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Capturing the Value of International Staff Mobility in Higher Education: A Customer-Dominant Logic Approach

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This paper aims at analysing and achieving better understanding of the experience of international mobility of academic staff from the perspective of value creation process. Qualitative research methods are used: a combination of individual in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. We apply a customer-dominant logic perspective in order to identify the drivers of value co-creation and emerging value types. The study identifies multiple types of value emerging from a mobility experience (e.g. individual and shared value, one-off and longitudinal value). Also, the value co-creation context is investigated and an influence of factors such as personality, previous experiences, situation at home and host institutions and their support are discussed.

Keywords: value, mobility, customer, higher education, academic staff.

Wartość mobilności pracowników akademickich w świetle logiki dominacji klienta

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Celem tego artykułu jest analiza i lepsze zrozumienie doświadczenia międzynarodowej mobilności pracowników akademickich z punktu widzenia procesu tworzenia wartości. Zastosowano jakościowe metody badawcze w postaci indywidualnych wywiadów pogłębionych oraz wywiadów grupowych. Jako ramę teoretyczną zastosowano logikę dominacji klienta, dzięki czemu zidentyfikowano czynniki sprzyjające współtworzeniu wartości oraz wyłaniające się typy wartości (np. wartość indywidualna i dzielona, wartość jednorazowa i podłużna). Zbadano także kontekst współtworzenia wartości i omówiono wpływ czynników, takich jak osobowość, wcześniejsze doświadczenia, sytuacja w domu oraz wsparcie instytucji przyjmującej.

Słowa kluczowe: wartość, mobilność, klient, szkolnictwo wyższe, pracownicy akademiccy.

JEL: M30, M31, I20

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1. Introduction

The promotion of international staff mobility is a founding principle of the ‘Bologna Process’, designed to create a converged system of higher education (HE) across Europe. Universities are engaged in the development of internationalisation strategies which include staff mobility. Many such strategies include a statement regarding the ‘encouragement’ of international staff mobility (Harris, 2008; Killick, 2007) but none goes further in explaining **how** this might be achieved or how to ensure the creation of value. This paper begins to consider the paths to value creation through international mobility, examining the balance between individual and institutional effort and attitude. It avoids the simplistic assumption that all mobility is somehow a force for good and that positive value is a given for all concerned. Uniquely, customer-dominant logic, a concept from the domain of marketing, is applied to the experience of staff mobility to identify the drivers of value creation. In this study, the ‘customer’ is represented by a person undertaking international secondment.

1.1. Higher Education Context

“Since its origins in Medieval Europe, the university has been international”, asserts Harris (2008) and Teichler (2004) invites us to consider that HE is going through a process of ‘re-internationalisation’ given that universities have always been international institutions. But Marginson and van der Wende (2007) claim that economic and cultural globalisation has *“ushered in a new era in higher education”* (p. 3). Altbach and Lewis (1996) observe that international scholarship has followed the blurring of national boundaries and increasing national interdependency, and perhaps more than any other area or industry (Vaira, 2004; Bartell, 2003; Torres & Morrow, 2000). Many policy makers and scholars asseverate the need for HE institutions to internationalise in order to prepare students for a globalised world (Adams & Carfagna, 2006; Friedman, 2005; Green, 2003; Grünzweig & Rinehart, 2002; Sigsbee, 2002; van der Wende, 2001; Mestenhauser & Elingboe, 1998). The need for intercultural understanding and international knowledge has become an urgent priority (Bartell, 2003). International literacy has become critical to cultural, technological, economic and political health. *“International competence in an open world of permeable borders has become a generalized necessity rather than an option for the tier of societal elites as was true in the past”* (ibid, p. 49).

In 1997, Welch suggested that the volatility of international political and economic conditions at that time underlined the urgent and profound need for an understanding of international contexts and that academic exchanges could help. Such conditions can be regarded as exacerbated today as the interdependency of nations in resolving global crises increases (Duncan et al., 2006) while nationalistic movements enjoy a resurgence in Europe.

