



Resource integration for co-creation between marketing agencies and clients

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Abstract

Resource integration is a central idea within Service-Dominant Logic, but there has been little empirical research on this aspect of theory. This study explores resource integration between marketing agencies and their clients. Nine case studies were developed, using a dyadic approach, of interviewing clients and members of their agency teams. This was followed up with presentations and workshops with over 200 practitioners that validated the findings and added new perspectives. The key operant resources in the client/agency context were identified. The study suggests that resource enhancement and development, as a result of integration, is important. For agency/client research, resource integration and development brings new perspectives complementing existing relationship approaches to research. The findings have implications for relationship marketing theory across B2B contexts and the discourse of co-creation suggests a way for practitioners to discuss how to work together effectively.

1.0 Introduction

This study is the first to apply ideas from Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) to the empirical context of co-creation between marketing agencies and their clients who work together to create an output, such as a campaign or a design. From a managerial perspective, it is a very important process that is central to producing effective marketing communications. From a theoretical perspective the contribution is mid-range in providing a bridge from metatheory to a context of application, as called for by Vargo and Lusch (2017).

From the start, Vargo and Lusch (2004) recognised the importance of the resources of supplier and customer in the co-creation of service. As the debate has developed, the significance of resource integration between participating actors has become more apparent, particularly in Business-to-Business (B2B) contexts. However, to date there has been limited scholarly research on operant resources and resource integration (Payne *et al.*, 2008; Madhavarani, *et al.*, 2014). In particular, there has been a lack of empirical studies, with most of the work having been at a level of abstraction far removed from practical analysis (Gronroos and Ravald, 2011; Gummesson, 2011) and yet Vargo and Lusch (2011) put forward S-D Logic as an explanation of markets that should ultimately inform the practice of

1
2
3 marketing. While some recent studies have begun to examine co-creation in different
4
5 contexts (Frow, McColl-Kennedy and Payne, 2016; Skalen and Edvarrson, 2016; Whalen and
6
7 Akaka, 2016; Wood, 2016) there has been little contextual research relating to resource
8
9 integration.
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11
12 The initial data was derived from interviews with clients and executives from their
13
14 agencies. This was followed up by face-to-face presentations and workshops with a large
15
16 number of agency and client practitioners. The transcripts from these workshops were
17
18 analysed and contribute contextual data to the Discussion and Managerial Implications
19
20 section.
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23
24 This article starts by discussing the literature on SD-Logic to demonstrate the
25
26 theoretical framing of the research around resource integration. This leads to three research
27
28 questions (RQs): RQ1 what are the key operant resources in the context? RQ2 what happens
29
30 to resources through integration? RQ3 how do the actors perceive the process and outcome
31
32 of resource integration? The client/agency relationship is then discussed to demonstrate
33
34 why it is a good context for looking at co-creation and to explain why S-D Logic is a useful
35
36 lens to view the phenomenon. The Methodology section outlines the dyadic approach in
37
38 developing the case studies and the subsequent workshops, involving sharing of the findings
39
40 and getting feedback from over 200 practitioners. The Findings and Discussion sections
41
42 elaborate on the operation of resource integration in co-creation, adding to knowledge on
43
44 the application of S-D Logic and on co-creativity between agencies and their clients. Finally,
45
46 good theory should inform practice and new perspectives from researching both agency and
47
48 client perceptions are offered to inform the ways that agencies and clients could work
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50 together more effectively.
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2.0 S-D Logic, co-creation and resource integration

The fundamental idea behind S-D Logic is that value is co-created through use and can only be understood in terms of the experience of the participants (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a). While the original conceptualisation of S-D Logic viewed these participants as customers and suppliers (Vargo and Luch, 2004), later thinking moved on to consider value to be co-created amongst a range of generic actors (Vargo and Lusch, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). It may involve a complex series of interactions (Gronroos, 2011), reciprocity (Ballantyne *et al.*, 2011; Ford, 2011) and a number of stakeholders (Frow and Payne, 2011).

This approach, of seeing value as a perception that is relative and individual is given continuing emphasis in S-D Logic, forming Axiom 4: "Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary" in Vargo and Lusch's (2014) update of the core ideas. The implications of Axiom 4 for researching B2B situations and particularly agencies and clients, are significant and yet there has been little empirical research in this area. For example, Axiom 4 underlines the need to consider perspectives from different points of view and yet the contemporary body of literature on marketing agencies and clients (see below) is mostly based on researching one perspective, using either agency or client respondents. The implication of SD-Logic is of the need to conduct empirical research on agencies and clients from both perspectives.

S-D Logic also has much to say about the value generating activities that take place within co-creation, focussing on the nature of the resources provided by the actors and the way operant resources are integrated (Kleineltankamp *et al.*, 2012). Operant resources are usually intangible, such as knowledge and skills (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Arnould *et al.*, 2006). Whenever a person acts they need some skill or knowledge, so they use operant resources and integrate these by engaging with others in co-creation (Löbler, 2011). Hence,

1
2
3 resource integration is the means by which value is created (Vargo and Lusch, 2011) and as
4
5 Axiom 3 states: "All economic and social actors are resource integrators" (Vargo and Lusch,
6
7 2014). There is much to learn about resources and resource integration. Madhavaran *et al.*
8
9 (2014) note that scholarly work on operant resources has not progressed significantly
10
11 despite the recognition of their importance. Vargo and Lusch (2004) suggest that new
12
13 resources can come into being, as a result of co-creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2011). This raises
14
15 questions about the pre-existence of resources against their creation as a result of
16
17 integration (Löbler, 2013). As S-D Logic discourse has developed, it has become apparent
18
19 that there is a knowledge gap in relation to the way operant resources are created,
20
21 transformed or modified in the process of integration. In view of the limited work in this
22
23 area, Kleinaltenkamp and collaborators (Kleinaltenkamp *et al.* 2012) followed up discussions
24
25 from the S-D Logic Forum on Marketing and Markets (2010) in theorising themes relevant to
26
27 gaining a clearer understanding of resource integration.
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31

32 33 **3.0 A resource integration framework**

34
35 The framework proposed by Kleinaltenkamp *et al.* (2012) has been adapted, in this
36
37 article, to provide a basis for analysing resource integration.
38

39 **Insert Figure 1 about here**

40
41 Using the framework in Figure 1, the following research questions (RQs) were posed to
42
43 guide the research study:
44

45
46 RQ1 what are the key operant resources in the context?

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48 RQ2 what happens to resources through integration?

49
50 RQ3 how do the actors perceive the process and outcome of resource integration?
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52
53 The starting point is to identify the key operant resources that are important in the
54
55 particular context (RQ1). The process of resource integration has the potential to create
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1
2
3 new resources and change existing resources (Vargo and Lusch, 2011), therefore it is
4
5 relevant to ask the question (RQ2) with regard to understanding what happens to resources
6
7 through integration. The whole process can be seen from an objective perspective in
8
9 relation to the interactions of the actors, but also can be viewed as emergent and subjective
10
11 (Peters *et al.*, 2014). The human and social experiences resulting from resource integration
12
13 (Ramaswamy, 2011) will form the phenomenological value perceptions of the resource
14
15 integrators (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a). Therefore understanding how different actors view
16
17 the process and outcomes (RQ3) is important.
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19
20

21 Resource integration can be seen to require engagement between actors. While co-
22
23 creation of value is the purpose of economic exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2017),
24
25 engagement between actors provides the means for co-creating value (Ramaswamy, 2011),
26
27 through resource integration. Thus the engagement behaviours of the actors (Prior and
28
29 Marcos-Cuevas, 2016; Waseem, Biggemann and Garry, 2017) are significant in moderating
30
31 the actors' perceptions of the process and outcomes from co-creation (RQ3).
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35 **4.0 Agencies and clients: A co-creative professional relationship**

