



Assessing the extent to which small enterprises, inclusive of emerging black businesses engage in service dominant logic practices: empowering B2B value co-creation in the tourism sector



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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the extent to which small enterprises engage in service dominant logic practices. In this study, data was quantitatively collected from 144 service providers of the game and nature reserves in Mpumalanga. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between the effectiveness of using ICT and the extent to which small enterprises engage in service dominant logic practices. These findings suggest that the use of ICT technologies has a positive effect on the extent to which small businesses engage in service dominant logic practices. The limitation is that this current study is only limited to the tourism industry, in that sense it cannot be generalized to other industries. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by assessing the extent to which small enterprises engage in service dominant logic practices. Through the co-creation of value, these small businesses can be sustained. Collaborative relationships between small businesses and dominant firms can enhance the small part that black entrepreneurs now play in the country's tourism industry. By means of value co-creation, major corporations have the ability to offer small and medium-sized companies (SMMEs) both entrepreneurial experience and skill training.

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Introduction

The marketing literature has long recognized value co-creation, which was primarily made possible by the development of the new Service Dominant (S-D) Logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). According to Vargo and Lusch (2004), the S-D Logic of marketing is a set of fundamental presumptions that aid in the following processes: i) identifying and developing core competences for competitive advantage; ii) identifying customers who can benefit from these core competences; iii) developing relationships to deliver value propositions to meet customers' needs; and iv) learning how to improve performance through closely engaging with customers to offer better value (Vargo and Lusch, 2017). According to S-D logic, value is generated by all parties involved and is decided by the advantages derived from using goods and services.

In order to access resources across supplier and customer organizations, managers are increasingly relying on collaborative relationships. People, organizations, and businesses together comprise a complex web of interconnected entities that engage in service exchange and value creation. More innovation and competitiveness for their businesses, as well as for their consumers and suppliers, are the benefits offered by the Service-Dominant (S-D) Logic literature to individuals who can successfully apply value co-creation (Grönroos and Helle, 2010; Lusch, Vargo, and Tanniru, 2010). However, because business-to-business (B2B) interactions are dynamic and complex, and because silo-based organizational structures are common, managers face significant risks and challenges (Crowther and Donlan, 2011; Day, 2011; Ritter, Wilkinson, and Johnston, 2004). To develop a clear understanding of the value

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proposition and align expectations, successful business relationships require individuals whose experiences, goals, and power have been shaped by the business function and the company to which they belong (Frow and Payne, 2011; Henneberg, Pardo, Mouzas, and Naudé, 2009; Kowalkowski, 2011).

Managers on both sides of a relationship who represent various organizational functions cooperate to actualize the value proposition. Because the person receiving the service determines value in a unique and phenomenological way, opinions on the value created in a partnership tend to vary amongst people from different firms and functions (Baba, 1988; Grönroos, 2011). To improve organizational learning, rework value propositions, and allocate resources to supplier and customer relationships in the most profitable manner, a cogent analysis of this input is required. Over the previous two decades, there has been a growing body of research on the impact of inter-organizational interactions on a firm's performance and competitiveness (Li, Claes, Kumar and Found, 2022; Sore, Saunila, Ukko and Helkkula, 2023; Ullah, Shen, and Shah, 2023). However, this research is only limited to dominant firms, research on the adoption of service dominant logic practices by small enterprises, especially those black owned is sparse. This study is aimed at addressing that gap by assessing the extent to which small enterprises, inclusive of emerging black businesses engage in service dominant logic practices. SMEs are often regarded as the foundation of any robust economy; they spur expansion, create jobs, and open up new markets (Zaborek and Mazur, 2019). Following the methods utilized, a synopsis of recent research on the subject will be given, followed by a description of the conclusions and discussions.

Literature review

Service Dominant Logic Practices Theory

The conventional, basic goods-dominant (G-D) logic of exchange, which viewed goods as the object of trade and services as a particular instance of commodities—a logic that marketing acquired from economics—became obsolete with the advent of service-dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2014). The prevailing logic in economics and its academic offspring, including marketing, was the G-D logic of exchange. Because of the prevalence of G-D logic, which suggests functional benefits, the literature is just now beginning to recognize the significance of more experiential, expressive, phenomenological, and emotional benefits (Vargo and Lusch, 2017). S-D logic emphasizes the small-scale activity of exchanging services for one another, which serves as the foundation for society's formation and advancement through co-creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2017). The significance of market-driven financial feedback as a method for learning is acknowledged by S-D logic.

