

# Characterizing the spaces of consumer value experience in value co-creation and value co-destruction

Consumer  
value  
experience

105

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper aims to explore how unreflective and reflective value experience emerges in value co-creation and co-destruction practices in a consumer context.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper presents a Heideggerian phenomenological heuristic consisting of three interrelated modes of engagement, which is used for interpretive sense-making in a dynamic and lively case context of amateur-level football (soccer) played on artificial grass. Based on a qualitative study using ethnographic techniques, this study examines the whats and the hows of value experience by individuals playing football at different qualities and in varying conditions across 25 Dutch football teams.

**Findings** – The findings reveal three interrelated yet distinct modalities of experience in value co-creation and co-destruction presented in a continuum of triplex spaces of unreflective and reflective value experience. The first is a joyful flow of unreflective value experience in emergent and undisrupted value co-creation practice with no potential for value co-destruction. Second, a semireflective value experience caused by interruptions in value co-creation has a higher potential for value co-destruction. Third, a fully reflective value experience through a completely interrupted value co-creation practice results in high-value co-destruction.

**Research limitations/implications** – This research contributes to the literature on the microfoundations of value experience and value creation by proposing a conceptual relationship between unreflective/reflective value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction mediated through interruptions in consumer usage situations.

**Practical implications** – This study's novel perspective on this relationship offers practitioners a useful vantage point on understanding how enhanced value experience comes about in value co-creation practice and how this is linked to value co-destruction when interruptions occur. These insights help bolster alignment and prevent misalignment in resource integration and foster service strategies, designs and innovations to better influence consumer experience in journeys.

**Originality/value** – This study deploys an integral view of how consumer value experience manifests in value co-creation and co-destruction that offers conceptual, methodological and practical clarity.

**Keywords** Unreflective/reflective value experience, Value co-creation, Value co-destruction, Interruptions in practice, Football

**Paper type** Research paper



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## Introduction

The consumer value experience and the co-creation of value have become fundamental premises in marketing practice and theory (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020). Consequently, service providers are eager to understand how consumers experience and co-create value based on their offerings in and beyond usage situations, that is, during the consumer journey (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Hamilton and Price, 2019). Nevertheless, unintended negative experiences can result in value co-destruction, a concept that is receiving increasing attention (Echeverri and Skålén, 2021; Keeling *et al.*, 2021). Hence, the understanding of consumer experiences within value co-creation and co-destruction practice has become increasingly critical for facilitating alignment and preventing misalignment throughout the consumer journey (Laud *et al.*, 2019; Smith, 2013; Echeverri and Skålén, 2021). It is against this background that this article deploys an integral view of how consumer value experience manifests in value co-creation and co-destruction practice.

Studying value experience in value co-creation implies viewing consumers as both creators and experiencers of value rather than as mere perceivers of value (Gummerus, 2013). Value experience can be understood as the beneficiary's phenomenological determination of value (Frow and Payne, 2007; Vargo and Lusch, 2016) during resource integration in value co-creation practices (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020; Schembri, 2006; Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Schembri and Sandberg, 2002). The dynamic value experience can be individually and collectively lived in the past, present and future and can be unreflectively and reflectively lived across space and time (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a; Yakhlef, 2015; Ellway and Dean, 2016). Finding its origins in phenomenology (Gallagher and Zahavi, 2012; Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1970), subsequent empirical research reveals that reflective value experience appears in an objectified manner, making consumers aware of their value experience in a thematic way. In contrast, unreflective value experience is nonobjectifying and precisely given in a first-person subjective fashion, meaning that consumers are unaware of the value received as it remains implicit in their attempt of attaining goals. Value co-creation suggests that subjects, which always includes the beneficiary, are interactionally engaged in a constellation of "goal-oriented" practices during resource integration to achieve valuable outcomes that ultimately leave them better off (Becker *et al.*, 2020; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). In the dialectical relationship with the co-creation of value (Keeling *et al.*, 2021; Rahman *et al.*, 2019), value co-destruction captures the diminishment of value within these processes and thus is referred to as the unsuccessful resource integration by actors with the risk of diminishing the value experience (Echeverri and Skålén, 2021; Plé and Chumpitaz Cáceres, 2010).

To date, studies have focused on either value experience or value co-creation but have rarely investigate how they are conceptually or empirically linked (Gummerus, 2013), let alone taking an integral view on how value experience is linked to value co-creation or co-destruction. Exploring these linkages is important in helping service providers better understand consumer behavior (Lanier and Hampton, 2009) and manage the consumer value experience and its creation in consumer journeys in desirable ways (Homburg *et al.*, 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Moreover, an understanding of how consumers co-create and sometimes co-destruct value offers a new vantage point for creating a resonating focus in resource integration to accommodate value co-creation; prevent misalignment with the associated risk of value co-destruction (Laud *et al.*, 2019; Echeverri and Skålén, 2021; Pera *et al.*, 2016) and develop fitting strategies for marketing (Brakus *et al.*, 2009), service delivery and innovative beneficiary-centric offerings (Heinonen *et al.*, 2013; Becker *et al.*, 2020). Accordingly, this study aims to conceptualize and empirically investigate how (un)reflective

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value experience shapes and is shaped by value co-creation and co-destruction by consumer involvement in practice.

We draw on a case study of 25 Dutch amateur football teams playing football on artificial grass to examine the dynamic, multiactor and lively nature of value experience in the co-creation as well as co-destruction practices that characterize football on such pitches. Football is typified by its comradeship, dynamics and high levels of competition and emotional dedication, both on and off the pitch, among individual players and teams. Especially in the densely populated The Netherlands, artificial pitches can provide high play capacity and ensure smooth cross-seasonal play. Simultaneously, artificial pitches are criticized for the assumed hazardous effects of pitch rubber particles on the human health and the environment (Environment and Human Health, 2017), which have been amplified by the press (Zembla, 2016, 2017a, b) and have received attention in national and international parliamentary debates. Concurrently, artificial grass is continuously evolving by incorporating sustainable recycled materials that also enhance the playing experience. Despite the many controversies surrounding artificial grass, this study zeros in on the individual players and the teams who are the ultimate consumers as they perform on different artificial pitches of varying quality. In this qualitative case study, ethnographic data collection techniques (Van Maanen, 2011; Visconti, 2010; Pink and Morgan, 2013) were used over an intensive research period of three months to reach saturation and our 12-year experience with high-level amateur football provided prior knowledge of the field. In the obtrusive and nonobtrusive data collection procedures, we focused primarily on the football players' "lived experience" [i.e. experience-as-we-live-through-it in our actions, relations and situations (Van Manen, 2007, 2016b, p. 16)] on the artificial grass on which they were playing and creating value.

Inspired by phenomenology, we turned to the work of Martin Heidegger (1962) and interpreters of his work, such as Dreyfus (1991), Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011); and Nicolini (2009), for guidance. The Heideggerian tradition distinguishes three different modes of engagement in everyday practices: ready-to-hand, unready-to-hand and present-at-hand (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 1962). So-called minor or major "practice breakdowns" (or interruptions, as we label them in our study) act as a generative mechanism that mediates how one is engaged, what one encounters and how one copes with the situation (Dreyfus, 1991). This work is useful in our research for several reasons. First, it foregrounds the often unspoken and unnoticeable (Nicolini, 2009) practice and experience of everyday life. Second, it provides theoretical support for how consumers are engaged with "basic objects" as equipment ("Zeug") in terms of their use and availability in accomplishing tasks generated by their interests (Moran, 2002) and helps to comprehend what and how consumers experience in day-to-day activities (Cerbone, 2008). As a common practice (Wilson, 2012, 2018), we have matched the philosophical work of Heidegger with our research quest in marketing and thereby propose a theoretical phenomenological heuristic of three modalities through which we empirically examine how unreflective/reflective value experience shapes and is shaped by value co-creation and co-destruction in practice. We posed our findings into a model of spaces of value experience in co-creation and co-destruction. This model illustrates how each of the three modes of value experience reveals another form through some type of interruption in usage practices in value co-creation and co-destruction practices.

This study contributes in multiple ways to the microfoundations of value experience in co-creation and co-destruction (Hartwig *et al.*, 2021; Storbacka *et al.*, 2016). The three modes consisting of minor and major interruptions as causal mechanisms, render a granular view of how individual/collective and unreflective/reflective value experience (Ellway and Dean, 2016;

Helkkula and Kelleher, 2010; Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a; Jaakkola *et al.*, 2015) and consumers' practices (Becker *et al.*, 2020) are manifested in the continuum of value co-creation and co-destruction (Keeling *et al.*, 2018; Laud *et al.*, 2019). As degrees of interruptions in value creation practices are an inescapable fact of consumers' lives, they thus pose an opportunity to disclose exactly what and how consumers exactly value in products or service(s) on this continuum. Furthermore, we offer rich empirical support for understanding the circular role of temporality (Helkkula and Kelleher, 2010; Payne *et al.*, 2008) and agential materiality (Barad, 2003) in the accumulation of value experience. Moreover, we find that the standing assumption that value co-creation is only about enhancing consumer experience in practice (Cambra-Fierro *et al.*, 2018), with goods as transmitters of value (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), is myopic and risky because goods are often silently available and can be taken for granted in value co-creation practice. Finally, the space model (Figure 2) can be used as a novel tool for practitioners in understanding, examining and managing the value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction practices in consumer journeys (Bruns and Jacob, 2014; Gummerus, 2013; Jain *et al.*, 2017).

