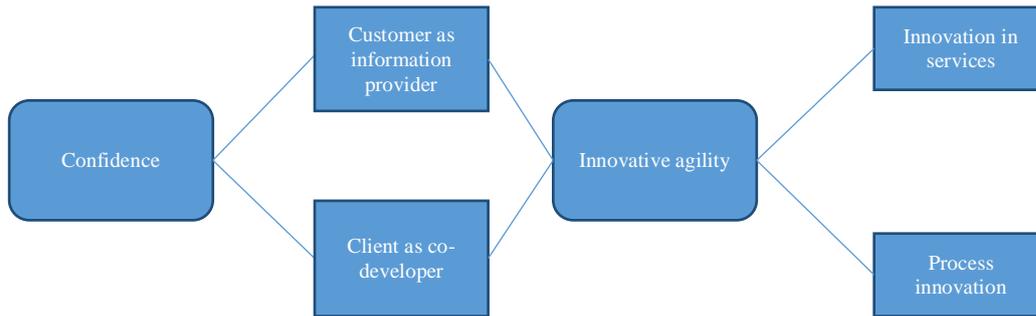


Figure 2. Conceptual framework

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

3.1. DATA

To contrast the different hypotheses we have carried out an empirical study. To obtain data we have started from the information provided by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) on the number of companies belonging to the service sector in Iraq with activities for technological innovation in 2020, which they considered as the main sources of information for development of its services both the information generated internally and that generated in the market, with more than 100 companies.

The sample studied is made up of 25 companies. The CSO Database has allowed us to access the data and contacts of the companies under study. This allowed us to send the questionnaires, addressed to the directors of the companies and / or those responsible for the operations and design area, which included information on the goals of the study. The response rate was 18%. With a sampling error of 6.3% and a confidence level of 95%.

3.2. EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE

All the variables used in this research have been measured with scales of several items and using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = total disagreement; 7 = total agreement) and in the case of innovative agility (1 = little agility; 7 = a lot of agility). The details of the scales are compiled in the annex.

Customer participation in the transfer of information was measured using the Lin and Huang scale, (2013), which measures the information that customers share with the organization. To measure customer participation in the co-development of the new service, the Alam scale (Khatab, 2019) was used, which measures customer participation in the different stages of the new service development process. The level of trust was measured by adapting the scale of Chu et al., (2012), which measures the trust relationship that exists between the company and its customers. Innovative agility was measured by adapting the scale of Najafi Tavani et al., (2014), measuring the degree of agility in which the company offers its new services. Innovation in services as well as innovation in processes were measured by adapting the scale of Camisón and Villar, (2010), which respectively measure the capacity of a company to develop new or significantly modified products or processes.

3.3. DATA TREATMENT

A confirmatory factor analysis was carried out to determine the internal consistency, reliability and convergent validity of the measurement scales. Individual reliability was verified to be greater than the recommended level of 0.5. The reliability of each of the scales was established using Cronbach's (α)

Alpha so that this scale was greater than 0.7, which guarantees the reliability of the scale. The value of composite reliability (CR) and mean variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5 were also calculated, which guarantees the reliability of the scale. Thus, both individual reliability and compound reliability exceed the established minimums, therefore, it can be stated that the observed variable is representative of the latent construct.

Table 1. Composite reliability, mean variance extracted and shared variance

<i>Parameters</i>	<i>C.R</i>	<i>A.V.E</i>	<i>M.S.V</i>	<i>A.S. V</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
1.Innovation in processes	0.85	0.53	0.39	0.22	0.73					
2.CCP	0.94	0.71	0.15	0.09	0.25	0.84				
3.CPI	0.81	0.51	0.27	0.19	0.48	0.38	0.72			
4. Confidence	0.8	0.5	0.27	0.12	0.25	0.19	0.52	0.71		
5. Innovative agility	0.92	0.7	0.48	0.24	0.62	0.31	0.41	0.27	0.84	
6.Innovation in services	0.84	0.52	0.48	0.25	0.62	0.3	0.39	0.38	0.69	0.72