36
37 The context for the research is that of marketing agencies and their clients working
38
39 in a co-dependent relationship. A recent literature review of the extant research on
40
41 marketing agency – client relationships identified co-creation as a key theme for future
42
43 research to develop stronger theoretical foundations in this area (Keegan, Rowley and
44
45 Tonge, 2017).
46
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49 Creativity resources in agencies are largely made up of creative people working in
50
51 teams within supportive organisational processes (West, 1993; Lynch and West, 2017).
52
53 Advertising creativity is distinguished from other more pure forms of creativity because it is
54
55 moderated by the needs of the client (Haberland and Dacin, 1992; Koslow *et al.*, 2003).
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1
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3 Therefore, clients have a major influence on creative risk taking (West, 1999) and thus
4
5 creativity becomes a balancing act between agency and client relating to how much risk a
6
7 client is willing to take (Sasser *et al.* 2013). Clients who show they are more open to new
8
9 ideas will receive more creative work (Koslow, 2015). The role of the client is therefore
10
11 important, but there is a gap in research in understanding the viewpoints of both agency
12
13 and client on what they put into the creative process and what they get out of the process
14
15 (Amabile, 1996; Hill and Johnson, 2003; Oliver and Ashley, 2012). In one of the few studies
16
17 that have attempted to get views on creativity from both agencies and their clients Michell
18
19 (1984) found several areas of discord. Dissatisfaction with agency performance causes
20
21 clients to change their advertising agencies despite the costs involved (Michell, Cataquet
22
23 and Hague, 1992; Durden *et al.* 1997).
24
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28 Studies of client dissatisfaction, with their advertising agencies, suggest that agencies
29
30 are perceived by their ex-clients as being generally poor at managing their side of the
31
32 relationship (Doyle *et al.* 1980; Michell, 1986; Michell *et al.* 1992; Durden *et al.* 1997). The
33
34 building of trust in the relationship between agency and client is an important research
35
36 theme (Caceres and Paparoidamis 2007; Duhan and Sandvik 2009). Relationship
37
38 development studies have identified the stages of relationships and the emergence of
39
40 relational bonds such as trust and commitment through a process of open communication
41
42 and goal setting, adaptability, and coordination (Wackman and Salmon, 1986; Halinen,
43
44 1997; Duhan and Sandvik, 2009). Interpersonal relationship studies have identified the
45
46 importance of friendships and the pivotal role of the agency account manager in building
47
48 trust (Ewing *et al.*, 2001; Haytko, 2004; Vafeas, 2010). Relationship performance studies
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50 have highlighted the need for agency proactivity, productive interaction and client
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3 involvement (Labahn and Kohli, 1997; Davies and Prince, 1999; Beverland *et al.*, 2007; Grant
4
5 *et al.* 2012).

6
7 The quality of relationship is important in working effectively together, but there is
8
9 still a gap in knowledge in relation to the contribution of agency and client actors in
10
11 different circumstances. The development of marketing campaigns between agencies and
12
13 clients can be seen to be a prime example of co-creation: “marketers, copywriters, and
14
15 graphics artists must work closely together to produce a single integrated work” (Wageman
16
17 and Gordon, 2005, p. 687). At a minimum, this requires client engagement at the beginning
18
19 of the process in setting the strategic context for the work (Hackley, 1998). However, the
20
21 level of client engagement with the agency, over and above this, may vary significantly
22
23 (Haytko, 2004). Na *et al.*, (2009) suggest that the client is closely engaged with strategy and
24
25 creative work approval, but the extant studies do not explore client engagement at other
26
27 stages of the process. Creativity is delivered in an interactive process with the client and
28
29 needs to be understood as a sequence (Hill and Johnson, 2003, 2004). Turnbull and Wheeler
30
31 (2015) identify 24 stages in the creative process and admit that there is limited
32
33 understanding of how far the client might be engaged at each stage. Analysing the process
34
35 at the level of the operant resource integration has the potential to add to knowledge in this
36
37 area. The importance of the application of both client and agency resource in this process is
38
39 acknowledged (Koslow *et al.* 2006), but there has been little research on the nature of these
40
41 resources (RQ1).
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48 The quality of client input is also important because the wrong type of client input
49
50 can inhibit the agency’s creativity (Hill and Johnson, 2004). Judging creativity is challenging
51
52 for some clients, requiring fine judgements on when highly creative advertising is
53
54 appropriate (Sasser *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, many clients are unsure of the role they
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3 should play when working with creative agencies (Beard, 1996; Zolkiewski, *et al.*, 2008) and
4
5 do not understand the process of developing advertising (Feldwork, 2012). Koslow *et al.*'s
6
7 (2006) research, with US advertising agencies, suggests that the value of client involvement,
8
9 in boosting creativity, depends on the client's willingness to be open minded to new ideas.
10
11 The open minded client can influence the agency environment (Sasser and Koslow, 2008)
12
13 and in turn motivate everyone in the agency to do great creative work (Koslow, 2015).
14
15

16
17 RQ2 and RQ3 address the question of client and agency input, taking a resource
18
19 integration approach. RQ2 poses the question of what happens to operant resources
20
21 during integration when interaction between client and agency results in the creation of
22
23 outputs in the form of a creative solution or campaign. This covers the creative process,
24
25 running from briefing through to execution and evaluation. RQ3 investigates the actors'
26
27 personal perceptions of how they view their contributions and the outputs from this
28
29 process.
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31

32
33 The need for empirical research into the views of both clients and agencies on their
34
35 contribution to the process is relevant because of the way that the marketing
36
37 communications environment has fundamentally changed (Keller, 2009) since Michell's
38
39 (1984) dyadic study. The emergence of websites, e-mail marketing, text marketing and paid
40
41 search (Keller, 2009), alongside social media and blogging (Kietzmann *et al.* 2011; Valos *et*
42
43 *al.* 2016) has impacted significantly on the agency/client eco-system (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*
44
45 2010; Karjaluoto *et al.* 2015; Keller, 2016). In 2015, digital marketing captured 41.3% of U.S.
46
47 agency revenue (Johnson, 2016).
48
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50
51 The thinking on co-creation and resource integration from the S-D Logic stream of
52
53 literature can add new perspectives to understand the contribution of clients and agencies
54
55 and a re-examination is particularly appropriate given the changes in the communications
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3 environment. The S-D Logic discourse has provided new thinking that has previously not
4
5 been applied to the agency/client context and the purpose of this article is to explore the
6
7 contribution that SD-Logic can make to understanding co-creation in this empirical context.
8

9 10 **5.0 Methodology**

11
12 There are epistemological and ontological challenges in researching questions using
13
14 an S-D Logic lens. A positivistic approach to the research was rejected, as being unsuitable
15
16 for analysing value creation from multiple perspectives. Fundamentally, the
17
18 phenomenological nature of value perception, in Axiom 4 (Vargo and Lusch, 2014), suggests
19
20 research approaches that accept that reality is partly socially constructed and that multiple
21
22 perceptions of reality exist. In this respect, a number of different approaches may be
23
24 appropriate to research on co-creation, such as critical realism, social constructionism, post-
25
26 structuralism and others.
27
28

29
30 The authors chose to take a critical realist approach, as advocated by Van de Ven
31
32 (2007) for engaged scholarship, because it is suited to understanding of the complex world
33
34 in which clients and agencies operate, where validity is very much contingent on the context
35
36 and there are multiple perceptions of reality. The paradigm accepts the existence of a social
37
38 world and recognises the limitations in our understanding of complex phenomena (Guba
39
40 and Lincoln, 1994; Godfrey and Hill, 1995; Tsoukas, 1989). Most importantly, critical realism
41
42 positions the role of the researcher as one of trying to understand an outside reality
43
44 involving different stakeholders with potentially contradictory perspectives (Healy and
45
46 Perry, 2000).
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50
51 Qualitative research methods are well accepted within critical realism and face-to-
52
53 face interviews are considered to be a good way to achieve sufficient depth (Healy and
54
55 Perry, 2000; Sammarra and Biggiero, 2008). Purposive sampling was used to recruit client
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1
2
3 organizations of varying size. 150 marketing directors and marketing managers from a
4
5 database of firms that purchase advertising and design services were invited to participate.
6
7 For practical reasons the sample was limited to the south of the UK. Although the response
8
9 rate was low (4.7%), acceptances were received from firms with annual turnover ranging
10
11 from £25m to £800m, and with relationships ranging from 18 months to 10 years. In the
12
13 first place, clients were approached and once the client agreed to take part their agency was
14
15 approached. Thus the dyads were formed between each client and their agency. Twenty five
16
17 interviews were conducted with seven clients and eighteen agency executives. Two of the
18
19 clients gave the authors access to two of their agencies and so nine separate cases were
20
21 constructed, based on the relationship between a client and an agency. Restricting the
22
23 interviews to situations where the authors could get both agency and client respondents
24
25 limited the response. However, the dyadic nature of the case studies was fundamental in
26
27 getting viewpoints from both sides and is a distinctive feature of the research.
28
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32
33 The validity of the research comes from accessing knowledgeable interviewees
34
35 (Rubin and Rubin, 1995) to provide context rich data that enhances insight and
36
37 understanding (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008). Appropriate case studies are particularly
38
39 useful where new perspectives are sought about an area in context in order to develop new
40
41 in-depth insights (Johnson *et al.*, 1999; Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002). The 25 interviews
42
43 covered recurring themes and data saturation suggested that further information would not
44
45 be attained by undertaking more interviews.
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48