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. We commence to discuss the core literature on value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction. Next, we offer a comprehensive phenomenological conceptualization of experience in the creation and destruction of value, leading to the Heideggerian heuristic. We then discuss the scene for this study followed by the Methodology section, which details our research design and techniques for data collection and analysis. The next section describes our findings and reflects on the merits of our initial conceptualization. The discussion section outlines the contributions to theory development and practice and we conclude by discussing limitations and opportunities for future research.

## **Experience, co-creation and co-destruction of value**

### *Consumer value experience*

In the modern marketing literature, there is a consensus that consumers are both interpreters of and contributors to their own value determination rather than only perceivers or assessors of value alone (Gummerus, 2013). Given this subjective and action-oriented nature, value is idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual and meaning-laden and is always phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary in value co-creation processes (Vargo and Lusch, 2008, 2004), amounting to what is known as value-in-use (Macdonald *et al.*, 2016; Macdonald *et al.*, 2011; Sandström *et al.*, 2008). Taking the phenomenological determination of the value experience seriously implies a reliance on a subjectivist, ontological understanding of consumer value as grounded in the individual or collective "lived experiences" of consumers in their own contexts (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a; Schembri and Sandberg, 2002; Heinonen *et al.*, 2013). Consumers as subjects are inseparable from services as objects (Schembri, 2006); thus, all individuals are subjects undergoing experiences in social experience networks.

On this basis, various scholars have promoted the idea of examining the "lived experience" of service quality and value (Schembri and Sandberg, 2002; Tumbat, 2011) or characterizing value in the experience (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a). Value can be individually and collectively experienced and is laden by the past, based on the idea that experiences do not occur in isolation but rather through the accumulation of its historical experience, which generates affective "horizons of understanding" (Moran, 2002; Gadamer, 1982). However, value must be shaped by the present and can even be imagined by consumers apart from their involvement in value practices (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a; Heinonen *et al.*, 2013). Value experiences also occur between and beyond touchpoints in the consumer journey (Grönroos, 2017) and thus are not always in the control of the service provider. Yakhlef

(2015) reminds us that value experience is not only a mental experience, as the body is an intrinsic part of the experience of value usage environments in the spaces in which value co-creation occurs. The body (including the mind) connects the social and material realms, which reconfigure each other. Thus, experience is a synthesis of the physical and spatial features of the environment and the subject's bodily, perceptual capacities that coalesce in the habitus (Yakhlef, 2015). This basically implies that experience is a prereflective phenomenon constructed through everyday habitual practices through which subjects experience the world instead of being in a disembodied "social vacuum," which would pertain to a theory of the bodiless mind (Gallagher, 2006). While these studies have highlighted the importance of context and usage practice in the determination of value, it is still not clear how the experience of value manifests in the consumer's engagement in value co-creation let alone value co-destruction practices.

#### *Consumer value co-creation and co-destruction*

While value *determination* refers to how consumers experience value, value creation concentrates on what consumers do with products or services to extract value from them (Gummerus, 2013; Heinonen *et al.*, 2010; Payne *et al.*, 2008). Value co-creation encompasses consumers' physical, mental or possessive activities, practices and experiences in a multiactor context (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). In a less deliberate way, value can also emerge more organically based on use, including through mental and physical experiences (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). The difference between the experience and the creation of value is that the former is considered "an act of the mind" in which value appears to a consumer, whereas the latter refers to the process, including the activities and interactions that form that value. In this regard, some scholars consider value co-creation as a collective, goal-oriented process aimed at producing valuable outcomes, without attention to the process of immersion in recurring practices, so that subjects become better off than before (Gummerus, 2013; Payne *et al.*, 2008; Becker, 2020), whereas others refer to value practices to indicate the often implicit and routinized actions involved in value co-creation (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b; Holttinen, 2010; Korkman, 2006). However, value co-creation processes are not always flawless and can be fragile and dynamic to the point that when a situation becomes unpleasant, value co-destruction is the result. Value is destroyed when subjects' well-being deteriorates, leaving them worse off (Cabiddu *et al.*, 2019). Although value co-creation and co-destruction might seem to be two different concepts, scholars emphasize that they are dialectically related to each other (Echeverri and Skälén, 2021; Rahman *et al.*, 2019; Luyen *et al.*, 2021). Different manifestations of value co-destruction exist that can occur either more accidentally or more deliberately. Actors can, for example, experience a lack of resources, not have access to them during value co-creation practices or simply not have the capability to participate in these practices (Laud *et al.*, 2019). Such manifestations affect consumers' well-being in different ways. For instance, a consumer might experience anger, anxiety, apathy, deception, dependence and lack of control (Laud *et al.*, 2019; Smith, 2013). These contributions are important to enhance our understanding of how consumers contribute, more or less successfully, to value co-creation, yielding positive experiences, or essentially destroy value, yielding negative experiences. However, they leave unexplored how value is experienced whenever it is co-created and co-destroyed.

#### *Linkages between consumer value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction*

Despite referring to these linkages, the key argument of this paper is that the relationship between value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction has rarely been

examined in detail. The literature indicates that there is a relationship between the experience and co-creation of value. For instance, [Helkkula et al. \(2012b, p. 563\)](#) stressed that these concepts are not viewed as completely separate: “Our sense making in relation to value experiences from a phenomenological perspective cannot (and should not) be divorced from the experience of value-creation practice itself.” Building on [Bourdieu’s \(1990\)](#) recursive triad of practice, habitus and field, [Ellway and Dean \(2016\)](#) noted that value experience and practice are not only inextricably linked but also mutually constitutive and thus shape each other. While habitus reflects an unreflective experience, reflective experience is considered instrumental “based upon attitudes, interests and dispositions to engage in certain practices” ([Ellway and Dean, 2016, p. 318](#)). Hence, in this view, practice involves both a habitual (unreflective) mode of engagement by consumers and a reflective mode that is more instrumental, as consumers reflect on their experience of existing practices. The instrumental mode may even lead to novel insights and change because value is reflectively experienced and assessed by consumers. These few contributions are important in showing that value experience and value co-creation are inextricably related and mutually constitutive.

However, while an immanent dialectic relationship between value co-creation and co-destruction ([Echeverri and Skälén, 2021](#); [Keeling et al., 2021](#); [Rahman et al., 2019](#)) is assumed, we know little about the link between value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction practices. Specifically: How do they mutually shape each other? When and why is value experience unreflective and reflective? What mechanisms alter the different types of experience in value co-creation and co-destruction practices? These questions remain unanswered by the few studies that have surfaced the linkages between value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction and provide the basis for the investigation in this article.

### **Toward a Heideggerian phenomenological heuristic for understanding consumer value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction**

#### *Experience in phenomenology*

Our approach is rooted in phenomenology, which is the study of essences ([Merleau-Ponty, 1962](#)) through the close examination of “lived experience,” that is, the experience-as-we-live-through-it ([Van Manen, 2016a](#)). We are intrigued by the work of phenomenologists, as they are passionate about creating a detailed understanding and characterization of the primordial, immediate and first-person givenness of experience ([Gallagher and Zahavi, 2021](#)). Furthermore, phenomenologists are deeply interested in the problem of prereflective experience in relation to reflective experience ([Cai, 2013](#)).

In basic terms, reflection is the faculty of turning to oneself and examining one’s own mental states or acts ([Cai, 2013](#)). The twofold distinction between the primordial prereflective experience and reflective experience (also referred to as prereflective consciousness and reflective consciousness) can be theorized as follows: when prereflective, experience is given, not as an object but precisely as subjective experience ([Gallagher and Zahavi, 2012, p. 60](#)). Hence, a subject’s intentional experience is lived through with a minimal prereflective self-consciousness, but it does not appear to the subject in an objectified manner; it is neither seen nor heard nor thought about ([Gallagher and Zahavi, 2012, p. 60](#); [Husserl, 1984, p. 399](#); [Sartre, 1957, pp. 44–45](#)). In essence, experience is at the foundational level, primitive and not reflected upon ([Cai, 2013](#)). When reflective, experience appears as self-consciousness, brings the primary intentional experience into focus as an object and becomes thematic and articulated ([Gallagher and Zahavi, 2012, p. 70](#); [Cai, 2013](#)). Thus, the experience that comes into reflection becomes accentuated. Hence, reflection suggests,

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discloses, disentangles, explicates and articulates all those components and structures that were contained implicitly in the lived – unreflective – experience (Gallagher and Zahavi, 2012; Husserl, 1970, 1984).