Below are the methods that are supported by a set of fundamental ideas called the S-D Logic of marketing: Businesses need to build relationships to deliver value propositions that meet customers' needs, identify and develop core competencies, find customers who can benefit from these competencies, and learn how to improve performance through close customer interaction in order to gain a competitive edge (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). S-D logic suggests that although businesses provide value propositions, customers are the ones who can decide what is valuable.

Business – to - Business Value Co-Creation

Value co-creation is a social and economic process in which people have predetermined roles that shape their perspectives and behavior (Lambert and Enz, 2012). According to Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey, and Lawles (2019), perceptions are both dynamic and unique, and they can be changed by direct interactions with other people as well as indirect information sources. Bonamigo and Frech (2020), asserts that business-to-business relations require considering collaborative relationships that include other stakeholders. A complex network of entities that interact to exchange services and co-create value is made up of individuals, organizational functions, and businesses. In a business-to-business (B2B) setting, value is characterized as an actor's subjective perception following a co-creation process in which value propositions—a product, service, or solution—serve as intermediaries of possible value in transactions involving the organization and its consumer companies (Pathak, Ashok, and Leng Tan, 2022).

According to Ranjan and Read (2016), when value is co-created, the buyer and seller firms are both providers and beneficiaries of service. A comparatively small amount of research has been done on value co-creation in the business-to-business context (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital and Gouthro, 2013; Rihova, Buhalis, Moital and Gouthro, 2015; Gummesson and Mele, 2010), previous studies on value co-creation have primarily focused on the business-to-customer context. The global, digitally connected, service-oriented, and innovative economy has increased the significance of value co-creation in the B2B setting (Pathak et al., 2022). Value co-creation practices include co-design, co-ideation, and co-marketing, among others (Pathak et al., 2022). However, existing research also indicates that in a business-to-business setting, there is a chance that partners may act opportunistically, which could destroy value (Ashok, Day, and Narula, 2018; Pathak, Ashok, and Tan, 2020; Bonamigo, Frech, and Lopes, 2022). Sheth (2020) contends that in every B2B market, co-creation of value is prevalent. Still, it can be a very difficult task. According to a McKinsey study of 300 businesses in 2014, just 12% of executives really integrated consumer opinions and resources into their fundamental operations, despite 90% of executives expressing a strong desire to do so (Bughin, 2014).

Value co-creation, according to Bonamigo and Frech (2020), happens at three different levels depending on the number of people involved: dyad, triad, and complex networks. In a dyad, two actors share resources and abilities to achieve mutual benefits; this level frames typical customer-supplier interactions (Hein, Weking, Schreieck, Wiesche, Böhm and Krcmar, 2019). In a triad; a supplier, a consumer, and another stakeholder are the three actors that work together in a trio (Bonamigo and Frech, 2020). Finally, the category

of networks concerns relationships involving several players, including suppliers and a network of suppliers (Hein et al., 2019). According to Schwetschke and Durugbo (2018), the dynamic in value co-creation can be altered by factors other than the quantity of participants involved. The development of technology is one of those components; it makes it easier for firms to communicate with one another and integrate resources across organizational boundaries, which creates new chances for value co-creation in the context of business-to-business transactions.

Although it is acknowledged that value is co-created through ongoing interactions between the consumer and the provider of goods or services, and that these interactions comprise the four DART-model building blocks, the location of these encounters is still a mystery (Andrén and Sjöberg, 2020). As technology advances, new channels for customer interaction open up (Andrén and Sjöberg, 2020). Now, there are many other methods to engage thanks to the internet, but in the past there was only face-to-face interaction and then interaction by phone and email (Zhang, Pratap, Huang and 2017). The ability to co-create new goods, experiences, and services is made possible by these new digital means of communication. Sigala (2017) argues that technology enables more personalized value experiences, better-informed purchases, and more complex long-term partnerships between provider and consumer.