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The internationalisation of university staff is less researched than that of the student but is gaining more attention as interest in the mobility of knowledge workers in a globalised economy increases (Welch, 2002). However, a distinction between academics and other educated manpower is essential since academics educate the adults of the future and thus have potential national influence (Saha & Atkinson, 1978). The sabbatical was always an important aspect of a UK academic's professional life during which travel abroad to a university in Europe was not uncommon (Harris, 2008.) The flow of intellectuals and scholars between nations is hardly a new phenomenon (Saha & Atkinson, 1978) but the need for intercultural understanding and international knowledge has become an urgent priority (Bartell, 2003). Welch (2002) agrees, quoting French (1996):

"If our higher education institutions are to attain and remain in world class positions, if they are to pursue excellence, it is vital they include members of staff who are as familiar with libraries and labs in Beijing, Canberra, both in Cambridge and Tokyo, as they are with those in Hong Kong itself." (p. 446).

Welch (2002) argues that the greater ease and speed of communication today means that it is important to maintain close contact with overseas colleagues to avoid isolated scholarship. Indeed, Ellingboe (1998) believes that faculty involvement with institutions worldwide and the integration of international scholars into campus life are fundamental to an internationalisation process and Schoorman (2000) emphasises the centrality of faculty members to implementing an internationalisation strategy, quoting five different studies in the 1990s to support the view that they are the most important staff group.

An increase in diversity within the faculty is therefore necessary to match the increasing diversity of the student body, Schoorman (2000) argues, not only for academic reasons but to support students' social adaptation and to address a lack of innovation in a typical faculty (de Vita & Case, 2003). Benefits of exchange can be institutional, personal and often both.

1.2. Implementing Staff Exchange

Much of the small body of literature on staff exchange is now dated but nothing new has emerged to demonstrate any development in this area and, reviewing it in light of the prevalent approaches to internationalisation, there is no reason to believe that any progress has been made.

Irandoust & Sjöberg (2001) state that teaching staff exchange is not as common as desired because the incentives for those taking part are limited compared with the social and professional barriers. Goodwin & Nacht (1991) posit that staff who have international expertise or interests are underutilised within the university. The drawbacks for faculty involvement in international affairs are a problem described aptly by Schoorman (2000):

"for many faculty members, these (international) experiences came at considerable costs in the form of personal expenditure, family complications, a decrease in income, and being overlooked or adversely affected in decisions on rewards or tenure." (p. 27)

The increasing complexity of their work and involvement in management impedes academic staff in the exploitation of international opportunities. Similarly, organisational processes inhibit international involvement and preclude the participation of faculty in the internationalisation process (Welch, 1997). Irandoust & Sjöberg (2001) assume that teachers only in their role as researchers can undertake any international activity and this limits the opportunities of those who do less research, such as in a 'new' university. International experience and awareness is rarely considered an important part of faculty development by managers, according to Goodwin & Nacht (1991). Schoorman (2000) reports that *"although prolonged overseas stays are of greater educational benefit"* (p. 27), only short-term travel grants are available for faculty development and this is true under the Erasmus scheme. Meanwhile, internationalisation of administrative and staff positions, librarians and student counsellors (i.e. non-faculty employees) is overlooked and excluded from existing efforts (ibid). Not all forms of international staff mobility incur insurmountable costs: bi-lateral exchange schemes carry lower overheads, although a certain requirement for financial support is inevitable (Welch, 1997). Where the quality of experience is high and the cost is low, the decision to implement should be simple but benefits should not all be valued in economic terms.

Most literature problematises family accompanying expatriates (Richardson, 2006). Richardson and Zikic (2007) suggest that the family might contribute to a positive experience by providing social and emotional support, thereby making the assignment less risky. Their value seems to be closely connected with cultural differences: the greater the distance between the home and host cultures, the more important the role of family as a support mechanism.

Welch (2002) found that in Australia internationally peripatetic academics were more senior, more highly remunerated, more male, more research-oriented and productive, more likely to be in fulltime, tenured employment and more internationally active than their 'indigenous' counterparts. Gender differences in peripatetic academics were greater than in the indigenous, leading him to suggest that either the opportunity to travel and study abroad actively discriminates against female academics or men take more international opportunities than women or are more enabled to do so. He therefore proposes that making more international opportunities available to women and other minorities should form part of an equity strategy in human resources.