### *Heidegger's modes of engagement in practice*

To understand the differences between unreflective and reflective experience and how they manifest and change in practice, we find special support for the works of Martin Heidegger and management scholars who have made his work accessible for organization studies (Chia and Holt, 2006; Sandberg and Dall'Alba, 2009; Dreyfus, 1991; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). This research is useful in exploring how the prereflective and reflective experience manifests in engagement in practice mediated by practice breakdowns as a key mechanism that alters the way value is experienced. As used in marketing and this study's terminology, unreflective and reflective value are demonstrated in value co-creation and co-destruction practices mediated by interruptions in such practices. We distance ourselves from any logocentric rationality and follow the Heideggerian nondualistic, intersubjective tradition in which experience derives from our engagement with the world through everyday practices rather than emerging in a social vacuum.

Heidegger distinguished three different modes of engagement in everyday practices, namely, ready-to-hand, un-ready-to-hand and present-at-hand (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 1962). The primary mode, referred to as ready-to-hand, is rooted in everyday engagement with things and others in the various sociomaterial practices that constitute social life (Heidegger, 1962). This implies that experience and meaning derive from being immersed in such practices and the means and ends are already intelligible to those involved, or "entwined," in those practices (Dreyfus, 1991; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). This understanding departs from the notion of entwinement as the fundamental mode of existence: "For something to be, it needs to show up as something – namely, as part of a meaningful relational totality with other beings" (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011, p. 343). Instead of being seen as thinking subjects, humans are "doing subjects" who skillfully get along with others and things (i.e. equipment, appliances and technology) in a meaningful and purposive way (Chia and Holt, 2006; Dreyfus, 1991). In this action-oriented view, the functionality of "things" renders meaning and experience (Heidegger, 1962). This idea is based on the phenomenological concept of "intentionality," which basically means that we always do, think or feel "toward" or "with" things in the world (Cerbone, 2008; Heidegger, 1962; Legrand, 2007; Van Manen, 2016a). Consumers achieve meaning through a continuous process of prefiguring, configuring and refiguring (Ricoeur, 1988).

This idea also accounts for sociomaterial practices that are teleologically structured, with the aim of attaining certain ends (Schatzki, 2005, 2002). Ready-to-hand implies that there is an unquestioned and logical coherence between the means and the ends of any given practice (Chia and Holt, 2006). Consequently, the use of things and getting along with others in the practices aimed at attaining the ends do not require deliberate thought or reflection. They involve routinized behaviors and relevant mental activities and processes that can be characterized as unreflective (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a; Reckwitz, 2002), meaning that goals are realized without the need for reflective awareness. In more extreme terms, "actors are immersed in practice without being aware of their involvement in it: they spontaneously respond to the developing situations at hand" (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011, p. 344).

There are two elaborated modes of engagement (mild and total breakdowns) in which otherwise everyday engagement in practice is revealed, constituting a more deliberate form of reflection and thought. This revelation occurs when ongoing practice breaks down for some reason (Heidegger, 1962). Examples include malfunctioning equipment, a missing

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part or obstruction (Chia and Holt, 2006) as well as nonobvious situations or even surprises (Yanow and Tsoukas, 2009). Regardless, the logical flow of a practice is interrupted, causing actors to deliberately interpret the situation at hand, which requires reflective experience.

There are two distinct types of breakdown: mild and total. Mild breakdowns are labeled un-ready-to-hand situations (Heidegger, 1962). In such cases, humans still want to “get going again” (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 84), for instance, through finding a solution or by improvisation. What previously was unreflectively appreciated is now reflectively experienced as a “thing” that somehow blocks or hampers the attainment of goals. The character of the experience is nonetheless context-dependent because the actors are still oriented toward attaining the goals of the practice. Dreyfus (1991, p. 155), using Heidegger’s favorite example of a carpenter, explicated this situation as follows:

When a hammer is so heavy that the carpenter cannot use it, it is then experienced as too heavy. But since being-too-heavy is context-dependent, it still presupposes the equipment nature of hammers.

The total breakdown differs substantially from a mild breakdown. It causes humans to become completely detached from practice (Dreyfus, 1991; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). In contrast to the temporary un-ready-to-hand situation, this type of breakdown has a more permanent character, as the situation appears present-at-hand and continuation of the practice is no longer desired or tenable. Total breakdowns involve reflective experience but must be viewed as context-independent, in contrast to mild breakdowns. As the impact of the breakdown is severe, the person can no longer make sense of the situation. As Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011, p. 345) remarked, “we bracket our immediate practical concerns, either being too paralyzed to act (e.g. panicking) or aiming to determine the abstract properties of the situation at hand.” To use Heidegger’s phrasing again:

All that is left in experience is a mere something – ‘just occurrent and no more’ (Heidegger, 1962, p. 103) – whose properties are not connected to its function in any intelligible way and are thus beyond understanding (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 155).

It remains important to reiterate that all meaning, experience or knowledge derives from the routinized, unreflective, yet purpose-oriented behavior that constitutes the entwinement logic of practice (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011).

*Application to the consumer value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction practice*  
What would Heidegger’s notion of experience in practice mean for understanding consumer value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction practice? The basic *modus operandi* is that consumers do not reflectively experience value in value co-creation practice as long as the practice is not disturbed. The value is still appreciated as a minimal sense of embodied valuing or enjoying, but is not reflected upon and the practice in value co-creation can be characterized as a flow geared toward realizing valuable outcomes. Breakdowns, or interruptions as we label them, as an alternative to the severe semantic connotation of breakdown, act as mechanisms that alter value experience.

Value experience becomes reflective when interruptions occur during value co-creation practice and cause value co-destruction. These interruptions may occur in value co-creation practice, for instance, when a service or product malfunctions but can also be caused by an outside event or force, that negatively influences value co-creation practice (for example, the loss of grid power while drilling). This causes consumers to reflect on the interrupting features and urges them to do something about them. While still interested in realizing



valuable outcomes, consumers act deliberately to try to restore the situation and return to the flow again. These interruptions are considered minor, as consumers believe that they can overcome them and return to an acceptable situation while remaining prone to value co-destruction.

The consumer experience will be fully reflective if the value co-creation practice is completely disturbed by something that is malfunctioning or broken within a practice or by an external event affecting that practice. A major interruption forces consumers to cease their practice and direct their attention to the features of a product or service and the context of use, which obstructs value co-creation and foregrounds co-destruction. When restoration is no longer possible, consumers become detached from value co-creation practice and consequently, co-destroy value.

The value experience thus ranges from unreflective, in which consumers appreciate products and services with no need to reflect on their features and the context of use, to a fully reflective experience, in which consumers identify and spell out those features. We label these differences in each space of value experience space as depicted in [Figure 2](#). Equipped with this threefold structure of value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction, we now continue with a case study of football players who experience the value of artificial grass of differing quality under different circumstances. For the reasons explained, this case will be used as an illustration to enhance our understanding of the linkages between value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction in greater detail.

### **Dutch scene of amateur football on artificial grass**

Football is generally considered a dynamic, highly competitive and emotional sport. Its vivacity and liveliness through affective engagement make it a fruitful and unique arena for observing different instances of value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction. In The Netherlands, artificial pitches have become increasingly popular, especially among amateur football clubs; they require little maintenance and are robust enough for use throughout the year, including the winter season. According to the sports and health literature, artificial pitches offer both advantages (for instance, the evenness and conservation of the pitch) and disadvantages (for example, skin abrasions or muscle strains) ([Burillo et al., 2014](#); [Twomey et al., 2019](#)). Although largely considered an attractive alternative to natural grass pitches, artificial pitches have recently been criticized by experts in the press ([Fritschy, 2019](#); [Zembla, 2017b, 2017a, 2016](#)) and their status is currently considered controversial. In [Zembla \(2017b\)](#), a Dutch television report that covers controversial topics through in-depth research, an expert stated: “[. . .] I wouldn’t play on these fields because we cannot make a proper assessment of the risks.” The critics pointed toward the assumed hazardous effects of rubber particles on the pitch on human health and the environment ([Zembla, 2016, 2017a, 2017b](#)), which triggered debates in the Dutch parliament and received attention from politicians at the European level. Furthermore, there is a perception that artificial grass increases injuries, although this has not been proven by evidence ([Ekstrand et al., 2011](#); [Lanzetti et al., 2017](#); [van Ours, 2019](#)). Simultaneously, artificial grass pitches are continuously evolving. For instance, controversial rubber particles are increasingly being replaced by sustainable and environmentally friendly materials, such as cork, to safeguard the absorption of excess water and provide cushioning ([Zembla, 2016](#)). Despite this debate over artificial grass, it is still widely used by amateur football clubs in The Netherlands and probably worldwide. Most, if not all, football players have experience playing on artificial grass of different qualities in varying conditions. Hence, the Dutch scene of amateur football on artificial grass provides us with sufficient differentiation of experience throughout dynamic practice.

