

Value Cocreation of Cultural and Creative Industries Driven by Digital Transformation: A Case Study of EB

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Abstract

Cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are one of the most rapidly developing business sectors globally. Rapid developments in science and technology have required CCIs to adjust to meet the challenges of digital transformation by providing opportunities for value cocreation with partners. The present study investigated the Taipei CCI EB as a case study of digital transformation, using primary and secondary sources to analyze how this firm employs digital platform strategies to achieve value cocreation among brand suppliers and how this digital transformation has reshaped its organizational operations and partner relationships. This study established an organizational framework comprising inclusive values, digital platform services, and cultural resources to provide a reference for CCIs struggling with digital transformation and value cocreation. It revealed that EB develops designs grounded in Taipei cultural imagery to create products that capture the essence of its cocreated “New Chic Taste” brand. This study extends the theoretical applications of service-dominant logic by demonstrating functions as an intermediary mechanism for integrating cultural resources and value cocreation. This study also addresses a gap in the literature regarding exploration of how cultural content generates value on digital platforms, how resources are transformed on such platforms, and how connections are formed as value is cocreated. Additionally, this study illustrated the considerable flexibility and innovation exhibited in EB’s organizational structures, resource allocation, and customer interaction model. Furthermore, this study proposed several strategic recommendations, such as cultural media resources through digital platforms that integrate novel cultural elements to support innovative service models. Finally, this study provides recommendations for CCIs to develop a collaborative framework involving flexible interdepartmental and cross-brand coordination.

Keywords

Value Cocreation, Digital Transformation, Digital Platform, Cultural and Creative Industry, New Chic Taste

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Motivation

1.1.1. Cultural and Creative Industries Facing the Challenges of Digital Transformation

Cultural and creative industries (CCI) are one of the most rapidly expanding business sectors globally, and governments have begun to recognize the value of CCIs as a catalyst of social and economic progress. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CCIs experienced severe disruptions to their business. As they explored strategies to adapt, the pace of their digital transformation quickened (Lazić, 2023). In undergoing digital transformation, the CCIs have often been limited by their lack of familiarity with technological and market trends, the value to be created from digital transformation, use of data to improve business, and the implementation of online-merge offline (OMO) practices. The development of the digital economy and the integration of e-commerce with physical retail and OMO have created crucial opportunities for traditional physical retailers to expand their market share and sales. E-commerce platforms enable businesses to expand their sales services and revenue streams, facilitating the development of local microeconomies (Yang, 2024). they must adopt a “trial, pause, and go” approach involving implementation, reflection, and adjustment.

Micro CCIs are encouraged to adopt digital transformation, primarily through group initiatives or mass counselling sessions led by dominant firms. However, scholarly evidence on the unique challenges faced by micro CCIs during the implementation of digital transformation remains limited. There is a scarcity of information on how entrepreneurs manage the digital transformation of branded micro CCIs.

Although micro CCIs contribute substantially to economic development and cultural sustainability (UNCTAD, 2022), several face ongoing challenges as the pace of digital transformation increases, such as a lack of resources, unclear strategies, and value chain breakdowns (Lerro et al., 2022; Lazić, 2023). Currently, the digital value cocreation practices of CCIs are sporadic and lack a comprehensive framework (Appio et al., 2021; Lazzeretti et al., 2022). This problem directly affects the effective integration of online and offline resources, the promotion of continued practitioner participation, and the establishment of collaborative models involving multiple participants using shared digital platforms (Lerro et al., 2022). These challenges warrant further investigation.

1.1.2. Value Cocreation under Digital Transformation

Research has demonstrated that incorporating art elements in product designs or

marketing strategies in digital environments can promote positive attitudes and purchase intentions in consumers (Hagtvedt & Brasel, 2016). Such an increase in goodwill and purchase intentions can help businesses establish unique positions in competitive markets. The value created by digital transformation—whether in CCIs or other industries—is derived from service exchange processes. Adopting exchange models or structuring exchanges around the user experience reframes cultural creativity from a static source of appreciation to a dynamic social resource. However, cultural value cannot be determined as products are being designed; rather, it emerges from user interactions (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

1.2. Research Motivation and Research Question

This study adopted the theoretical perspectives of digital transformation and value cocreation to investigate the digital transformation process of micro CCI cluster firms. A leading manufacturer's digital transformation processes was explored, and their reasons for undergoing digital transformation were examined.

What enables leading CCI brand cluster businesses to undergo digital transformation together?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is an innovation-driven developmental strategy that guides the transformation of enterprises through the application of digital technologies. Bharadwaj et al. (2013) observed that digital strategies fundamentally influence commercial strategies, business processes, resource allocation, core organizational abilities, product and service integration, and relationships between key partners within business networks.

Matt et al. (2015) argued that the adoption of early-stage information technologies typically involves a focus on basic information technology infrastructure and has limited influence on commercial development. By contrast, digital transformation involves all an organization's structures and processes. Such transformation extends across an enterprise's boundaries; comprehensively reshapes strategies, products, technologies, services, and commercial models; and is required to align with an enterprise's objectives. If the core business maintains its competitive edge, the urgency of digital transformation is reduced and the organization can invest fewer financial resources in it.

An enterprise functions as an ecosystem, and its internal interdependent relationships provide a framework for its competitive strategies. In digital ecosystems, digital technologies and their associated data must be activated and interconnected to function (Mohan & Piskorski 2020).

Digital monopolies do not operate in isolation but affect both companies and stakeholders (Henriette et al., 2015). Henriette et al. (2015) contended that the process of digital transformation involves an enterprise's ability to digitally transform its operations, resource allocation, organizational structures, and connections

with internal and external users as it transforms commercial models. Such changes also help with coordinating the interactive relationships among stakeholders within the organization. Simultaneously, appropriate structures must be established to design and support digital transformation activities. Through the introduction of digital technologies and disruption of traditional value-creation activities, digital transformation establishes new organizational models that reshape production processes and intertask dependencies (Kretschmer & Khashabi, 2020).