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Parsons and Fidler (2005) conclude that an incremental pattern of international development fosters a *"culture of opportunism (…) in which more cosmopolitan or outward-looking and entrepreneurial individuals were able to realise new initiatives"* (p. 454). Irandoust and Sjöberg (2001) also highlight the role of individual initiatives in strengthening the international profile of their institutions. *"The positive energy for internationalization is within individuals, not bedded in the school"* (p. 48), commented a respondent in Robson and Turner's (2007) university-based research. Opportunism and flexibility play an important part in international staff experience (Richardson & McKenna, 2003); the desire for travel, adventure and personal fulfilment is a stronger motivator than upward career mobility.

It is an exploration of this desire and drive, and its effect, which is the aim of this research. Using the theory surrounding the customer-dominant logic, the lived experience of internationally mobile staff is analysed and key recommendations are made for assuring the creation of positive value.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Traditional Goods- and Service-Dominant Logic

Over the last two decades there has been an intense debate about the 'logics' underlying both researchers' and managers' approach to market offering, and the role of the customer in its (co)creation. The previously prevailing 'goods-dominant logic' (GDL) has been criticised for its myopia and instrumental approach to the customer, to whom the firm's offer was marketed (Lusch, Vargo, & O'Brien, 2007). The customer's role was mostly passive. A new approach was introduced by Vargo and Lusch (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) and called 'service-dominant logic' (SDL) as it focuses on the exchange of service (understood as skills and competences) between actors that leads to creation of value. The main focus shifted from the outcome (goods and services in GD logic) to the process and interactions (in SD logic). However, Heinonen et al. (2010) argue that despite the fact that the service-dominant logic has widened the understanding of marketing, it is still very much production- and interaction-focused, i.e. it is a provider-dominant approach and does not explain fully what happens on the customer's side.

Making the customer the centre of attention is not a completely new approach: it was originally proposed by classical authors such as Levitt (1960) and Drucker (1974). However, in their view, the customer was assigned a passive role that was limited to purchasing and consumption of the company's offer. Little attention was paid to customer activities beyond a particular service and consumption context. However, the customer's activities and life beyond the service context have been an aspect of approaches such as consumer culture theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). This approach presents a different difficulty in that it cannot be applied to practice as it ignores the structural fit between the customer's life and a service.

2.2. The Dynamic of Customer Dominant Logic

This paper uses 'customer-dominant logic' (CDL) as a theoretical framework to analyse the value emerging from international staff mobilities. It was proposed by Heinonen et al. (2010), who introduced a new perspective on customers' and companies' roles in value creation. The CD logic is focused not on the exchange and service, but on the way in which this service is embedded into the context, activities, practices and experiences of the customer and what implications this has for the company. Instead of analysing what companies do in order to create services attractive to customers, the emphasis is put on what the customer does with the service in order to achieve their goals. The key aspect here is not the offer itself (either outcome or process) but the customer's life and tasks connected with this offer (Heinonen et al., 2010).

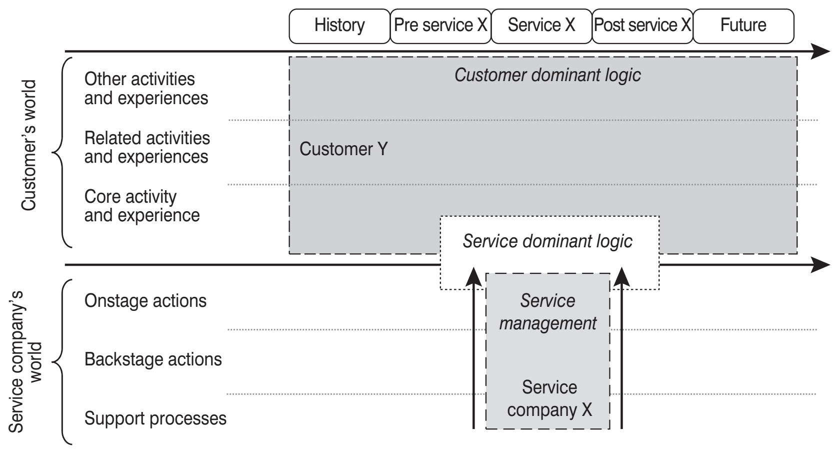

Fig. 1. CD logic contrasted with service management and SD logic. Source: Heinonen et al., 2010, p. 535.