## Methodology

### *Research design*

In line with the interpretivist worldview (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2020) adopted in this article, we conducted an in-depth qualitative study in which we resorted to ethnographic techniques to come as close as possible to the lived experience of those we studied in their context (Herbert, 2000; Van Maanen, 2011; Visconti, 2010). There is a general consensus in the service marketing (Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Norton and Pine, 2013; Goulding, 2005) and consumer research literature (Arnould and Price, 2006; Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994) that ethnographic techniques provide a solid basis for obtaining an in-depth understanding of consumer behavior. Moreover, they can be seen as vehicles for creating depth and meaning (Fetterman, 2019; O'Reilly, 2012). Geertz (1994) reminded us that those who use ethnographic techniques aspire to create so-called thick descriptions that go beyond mere facts and surface appearances to provide a detailed account of the context, including emotions, actions, voices, expressions and interactions among individuals (Denzin, 2001; Ponterotto, 2006).

### *Data collection*

Having 12 years experience in high-level amateur football himself, the first author has substantial experience with the game as well as with playing on artificial grass. Given this experience and knowledge of context and field, it was possible to collect ethnographic data in a noncontinuous and event-driven way (Knoblauch, 2005; Pink and Morgan, 2013). Furthermore, we could easily relate to the football players' experience, context, vocabulary and emotions, which helped us to identify subtleties. Consequently, in a relatively short period of data collection, we obtained an "insider" point of view that helped to turn the strange into the familiar (O'Reilly, 2012). A total of 25 Dutch amateur football teams of various age categories and competition levels served as our sample. Using both field observations and interviews, we intensively studied their experiences with artificial pitches during training sessions and matches over a period of three months. In this period, we continued collecting data until we reached saturation, when no new insights emerged and themes continuously recurred (Schensul *et al.*, 1999). As both authors are native Dutch speakers, communicating with football players was a fluent process. All data were collected, recorded and documented in Dutch, after which they were professionally translated into English.

Our unobtrusive data collection consisted of nonparticipant observations. We observed the teams and individual players during competitive games and training sessions. The photo below exemplifies how nonparticipant observations took place during training sessions. It shows a training session of a high-level amateur football team mimicking competitive match situations on a newly installed and state-of-the-art artificial pitch [Figure 1](#).

The recording of detailed field notes allowed us to take important contextual factors into account. For example, the teams were playing or training in difficult weather conditions such as heavy rain in the evening and low temperatures as well as warmer and sunny days. We purposively took into consideration material aspects such as the condition and quality of the pitches because they varied from old to brand-new. With our football experience, we could readily identify that some pitches contained flat yarns and were outdated, whereas others were new and in very good condition. Such idiosyncrasies provided us with additional dynamics and vibrancy to determine how the players experienced and created value and how this may have varied from case to case. These different circumstances provided us with a unique set of data with which we could observe various practice



**Figure 1.**  
Observing football  
players simulating  
match situations on a  
recently installed  
high-end artificial  
pitch

interruptions resulting from the broader range of conditions in which the players found themselves. In addition, we were able to relate specific happenings on the pitches during the matches and training sessions to practice interruptions and subsequently to experience the value co-creation and value co-destruction practice.

Obtrusive data collection consisted of short and more elaborate open interviews immediately after the games or training sessions and during the breaks. We asked individual players about their experience with reference to specific events and their overall experience of the match or training session. These interviews were helpful in verifying or challenging our earlier observations and uncovering the various modes of the “lived experience” of value of these players in relation to practice during the matches and training sessions. In doing so, we basically followed the strategy of the entwinement logic of practice. This strategy helped us to capture unreflective experiences by using elements of a “life-world interview” (Sandberg, 2000; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011) designed to grasp the players’ meaning structure of their lived experience, which was linked to the material (the football pitch) and the metaphorical horizon of understanding. In our case, this approach entailed documenting and understanding what constitutes a football match or training session and how artificial grass helps players realize the value that they are creating. In this case, we discussed the “practical consciousness” (Giddens, 1979) of the ready-to-hand, which in essence refers to the taken-for-grantedness and knowledgeability of conducting daily practices. Reflective experiences, in contrast, were obtained by asking players after the match or training session about what they experienced when they encountered noticeable interruption situations caused by, for example, the condition of the artificial grass during their practice. Such “discursive consciousness” involves knowledge that actors are able to express in their discourse (Giddens, 1979). We continued our interviews until no new insights emerged (Eisenhardt, 1989; Sandberg, 2000).

#### *Data analysis*

The data were analyzed through an abductive approach (Dubois and Gadde, 2002) that involves systematically combining of multiple resources (Vink and Koskela-Huotari, 2021). Abduction marries well with developing theory that is novel and practical (Nenonen *et al.*, 2017), which is in par with the objectives of this study. We transcribed the interviews

verbatim and structured the observations in fieldnote format (Schensul *et al.*, 1999) to prepare the data analysis process. Supported by the football experience of the first author, we triangulated the field observations and the experiences of players captured during the interviews. In an early stage, we manually reviewed all the data multiple times to create an intimate connection with our empirical information. Next, throughout the iterative data analysis process, we continuously traveled back and forth between the data (consisting of interview transcripts and observations) that represented the empirical world, the developed Heideggerian heuristic and the theory underlying value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction. To ensure rigor, the entire process was conducted constructively, with both researchers manually analyzing the data separately and subsequently discussing and comparing the outcomes in “data sessions” (Knoblauch, 2005).

As a result, we distinguished the players’ emotions, practices, including activities and actions; and materiality. Across these categorizations, we retrieved fine-grained cues from the data that detailed each mode in the heuristic. These cues were helpful in further refining the differences in what the players experienced between unreflective experiences linked to a nonobjectifying sense in the pleasurable continuous flow of value-creating practices and reflective experiences linked to value-destructing practices caused by interruptions. This ultimately brought us to the three spaces of value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction, including their characteristics (Table 1).

### Findings

This section illustrates the three modalities in which the players’ value experience manifests in the value co-creation and co-destruction practice. We provide a detailed description of each link supported by illustrative quotations and our own observations and interpretations. Then, we further characterize our findings. The modes are entitled “present-to-play,” “presenting-to-prevent play” and “presenting-as-preventing play” in an application of the Heideggerian labels to our consumer context.

#### *Mode 1: the pitch as present-to-play in an unreflective value experience in spontaneous value co-creation silencing value co-destruction*

We observed how the football players unreflectively experienced the artificial grass in several situations where value co-creation relegated value co-destruction to the background. These players have a general desire to play football and complete an orderly match. They perceive feelings of joy when they can demonstrate skills and competencies with passion and play exciting football with their team to obtain a higher rank in their league. Our observations during training sessions suggested that there was an individual and collective drive for performance and competition that was less noticeable. We noted that individual players’ ambition to perform well and improve their game was reciprocally connected to the collective ambition to do so. For example, during a match, we witnessed that an individual player who had just carried out a valuable and impressive dribbling toward scoring a goal galvanizing the entire team and lifting the team spirit and collective drive, which demonstrated the interrelation between the individual and collective value experience and value co-creation practice. In any case, sophistication, control and passion for football go hand in hand with performance, as reflected in a sportsman’s mentality. These values must be considered ends in themselves and contribute jointly to the players’ ultimate goals: winning a match and enjoying football. Artificial grass seems to accommodate players in their activities to achieve these goals. Players conduct actions as instantiated in practice routines directed at achieving a goal, such as dribbling, turning or passing on artificial grass, to win a match (fulfilling a generic activity) and therefore seemingly create value

Modes in the heuristic	Emotions	Practices including activities and actions	Materiality
Mode 1: Unreflective value experience in value co-creation that silences co-destruction	Joy, optimism, excitement, amusement, carefree, peace of mind, team spirit, individual and collective desire, affection	Flow, smoothness, suppleness, ease of play, straightforwardness, striving to reach both individual and collective goals; improve individual and team skills; win match or perform well in training	Conditions and/or context that facilitate or contain attractive appearance, reference to alternative options that are worse, a posteriori reference to facilitating and ensuring material
Mode 2: Semireflective value experience in minor value co-creation with minor value co-destruction	Deception, unpredictability, doubt, troubled, slightly frustrated or irritated, pressed, prudent	Temporal blockade in play, modification, coping with, learning from current and previous experiences, deliberate actions,	Material features that irritate, pause play, or are affected by difficult conditions and/or context
Mode 3: Full reflective value experience in value co-destruction that withstands value co-creation	Anger, despair, drama, desperation, confusion, disapproval, panic, robbed of desire, outraged	Disabled to play, obstruction, withdrawal, injured in action, failure, individualized	Materials that obstruct hurt, injure or pose great risks

**Table 1.**  
Coding scheme used  
between the heuristic  
and data

without being reflectively aware of the pitch that enables them to do so. We illustrate how value co-creation occurs using a few quotations from the interviews:

[. . .] Being a sportsman, I just want to play football. This is my sport and passion and artificial grass enables me to play football.