The advancement of technology has made it possible for people to buy and sell their goods as well as interact, which has had a significant impact on industrial structures and the kind of experiences and products that are offered (Sigala, 2017). Tourism is not exempt from these developments (Sigala, Christou, and Gretzel, 2012). This is because the nature of the product it offers—an experience good that is difficult to evaluate before purchasing—requires consumers to look for and read a wealth of information in order to lower their transaction costs and risks. According to Sigala (2012), these costs can be classified as time-based, price-based, or psychological (e.g., psychological stress, purchase risks, emotional stress, frustration, anger, and product dissatisfaction).

In the tourism industry firms can use technology to buy, sell, trade, and exchange travel-related services with one another (Xu, Choi, Chung and Guo, 2023). A few examples of this include trading food at *kitchensurfing.com* and *forkly.com*, exchanging accommodations on *Airbnb*, *homeexchange.com*, and *couchsurfing.com*, and offering genuine tours and experiences on *localguiding.com*, *vayable.com*, and *getyourguide.com* (Sigala, 2017). Due to firms connecting and making purchases from one another, collaborative commerce is developing at exponential rates, upending established value chains and posing a threat to businesses that are being left behind (Sigala, 2017). Xu et al. (2023), argues that with collaborative commerce becoming a necessity, executives will begin emphasize ways in that people and institutions can cooperate to reach common goals. Through collaborative commerce companies are able to develop new business models that simultaneously generate value to the employees, customers and business partners and/or vendors (Zhang et al., 2017). The internet has a huge global influence, thus this integration will likely have a significant impact on global economic development and the competitive landscape (Xu et al., 2023).

Linkage Between Dominant Tourism Firms and Burgeoning Black Business Owned Emerging Businesses

Numerous authors (Kristen and Rogerson, 2002; Mofokeng, Giampiccoli and Jugmohan, 2018; Nyikana and Tichaawa, 2018; Thomas-francois, 2016) have identified tourism as the key to economic growth and development in the developing countries. One of the main drivers of the South African economy is the tourism sector, which has also been identified as a key driver of job creation, economic growth, and the reduction of poverty (Mokoena 2017; Harilal and Nyikana, 2019). However, Tassiopoulos (2010) contends that there are a lot of difficulties facing the Small, Micro, and Medium-Sized Tourism Enterprises (SMMTE) industry in South Africa. Moreover, Tassiopoulos (2010) contends that in order to guarantee long-term viability, SMMTE owners must make wise and efficient business decisions regarding the risks and difficulties their companies confront from both the inside and the outside. Tassiopoulos (2010) claims that this will help them make sure they have enough strategic data to support their decisions and keep their competitive edge in the travel and tourism sector. According to Harilal and Nyikana (2019), there are numerous opportunities for business connections within and between different industries and business enterprises, regardless of size, in the tourism sector. In addition, Harilal and Nyikana (2019) contend that there is an imbalance between the number of dominant major firms in the tourism sector and the number of small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMMTEs) that are not part of the industry. The author also suggests that the imbalance may result from a number of systemic problems that SMMTEs face, making it difficult for big businesses to build long-term relationships with black-owned tourism SMMTEs in South Africa.

According to Harilal and Nyikana (2019), the industry may not have undergone sufficient transformation, which could account for the disparity. The government has acknowledged that this absence of change is the main obstacle preventing big businesses from developing long-term relationships with black-owned SMMTEs in the tourism sector (Harilal and Nyikana, 2019). The study conducted by Harilal and Nyikana (2019) aimed to identify the factors that prevent large enterprises from forming sustainable business relationships with black-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMTEs) for the sustainable development of the tourism industry in South Africa. The results showed that a number of factors, including the following, hinder cooperation between large and small tourism enterprises:

- i. Negative perceptions held by large businesses regarding the capacity and resourcing of small black enterprises.
- ii. Lack of access between the two, particularly in relation to the procurement patterns of large enterprises.

In order to bring about structural transformation and inclusivity in the tourism industry, Mofokeng et al. (2018) contend that the aforementioned obstacles can be addressed by implementing a policy framework, such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE),

the Tourism BEE Charter, and Tourism BEE Sector Codes of good practice. The goal of the BEE program was to empower formerly underprivileged groups to launch their own enterprises by facilitating and expediting their integration into the mainstream economy through the creation of SMMEs (Mofokeng et al. 2018). According to the authors, these kinds of initiatives aim to enhance the small part that black entrepreneurs now play in the country's tourism industry. By means of these initiatives, major corporations have the ability to offer small and medium-sized companies (SMMEs) both entrepreneurial experience and skill training. The owners of SMMEs would acquire essential skills and be able to sustain significant relationships with major tourism industry companies (Harilal and Nyikana, 2019).