49 Table 1 outlines the nature of the clients and agencies to demonstrate the
50
51 contextual richness and breadth of the multiple cases.
52

53 **Insert Table 1 about here**
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2
3 The one-to-one, semi-structured face-to-face interviews used separate topic guides
4
5 for clients and for agency personnel. The interviews were designed to get the interviewees
6
7 to talk openly about specific recent projects and the interviewers did not specifically
8
9 mention resource integration to the interviewees. Table 2 provides the topic guides.
10

11
12 **Insert Table 2 about here**
13

14 The interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes, and were conducted, recorded,
15
16 transcribed, and analysed, by the researchers. The dyadic nature of the research is
17
18 important. Perspectives from client-agency pairs were sought because the various actors
19
20 involved in a relationship may have very different perspectives (Lewis and McNaughton
21
22 Nicholls, 2014). Each interview was conducted individually, separately and in confidence,
23
24 with a promise that the interviewee would be quoted anonymously in any published
25
26 material. The replies of the client and agency were not shared between the counterparties.
27
28 This was essential in getting open and honest answers because neither client nor agency
29
30 could be depended on to be totally frank in front of their counterparts, especially if they
31
32 were dissatisfied. In all but one case (Case 3), the interviewees included the client, an
33
34 account manager or account director (client services), and a member of the agency's
35
36 creative studio. It was important to capture the views of agency managers and agency
37
38 creatives, because of their very different roles and also because of their different value
39
40 systems (Kover and Goldberg, 1995). In two cases, the client recommended that we speak
41
42 to two of their agencies because of their contrasting relationship dynamics.
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44
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48 Nvivo 10 was used for coding, following an analytic process based on Pratt *et al.*
49
50 (2006) and Gioia *et al.* (2012). Initially a particularly 'rich' transcript from each respondent
51
52 type was selected and analysed, line by line, to develop an initial list of first-order concepts.
53
54 These concepts emerged directly from the interviewee's discussion of recent projects. This
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1
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3 task was conducted independently by two of the researchers. The two lists of concepts were
4
5 then compared in order to identify similarities and differences and refine the list. This
6
7 process of checking the coding improves reliability and definitional clarity (Miles and
8
9 Huberman, 1994). With the coding of subsequent transcripts the set of concepts expanded.
10
11 Once the initial coding process was completed the researchers categorised the concepts
12
13 into higher-order, aggregate constructs. Therefore, while lower-order concepts are
14
15 descriptive, such as: “Inexperienced clients often don’t know what information agencies
16
17 need” the higher-order constructs, in this case “client knowledge” and ultimately the
18
19 theoretical dimension “operant resources” are more abstract and more related to theory.
20
21
22

23 Building on the original research, the authors then shared the findings with
24
25 practitioners in three face-to-face workshops and then eight workshops with individual
26
27 agencies, as summarised in Table 3. The face-to-face workshops were organised in
28
29 coordination with professional bodies, representing clients and agencies. The professional
30
31 bodies were important in encouraging their members to take part and the participants paid
32
33 to attend. The format covered presentations of the research findings by the authors,
34
35 followed by group discussions and feedback relating to implications and actions that could
36
37 be taken to improve the ways in which clients and agencies work together. The individual
38
39 agency workshops involved presentation of the research results to creative, account
40
41 management and other executives followed by a discussion of implications in relation to
42
43 that particular agency.
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47

48 **Insert Table 3 about here**
49

50
51 These workshops and presentations with over 200 practitioners were recorded and
52
53 analysed to add contextual understanding and to aid interpretation of the findings from the
54
55 case studies. This opportunity to utilise tacit practitioner knowledge in considering the
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1
2
3 research findings has informed the following discussion and in particular the managerial
4
5 implications section.

6 7 **6.0 Findings**

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9 The presentation of the findings, from the nine case studies, is structured around the
10
11 three research questions, as indicated in the sub-headings.

12 13 *6.1 The key operant resources in the context (RQ1)*

14
15 The research provided rich information on the perceptions of the actors of the
16
17 operant resources provided. Table 4 summarises and explains the main operant resources
18
19 mentioned by the interviewees, in talking about how they work with each other. The quotes
20
21 provided below have been chosen to illustrate and to bring to life the points made by the
22
23 interviewees. and to bring to life the points made by the
24
25 interviewees.

26 27 **Insert Table 4 about here**

28
29 Initiation of a project tends to come from the client and involves a briefing process.
30
31 Typically knowledge of the organisation, the strategy, the brand and the customer are
32
33 required for input into the brief. Hence with an agency new to the client's organisation a
34
35 large degree of input is required of operant resources from the client:
36
37

38
39 "Yes. With a new agency, they tend to make big assumptions. There are key learning
40
41 curves. *Agency name* made assumptions about our target audience. They assumed it was
42
43 younger than it was and so their creative work at the beginning was not right. They've
44
45 had to re-adjust. We've done some work with them since then So they've had to
46
47 adjust the tone of voice." Client Case 6/7
48
49

50
51 In contrast, with an incumbent agency this knowledge has often already been taken
52
53 on board by the agency. This suggests a learning process has taken place in which the
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3 agency has enhanced its operant resources in relation to that client, as a result of earlier
4
5 resource integration:

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7 “But we have had a long relationship with *agency name*. They know the brand well, they
8
9 understand the industry and the background to why we are doing things so we don’t
10
11 need a detailed written brief.” Client Case 2

12
13
14 “But they’ve been involved in a wide range of projects over five years. So, for smaller
15
16 projects, I don’t have to give them much detail. They know what they need to do. Even
17
18 with bigger jobs, they know the brand and the target audience.” Client Case 6/7

19
20
21 Thus the degree of existing agency operant knowledge, relating to the client
22
23 organisation appears to be an important factor in the operant resource inputs that are
24
25 required in briefing. However, the practice of briefing is also very dependent on the attitude
26
27 and knowledge of the client and in terms of resource inputs appears to vary widely. There
28
29 were many critical comments from agencies about the quality of briefs and this was often
30
31 attributed to lack of relevant experience amongst clients:
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33

34
35 “Some clients are very much, they write the brief, they give us the brief and say this is
36
37 what we need done. Some, we go in and they say ‘we’ve got a rough idea of what we
38
39 want to do’ and then we do a brainstorm with the client. And what we find with that, is
40
41 that we effectively write the brief with them and learn more about what outcomes they
42
43 want.” Agency: Creative Director Case 7

44
45
46 “Another issue is when they don’t share all their information with us..... They don’t tell
47
48 us what the PR agency is doing or what they’re doing above the line. They just think
49
50 about pots of budget. There’s no synergy.” Agency: Account Manager Case 8

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52
53 The generation of ideas in response to the brief involves the input of creative
54
55 operant resources from the agency. It is then in the interaction with the client in discussion
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2
3 about the ideas/concepts/plans that integration takes place. This requires operant
4
5 resources from the client in relation to being able to judge and make constructive
6
7 comments in relation to the work. Despite this confident assertion from the client in Case 1,
8
9 a number of the clients privately expressed doubts about their ability to judge creative
10
11 work.
12

13
14 “It’s part of a marketing role to be able to understand creativity and expect a certain
15
16 outcome from what you’ve briefed in. To write the brief I have to have a certain level of
17
18 understanding of what I’m looking for.” Client Case 1
19