This represents the recurring and habitual practice of players. We followed up by asking this player about how artificial grass helps to support this individual and collective passion. Based on his current horizon of understanding (Gadamer, 1982) of the materiality of pitches that shape his experience, he continued:

Artificial pitches are flat and contain hardly any irregularities such as the bumps that you often encounter on natural grass. Therefore, our team is better able to develop our own game strategy from the beginning. You know exactly in which direction the ball moves when it hits the grass because there are no irregularities. It helps us to perform better.

Another player confirmed this experience by saying:

Playing on artificial grass leads to quicker football and it is also more precise because there are no irregularities on the grass. Controlling the ball is easier on an artificial pitch as opposed to natural grass.

It seems that artificial grass is an enabler of a player's and team's sport and allows them to demonstrate their qualities. However, even though players were able to point out these positive aspects, it seemed that what they individually and collectively experienced during the game remained highly unreflective. The absence of irregularities on artificial grass helped to ensure an uninterrupted flow and thus assisted them in creating value without them being deliberately aware of the qualities of the pitch itself. The smoothness of the pitch provided a favorable basis for them to act and excel during the game to realize the overall teams' strategy and performance through precision and improved control. Other players indicated that artificial grass also enabled them to demonstrate their personal technical skills in creating a fast-paced game. As one player remarked, clearly displaying well how one's own "embodied" doing goes hand in hand with a minimal sense of self-consciousness:

For technically skilled players, it is very pleasant and enjoyable, of course. The ball travels fast and smoothly. You can just do your thing! The ball travels much faster on artificial grass [than on natural grass] and passing the ball goes much quicker. It becomes slightly like the 1995 AJAX tikki-takka football, yes, a lot faster.

Another player expressed his experience as follows:

When playing on artificial grass in general, I am assured that I can perform many dribbles which my team truly benefits from. I am a left winger, which means dribbles and defeating the other team's defense is very important in order to win the match.

Again, typical value co-creating actions during the game, such as passing and dribbling, contribute to realizing the overall goal of football, which is to win a match in a joyful way. However, the players do not reflect on the features of artificial grass while engaged in the practices that allow them to realize that goal. In other words, the individual and collective experience, with a minimal sense of themselves as such, are fully immersed in the spontaneous value co-creation practice itself and remain largely implicit in the pursuit of valuable outcomes.

Our data also revealed that players experienced, both individually and collectively, how the use of artificial grass allowed uninterrupted playing throughout the season even when

the weather conditions were bad. It seems that individual experiences connect collective experiences. As one player remarked:

We can always train and play the matches on an artificial pitch under all weather circumstances so the league competition will not be interrupted throughout the year.

Another player explained why this is the case:

There are no rainouts or cancellations or so on and thus we can always play football. I just want to play football and on an artificial grass pitch this goes very well. The fields are flat and the ball rolls nicely. Artificial grass allows teams to play throughout the year, even if it rains.

His teammate even appreciated a slight rain because it stimulated an even faster game. He explained:

An artificial pitch just needs to be wet because it allows for a quick, uninterrupted match. Our team performs a lot better when the pitch is wet, especially because it allows for short-distance play within a range of 10-15 meters.

Another consequence of using artificial grass is that because of its absence of irregularities, weaker technical skills can no longer be masked by blaming a problem on the grass, as some players do when they play on natural grass pitches. As a player remarked:

On a natural grass pitch, you suffer from uneven patches, which is not the case over here and thus you cannot blame the grass anymore. Therefore, a wrong pass must then be the fault of the player because there are no irregularities or bumps that might bend the ball as you frequently experience when playing on natural grass pitches.

Similarly, a player commented that his and his team's skills improve on artificial grass, signifying strong support of value co-creation:

[...] It [artificial grass] truly improves my technical capabilities, such as quickly turning, dribbling, fast handling and so on. I am sure this also counts for my teammates. Therefore, our team will perform better.

Thus, artificial grass supports the development of their skills both individually and collectively at the level of their team and helps them to improve their value co-creation practices during the game. It seems that artificial grass accommodates such practices and the outcomes realized, causing value to emerge organically and preventing its deterioration. Nonetheless, while players mentioned these experiences explicitly during the interviews, they were not intentionally aware of the consequences of using the grass because they were caught up in the value co-creation practice itself.

*Mode 2: the pitch as presenting-to-prevent play in a semireflective value experience in pressed value co-creation caused by temporal value co-destruction*

In addition to the unreflective experience of value in value co-creation practice, we also found that players can reflectively experience artificial grass as something that destroys value and constrains their value co-creation. There was a difference in what was experienced with a minor and a major interruption during their practice. Each had distinct implications for the value outcomes. We first discuss in this mode how minor interruptions mediate the reflective value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction.

Many such experiences were related to the weather conditions that affect the current state of the artificial grass. It seems that both wet and dry weather conditions, especially when excessively, can be critical to the value co-creation practice and are sometimes considered interruptions by players. In such cases, the players became explicit about their

experience of the characteristics of the artificial grass and established links with value co-creation practices. The materiality of the pitches seems to be susceptible to varying conditions and impacts the players' practice. As one player expressed after a match on a slippery pitch:

For a nice, quick, technical football play, you need wet grass, but not too wet like this one because then it becomes too slippery.

Another player explained why this was the case:

When receiving a pass, the ball travels too fast and may bounce unpredictably. Therefore, you expect to get the ball in one place and it ends up somewhere else. That's something you truly have to take into account.

We observed during training sessions and matches that weather conditions cause players to change their way of playing. In other words, their behavior in value co-creation practice must change so that they can continue playing and prevent further and more severe value co-destruction. Additionally, affective attention to practices distracts from attention to the valued goal. Specifically, rather than playing their game with sophistication, control and precision, mostly in unreflective ways, they now had to deliberately adapt their play. If the pitch is too wet, they hold back and for example, are more cautious in performing a sliding tackle. In these cases, the pitches are too slippery, creating a risk of bumping into obstacles such as fences or goalposts. Consequently, the players must anticipate and focus on the pitch during the game and adjust their behavior so that it is still possible to achieve valuable outcomes. In this vein, dry weather can also be problematic, as it makes the grass too rough, which may even lead to serious injuries:

Playing football becomes complicated if the pitch is too dry; then, quick moves are complicated and can even lead to injuries when you fall on the ground.

Another player added:

If you know that when performing a tackle or sliding, a skin abrasion will be the result, you will be more prudent when performing a slide next time. So in my opinion, the player adapts his game to this problem.

You must be careful not to tackle on artificial grass. You will scrape the skin around your thighbone.

Another player put it even more succinctly:

I prefer to slide, so I dislike artificial pitches.

Thus, the players disapproved of pitches that were too dry because they had to adjust to protect themselves from injury and therefore, enjoyed the game less. We also observed that dry pitches could trigger value co-destruction and spoil value co-creation during the game, as the players became reflectively aware of the features of artificial grass, which dampened their mood. Players' affective attention is geared to the process and practice and objectively thematizes such characteristics, as one player clearly noted:

Especially when the sun starts to shine strongly, the pitch feels hotter and this affects the mood negatively.

This grass gets truly warm when the sun shines and you feel the heat in your feet.

In comparison to wet weather conditions, which cause players to think only in passing about how to adjust their practice, dry pitches often cause them to strongly reconsider the value of



playing, even during a match. Another obstacle to value co-creation and cause of value co-destruction is the amount and quality of infill present on the pitch. When excessively present, those rubber particles clearly spoil the players' motivation during the match and even beforehand, when they are checking out the pitch. For example, we observed that when pitches were susceptible to hot weather conditions, the rubber particles emitted a penetrating odor that was more like burned rubber than natural grass. The players elaborated upon this:

There is nothing better than natural grass. You get a dry mouth on an artificial pitch especially when it doesn't rain. You almost taste the rubber particles on the pitch.

There are artificial pitches where you can see from a distance that they contain many rubber particles. For me, this immediately characterizes a bad pitch. The pitch also appears less green, which gives you the idea that you are not playing on a pitch anymore.

I prefer to play on artificial grass during the winter. In the summer, the pitch is too hard to play on and all these rubber particles slip into your shoes and this irritates me.