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research method. Game and nature reserves in Mpumalanga were the focus of this study. 144 respondents who provide services to the 23 game and nature reserves in Mpumalanga were surveyed using a descriptive quantitative research design to gather data. The table below presents the 23 game and nature reserves that were targeted:

Table 1: Targeted Game and Nature Reserves

Game and Nature Reserves in Mpumalanga	
1.	Sabi sands game reserve
2.	Sebaka Game reserve
3.	Blyde River Nature Reserve
4.	Dullstroom Nature Reserve
5.	Gustav Klingbiel Nature Reserve
6.	Kruger National Park
7.	Ligwalagwala Conservancy
8.	Loskop Dam Nature Reserve
9.	Marieskop Nature Reserve
10.	Manyeleti Game reserve
11.	Mkhombo Nature Reserve
12.	Mount Sheba Nature Reserve
13.	Mountainlands Nature Reserve
14.	Mthethomusha Game Reserve
15.	Nkomazi Game Reserve
16.	Nooitgedacht Dam Nature Reserve
17.	Mjejane Private Game Reserve
18.	Londolozu Game Reserve
19.	Saragossa Game Reserve
20.	Songimvelo Game Reserve
21.	Steenkampsberg Nature Reserve
22.	Lionspruit Game Reserve
23.	Verloren Vallei (lost valley) Nature Reserve

A systematic sampling method was used to survey these individuals as part of a quantitative research plan to collect data. A study's chances of success are increased when the study population chosen is the most pertinent to the research question at hand. The information for this study was thus obtained from Mpumalanga's game and nature reserves. The table below presents the 144 respondents according to the types of services that they offered the 23 targeted game and nature reserves in Mpumalanga.

Table 2: 144 Respondents According to The Type of Services They Offer

<i>Type of service offered to the dominant firm</i>	144
Shuttle services	54
Laundry services	25
Tour operator	26
ICT services	15
Traditional community tours (arts and crafts)	24

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Research objective: To assess the extent to which small enterprises, inclusive of emerging black businesses engage in service dominant logic practices.

This objective was addressed through the use of a Likert scale of 1-5 where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The Likert scale consisted of seven statements.

Table 3: Grading Table

Grading	Mean
Between agree and strongly agree / between effective and very effective	3.6 and above
Neutral / Moderate	2.6 - 3.5
Between disagree and strongly disagree / between not effective and less effective	1 – 2.5

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on The Extent to Which Small Enterprises Engage in Service Dominant Logic Practices

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
The firm that contracted me allows me to have a dialogue with them about offering assistance in providing a better service to improve customer satisfaction.	32 (22.2%)	42 (29.2%)	21 (14.6%)	38 (26.4%)	11 (7.6%)	2.68	1.288
The firm that contracted me allows me to offer views and suggestions regarding the service experience of consumers.	16 (11.1%)	47 (32.6%)	8 (5.6%)	37 (25.7%)	36 (25.0%)	3.21	1.414
The firm that contracted me seeks my advice and assistance.	22 (15.3%)	21 (14.6%)	11 (7.6%)	56 (38.9%)	34 (23.6%)	3.41	1.391
The firm that contracted me ensures that guests or consumers are made aware of the services offered by my business as a service provider.	3 (2.1%)	3 (2.1%)	2 (1.4%)	67 (46.5%)	69 (47.9%)	3.59	1.371
The firm that contracted me ensures that customer feedback regarding my service provision is communicated.	3 (2.1%)	-	2 (1.4%)	101 (70.1%)	38 (26.4%)	4.19	.658
The firm that contracted me allows me to have an active dialogue with the consumers on how to add value to their service experience.	3 (2.1%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (.7%)	70 (48.6%)	68 (47.2%)	3.51	1.379
The firm that contracted me allows me to communicate with customers in order to receive input regarding the improvement of the service experience.	4 (2.8%)	1 (.7%)	3 (2.1%)	97 (67.4%)	39 (27.1%)	3.74	1.077

Based on the above grading table, if respondents obtained a mean score of 2.5 and less, it indicates that their responses were between disagree (not effective) and strongly disagree (or less effective), 2.6 to 3.5 indicates that they were neutral, while 3.6 and more indicates that the responses of the consumers were between agree (or effective) and strongly agree (very effective). As depicted in table 3, from a total of 144 respondents 32 (22.2%) strongly disagreed that the firms that contracted them allow them to have a dialogue with them about offering assistance in providing a better service to improve customer satisfaction, 42 (29.2%) respondents disagreed and only 11 (7.6%) respondents strongly agreed. Based on the grading table presented above, a mean score of 2.68 suggests that majority of the respondents were neutral regarding a statement which indicated that the firms that contracted them allows them as service providers to have a dialogue with them about offering assistance in providing a better service to improve customer satisfaction.