The relationship between the main concepts is illustrated in Figure 1. In a traditional approach, such as service management, researchers focus narrowly on the service itself and its design (Bitner, Ostrom, & Morgan, 2008), identification of service encounters (Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994),

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measurement of perceived quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) and perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988). In turn, the service-dominant logic proposes a slightly extended view. The service situation is still a key focus but it also includes the co-creation of service and customer-company interaction (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). According to Heinonen et al. (2010), these approaches are limited in their utility. The customer does not use the service in a vacuum and the customer's understanding of the service is different (much wider) than the service provider's. It encompasses not only the core activity and experience relating to using a service but also other, related and unrelated, activities and experiences. In the customer-dominant logic, it is the customer's intentions, activities and experiences that should be of interest to marketers, not the act of service alone. All onstage and backstage actions undertaken by companies should support the customer's activities.

2.3. Customer-Dominant Logic and Value Creation

Co-creation, value-in-use and customer experience have been often discussed in the literature (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Holbrook, 2006; Gronroos, 2008; Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008). These three issues have a common denominator: a question about the customer's role. According to Heinonen et al. (2010):

"the customer's value-in-use evaluation is based on the customer's service experience which is embedded in the customer's context. From the customer's point of view, service contains three types of elements: outcomes of the service providers' internal activities, co-creation processes and their outcome elements, and process and outcome elements of the customer's own activities. Co-creation is seen here as an element of service by creating a part of the customer experience" (p. 537)

In order to understand the co-creation process, one has to look more closely at its key elements in the service-dominant logic. As far as co-creation itself is concerned, it is the customer who controls the process and allows for the company's involvement. In the CD logic, contrary to provider-dominant logics, value-in-use focuses not only on visible interactions but also on invisible activities and those happening in the customer's mind. Finally, the customer experience emerges from the customer's life and includes both ordinary and mundane events (not only those which are special and extraordinary).

Finally, the customer-dominant logic offers a different perspective on value (see Table 1).

	Provider-dominant logic (PDL) Value creation is orchestrated by the service provider	**Customer-dominant logic (CDL)** The customer orchestrates and dominates value formation
How?	Value is created	Value is formed
	Value creation is based on a structured evaluation	Value formation is based on an emerging process
Where?	Value is created in the interaction	Value is formed in the life and ecosystem of the customer
	Value creation takes place in the control zone of the company	Value formation takes place in the control zone of the customer
When?	Value is created when the company is active	Value formation is temporal and not necessarily and directly related to company activities
	Value-in-exchange/value-in-use	Value-in-use/value-in-experience
What?	Value creation is defined by the service provider	Value formation is determined by the customer relative to alternatives on multiple levels
	Value is based on customer perceptions of company-created value propositions	Value is based on experiences of customer fulfilment
Who?	Value creation is idiosyncratic	Value formation is also collective and may be shared
	The value unit is an individual and can be grouped into	The value unit consists of different configurations of actors' segments

Tab. 1. PDL vs CDL in value creation. Source: Heinonen, Strandvik & Voima, 2013, p. 113.

While the product-dominant logic stipulates that the value creation process is objective and value is embedded in the product or service delivered by the company, in the service-dominant logic the process is intersubjective and includes three spheres: provider's, customer's and joint (Gronroos, 2008). However, in the customer-dominant logic value may result from a purely subjective process detached from the provider's activities, as well as an intersubjective process where the customer is in control (Anker, Sparks, Moutinho, & Gronroos, 2015). According to Heinonen, Strandvik and Voima (2013), there are several rules regarding value in the CD logic:

- Value is formed in an emerging process. It emerges as a result of cognitive and behavioural processes when the customer interprets the experience and reconstructs cumulated reality in which value is embedded;
- Value emerges in the customer's ecosystem and reality, which is often beyond any control or influence of the company;