20
21 The ability to make decisions approving creative work and plans in moving ideas and
22
23 proposals to the next stage is an important point where the agency requires an operant
24
25 resource from the client. This means getting access to and agreement from the decision
26
27 maker:
28

29
30 “The only person the agency really listens to in the room is the most senior person. They
31
32 listen to all this stuff from the client’s managers and go ‘yeah, yeah’ but what the agency
33
34 really needs is one very clear voice: ‘this is what we want’.” Client Case 3
35

36
37 “The easiest to work with are those who don’t come from a hierarchical organization. If
38
39 they do, we really need to meet the decision-makers from the outset so that we get
40
41 some reassurance that they know what they’re asking for. It prevents a lot of time-
42
43 wasting.” Agency: Account Director Case 7
44

45
46 Producing the outputs from the process requires a range of technical operant
47
48 resources whether the output is a television advertisement, a pack design, a website or
49
50 digital campaign. The following quote illustrates a mature and balanced view from an
51
52 agency design creative summing up how the end product needs to result from the
53
54 integration of client and agency operant resources:
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1
2
3 “The more you do the job though, you realise you’re producing a piece of work for the
4 client’s world, about which they know more than we do, so it’s a question of balance and
5 compromise. Ultimately, it’s not about the designer, it’s about the end customer. You
6 have the designer in their world, and the client in their world, but it’s about neither of
7 those worlds. It’s about the end-customer’s world. So it’s about combining the
8 knowledge from both sides to reach the customer.” Agency: Member of Creative Team

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16
17 Case 4

18 19 20 6.2 Resource integrating: What happens to resources in resource integration? (RQ2)

21 22 **Insert Figure 2 about here**

23
24 Figure 2 shows the coding, from the analysis, relating to the concept of resource
25 integration. The second level of coding identifies key stages in the integration process and is
26 broadly in line with other studies that have looked at agency/client engagement as a step by
27 step process (Hill and Johnson, 2004; Na *et al.*, 2009; Turnbull and Wheeler, 2015). The third
28 level of coding identifies the main operant resources, as already outlined in Table 4. What
29 was evident from the interviews was that way in which the resources are integrated and the
30 balance of contribution between agency and client varies widely.
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40 Taking ‘Briefing’, in some cases the client may write the brief, in other cases the
41 agency writes with input from the client. Where there is insufficient resource input from the
42 client the agency has to compensate by providing resources to get the project moving:

43
44
45
46
47 “It doesn’t matter how you get that brief, whether the client writes it, or we write it
48 together..... Either way you need to know what you’re trying to achieve and need to be
49 collectively aligned.” Agency: Account Director, Case 7.
50
51
52

53
54 At the ‘Creative development’ stage in Figure 2, the client needs to supply operant
55 resources in terms of their ‘Ability to evaluate creative ideas’ through responding to the
56
57
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1
2
3 agency's creative work and supplying further direction. The interviews, with clients suggest
4
5 that this can be particularly challenging. All the clients in the research expressed some
6
7 degree of concern over judging creative work, as expressed by the client in Cases 6 and 7:

8
9 "So I'm not always 100% confident. Do other people say that?"Interviewer: "Oh yes...."

10
11 "They do? Thank goodness. I always think it's me lacking confidence." Client: Cases 6 and
12
13
14 7.

15
16 The 'Creative development' stage involves the fundamental agency operant resource
17
18 of 'Creative skills'. In the 'Production' and 'Implementation' stages, in Figure 2, the range of
19
20 operant resources supplied by agencies varies greatly. In the cases, the larger agencies
21
22 (Cases 3 and 7) offered a more diversified range of capabilities in terms of media buying,
23
24 research and planning. Across all stages, the resource contribution by different agencies
25
26 seems to vary in relation to the scope of their expertise and what they perceive to be
27
28 expected of them by the client company. Case 3 is an example of a large agency that
29
30 provides a strategic perspective and a wider knowledge of trends, customer issues and
31
32 media opportunities:
33
34
35
36

37 "We don't only do creative output for print, TV and radio, but we're the strategic lead.

38
39 What that means is we're involved in their annual planning cycle and involved in the
40
41 upstream process." Agency: Account Director, Case 3.
42
43

44 The degree of resource contribution by agency and client at different stages of
45
46 resource integration is, therefore, highly variable. What is more interesting though, is the
47
48 way the available operant resources may develop over time. There was plenty of evidence
49
50 of how resources develop and are enhanced in the resource integration process. Two
51
52 experienced clients demonstrated how their own operant resources were enhanced
53
54 through taking part in the co-creative process with agencies. The client in Case 4 explains
55
56
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1
2
3 how she learnt from agencies in her early career. The client in Case 3 recognises that the
4
5 client bears a major responsibility for the creative output and emphasises the need for
6
7 continuous improvement and learning in working with agencies:
8

9
10 “Quite often you find yourself as the specialist in your organization, but in the absence of
11
12 having internal people to learn from, you have to find other ways of learning. A lot of that
13
14 for me has been through external agencies. Earlier in my career, I had to use agencies as
15
16 a way of learning.” Client: Case 4
17

18
19 “My mantra is that the work is only as good as the client. You need to self-learn in the
20
21 process. What worked, what didn’t work? Where did we go wrong? What do we need to
22
23 do differently?” Client: Case 3
24

25
26 The integration process therefore is not just about creating new resources (such as a
27
28 new campaign), as outputs of the resource integration process, but also about modifying
29
30 (ideally enhancing) the potential resources (for example the capabilities of the actors) that
31
32 are available for further resource integration over time.
33

34 35 **Insert Figure 3 about here**

36
37 The idea of developing and enhancing resources adds a parallel process to the step
38
39 by step process of working together. Figure 3 demonstrates one of the reasons why there
40
41 are benefits in the establishment of longer term relationships between agencies and clients.
42
43 Through the resource integration process there is the opportunity to build the potential
44
45 resources that then go into the next stage of resource integration (the next campaign or
46
47 project).
48
49

50 51 *6.3 Actors’ perceptions of the process of resource integrating (RQ3)*

52
53 Resource integration occurs through a series of interactions between agency and
54
55 client from briefing, through creative development, to final execution. While both sides may
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1
2
3 agree on the steps in the process they may have very different views on the quality of
4
5 resource input and subsequent value of the output. The benefit of the dyadic approach in
6
7 the research is that it shows up differences in perceptions, as demonstrated in these
8
9 contrasting quotes:

10
11
12 “To write the brief I have to have a certain level of understanding of what I’m looking for.

13
14 It’s not they don’t have knowledge of the market, but we have a much better
15
16 understanding of what customers want, what works in the marketplace, what consumers
17
18 respond to.....I feel they need as much as possible.” Client: Case 1

19
20
21 “(Name of client Case 1) for example is one of these woolly briefers. She’s very vague.

22
23 She knows what she wants but can’t seem to get it down on paper.” Agency: Studio

24
25
26 Manager, Case 1

27
28 Client attitude and way they deal with the agency is key in terms of the motivation of
29
30 people working on their account. The agency interviewees suggested that often a
31
32 compromise is made between providing an output that keeps the client happy and an
33
34 output that they value as good creative work. The process can have a significant effect on
35
36 how much the agency feels ownership of the resulting creative work:

37
38
39 “Often the process has an impact on how much people love or hate an ad and therefore

40
41 how much ownership they feel. If you’ve been through a good process that everyone is

42
43 happy with, everyone feels like it’s got their name on it. But if you go through a difficult

44
45 process or end up with an output that misses the bar, the agency doesn’t put it on its

46
47 show reel and the client doesn’t want ownership either.” Agency: Account Director, Case

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3 When budgets and resources are sufficient, the creation of shared experiences may
4
5 be possible, as in the case below, where the client provided a joint context for co-creation of
6
7 the brief:
8

9
10 “We went on a field trip to the Orkney Islands, four or five of us, with the client. Stayed
11
12 there for a few days, looked round the island, went on a boat trip, and from that trip, we
13
14 put together a mood board of images that captured the trip. The client turned round and
15
16 said ‘actually that captures the brief. Why don’t you design from that mood board?’
17
18 Although it was then supported by a written brief, that was done retrospectively. We
19
20 started designing from a shared experience.” Agency: Creative Director, Case 2
21
22