The findings also reveal that from 144 respondents, 47 (32.6%) disagreed with the statement which indicated that the firms that contracted them allows them to offer views and suggestions regarding the service experience of the consumer, 16 (11.1%) strongly disagreed and only 8 (5.6%) were neutral. These findings also revealed that a mean score of 3.21 suggests that a large portion of the respondents were neutral regarding the statement that the firms that contracted them allow them to offer views and suggestions regarding the service experience of consumers. Moreover, 34 (23.6%) respondents strongly agreed that the firms that contracted them seek for their advice and assistance, 22 (15.3%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 21 (14.6%) respondents disagreed. Based on the grading table, a mean score of 3.41 suggests the respondents were neutral when asked if the firms that contracted them asked for their advice and assistance regarding a service provision.

Table 3, also depicts that from 144 respondents, 69 (47.9%) strongly agreed that the firms that contracted them ensures that the guests or consumers are made aware of the services offered by their businesses as service providers, 67 (46.9%) respondents agreed and only 2 (1.4%) were neutral. This study further revealed that with a mean score of 3.59, majority of the respondents were between agree and strongly agree when asked if the firms that contracted them ensured that guests or consumers were made aware of the services offered by their business as service providers. Moreover, this study revealed that 101 (70.1%) of the respondents agreed that the firms that contracted them ensured that customer feedback regarding their service provision was communicated, 38 (26.4%) respondents strongly agreed and only 3 (2.1%) strongly disagreed. A mean score of 4.19 suggests that a large number of the respondents were between agree and strongly agree regarding the firms that contracted them ensuring that customer feedback regarding their service provision is communicated. Furthermore, this study found that 70 (48.6%) respondents agreed that the firms that contracted them allows them to have an active dialogue with consumers on how to add value to their service experience, 68 (47.2%) respondents strongly agreed. The findings also revealed that with a mean score of 3.51, majority of the respondents were neutral regarding the firms that contracted them allowing them to have an active dialogue with the consumers on how to add value to their service experience. Lastly, table 3, also depicts that 97 (67.4%) respondents agreed that the firms that contracted them allows them to communicate with customers in order to receive input regarding the improvement of the service experience, 39 (27.1%) respondents strongly agreed. With a mean score of 3.74, majority of the respondents were between agree and strongly agree when asked if the firms that contracted them allowed them to communicate with customers in order to receive input regarding the improvement of the service experience.

Inferential Statistics

Correlation

Table 5: Correlations on The Extent to Which Small Enterprises Engage in Service Dominant Logic Practices

		DOMINANTLP	EFFCTICT
DOMINANTLP	Pearson Correlation	1	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	144	144

As shown in table 4, there was a strong positive relationship between the effectiveness of using ICT and the extent to which small enterprises engage in service dominant logic practices ($r=0.639, p<.001$). These findings suggest that the use of ICT technologies has a positive effect on the extent to which small businesses engage in service dominant logic practices. These findings suggest that ICT technologies make it possible for businesses to engage in service dominant logic practices.

Demographics and The Extent to Which Small Businesses Engage in Service Dominant Logic Practices

Anova

Table 6: Anova

Demographic Characteristics	F	P
Age	1.417	.231
Education	4.458	.005
Number of employees	1.800	.132
Years of experience in the business	2.638	.075

The results revealed no significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents varying by age ($F = 1.417, p > 0.001$) and number of employees ($F = 1.800, p > 0.001$) regarding the extent to which small businesses engage in service dominant logic practices. Thus, the results imply that age and the number of employees had no significant influence on the extent to which small businesses engage in service dominant logic practices. There is a statistical difference among the respondents in terms of education concerning extent to which small enterprises engage in service dominant logic practices. Moreover, there is a statistical difference among the respondents in terms of the years of experience the respondents have as service providers concerning extent to which small enterprises engage in service dominant logic practices. Therefore, **Post Hoc Test** has been computed to determine the statistical difference. The results are presented in the Table below.