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- Value should be analysed from a multi-contextual and extended-in-time perspective. It is in fact value-in-experience rather than value-in-use;
- Value is not limited to a cognitive and resource perspective, it can also be interpreted from a social and phenomenological perspective. That means that value is not a simple result of interactions between the customer and the company, it is relative and cumulative as a result of various processes;
- Value is not an isolated phenomenon because customer reality is connected with other subjects' realities. Thus, value is embedded in dynamic, collective and shared customer realities.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Context

This exploratory analysis of individual value creation was conducted under the auspices of an international research and innovation staff exchange project funded in the EU Commission's Horizon 2020 stream. The four-year project started in 2017 and 272 month-long international secondments are to be undertaken by 2020. Secondees come from and go to five countries: UK, Poland, Slovenia, Republics of Ireland and Korea for the purposes of project management, research and participation in networking events called 'sandpits'. This large international project is proving revelatory as it involves complex cultural and institutional dynamics. The setting of this project is ideal for analysing and understanding the dynamic process of individual value creation in different contexts within HE industry.

3.2. Empirical Data Collection

In line with the main research aim, Denzin and Lincoln's (2003) inductive approach was adapted with semi-structured interviews (Bernard & Ryan, 2010) and focus group discussions (Madriz, 2003) served as the primary source of data. The three authors conducted 13 interviews in English, Chinese and Polish, depending on the interviewees' and interviewers' preferred language and proficiency. Interviewees had undertaken international secondments in various organisations, including 8 HE institutions, in 5 countries. The mean duration of the interviews was 1 hour. To explore interviewees' rich and varied experience of value creation during their international mobility, the interview protocol comprised a range of open-ended questions. In addition to in-depth interviewees, two focus group interviews were conducted to provide participants with multiple lines of communication. Table 3 summarises the distribution of individual and focus group interviews.

Participant ID	Gender	Home country	Host country	IDI	FGI1	FGI2
P1	F	SLO	UK	✓	✓	✓
P2	M	SLO	PL	✓	✓	✓
P3	M	PL	UK	✓	✓	
P4	M	PL	UK	✓	✓	
P5	F	PL	SLO	✓	✓	
P6	F	PL	UK/IRE		✓	✓
P7	M	IRE	UK/ROK/PL		✓	✓
P8	F	IRE	SLO/PL		✓	✓
P9	F	PL	UK		✓	✓
P10	M	UK	ROK/PL		✓	✓
P11	M	UK	ROK/PL		✓	✓
P12	M	PL	SLO	✓		
P13	F	SLO	ROK	✓		
P14	F	PL	ROK	✓		
P15	M	UK	ROK	✓		
P16	M	UK	SLO	✓		
P17	M	ROK	UK	✓		
P18	F	UK	ROK	✓		
P19	F	UK	ROK	✓		
P20	F	UK	ROK/PL		✓	
P21	F	PL	SLO			✓
P22	M	UK	ROK			✓

Tab. 3. Breakdown of the individual and focus group interviews. Source: own elaboration.

3.3. Data Analysis

A combination of thematic analysis (Flick, 2009) and template analysis (King, 2004) was applied to transcripts translated into English. Drawing on all interview data, interviewees' activities were mapped at three stages: before, during and after the international secondment, creating a 'summary report' for each interview. These reports were cross-checked by the authors, enhancing validity (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Green, 2001) and creating

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confidence in the trustworthiness to the participants' claims (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In conducting a comparative analysis of summary reports, 'codes' emerged and a completed code template (the 'code book') was created with the focus on value creation. Based on grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), a model of value creation was developed.

4. Findings

Emerging from the rich interpretive data were clear patterns of variation in how international staff create value in the context of HE industry. Four themes emerged: 1) Dynamic mobility experiences; 2) Value-in-experiences; 3) Value construction; and 4) Customer centricity in value creation. This section is structured around these themes and their hierarchical subthemes.