23 The degree of openness of the relationship between agency and client is stressed as
24
25 important in all the cases, in line with previous literature on agency/client relationships
26
27 (Sasser and Koslow, 2008; Koslow, 2015). The sometimes contrasting experiences of the
28
29 actors involved in the resource integration process helps explain why this is the case. If the
30
31 relationship is open and honest the experiences are shared and problems can be dealt with.
32
33 However, in the cases there was only one example where the interviewees talked about the
34
35 agency and client sitting down together to review the relationship and process between
36
37 agency and client. The pattern of working generally seemed to be that agency and client
38
39 would move from one campaign or project to another without sharing their experience of
40
41 working together.
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46 **7.0 Discussion**

47
48 The purpose of this article is to apply theoretical ideas from S-D Logic to co-creation
49
50 in a practical business context, in order to use S-D Logic as a lens to provide new
51
52 perspectives and ultimately inform the practice of marketing. In addition to the case studies,
53
54 the input from the workshops with over 200 practitioners helped inform this section and the
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1
2
3 rest of the article. The discussion below will consider the implications from the perspective
4
5 of to the S-D Logic literature and of the literature on marketing agencies and their clients.
6

7 *7.1 Contribution to S-D Logic*

8
9
10 The study answers the call for more research on operant resources and resource
11
12 integration in practice (Payne *et al.*, 2008; Madhavarani, *et al.*, 2014). In making a bridge
13
14 between meta-theory and application, the research identifies key operant resources in the
15
16 context of client/agency co-creation. This allows for a consideration of the operant
17
18 resources used at different points in the resource integration process (Figure 2). Further
19
20 studies of operant resources in different B2B contexts could usefully compare the types of
21
22 resources used in co-creation and identify commonalities and differences.
23
24

25
26 The concept of resource development has received little attention in the S-D Logic
27
28 literature, and would benefit from further exploration. Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2011) talk
29
30 about the process of 'resources becoming', but there is limited explanation of this (Löbler,
31
32 2013; Madhavarani *et al.*, 2014). In the current study, new outputs such as campaigns,
33
34 advertisements, designs and websites are created through resource integration. What is
35
36 more interesting though is to consider the effect of resource integration on the
37
38 development and improvement of the operant resources that the actors bring to the
39
40 process. Clients in the case studies acknowledged the role that working alongside agencies
41
42 had played in their professional development, particularly when young and inexperienced.
43
44 The co-creation process provides the potential for clients to develop their skills with respect
45
46 to briefing, creative judgement and managing the client-agency relationship, all of which
47
48 involve the enhancement of their operant resources. Similarly, agency actors develop their
49
50 operant resources in relation to their knowledge of their client's commercial operation. At
51
52 the very least, the actors can be seen to develop their professional competence and
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3 confidence which, in themselves, are operant resources. The operant resource development
4
5 process can be seen to be very important in ongoing collaborations, where effective
6
7 learning results in the development of the actors' operant resources, thereby providing an
8
9 enhanced input into the next round of resource integration, as suggested in Figure 3. This
10
11 study suggests that resource development is the way in which resource shortfalls can be
12
13 corrected and resources may be brought back into balance, over time, in order to enhance
14
15 the effectiveness of co-creation.
16
17

18
19 The importance of building trust is well established in B2B relationships (Morgan and
20
21 Hunt, 1994) and particularly in the relationship between client and agency (Caceres and
22
23 Paparoidamis 2007; Duhan and Sandvik 2009). The development of operant resources
24
25 during co-creation would seem to be an important element in the trust building process. As
26
27 described above, during co-creation the actors can develop their competence through
28
29 building relevant knowledge and correcting resource shortfalls. In the client/agency context
30
31 it is particularly incumbent on the agency to correct shortfalls given their dependence on
32
33 the client as budget holder. The connection between the development of operant resources
34
35 and building of trust provides a potential link between S-D Logic and the relationship
36
37 marketing literature. Resource development could be a very promising area for
38
39 understanding why some B2B relationships are more effective than others. What are the
40
41 relationship factors that lead to effective operant resource development? How far is
42
43 effective operant resource development related to the development of trust? Further
44
45 research is needed on how resource integration can develop the actors' operant resources
46
47 and how organisations might leverage co-creation opportunities to enhance the operant
48
49 resources of their actor networks, particularly their employees.
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55 *7.2 Contribution to knowledge of agency/client co-creation*

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3 Over the last 20 years there have been a number of studies that have looked at
4
5 creativity in agencies as a stage-by-stage process (Amabile, 1996; Hill and Johnson, 2004; Na
6
7 *et al.* 2009; Turnbull and Wheeler, 2015). Studies have shown a variety of patterns of
8
9 engagement with clients (Haytko, 2004; Hill and Johnston, 2004; Sasser and Koslow, 2008).
10
11 The S-D Logic approach has the potential to aid understanding of client involvement by
12
13 focussing on the contribution that the client and agency make at the fundamental level of
14
15 operant resources. This focus on what is contributed by each side allows for a wide variation
16
17 in contribution rather than following preconceived notions of the role of agency and client.
18
19

20
21 It has been established that role ambiguity can be a source of dissatisfaction in the
22
23 client/agency relationship (Beard, 1996; Zolkiewski, *et al.*, 2008). The availability and
24
25 deployment of appropriate operant resources on both sides is highly relevant to obtaining a
26
27 better understanding of the underlying reasons for the ambiguity. Examples given in the
28
29 Findings section demonstrate, for example, that briefing can take many forms and may
30
31 involve a wide variation in client involvement. While the relative resource contribution is a
32
33 longstanding issue (Beard, 1996), it is also notable that digital marketing has brought in new
34
35 areas of ambiguity around website development and updating, social media content and
36
37 control and search engine optimisation. The identification of the key operant resources
38
39 required at different stages of the co-creation process is of potential significance in
40
41 understanding how agencies and clients work together in the emerging new
42
43 communications environment.
44
45
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47

48
49 The findings, in relation to RQ2, demonstrate how the integration process can lead
50
51 to the development of the operant resources of the actors, which then provides enhanced
52
53 resources for the next round of co-creative activities (Figure 3). This shows that resource
54
55 integration leads to greater benefits than simply achieving a short term goal by putting
56
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1
2
3 together complementary resources. Resource integration provides opportunities for actors
4
5 to learn from each other and develop knowledge and skills that will be useful in the future.
6
7 This is important. The follow up workshops to the original case studies included working
8
9 group sessions, where the practitioner participants discussed the implications of the
10
11 findings from the original case studies. The outputs from these groups were recorded,
12
13 transcribed and analysed. The analysis suggests that resource shortfalls on one side or
14
15 another are frequent occurrences.
16
17

18
19 The workshops also confirmed the tendency for agency and client actors to
20
21 concentrate on the outputs of the process rather than the development of the operant
22
23 resources of those involved in resource integrating. Previous research on agencies and
24
25 clients has stressed the importance of the client being open minded to create the conditions
26
27 for creativity (Koslow *et al.*, 2006; Sasser and Koslow, 2008; Koslow, 2015). A resource
28
29 integration approach suggests that a more structured process of facilitating reflection and
30
31 learning would be beneficial in many cases. Imbalances of skills in other knowledge
32
33 intensive business services have been found to cause problems in co-creation (Aarikka-
34
35 Stenroos, and Jaakkola, 2012). Understanding more about how resources develop during co-
36
37 creation has the potential to bring new insights into how imbalances can be corrected.
38
39
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41
42 Value may be co-destroyed as well as co-created (Ple' and Ca'ceres, 2010; Gronroos
43
44 and Gummerus, 2014). Recent literature has clarified the idea of a negative side of co-
45
46 creation by conceptualising the positive and negative results of co-creation as a continuum
47
48 (Chowdhury, Gruber Zolkiewski, 2016). Value may be diminished because of the action of
49
50 the actors (Vafeas, Hughes, and Hilton, 2016). Agencies are frequently sacked by clients with
51
52 the main reason being dissatisfaction with agency performance (Michell *et al.* 1992; Durden
53
54 *et al.* 1997). A focus on operant resources could shed light on the reasons for dissatisfaction.
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3 While co-creation may lead to the enhancement and development of resources it may also
4
5 lead to resources becoming redundant over a time period. For example, an agency may be
6
7 replaced because the client perceives the need for a new creative approach. In this case
8
9 reason could be that the agency has become complacent or it could simply be that the client
10
11 has been approached by another agency with new ideas. Creativity is a particularly
12
13 interesting operant resource in that it is possible that this resource may sometimes diminish
14
15 over time, as familiarity leads to preconceptions over what approach will be effective and a
16
17 lack of new ideas.
18
19