As Table 1 summarizes, it was made from the composite reliability indicators, the average variance extracted, the maximum shared variance squared (Maximum Shared squared variance - MSV), and the average shared variance squared (Average shared squared variance - ASV). The suggested criteria for evaluating convergent validity are: CR is higher than AVE and AVE is higher than 0.5, and for discriminant validity: MSV is lower than AVE and ASV is lower than AVE. (Khatab, 2019). Similarly, factor loadings were calculated, which can only be considered significant if their value is less than 0.40 (equivalent to N = 200). As can be seen in Table 1, in all cases the extracted variance is greater than the 0.5 limit and all factor loadings exceed the 0.40 threshold, with which it can be verified that the scales have convergent validity. Note that in the diagonals instead of the classic value of 1, the square root of the AVE has been shown. The square root of the AVE must be greater than the correlations between the constructs, as shown by the diagonal of Table 1, which indicates a discriminant validity, in addition, Table 1 indicates that the correlations between the different factors that make up the model are not higher than 0.8. The analysis carried out demonstrates the unidimensionality of the scales and an adequate reliability and validity.

4. RESULTS

To contrast the proposed theoretical model, a structural equation model analysis SEM (Structural Equation Models) was used, which consists of a multivariate statistical model that allows estimating the effect and relationships between different variables, and therefore, contrasting the proposed relationships. The objective of the analysis is to check which variable has an antecedent or consequent role, as well as to verify the direct and indirect effects between variables. There are several software for estimating this type of model: LISREL (Linear Structural Relations), EQS (Abbreviation for Equations) or like the one used in this study: AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) in version 18. To evaluate the quality of the proposed model, its goodness of fit was analyzed. As can be seen in table 2, the adjustment indicators of the Chi-square ratio model (χ^2 / df) is between 1 and 2, as well as CFI (Comparative fit index), GFI (goodness of fit index), IFI (incremental fit index), TLI (Tucker-Lewis index) are above or close to the recommended 0.90, as well as the SRMR which is below 0.08, showing an acceptable fit. The sample used in this study consisted of 200 observations, far exceeding the minimum requirement of 100 observations when using the AMOS software. The results obtained provide evidence that supports the proposed hypotheses. In the p-value less than 0.001 and less than

0.01, taking into account that the limit to accept or reject a proposed hypothesis is $CR \pm 1, 96$. When the critical ratio (CR) is > 1.96 , the ratio is significant at the level of 0.05 or better, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the analysis of the structural model

<i>Parameters</i>			<i>Estimated regression coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>
CPI	←	Confidence	1	0.198	5.53	H ₁ Accepted
CCP	←	Confidence	0.548	0.199	2.76	H ₂ Accepted
Innovative agility	←	CPI	0.304	0.067	4.55	H ₃ Accepted
Innovative agility	←	CCP	0.144	0.049	2.96	H ₄ Accepted
Innovation in services	←	Innovative agility	0.58	0.073	7.90	H ₅ Accepted
Process innovation	←	Innovative agility	0.492	0.063	7.84	H ₆ ₁ Accepted

The first hypothesis, H₁, could not be rejected (C.R = 5.54; $\beta = 1.901$ and $p < 0.001$), thus, trust positively and significantly affects client participation as a source of information. Similarly, H₂ could not be rejected (C.R = 5.54; $\beta = 0.55$ and $p < 0.01$). This confirms that trust positively affects the client's participation as a co-developer of the new service. The hypotheses on the positive effects of client participation as a source of information (H₃) and as a co-developer (H₄) on innovative agility, obtained empirical support (C.R = 4.55; $\beta = 0.31$; $p < 0.001$) and (C.R = 2.97; $\beta = 0.145$; $p < 0.001$) respectively. Regarding hypotheses H₅ and H₆, both obtained empirical support (C.R = 7.99; $\beta = 0.57$; $p < 0.001$) and (C.R = 7.85; $\beta = 0.501$; $p < 0.001$) respectively.