4.1. Dynamic Mobility Experiences

As shown in Table 4, this theme comprises three second-order subthemes: *individual experience; interrelated experience and mental experience.*

Initial codes (1st order)	**Extended codes (2nd order)**	**Illustrative quotations**
Mobility experiences	Individual experience (e.g. independent of others)	*"going on a mobility for 2 months is not for everyone. After one week of 'sandpit' events, you are left all alone!"* (P14)
	Interrelated experience (e.g. networking events, collaborative research activities etc.)	*"it was great that also administrative staff participated in the events"* (P5) *"we formed a group of researchers who want to study the development of this research network"* (P12)
	Mental (feeling) experience (e.g. mood, emotion etc.)	*"hate the weather / spicy food"* (P18) *"very useful!"* (P20) *"great atmosphere during workshops"* (P5)

Tab. 4. Illustrative Quotations. Source: Own elaboration.

The analysis shows that secondees' experiences are complex and dynamic. During their overseas mobility, both individual and collective activities were undertaken. Individual experience reflects the activities undertaken independently. As indicated in the illustrative quotations throughout this section, secondees organised and managed their secondment themselves. These individual experiences are in contrast to interrelated experiences that, some interviewees believed, are 'direct interaction' or 'relationship' experiences. This type of experience can be obtained through formally or informally organised collective activities and events, such as officially delivered sandpit events and collaborative research activities. A few others had strong emotional feelings about adjustment and unpleasant experiences when living overseas. The selected direct quotations presented in Table 4 above clearly reflect that this type of mental experience had significant impact on secondees' mobility.

4.2. Value–in–Experience

No matter what their activity-based experience (individual or collectively) or mental experience, the findings show that three sets of values were embedded in a variety of secondees' experiences: 1) *individual vs shared value*; 2) *visible vs invisible value*; and 3) *one-off vs longitudinal value*.

4.2.1. Individual vs shared value

Some secondees believed that they benefited more from an individual perspective, others claimed that the most successful stories during their secondment largely relied on the collective activities they experienced. One of participants commented:

"One of my successful stories was that I conducted […] a systematic literature review in relation to 'talent management'. This enabled me to have a better understanding of the concept of 'entrepreneurship', which is my personal research interest area. That is why it is valuable that I participated in this mobility programme" (P16)

And another:

"A success? I managed to go through the ethical procedures, even though I thought it was impossible. Let's be honest, you do these things [mobilities] for yourself, not for others. Come on, do you do research for the university? Publish? Of course not!" (P3)

The difference in emphasising the 'shared value' is evident from the direct quotations from more participants:

"We used the breaks for discussions… they absorbed us so much that we almost forgot about our sandwiches! It was great that people from other faculties also participated in workshops." (P5)

"The most valuable and memorable event was the 'sandpit' I experienced." (P15)

"…. A night out with people involved in GETM3 project" and *"Andy's truck!"* (P1)

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"For me, the most successful event was the PhD meeting organised by the hosting institution: very useful in terms of shared research development". (P13)

4.2.2. Visible vs invisible value

Emerging as the second set of value, some mobility experiences triggered visible value participants can see. In an effort to participate in some activities and events, some secondees claimed that the outcomes of their overseas mobility can be explicitly stated and recorded. For example, one interviewee explained: "*One interview conducted with an HR person at Company A was very successful, it was planned for 40 minutes, but it lasted for more than one hour: very successful!"* (P2) Another secondee stated: "*I met 7 professors at the hosting institution, they introduced me to some books …. I also met the managers from the local SMEs"* (P16). In contrast, some interviewees described value as sometimes 'invisible'. This value perception may result in experience and capability. One participant explained that:

"when I went to Korea, it was the first time I had travelled outside Europe, and it was the first time I spent more than 2 hours on the plane …. How I am going to survive 8–9 hours on the plane? How will I find the right bus (to the university)?" (P13).

This trip was a completely new experience for her: the value comes from this 'objective' activity, although she cannot explicitly describe it.