20
21 A striking aspect of the research related to the very different perspectives of the
22
23 actors in talking about each other's contribution to the resource integration process and its
24
25 outcomes (RQ3). S-D Logic emphasises the need for value to be understood from the
26
27 perspective of all the stakeholders because value is perceived differently by the actors
28
29 involved (Frow and Payne, 2011; Kowalkowski, 2011). One contribution of this study, in
30
31 contrast to other recent studies, is the dyadic approach in getting both client and agency
32
33 interviewees to talk about their own experiences of resource integration in relation to the
34
35 same specific case. Haytko (2004) for example, only interviewed agency account managers.
36
37 She admits this is a limitation in her study, but suggests that interviewing clients was not an
38
39 option because advertising agencies are private and very protective of these relationships.
40
41
42 The current study demonstrates the benefit of approaching clients in the first place and
43
44 getting them to sanction an approach to their agency. Approaching future client/agency
45
46 research in a similar manner may help overcome some of the challenges experienced by
47
48 Haytko and others.
49
50
51

52 53 *7.3 Managerial implications* 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

1
2
3 The S-D Logic approach to co-creation has the potential to influence practice as well
4
5 as theory. In reality, establishing a more open dialogue, as recommended in the existing
6
7 literature, may prove difficult because of the unequal balance of power between agency
8
9 and client, with the client ultimately holding the budget. The workshop feedback from
10
11 practitioners suggested that time spent together is becoming more limited and the
12
13 proliferation of agencies, with the development of digital marketing, is making it more
14
15 difficult to work together effectively and in an integrated manner. The resource integration
16
17 approach might provide a language or discourse that could legitimately be used by agencies
18
19 to talk about the contribution from all sides that is necessary to optimise effectiveness of
20
21 the co-creation process.
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23
24

25
26 The resource integration framework presents a strong case for widespread adoption
27
28 of a formal evaluation of co-creation experiences by all collaborating actors. This is more
29
30 than the client and agency sitting down together to discuss their experience of working
31
32 together. A resource integration framework provides a mechanism for addressing what
33
34 resources are required at different stages and how these can best be provided. This focusses
35
36 the discussion of what is required to a constructive analysis without blaming or criticising
37
38 individuals.
39
40
41

42 It also might be the case that the agency is not able to sit down with the client to
43
44 discuss how to operate more effectively together. In this situation, resource integration still
45
46 provides a framework for agencies to analyse what could be done to improve performance.
47
48 The findings on the development of the actors' operant resources during resource
49
50 integration are highly relevant for understanding how to deal with shortfalls in resource
51
52 inputs when they occur. The research suggested certain areas, such as in evaluating creative
53
54 work, which clients found to be very difficult. The client may be highly proficient in the
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3 technical aspects of running their business, but briefing and judging creative work requires a
4
5 different set of skills. Clients may be unwilling to admit their lack of expertise to the agency,
6
7 because the client thinks it would be a sign of weakness and feel that it may lessen their
8
9 authority. In the follow-up presentations and workshops to the original case studies, the
10
11 authors' asked the participants how often clients were offered any training on evaluating
12
13 creative work and the results suggested that it is very rare for training to be offered. Taking
14
15 a lead on this this may be a way forward for agencies and in positioning this with clients. The
16
17 language of co-creation may prove a useful starting point.
18
19

20 21 **8.0 Conclusions**

22
23 This exploratory study has utilised theoretical ideas from S-D Logic as a lens to
24
25 analyse resource integration in the specific context of clients and their marketing agencies.
26
27 As such, the intended contribution is two-fold. The first contribution responds to calls for
28
29 empirical studies based on the theoretical ideas of S-D Logic. Specifically, the research
30
31 explored the key operant resources in the context (RQ1); the development of resources in
32
33 resource integration (RQ2) and the perceptions of those involved in resource integration
34
35 (RQ3).
36
37

38
39 The findings provide some new perspectives on the development of operant
40
41 resources in the course of co-creation. In particular, the idea of resource development and
42
43 enhancement, taking place in the process of resource integration and the potential
44
45 importance of this process to maintaining effective co-creation is a fertile area for empirical
46
47 research in other contexts. The application of theory from S-D Logic to analysis in context
48
49 also raised philosophical questions for the authors about the most appropriate research
50
51 approach to utilise in this field. As previously mentioned, Axiom 4 strongly directs the
52
53 researcher towards research that investigates the multiple subjective perspectives of the
54
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1
2
3 participants. Therefore we would assert that participant subjectivity needs to be built in to
4
5 empirical research on S-D Logic. However, we agree with Peters *et al.* (2014) that both
6
7 subjective and objective approaches have a role to play. Particularly, in using objective
8
9 approaches, as a form of triangulation, to provide separate data to complement the
10
11 subjective views of the participants. For example, in this study the subjective reports of
12
13 resource enhancement might have been complemented by more objective assessment of
14
15 individual capabilities over time. In this regard participant observation, in longitudinal
16
17 studies, might be a useful approach alongside depth interviews with the actors.
18
19
20

21 The second contribution is to demonstrate how the ideas and language of S-D Logic
22
23 can be used to bring new insights to a complex B2B relationship, in this case that of
24
25 marketing agencies and their clients. The intention is to complement rather than replace the
26
27 dominant approach of applying relationship marketing theory to the study of agencies and
28
29 clients. In line with the emphasis in S-D Logic on the phenomenological nature of value
30
31 perception, the research involved interviewing both clients and agency executives to get
32
33 their separate perspectives on their common case. Dyadic research is rare in this context.
34
35 This exploratory study shows that the resources contributed by the actors vary and are not
36
37 static, but can change and develop over time. There is much to learn about what agency and
38
39 client actors contribute, in different circumstances and what level and type of resource
40
41 contribution is effective at different stages to maximise the effectiveness of the creative
42
43 process. In B2B more generally, co-creation of value between actors, often in wide networks
44
45 of relationships is fundamental. Building trusting relationships and working effectively
46
47 together requires resource integration and yet this aspect is not stressed in relationship
48
49 marketing theory. One of the contributions of this article is to demonstrate how resource
50
51 integration and the idea of resource enhancement can help build effective working
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1
2
3 relationships. Incorporating resource integration into relationship marketing theory has the
4
5 potential to bring the fields of S-D Logic and relationship marketing closer together.
6

7 Vargo and Lusch's (2008b) view on relationship marketing (RM) is that its
8
9 establishment was a response to the limitations of the Goods-Dominant Logic. They argue
10
11 that S-D Logic, in providing a general theory of marketing, enhances and encompasses
12
13 elements of RM (Vargo and Lusch 2008a). A number of RM academics have written on S-D
14
15 Logic (Gronroos, 2011; Ford 2011; Ford and Mouzas; 2013; Skjølsvik, 2017) and ideas from
16
17 RM have influenced the development of S-D Logic. For example, the change from an
18
19 emphasis on co-creation between customers and suppliers to co-creation between generic
20
21 actors was influenced by inputs from B2B RM academics (Vargo and Lusch, 2011; Vargo and
22
23 Lusch, 2016). Thus, the connections between S-D Logic and RM are important in the
24
25 development of theory. Moreover, Madhavarani, Granot and Badrinarayanan (2014) call
26
27 specifically for more research into operant resources and their contribution to RM.
28
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32 The importance of building trust is well established in B2B relationships (Morgan and
33
34 Hunt, 1994) and particularly in the relationship between client and agency (Caceres and
35
36 Paparoidamis 2007; Duhan and Sandvik 2009). The present research suggests that the
37
38 development of operant resources during resource integration is an important element in
39
40 the trust building process. As described in the Findings section, during resource integration,
41
42 the actors can develop their competences through building relevant knowledge and
43
44 correcting resource shortfalls. In the client/agency context, it is particularly incumbent on
45
46 the agency to correct shortfalls, given their dependence on the client as budget holder. The
47
48 connection between the development of operant resources and building of trust provides a
49
50 potential area for more research connecting S-D Logic and the RM literature. Specifically,
51
52 the concept of resource development could be a very promising area for understanding why
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1
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3 some B2B relationships are more effective than others. Conversely, it would be useful to
4
5 understand how relationship factors, such as trust and openness lead to effective operant
6
7 resource development.
8