In contrast to an undisturbed value co-creation practice and related unreflective experiences, value co-creation practice is seemingly substantially disturbed by value co-destruction because of the state of the pitches causing a reflective experience for the players. In fact, those experiences greatly influence their mood and motivation to engage in or continue with the value co-creation practice to realize the otherwise desired ends of playing a good match. However, despite their experiences, in all instances, we observed that the players nonetheless strove to carry on and play the game as planned. They did so by adjusting their behavior with concrete value co-creation practices when the pitch was too wet or by experiencing an adverse mood when it was too dry.

*Mode 3: the pitch as presenting-as-preventing play in full reflective value experience in value co-destruction withstanding value co-creation*

While minor disturbances and the related reflective experiences about the state of the pitch did not prevent the players from continuing with the value co-creation practice and pursuing their goals, we also noted situations in which players considered terminating the value co-creation practice or even not starting it at all. Then, the players remained embedded in value co-destruction practice. In these instances, the intensity of the reflective experience differed substantially from the previous experience. The players become decontextualized from their actual individual and collective practice of playing football, causing the pitch to become presenting-as-preventing to play. For instance, one player complained strongly about the quality of a pitch:

Playing on this pitch is a drama: the ball goes in every direction, there are too many rubber particles and you will seriously injure your knee if you do slide.

Similarly, during an intensive training exercise, we observed a player conducting a sliding tackle to keep the ball inside the playing area to continue the game. However, the player did not succeed, as he was not able to properly slide and reach the ball at a fast pace. As a result, he cursed when looking at his knee, which was injured and covered with rubber particles. Greatly disappointed and upset, he abandoned the pitch and cleaned his knee with a sponge while his teammates continued the exercise with one less player. Another player remembered a match that he had played elsewhere:

We were playing a match on an artificial pitch and my foot got stuck while my upper body moved. Because of that, I had a severe knee injury. So in my opinion, artificial grass makes players more prone to injuries since it can be tough sometimes.

Another player expressed anger when sharing his experience with artificial pitches:

Some pitches are like concrete. Too hard to play and very risky too because one can easily injure oneself. It is a shame.

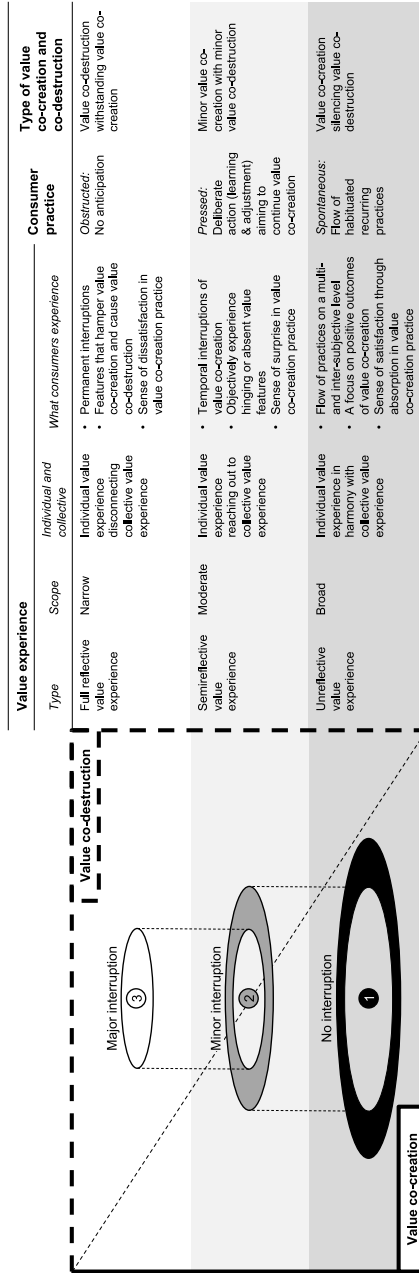
Here, reflective experience takes the form of a social drama in which the state of a pitch and its features that cause problems are illuminated and brought into relationship with the impossibility of creating any value at all. This major disturbance in the value co-creation practice causing value co-destruction differs from the minor disturbances observed earlier. In the former case, the players saw no merit in pursuing any positive outcomes and the associated joy, whereas in the latter case, they were still willing to continue and strive to realize these ends.

### *Interpreting and characterizing our findings*

Thus far, we have seen how the different modes of value experience manifested in value co-creation and co-destruction practice in the context of our case study. The Heideggerian heuristic supported us in further characterizing these modes. In this section, we zoom out to interpret and make sense of our findings to add color to the three spaces of the value experience. The figure below depicts the model we developed based on our findings. It illustrates how the three modes (no interruption, minor interruption and major interruption) relate to the continuum proposed by [Echeverri and Skälén \(2021\)](#), which depicts the coherence between value co-creation and value co-destruction. We further detail each space, differentiated by a gray shading of a description of value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction practices. We specifically characterize the value experience on the basis of its type and scope, the relation between individual and collective value experience and finally what consumers experience. We complement this characterization with consumer practices and the relation between value co-creation and co-destruction. The model is set up as follows. If, figuratively speaking, a light shone from above on the three different modes, it would illuminate all of them in a mutually exclusive manner. The highest circle would prevent the second from receiving light on the same surface. The second would do the same for the third. We use this metaphor to illustrate that our findings uncover mutually exclusive characteristics for the three different modes [Figure 2](#).

In Mode 1, consumers are purely contributors to value and do not reflect on the value experienced. This is because the value co-creation practice is not disturbed by any form of interruption and is conjoined with a minimal sense of self-consciousness (i.e. the primordial prereflective experience). Consumers thus remain in a continuous, spontaneous flow of value co-creation with the purpose of attaining practice ends, affective goals or objectives of intention that contribute to their well-being. The scope of this unreflective experience is, nonetheless, broad in the sense that the entire value co-creation context, including their bodily experience, matters. This clearly reflects the fact that the consumers focus mainly, throughout the regular flow of practices, on performing skills and activities that somehow contribute to their well-being, or that make them feel “better-off.” Hence, value co-destruction is silenced by fluent co-creation practice. In a collaborative setting, individual consumers’ value experience is in harmony with and directly connected to collective value experience. We conclude that value co-destruction is persistently backgrounded by value co-creation. Consumers experience a feeling of (self- and collective) satisfaction because of the flow of practices on a multiactor and intersubjective level.

SPACES OF VALUE EXPERIENCE IN  
VALUE CO-CREATION AND CO-DESTRUCTION



**Figure 2.**  
Space model of value  
experience in value  
co-creation and  
co-destruction practice

Mode 2 limits consumers to a semireflective value experience caused by occasionally being confronted with minor interruptions during their practice. Within its moderate scope, their semireflective value experience is objectified and constricted to specific blocked or missing features of an offering that cause temporal value co-destruction. Experience is directed toward two aspects that have a surprising effect on engagement in practice. First, the value of certain features of the offering (in our case, artificial grass) prevent consumers from fully realizing their goals. The second aspect concerns the missing values of specific features of the offering. Despite these interruptions, because of their intensity and the ensuing semireflective experiences, consumers deliberately adjust to the situation to elude value co-destruction and to get going again so that value co-creation can continue, albeit in an adjusted form. In this coping process, the individual value experience is inclined to reach out to the collective value experience with a regular flow of practices.

In Mode 3, a major interruption leads to the full reflective value experience and complete value co-destruction that mutes value co-creation. This implies that consumers encounter major interruptions during their engagement in practice, bringing full decontextualization into being and determining a cause-and-effect relationship. The scope is narrow, causing consumers to experience those aspects that block them from their engagement in value co-creation practices and precipitate value co-destruction merely reflectively. In other words, their reflection is primarily about the cause-and-effect relationship of the “conscious” experience of the value of the features of the offering. In addition to these features, a context of social drama arises in which consumers experience past and future experiences and might even idealize them. Individual consumers’ value experience becomes detached from the collective experience. Finally, the subjects see no possibility of realizing the desired outcome of the practices and therefore, experience no anticipation.

The underlying mechanism between the three distinct modalities works in a dynamic manner. In essence, a subject does not move in a fixed, step-by-step pattern between the three modalities. For example, a subject can move from situations in which everything occurs naturally as the subject contributes unreflectively to value co-creation to situations in which a minor interruption occurs, causing a semireflective value experience with deliberate minor value co-creation and minor temporal value co-destruction and vice versa. Situations of minor interruptions can also worsen because of major interruptions that turn the semireflective experience into a fully reflective one and convert deliberate minor value co-creation and co-destruction to no value co-creation and more permanent co-destruction. In more severe situations caused by major interruptions, subjects can switch directly from an unreflective value experience in spontaneous value co-creation to a fully reflective value experience in value co-destruction. Furthermore, in deliberate minor value co-creation and co-destruction situations (minor interruption), subjects are more likely to return to spontaneous value co-creation (no interruption). This contrasts with a case of full value co-destruction (major interruption), which requires a new setting or circumstances for subjects to reset their value co-creation practice.