5. DISCUSSION

In this work, we have tried to demonstrate that innovative agility will be conditioned by the participation and cooperation of the client. For this, we have treated innovation in services as a specific topic, beyond the present works that have focused mainly on tangible products. It should be taken into account that both the participation of the client as a source of information (CPI) and the participation of the client as a co-developer (CCP) condition agile innovation in services. These results are in line with those obtained by previous work on the client's partition (Ogiemwonyi, 2020), according to which, customer orientation has a strong effect on innovation capacity. This is due to the fact that the client as a source of information actively transfers the information obtained from its distributors and vendors to the company, frequently providing information on new trends and on their own needs. The client can also be integrated into the new service development process as another member of the company, interacting in all phases of the process and improving the innovation results in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The value for the company is co-created by integrating resources found in collaboration with the customer (Khatab, 2019). With this work we have also shown that customer collaboration contributes to the level of novelty of the services offered by the company as well as to the speed in the development of new services. The results of this work are similar to previous research that affirms that such collaboration allows the company to innovate continuously and creatively creating a strategy that can sustain the long-term success of the company. In the same way, cooperation with clients reduces the time to launch new services by being the first to introduce them to the market. This success depends, in this case, on the innovative capabilities of companies, which consist of the dexterity and ability of the

organization to react agilely to changes in the environment or market in order to develop new services and processes (Olorunniwo, 2006).

This agile innovation enables the company to innovate in services, replacing obsolete ones and expanding its range. It will allow you to be able to improve the design and reduce development and time to market. Innovative agility will also allow companies to continuously develop programs to reduce production costs and organize their production efficiently, which translates into improved innovation in the process. All this allows companies to improve customer satisfaction by capturing valuable opportunities in the market by taking advantage of knowledge about the needs and requirements of their customers. For example, previous studies suggest that innovation leads to the discovery, creation, or assembly of resources that allow the company to innovate efficiently and / or effectively produce value-added market offers, obtaining competitive advantages and superior performance. This work confirms the previous statements: the innovative agility obtained with the participation of the client allows both innovation in services and processes. Indeed, involving the customer allows a deeper understanding of market expectations and opportunities, which contributes to a more precise and faster response to customer needs and requirements. A client close to the company, in addition to providing valuable information, can overcome their commitment by conducting activities in an effective way, in addition, clients can initiate this involvement themselves: discussing ideas with staff, complaining about the existing service, discussing new ideas for services with the sales team or providing other unsolicited suggestions. This research also contributes to the search for the antecedent factors of this participation and shows that creating an environment of trust favors this cooperative behavior. The results show that a high level of trust translates into greater customer security, which enables the sharing of knowledge, resources and capabilities necessary for innovation in services. This finding is in line with the existing literature and shows that trust is an important pillar in collaboration between organizations and is considered to facilitate the co-creation of value by the client. Thus, this work shows that in order to achieve a successful collaboration with clients, creating value in terms of innovation, there must be a relationship between the company and its clients based on mutual trust. Transactions with clients do not have to be rigorously supervised. In this way, customers are sincere, honest and continuously demonstrate their commitment to the company (Anning-Dorson, 2018).

6. CONCLUSIONS

Today, innovation determines success in many industries and is considered a priority in services (Cui, et al., 2018). To do this, organizations can no longer focus on traditional or closed models to innovate. Seeking external sources of collaboration will support the company in its innovation processes.

As a result of the results of this research, innovation in services will be conditioned by the client's participation in the innovation processes, either as a source of information (CPI) or being an active participant in the company as a co-developer (CCP). All this has an impact on the innovative capacity of the company and allows the company to quickly generate a new offer or improve the existing one based on the information provided by the client himself. This innovative agility reduces development and market launch time. Similarly, the results affirm that the success of this participation will depend on the relationship between the company and its clients. The latter would have to be based on mutual trust in order to favor the CPI and CCP. This work provides important contributions both at an academic and business level, since we study aspects that directly affect the results of innovation in services obtained by companies through collaboration with their clients, however, there are some limitations. We do not recommend generalizing the results obtained, since the work has been carried out on a sample of companies in Spain. As future lines of research we are contemplating studying this model in other contexts. Given that this work is mainly focused on the services sector, future lines of research could address innovation in services only in manufacturing companies that offer services together with their

tangible products. It should be added that there are other types of collaborators with the company, such as competitors, universities or public bodies whose study could be interesting.

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