9
10 The dynamic of the agency/ client working relationship is a challenging one for both
11
12 parties. Yet it is highly important to the marketing management role. The role of universities
13
14 and professional training bodies is significant in respect to developing marketing theory that
15
16 is relevant and can inform teaching that influences practice. Curricula for undergraduates
17
18 and postgraduates in vocational subject areas, such as business and marketing and design
19
20 and creativity, should include an element on agency/client co-creation to prepare the
21
22 managers of tomorrow for the challenges of working together. S-D Logic provides a
23
24 perspective on co-creation of value and resource integration that could usefully be adopted
25
26 in teaching and ultimately in practice, by thoughtful marketing managers and agency
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28 executives.
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32 **9.0 References**

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Tables

Table 1 Clients and agencies in the cases

Case	Client characteristics (T/O in GBP)	Agency characteristics	Relationship duration	Client contact	Agency: Client services contact	Agency: Creative services contact
1	Beverages wholesaler, T/O £700m	In-house agency, 11 people	N/A	Marketing manager, 7 years' experience, 7 years in current role	Head of studio, 12 years' experience, 2 years in current role	Senior creative, 12 years' experience, 3 years in current role
2	Alcoholic beverages company, T/O £400m	Founded 2003, 15 people.	10 years and on-going	Brand manager, 13 years' experience, 3 years in current role	Managing director, 30 years' experience, 10 years in current role	Creative director, 17 years' experience, 10 years in current role
3	Food manufacturer, T/O £800m	400 people	6 years and on-going	Marketing director, 20 years' experience, 3 years in current role	Account director, 9 years' experience, 5 years in current role	Not permitted to interview a member of the creative team
4	B2B service, T/O £25m	20 people	2 years and on-going (but client contact, worked with the agency in a previous role)	Brand manager, 15 years' experience, 2 years in current role	Account manager, 3 years' experience, 3 years in current role	Middleweight creative, 8 years' experience, 8 years in current role
5	Construction firm, T/O £560m	In house agency, 11 people	N/A	Marketing manager, 20 years' experience, 17 years in current role	Head of studio, 24 years' experience, 21 years in current role	Senior designer, 16 years' experience, 11 years in current role
6	Service firm (business and consumer) T/O £65m	Founded 1991, 25 people	9 years and on-going	Marketing director, 30 years' experience, 9 years in current role	Account manager 8 years' experience, 2 years in current role. Account director, 10 years in current role	Creative director, 15 years' experience, 5 years in current role
7	Same firm as Case 6	Founded 1997, 55 people	18 months and on-going	Same contact as Case 6	Account director.	Creative director, 14 years' experience, 3 years in current role

8	Food manufacturer, T/O £250m	Founded 1994, 18 people	5 years and on-going	Brand manager, 10 years' experience and 10 years in current firm	Account manager, 11 years' experience, 7 years in current role	Creative director, 17 years' experience, 8 years in current role
9	Same firm as Case 8	Founded 2003, 27 people	5 years and on-going	Same contact as Case 8	Managing director	Creative director

Table 2 Topic Guides

<p>Interview Guide – Agency Account Manager and Creative</p> <p>Purpose of research / How data will be used / Confidentiality and anonymity / Permission to record</p> <p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Size of agency - Experience of individual - Number of clients worked with and/or number of design projects worked on - Age of firm-agency relationship - Formal or informal tie - How important is the relationship (dependency?) - Age of individual-individual relationship - Frequency/duration of projects with this firm <p>Then focus on specific, recent project</p> <p>Initiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who identified the design problem/opportunity? - Compiling the brief – help /comments from agency? - Briefing agency – who attended, duration, brainstorming? Agency able to revise the brief? - How much/usefulness background information on brand/market provided by client to agency? <p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequency/duration/type of interaction/communication - With whom? - Where (firm or agency – preference?) - Coordination/Lead role - Sufficient control over the process? - Creative competence of client - Amount/type of modifications requested by client? - Relevance of/justification for modifications/comments - Atmosphere/Conflict (reaction to requests for modifications/time pressures undermining creativity/risk averse versus creativity) - Did you always carry out modifications as requested? <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Client influence on final outcome (e.g. 50:50?) - Evaluation of final outcome (achieved objectives/enjoyable/smooth process) - Could anything have gone better? - Do anything differently next time? <p>Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent do you think client trusts agency/you (hitting deadlines; competent outputs; going the extra mile; adapting normal procedures; honesty when billing; working in client's best interests; similar objectives)

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3	- Friendships? (Strictly work or informal chat and/or socialising outside office hours)
4	- Strength of relationship after project
5	Interview Guide – Client
6	Purpose of research / How data will be used / Confidentiality and anonymity / Permission to record
7	
8	Background
9	- Size of firm
10	- Experience of individual
11	- Number of agencies worked with and/or number of design projects worked on
12	- Describe yourself as creative?
13	- Age of firm-agency relationship
14	- Formal or informal tie
15	- How important is the relationship (dependency?)
16	- Age of individual-agency relationship
17	- Frequency/duration of projects with this agency
18	Then focus on specific, recent project
19	
20	Initiation
21	- Who identified the design problem/opportunity?
22	- Importance of project
23	- Compiling the brief – help /comments from agency?
24	- Briefing agency – who attended, duration, brainstorming?
25	- How much background information on brand/market provided to agency?
26	- How confident that agency can deliver?
27	
28	Process
29	- Frequency/duration/type of interaction/communication
30	- With whom?
31	- Where (firm or agency – why?)
32	- Why? (market knowledge input/customization/efficiency/creative input/enjoyment)
33	- Coordination/Lead role
34	- Sufficient control over the process?
35	- How easy/difficult to make suggestions and request modifications?
36	- Atmosphere/Conflict (reaction to requests for modifications/time pressures undermining creativity/risk
37	averse versus creativity)
38	- Demands on time/emotion
39	
40	Evaluation
41	- Client influence on final outcome (e.g. 50:50?)
42	- Evaluation of final outcome (achieved objectives/enjoyable/smooth process)
43	- Could anything have gone better?
44	- Do anything differently next time?
45	
46	Relationship
47	- Level of trust in agency (hitting deadlines; competent outputs; going the extra mile; adapting their normal
48	procedures; honesty when billing; working in your best interests; similar objectives)
49	- Friendships? (Strictly work or informal chat and/or socialising outside office hours)
50	- Strength of relationship after project
51	- Intention to work together again?
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Table 3 Practitioner workshops and presentations