4.2.3. One-off vs longitudinal value

Value can be categorised into one-off value and long-term value. According to interviewees' narratives, one-off value was appreciated as an end in itself. Whereas this type of value can be obtained from a one-off event, longitudinal value is instrumental in attaining some further and potential benefits towards achieving future goals and objectives. Almost every secondee claimed that they built up the networks during their secondments. Although 'immediate benefits' are invisible, 'continuous network impact (positive)' was expected by the participants. This is evident from the following quotations:

"I failed at collecting data… I felt frustrated and angry at the time. But now… I would have done it completely differently, I know what I did wrong" (P3)

"I met a colleague I had known before and he proposed we do some research together [unrelated to the project]. That was an unexpected side-effect of the mobility" (P12)

4.3. Influencing Elements in Value Creation

Two second-order codes (presented in Table 5) reveal influencing elements in participants' value construction: contextualisation (value is situational) and continuity (value is accumulative).

Initial codes (1st order)	Extended codes (2nd order)	Illustrative Quotations
Influencing element in value construction	*Context-sensitive in value construction* • Existing value system of the secondee • Status of the secondee • Background and roles of the secondee • Interaction: who they interacted with	*"I have been Korea several times …"* (P6) *"If I was a PhD student, I would have tried harder, but now I don't have to"* (P3) *"I went on a mobility with a colleague of mine who is much younger than me. We didn't have much in common."* (P14) *"There was a lot of unnecessary stress coming from my home institution."* (P14)
	Time-frame in value construction • Before • During • After	*"I know a lot about the project, I participated in the kick-off meeting last year"* (P14) *"The meetings were busy, we talked a lot. I definitely improved my research skills during the workshops, I might use these methods in my research"* (P5) *"I proved to myself that I can go to another part of the world for 6 weeks. Now I can go to America or some distant locations"* (P13)

Tab. 5. Illustrative quotations underpinning value construction themes. Source: Own elaboration.

All participants acknowledged that value is subjective and is accumulated at multiple levels. According to them, both experiences and perceived value are closely linked to a 'certain context'. In their mind, value is always put into a context of some kind. For example, participants' personal and existing value system, role and background, and their status, even who they stayed with: all factors influence their value formation. Therefore, the formation process is related and bound to the context.

The analysis also indicated that value construction is an on-going process and may be staged. It is interesting to note that the majority of secondees interviewed identified their subjectively constructed value developed either before or during stages of their international mobility. Only one claimed that value construction for their secondment was a part of life beyond. It

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is created not just through activities which have already ‘happened’ and feelings experienced, but also the reflections on these experiences and emotions. Consistent with the emerging ‘longitudinal value’ theme, the findings reveal a clear message that, when value creators’ status changes with time, they may recall their past experiences to re-frame, re-construct and recognise further value.

4.4. Secondees Centricity in Value Creation

Finally, the analysis revealed the roles of institutional support and individuals in value creation. The findings show two categories: passive value creators (dependent) and active value creators (independent). First, it was found that all the secondees interviewed envisioned needing to embrace the institutional resources (e.g. information, accommodation, facilities). However, some of them overemphasised these tangible resources, ignoring the fact that ‘a person’ can be more ‘active’ during the value-generating process rather than being ‘passive’. One participant, for example, emotionally felt ‘isolated’ and perceived a ‘lack of support from the hosting institution’.

By contrast, others believed that whatever the types of value (e.g. relationship value; longitudinal value; shared value etc.), value was created actively by the individual. It is embedded in the ‘objective’, value creators have to deliberately discover it, create it, then interpret and construct it through active engagement either individually or collectively. One secondee claimed that she ‘*prepared some basic information*’ [P14] for other secondees coming from her institution; went to other cities in the host country, stayed at a temple and visited a bamboo forest during her spare time. It is evident from these findings that value can emerge in participants’ ordinary, extraordinary, expected and unexpected activities during international mobility. How to actively and innovatively create and interpret these activities in value creation is vital as value does not only emerge in the ‘interactive process’ but can be generated from an individual’s ecosystem of life.

5. Discussion

This study elucidates how value can be created through international staff mobility in the HE industry. Previous research has acknowledged the importance of managerial support from institutions and motivations of participating international staff mobility (Pearse & Quan, 2015) and emphasises an important role of the service provider and ‘value-in-use’ (Holbrook, 2006; Bitner et al., 2008). In this study, we have investigated how staff involved in international mobility create value from ‘value-in-experience’ from a CDL perspective. Derived from our findings, Figure 2 provides a summary of our proposed process model.