Table 7: Post Hoc Test Results on Educational Qualification and The Extent to Which Small Enterprises Engage in Service Dominant Logic Practices

DOMINANTLP			
Educational Qualification	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
2	4.6939	7	.80992
3	4.3690	72	.66435
4	4.0234	55	.58629
5	4.3571	10	.47738
Total	4.2520	144	.65432

The results showed that while the respondents with high school certificates, diplomas and post graduate qualifications tend to engage more in service dominant logic practices, those with degrees and primary education do not engage much in service dominant logic practices.

Table 8: Post Hoc Test Results on Years of Experience and The Extent to Which Small Enterprises Engage in Service Dominant Logic Practices

DOMINANTLP			
Years of experience	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	4.3545	81	.76935
2	4.0794	45	.44090
3	4.2222	18	.42779
Total	4.2520	144	.65432

The results showed that the respondents with five years and less experience in the industry tend to engage more on service dominant logic practices and those with more that five years of experience tend to engage less on service dominant logic practices.

Paired Sample T-Test

Table 9: Paired Sample T-Test Results on The Extent to Which Small Enterprises Engage in Service Dominant Logic Practices

Paired Samples Test										
		Paired Differences					Significance			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Gender - DOMINANTLP	-2.84921	.78932	.06578	-2.97923	-2.71919	-43.316	143	<.001	<.001

There is a statistical difference among males and females concerning service dominant logic practices. Therefore, Post-Hoc Test was computed to determine the difference. The findings are shown in the Table below.

Table 10: Post Hoc Test Results on The Extent to Which Small Enterprises Engage in Service Dominant Logic Practices

DOMINANTLP			
Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	4.2126	86	.37812
2	4.3103	58	.92471
Total	4.2520	144	.65432

The results showed that while females believed that small enterprises do engage in service dominant logic practices, males were least convinced.

Discussions

Research question: To what extent do small enterprises, inclusive of emerging black businesses engage in service dominant logic practices?

The findings from this current study revealed that the respondents were neutral when asked if the firms that contracted them allowed them as service providers to have a dialogue with them about offering assistance in providing a better service to improve customer satisfaction. Moreover, the findings also revealed that the respondents were neutral when asked if the firms that contracted them allowed them to offer views and suggestions regarding the service experience of consumers. In accordance with the findings from this current study, the findings from a study conducted by Kapaya and William (2020), which had an objective of analysing the service dominant logic in SME innovation, revealed that when it comes to the adoption of service dominant logic practices, SME businesses lag behind, in order to engage customers in the value-in-use co-creation process, SMEs must create avenues for them to participate in the company's activities at various levels.

Furthermore, this study also found that the respondents were neutral when asked if the firms that contracted them asked for their advice and assistance regarding a service provision. These findings suggest that small enterprises do not really engage much in service dominant logic practices due to lack of support from the dominant firms that contract them. The findings from this current study are in accordance with the findings from a study conducted by Halverson, (2023) which revealed that the skills shortage and lack of expertise are the reasons why dominant firms do not engage small businesses to get advice regarding the provision of a service. Similarly, Hlengwa and Thusi (2018) in their study found that even though small businesses make up the majority of the industry in many parts of the world, they frequently lose out to larger businesses and political organizations in the tourism planning and policy circles because they lack strong lobbying voices among the destination's stakeholders.

The findings from this current study revealed that the respondents were between agree and strongly agree when asked if the firms that contracted them ensured that guests or consumers were made aware of the services offered by their business as service providers. Moreover, this study found that the respondents were between agree and strongly agree regarding the firms that contracted them ensuring that customer feedback regarding their service provision is communicated. In accordance with the findings from this current study, the existing body of literature, customer feedback is vital because it gives insight into customer satisfaction levels and firms must encourage customer feedback in order to build a base of loyal customers (Bhatia et al., 2013; Patil and Rane, 2023).

Furthermore, this study revealed that the respondents were between agree and strongly agree when asked if the firms that contracted them allowed them to communicate with customers in order to receive input regarding the improvement of the service experience. Affirming the findings from this current study, a study conducted by Grisseemann and Stokburger-Sauer (2012), revealed that engaging with consumers regarding a service provision results in improved understanding of customer needs and enhances customer satisfaction.