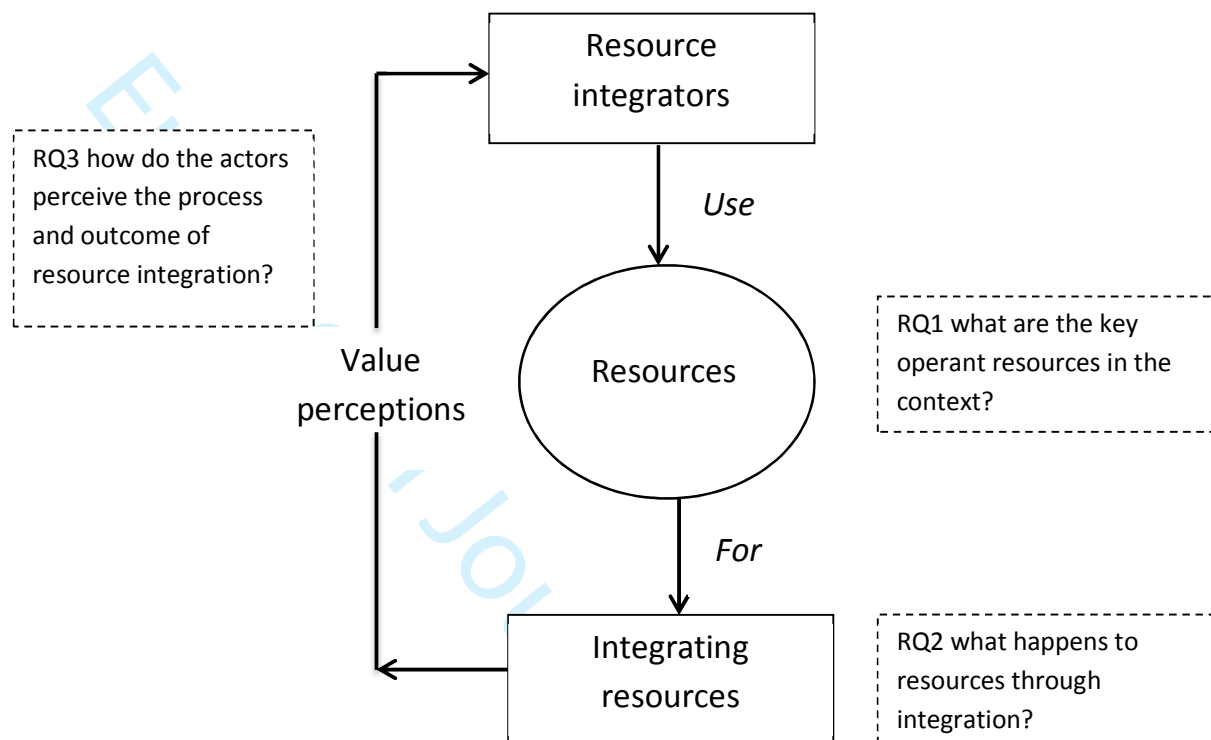
Event	Content	Participants
Workshop 1	Full day workshop including presentation of initial findings, group discussions of findings, feedback from groups and discussion	56 agency practitioners
Workshop 2	Full day workshop including presentation of initial findings, group discussions of findings, feedback from groups and discussion	11 client practitioners
Workshop 3	Half day workshop including presentation of summary of discussion in workshops 1 and 2. Further discussion and plenary session.	36 agency and client practitioners
Eight separate workshops with individual agencies: August – November 2015	Presentation of findings to agency personnel and discussion of implications for the agency and actions that they might take	A total of 108 agency practitioners

Table 4 Operant Resources in client/agency co-creation

Operant resources	Explanation
Knowledge of client organisation and sector	-Understanding the way the organisation operates, its products, distribution, profitability, commercial operations. -Understanding of the organisational structure, decision-making and constraints -Knowledge of competitors, collaborators and operation of the markets in which the organisation operates
Knowledge of the brand	-Values -Positioning -Constraints -Guidelines
Knowledge of customers	-Understanding of different customer groups -Understanding of customers' needs and benefits of product/service in use
Creativity	-Generation of creative ideas -Knowledge of what will work effectively in practice -Ability to evaluate creative ideas -Planning and research capacity
Decision- making	-Ability and scope to sanction and approve at different stages
Technical implementation knowledge	-Ability to execute effectively -Distribution -Training

Figures

Figure 1: Resource integration framework



Source: Adapted from Kleinaltenkamp *et al.* (2012)

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Figure 2 Resource integrating: Operant resources

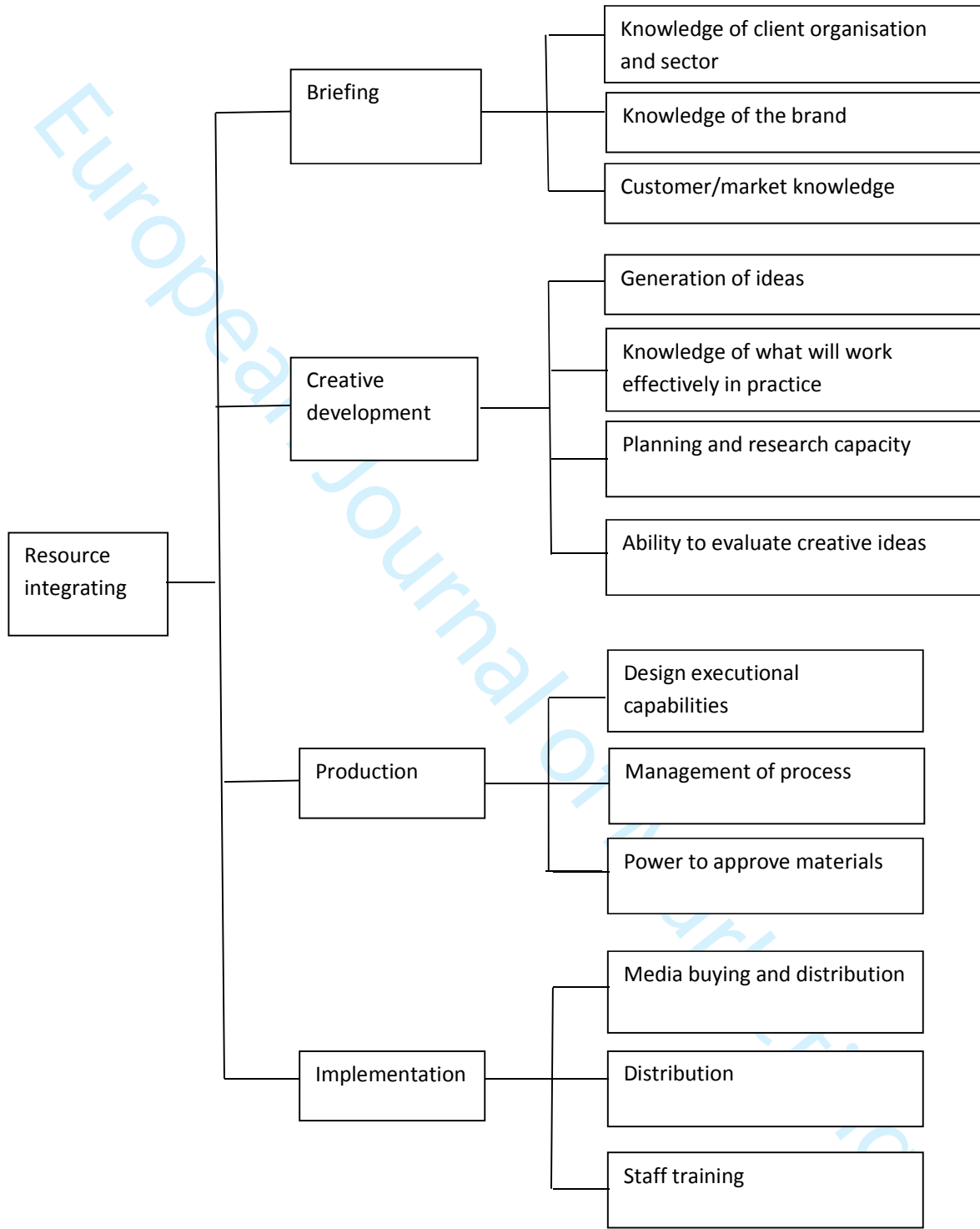
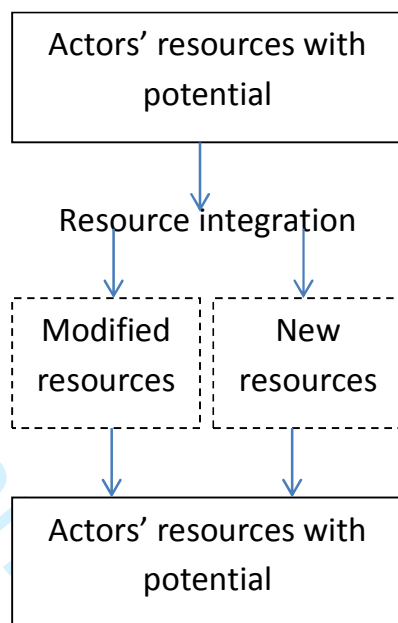


Figure 3 Resource development



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