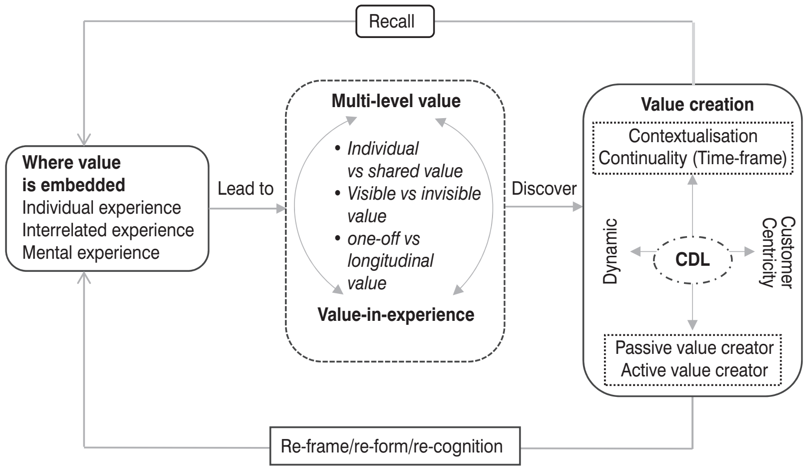

Fig. 2. A dynamic model of value creation from CDL perspective. Source: own elaboration.

It is evident that despite the fact that all participants in mobility were given a similar opportunity, they experienced different results and had varied success in creating value. This is in line with previous value creation literature stating that value is a subjective, relative, preferential, interactive, higher abstract construct and of cognitive and affective nature (Sanchez-Fernandez & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2006). We emphasise the fact that value is highly dependent on the context and its creation is a longitudinal process, embedded in a "customer's" life and ecosystem (Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013).

In the case of staff mobility in HE, the main context of our study, we observed that the participants' value creation process was strongly affected by their family and work situation back at home, as well as their personality, previous experiences, needs and expectations. However, no single conclusion can be drawn from these observations, as the result of these influences varied. For example, some people made preparations that proved to be useless and led to frustration; others were unprepared but enjoyed every moment of the mobility, believed that they had learned a lot and contributed significantly to the project; some people had visited the country previously but had negative experiences during the mobility, others did not. This is further evidence that the value creation process is very subjective.

Finally, despite this subjectivity, value is a phenomenon whose creation/emergence is socially constructed and experienced. The presence of other people can enable and catalyse, as well as inhibit, value creation. It is also a process that can be characterised as ongoing and continues long after

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a particular event is finished. It seems that revisiting our experiences and reflecting upon them helps in obtaining a higher positive value.

6. Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, it is clear that an experiential-phenomenological stream is critical in studying 'value creation' from a CD logic perspective. Customers placed at the centre of value creation can create and select their own experience, choosing what types of experience to seek out and reflect on. Value can be formulated not only through interaction with others but also through customers' own variety of individual experiences and activities.

6.1. Managerial Implications

Our findings have important and direct implications for managers of HE, organisational culture, and beyond. The assumption that all international experience is positive is false. Indeed, the nature and extent of value creation through international mobility is very largely down to the individual and particular context of the experience. This makes it less 'manageable' by organisations and more reliant upon the selection of individuals, with previous performance clearly indicative of the future. The results of this study highlight the importance and influence of a reflection after returning 'home' – which could be facilitated – and the openness to failure and learning in both the individual and the organisation.

6.2. Limitations and Direction for Future Research

One limitation of this study is the use of post-event interviews as the main source of data. They are subjective and time-bound. Other research methods could be considered, such as a longitudinal real-time analysis (e.g. conducting three real-time sub-interviews at before, during and after stages for each individual secondee). Also, a follow-up study should perhaps separate interviewees either with rich or less international mobility experience. Taking this contextual factor into consideration, we can probably benefit from gaining an in-depth understanding of value creation.

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