Conclusions

This objective sought to assess the extent to which small enterprises engage in service dominant logic practices. The findings from this current study revealed that the best value is achieved when the customer lets the supplier be their partner and shares their business information, this improves customer satisfaction. The study found that some of the micro to small enterprise service providers agreed that the dominant firms that contracted them create an environment whereby service providers are allowed to have a dialogue with them regarding ways to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Although some of the SME's were found to engage in service dominant logic practices, this study revealed that SME firms engage less in service dominant logic practices compared to large firms. This current study found that one of the reasons behind some SME's not engaging in service dominant logic practices was that SME's frequently lose out to larger businesses because they lack strong lobbying voices among the destination's stakeholders. Moreover, the findings revealed that the lack of faith among dominant firms in the ability of small black businesses to provide necessary goods and services was one of the causes contributing to the low

investment in supporting and expanding black entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the findings further revealed that black SMEs do not engage much on service dominant logic practices because they do not receive enough support from the firms that contracted them, it was apparent that they do not receive any form of training to enhance their ability to engage in value co-creation practices.

From the results, it was apparent that those SME's that were found to engage in service dominant logic practices adopted measures such as collaboration, engaging in an active dialogue and co-design to work with the dominant firms that contracted them to ensure the provision of best service experiences. The findings revealed that these measures enhanced customer satisfaction and also improved the business performance. Furthermore, this current study further revealed that the adoption of these measures assists with the creation of innovative ideas to address the needs of the consumers. Therefore, this study concludes that in order to enhance customer satisfaction, generate innovative problems solving ideas and improve the business performance, SME's must engage in service dominant logic practices.

The expansion of the tourism industry, according to Jaafar, Khoshkam, Rashid, and Dahalan (2014); Batta (2016), depends on the presence and assistance of SMMEs in each region. Additionally, there is a reciprocal relationship between tourism and entrepreneurial activities because tourism depends on entrepreneurial development to support the expansion and development of SMMEs. Vallabh, Radder, and Venter (2015) state that SMMEs are designated as the legs on which tourist expansion will walk and that tourism is widely acknowledged in South Africa as a "strategic priority for achieving economic growth." According to Khan and Krishnamurthy (2016), entrepreneurs are the cornerstone of tourism development and are essential for the growth of emerging tourism economies. However, SME tourism firms especially the black owned one struggle with sustainability. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by assessing the extent to which small enterprises, inclusive of emerging black businesses engage in service dominant logic practices. Through the co-creation of value, these small businesses can be sustained. Collaborative relationships between small businesses and dominant firms can enhance the small part that black entrepreneurs now play in the country's tourism industry. By means of value co-creation, major corporations have the ability to offer small and medium-sized companies (SMMEs) both entrepreneurial experience and skill training. The owners of SMMEs would acquire essential skills and be able to sustain significant relationships with major tourism industry companies.

Furthermore, the findings from this current study revealed that when it comes to the implementation of cutting-edge technologies for the co-creation of value small businesses lag behind. It is in this context that this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by developing a model that outlines how small businesses can engage in value co-creation practices. This model presents the co-creation of value through interaction and e-marketing. E-marketing involves the use of information technology in the process of creating, communicating and delivering value to customers, and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders. It is in this context that this study developed a model on how value can be co-created through interaction and e-marketing. Through the adoption of e-marketing small businesses can shape how the generation of relational rents are maintained and developed, and also promote information exchange between them their customers. The model is presented below:

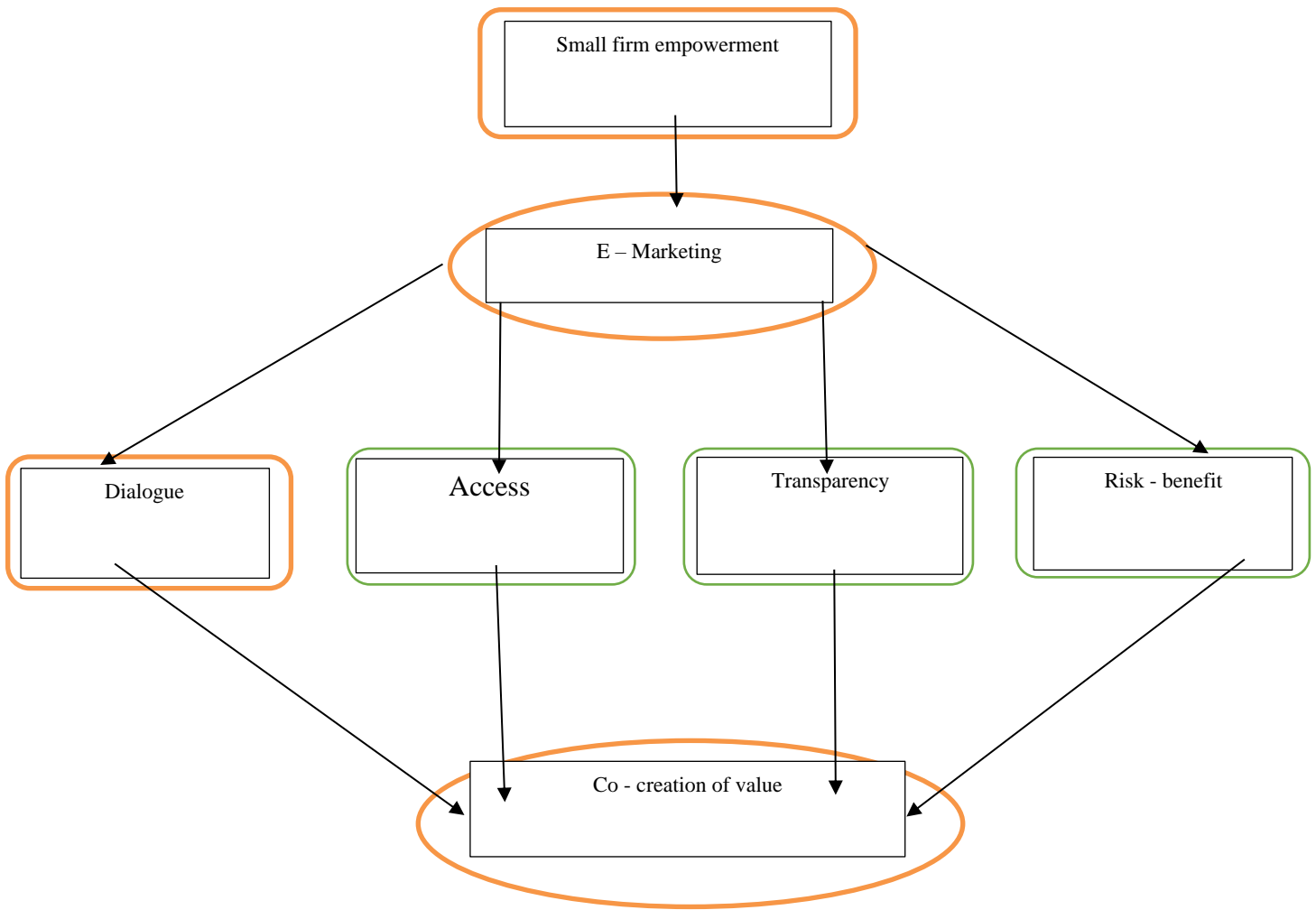


Figure 1: A model empowering the adoption of value co-creation practices by small firms; *Source:* Own computation

According to the above developed model, small firms can be empowered to engage in value co-creation practices through the adoption of e-marketing. Through the effective application of e-marketing, small businesses can influence the development and maintenance of relationship rents and foster information sharing with customers.

Through e-marketing, small firms will be able to engage in a dialogue with customers and the firms they are in partnership with. When customers and enterprises engage in a genuine dialogue, they are able to better comprehend and hear each other's needs. Moreover, through the adoption of e – marketing small firms will be able to grant their consumers access to and transparency regarding critical information about their service or product offerings. Furthermore, through the adoption of e – marketing, the consumers of small firms will be able to evaluate the risks and rewards associated with the service offerings.

The findings from this current study revealed that small firms do not adopt cutting edge technologies, as a result small firms struggle with sustainability. The adoption of the above model will result in the co-creation of value for small firms and their stakeholders. This will result in the sustainability of small firms because through the adoption of this model firms and their stakeholders will be able to better comprehend and hear each other’s needs, and this will result to the co-creation of value for both the firm and its stakeholders.

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