## **Discussion**

### *Reflections*

With this study, we demonstrated how unreflective/reflective value experience manifests in value co-creation and co-destruction practice and the level of interruption that alters the modes of engagement from consumers’ perspective. While the literature has argued that value experience and value co-creation are inextricably entangled in practice (Ellway and Dean, 2016), we provided an integral view of value experience in value co-creation and co-

destruction and thereby uncovered how and when the experience of value varies depending on the level of interruptions occurring during value co-creation and co-destruction practice.

To illustrate our findings, we outlined our space model, which stipulates in detail the key characteristics of value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction. We confirm that value co-creation and co-destruction are placed on a continuum; hence, the axes proposed by Echeverri and Skålén (2021) are embedded in our model. The first space casts light on consumers' broad unreflective value experience in emergent value co-creation, which mutes value co-destruction. Consumers subjectively experience first-hand a broad satisfactory "flow" of practices with a goal-oriented mindset toward fulfilling certain tasks (Cerbone, 2008; Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 1962) while focusing on the outcomes of the value co-creation practice; thus, the experience remains implicit (Ellway and Dean, 2016; Helkkula and Kelleher, 2010). On an individual and collective level, consumers experience a feeling of satisfaction. Consumers practices that consists of demonstrating skills and performing activities somehow contribute to their well-being as value emerges. Overall, their goals, experience and related behavior (Becker *et al.*, 2020) resonate with each other.

The second space narrows down to what consumers experience reflectively in deliberate minor value co-creation practice caused by temporal value co-destruction. The features of an offering that blocks the flow of practices with a triggering event or circumstance (Ellway and Dean, 2016; Helkkula and Kelleher, 2010) become an "objective presence" (Cerbone, 2008; Heidegger, 1962). Consumers experience a feeling of surprise and are aware of the missing value of specific features of the offering but are nonetheless motivated to return to a continuous flow by conducting practices such as learning and adjusting (Luyen *et al.*, 2021). This reveals the relationship between consumers' goals, experience and behavior (Becker *et al.*, 2020).

The final space shows what consumers reflectively experience in cases of value co-destruction (Rahman *et al.*, 2019; Cabiddu *et al.*, 2019; Smith, 2013). They experience isolated features of the offering that cause value co-destruction and explicitly refer instead to past and future experiences (horizons of understanding) that contributed or will contribute to their well-being. Along the lines of individual objective practice (Ellway and Dean, 2016), consumers experience full decontextualization and feel social drama, which causes them to stop anticipating. Hence, their goals are separated from their experience and behavior (Becker *et al.*, 2020)

The service marketing literature agrees that consumers must be both interpreters and contributors of value (Gummerus, 2013; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). However, little is known about when and how consumers are interpreters, contributors or destroyers of value. In taking up the issue, we explored the mechanism underlying when and how consumer value experiences are associated with value co-creation and co-destruction. Our study showed that, paradoxically, contributing to value and thus realizing valuable outcomes requires consumers not to be cognizant of the value experienced yet to experience a minimal sense of self-valuing when attaining goals. This finding seems to be at odds with contemporary ideas on value experience that posit that consumers must be made aware of the value experienced through products and services offered. Moreover, we found that a fully reflective experience of value is associated with a major interruption of value co-creation practice, causing value co-destruction, which confirms the dialectical relationship between value co-creation and co-destruction (Echeverri and Skålén, 2021; Rahman *et al.*, 2019). The major interruption and value co-destruction narrow the scope of experience, causing consumers to perceive the features of a product (in our case, artificial grass) that otherwise remain unexperienced in an uninterrupted flow of value co-creation. A middle ground was found in the case of value co-creation practice is moderately disturbed, causing consumers to temporarily experience the

value with the aim of continuing in an adapted form while remaining concerned with attaining the ends in value co-creation practice. Hence, value experience is fluid and dynamic, as it may vary from time to time even if consumers are situated in objectively similar value co-creation practice, such as playing a football match on an artificial pitch. It has been argued that the driver of change in the consumer value experience is located in the circular relationship between consumer experience in practice and their perceptions during or beyond that practice (Helkkula and Kelleher, 2010). Although our study highlighted how and when changes in value experiences came about, we portrayed these experiences as linear rather than circular. In other words, shifts in value experiences from (non)experience to mere perceptions occur through interruptions in value co-creation practice, causing consumers to reflect on spontaneous value co-creation from a prereflective state of mind (Cai, 2013; Gallagher and Zahavi, 2012). Consequently, we did not investigate how exactly value perceptions shape value experiences beyond or after value co-creation practice. Furthermore, the research context of this article is typically fast-moving and dynamic, with the value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction mechanism swiftly switching among different modalities. We acknowledge that the situation might appear different in other consumer contexts that are expansive and stable in nature. Finally, we contemplated the events in which the subject's expectations are exceeded and create a feeling of positive surprise, often referred to as customer delight (Ball and Barnes, 2017; Guidice *et al.*, 2020). Such situations elicit a profoundly positive emotional state filled with joy and gratitude (Guidice *et al.*, 2020; Oliver *et al.*, 1997). This notion merits further debate on reflective experience, as it suggests that subjects' state of mind is reflective in such rare outstanding experiences and may contradict our notion that value is unreflectively experienced when value co-creation is fluent.

#### *Theoretical contributions*

Based on the use of our phenomenological perspective and the empirical findings, we have developed a framework that contains three spaces in which value experience manifests in value co-creation and co-destruction practice. By taking an integral view of these concepts, which to our knowledge has not been done before, we describe how reflective and unreflective value experiences relate to value co-creation and co-destruction practice and how a disturbance in this practice mediates this relationship. Consistent with the literature that places value co-creation and co-destruction in the beneficiary's lifeworld (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Ellway and Dean, 2016; Heinonen *et al.*, 2010; Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a), this study's contributions are manifold and are laid out in detail in the context of the literature in Table 2 below.

#### *Managerial implications*

Understanding and enhancing the consumer experience in practice is an enormous challenge for manufacturers and service providers. Moreover, experience and practice are beyond the controlled touchpoint level in the user context, in which value is remotely co-created and co-destroyed (Edelman and Singer, 2015; Rawson *et al.*, 2013; Dey *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, understanding what consumers experience and how they experience value to become "better off" during value co-creation practice must be prioritized (Schembri, 2006; Skålén *et al.*, 2015; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Based on the findings, this article offers multiple managerial implications to service providers or manufacturers by moving to the microlevel of both the relation and the mechanism between consumers' value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction.

Contribution	Specification	Contributing to the literature
1. Interruptions as mediating mechanisms between unreflective and reflective value experience and value co-creation and co-destruction	<p>Three distinct modes identified:</p> <p>Mode 1: No interruptions occur. In such smoothly running situations, unreflective value experience presupposes a certain consistency and predictability of the user's expectations based on past experience (horizons of understanding). Thus, there is a certain flow and linearity in value co-creation practice, which are directed toward valuable outcomes and value co-destruction is muted</p> <p>Mode 2: Minor interruptions occur. In such temporarily interrupted settings that trigger value co-destruction and cause nonlinearity in value co-creation practice, semireflective value experience takes place</p> <p>Mode 3: Major interruptions occur. In these permanently interrupted settings that cause more permanent nonlinearity in value co-creation practice, fully reflective value experience takes place and value co-destruction is foregrounded</p>	<p>Ellway and Dean (2016), Gummerus (2013); Payne, Storbacka and Frow (2008); Helkkula and Kelleher (2010); Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlström (2012b)</p>
2. Value co-creation and co-destruction exist on a continuum as dialectic – interrelated – practice	<p>Mode 1: Value co-creation is at its peak, whereas value co-destruction is at its lowest point</p> <p>Mode 2: Value co-creation and co-destruction are at the same level</p> <p>Mode 3: Value co-creation is at its lowest point, whereas value co-destruction is at its peak</p>	<p>Keeling <i>et al.</i> (2018); Laud, Bove, Ranaweera, Leo Wei Wei, Sweeney and Smith (2019); Rahman, Bose, Babu, Dey, Roy and Binsardi (2019); Smith (2013); Echeverri and Skälén (2021); Luyen, Shabbir and Dean (2021)</p>
3. Specification of how individual and collective value experience are interrelated in three modes	<p>Mode 1: In smoothly running collaborative settings, the collective value experience is at its peak and fully in line with the individual value experience</p> <p>Mode 2: With temporary interruptions, the individual value experience becomes disconnected while still reaching out to the earlier collective value experiences</p> <p>Mode 3: With total interruptions, the two experiences become completely separated from each other</p>	<p>Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlström (2012a); Jaakkola, Helkkula and Aarikka-Stenroos (2015)</p>
4. Empirical support of the circular role of temporality in value experience and agential materiality in shaping consumers "horizons of understanding"	<p>Past experiences and future expectations, <i>inter alia</i>, shape the individual value experience in value co-creation practice in situ, in which materiality plays an important agential role. Materiality impacts the consumer's value experience and actions. Nevertheless, the in situ value experience remains important, as it shapes or reiterates the consumer's future expectations at an individual and/or collective level. Within this process, the</p>	<p>Helkkula and Kelleher (2010); Helkkula <i>et al.</i> (2012a); Jaakkola <i>et al.</i> (2015), Payne <i>et al.</i> (2008); Helkkula <i>et al.</i> (2012b)</p>

(continued)

**Table 2.**  
Theoretical contributions following an integral view of value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction practice

Contribution	Specification	Contributing to the literature
5. Specification of consumers' practices in the three identified modes	<p>consumer's horizon of understanding is continuously subject to change</p> <p>Mode 1: Consumers are in a continuous, habituated and recurring flow of practice</p> <p>Mode 2: Consumers are pressed to anticipate and learn to return to a flow of (value co-creation) practice</p> <p>Mode 3: Consumers do not anticipate because of full value co-destruction</p>	<a href="#">Becker et al. (2020)</a>
6. In-depth understanding of zooming in on the individual and zooming out of the context	<p>Zooming in refers to the subject being immersed in the value co-creation practice, whereas zooming out entails the objectivization of value. In consumption practice, zooming out is necessary for consumers to make the necessary adaptations and to learn, which is then manifested again in the subjective realm. In this process, adaptation requires bodily behavior changes by the players to continue their value co-creation practice. This presents the importance of the body, which is inextricably entwined with experience and value co-creation practice as it mediates the relation between the social and the material world</p>	<a href="#">Ellway and Dean (2016)</a> , <a href="#">Becker (2020)</a>
7. The ontological role of goods; goods as silently available	<p>The service marketing literature conceptualizes goods as transmitters of value in value co-creation practice. We provide a more nuanced and critical view of the role of goods. Namely, they vary with consumers' value experience with those goods in value co-creation practice and how the experience itself is triggered by disturbances in value co-creation practice. In linear value co-creation practice (Mode 1), goods are silently available in the sense that consumers appreciate them without reflectively experiencing the value they generate in value co-creation practices. Our study suggests that goods, regardless of their nature, are silently available for most of the time in value co-creation practice in the sense that consumers appreciate the goods without reflectively experiencing the value they generate in value co-creation practices. In other words, our findings indicate that value experience is ironically best when not reflectively experienced. This can work as a double-edged sword in the sense that consumers do not appreciate certain brands or take them for granted</p>	Service marketing literature in general, furthering its fundamental premises ( <a href="#">Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2016</a> )

Table 2.



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The space model can be deployed by service providers as a helpful tool to understand the link between how consumers experience value while creating it and preventing destruction. Although we have labeled our modes specifically in our context as “present-to-play”, “presenting-to-prevent play” and “present-as-preventing play,” similar depictions can be applied in usage processes and therefore be labeled as “present-to-use,” “presenting-to-prevent use” and “present-as-preventing use.” Such a typology can help practitioners categorize experience, creation and destruction elements.

Based on this model, we show that a consumer cannot be both a fully reflective interpreter of the value of an offering and a contributor to value co-creation at the same time. To this end, we add the role of consumers as destructors of value. Consumers are contributors, especially when the actual value is co-created, and they are destructors when value is co-destroyed. To allow consumers to fully enjoy the co-creation of the value of any offering, their experience must be unreflective or at least not be directed toward or distracted by the resources that support (or should support) value co-creation. Rather, we advise service managers to ensure a smooth value co-creation process, allowing consumers to create valuable outcomes without disruption. This includes not constantly making consumers aware all the time of the value they should be enjoying during value co-creation. Regardless of how tempting they may be, such efforts may cause value co-destruction because of an interruption during value co-creation practice. For example, a couple enjoying dinner in a high-end restaurant does not want to be told or asked every five minutes what they should be experiencing from the course in front of them or the atmosphere or to be bombarded with such information after they have left. Therefore, we warn practitioners that the management of consumer value experience in value co-creation and co-destruction practice is a careful balancing act.

At the same time, as we have learned from this study, understanding the value experience when consumers are creating and destructing it is vital for understanding the true value experiences and improvements or innovations of service offerings (Heinonen *et al.*, 2013). In other words, in consumer experience research in practice, we advise service providers to make use of so-called second-order interruptions (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). Whereas first-order interruptions are disturbances occurring in real-life situations (as in our study) that must be avoided to prevent value co-destruction, second-order interruptions can be created artificially, for instance, in focus groups, to prompt consumers’ reflective experience. This means bringing consumers artificially into a situation in which they encounter an interruption in value co-creation practice (for instance, by a malfunctioning or absent product and service) and then asking them what they experienced and what actions they wanted to take to achieve the desired outcomes. By epitomizing this approach in service processes, service providers can capture and categorize these consumer experiences and use them to improve or change specific aspects of offerings in such a way that they help enhance value co-creation practice and outcomes. This method of breaching taken-for-granted value co-creation may also reveal a source for new product development or service designs tailored to consumers’ potential or real problems and essentially for a sophisticated way of managing the consumer experience (Jain *et al.*, 2017). While firms’ extant focus is on creating consistent and predictable experiences (Court *et al.*, 2009; Edelman and Singer, 2015) to facilitate “smooth journeys” consisting of the fewest possible interruptions (those with negative meaning), consumers can sometimes value unpredictable experiences throughout “sticky journeys” (Siebert *et al.*, 2020). Simultaneously, we propose that interruptions in practice are not solely negative; second-order interruptions have the potential to trigger consumers positively and keep them engaged. To exemplify second-order interruptions, we apply them to the context of our study. Bearing in mind that value

can be co-created remotely (Dey *et al.*, 2016), manufacturers of artificial grass can collaborate with local football clubs to promote novel developments. For example, manufacturers of artificial grass can incorporate softening materials to enhance lubricity in the grass blades, thus helping players feel more at ease in performing sliding tackles while preventing skin abrasions, or integrate the scent of natural grass into grass blades and samples throughout a sports complex. With the help of football clubs that promote these novelties in areas such as the cafeteria and dressing room and on billboards, manufacturers can make players aware of their offerings in their natural habitat without any major interventions. Such efforts can create a positive, almost surprising effect on the experience of football players and lead to a sensation of delight (Ball and Barnes, 2017; Guidice *et al.*, 2020).

#### *Limitations and areas for further research*

Despite all our efforts to come close to the lived experience of the football players we studied, we had to rely on interviews held during breaks and immediately after matches. Consequently, we were not able to fully capture the pure *in situ* experience of the players during the games or training sessions. We closed the experience gap as much as possible by juxtaposing those experiences with situations observed on the field. These observations helped players recall their experiences at those moments. Nonetheless, for future research, we certainly would prefer the use of full-blown autoethnography (Visconti, 2010), in which players document and report their own value experiences in the value co-creation and co-destruction. If rigorously and longitudinally performed, such research could also contribute to a more thorough understanding of how value experience dimensions (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012a) evolve over time.

Our study focused on understanding value in a sport environment and focused primarily on value experience, value co-creation and co-destruction in the consumer context in which players remotely conduct their practice (Dey *et al.*, 2016). However, suppliers can also more directly influence consumers' practice. Therefore, we encourage other scholars to investigate different levels of aggregation (Chandler and Lusch, 2015) in the enablement and constraint of value experience and what this means for consumers as contributors and destroyers of value. In other words, we suggest adopting both a microview that involves single suppliers and a more systematic perspective that entails a multitude of actors. The combination of micro- and macro-perspectives would allow us to unpack collective concepts into constituent parts that in turn explain them (Felin *et al.*, 2015). Although service and industrial contexts are certainly associated with different contextual factors, our model can serve as a supportive tool, for instance, to uncover how interruptions in value co-creation practice lead to adjustments and learning (Luyen *et al.*, 2021), the improvement of products or services or the development of new products or services with the aim of realizing desired outcomes through value co-creation practice.

Furthermore, in this research, we point to value experiences as unreflective during fluent value co-creation practice. However, the literature on customer delight suggests that the beneficiary can encounter positive feelings of surprise through the expectations that are exceeded (Ball and Barnes, 2017; Guidice *et al.*, 2020) and therefore become temporally reflective of exceptionally positive and outstanding moments of service delivery, leading to an increase in "stickiness" throughout consumer journeys (Siebert *et al.*, 2020). Further research can refine and empirically provide support for the notion that subjects' state of mind can be reflective in such short moments of delight.

Finally, this study adopted a qualitative approach with a clear spotlight on how football players, labeled consumers, experience value while co-creating and co-destroying it on artificial grass. Even though we devoted attention to this highly topical case, we omitted its contextual significance, which therefore deserves more attention. Specifically, it would be

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worthwhile to deploy a full-fledged ethnography that involves multiple stakeholders to help uncover the cultural, social, geographic, topographic and financial aspects of this growing field.

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