The role of digital technologies in creating innovative platforms and their functions in the knowledge ecosystem (Fraser & Ansari, 2020; Nambisan & Baron, 2019); the integration of digital and nondigital assets to enhance production and services (Barrett et al., 2015); the changes in creative processes occasioned by digital transformation (Sedera et al., 2016); and organizational strategies and actions in response to digital transformation (Savino et al., 2017).

2.2. Digital Transformation of CCIs

CCIs are “trades or professions that originate from individual creativity, skills, and talents that have the potential to create wealth and employment opportunities through production and the use of intellectual property” (DCMS UK, 2001). CCIs produce “experience commodities that possess elements of creativity and deliver these commodities to the consumer market through mass retail” (Peltoniemi, 2015).

Many studies have focused on how CCIs adapt their products, services, and processes in response to digital transformation. Such adaptation involves collaboration with traditional businesses, integration into new business models, analysis of internal and external organizational boundaries, and reorganization of adaptive capabilities (Anderson et al., 2011; Hall & Johnson, 2009). Lerro et al. (2022) emphasized two major challenges posed by digital transformation: 1) An increase in digital participation: The number of new digital creators and platforms targeting novel commercial modes and regulatory frameworks has rapidly increased. 2) Reduced government support and charitable donations: this reduction has increased the urgency of creatively and digitally generating revenue, reshaping support channels for artists and creators. Li (2017) studied how digital technologies promote the creation of innovative CCI commercial models and explored how CCIs stimulate economic growth across sectors. His earlier study analyzed three categories of digital technologies—automation, extension, and transformation—to evaluate their effects on business model innovation (Li, 2007).

2.3. Value Cocreation

Porter (1996) introduced the concept of value chains, defining business as a series of value-generating activities and suggesting that value is the amount that a customer is willing to pay for an enterprise’s products or services. Brandenburger and Stuart Jr. (1996) argued that value creation involves multiple participants—from

suppliers and enterprises to customers—in vertically aligned linear creative processes. According to this model, in the process of value creation, enterprises use resources to strategically increase their operational and production efficiency and satisfy consumer demands by providing inimitable and irreplaceable value in competitive markets (Barney, 1991; Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000).

In response to the growth of the innovation economy, Vargo and Lusch (2004) proposed SDL, regardless of whether an enterprise markets a tangible product, intangible information, or a service, all of its offerings must satisfy customer needs (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Vargo and Lusch (2016) observed that the process of value cocreation involves resource integration and that all recipients of reciprocal services require broader positioning—that is, they cannot be viewed merely as static consumers or producers. The producer (enterprise) and the consumer (customer), traditionally considered the producers and recipients of value, respectively, become equal participants and actors in value chains. Coordinating these participants and actors transforms value cocreation processes into a mutually interdependent service-dominant ecosystem.

According to Lusch and Nambisan (2015), digital platforms catalyze multilevel interactions among participants and serve as digital information resources that facilitate direct involvement in social or market structural changes. Participants in CCIs can effectively integrate resources by using such platforms. Because they promote participants' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral participation, digital platforms can enable consistent service delivery across digital and physical spaces, activities, and processes. This continuity encourages ongoing interactions among participants. Digital platforms thus facilitate joint action physically or virtually among participants and organizations in value chains to cocreate digital value and establish norms, regulations, habits, and systems as the foundation of cultural service ecosystems.

Studies have highlighted the importance of inclusivity in CCIs and digital ecosystems. A CCI involves integrating human resources, organizational structures, skills, and shared information to create service system environments that generate cultural value. Nevertheless, human actors and digital products can only participate in such service interactions when digital platforms become operational resources (Storbacka et al., 2016). Digital platforms thus strengthen the joint use of shared resources in integrated activities (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015).

Such platforms enable participants from different environments—in virtual or physical spaces and in processes or activities—to maintain consistent service exchanges. SDL suggests that digital platforms can support cultural and organizational service ecosystems by facilitating experiential exchanges that promote digital value cocreation (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015). When resources within an organization are connected through a shared system, common value is created from the tendency to exchange service experiences through the organization, forming a cultural service ecosystem. Managers of organizations must create a service infrastructure that acts as a unified and consistent point of contact for value creation

through which users participate and act as cocreators. The digital transformation of CCIs has reconfigured their value chains. For example, digital technologies have altered creative processes by providing users and consumers with opportunities to actively participate in production processes.

The present study explored how value cocreation is achieved through participants' collaborative efforts. From the perspectives of SDL, integration, and interaction, products are endowed with resources and functions that create experiential value for consumers. Furthermore, service ecosystem operational models promote value cocreation through a combination of SDL, resource integration, and participant interactions (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).

3. Methods

Yin (1993) argued that case studies are well suited to investigating underexplored topics. Through case studies, actors and events can be analyzed, and their underlying processes and reasoning can be deconstructed. Benbasat et al. (1987) identified three advantages of case studies: they enable investigations in uncontrolled situations, facilitate theory generation from real-world observations, and clarify complexity, offering insights into similar actors or events.

3.1. Case Study & Selection

The present study employed the perspectives of digital transformation and value cocreation to explore how a CCI case underwent digital transformation and cocreated value with its brand cluster partners.

In *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, Yin (2003) outlined the rationale for selecting a case study and provided theoretical and methodological examples suited to each form of case study research. The present study selected Taipei's most representative print design brand, EB, for its case study for several reasons: 1) specificity: EB's a unique example of successful digital transformation; 2) centrality: EB's digital transformation provides critical insights into the real-world applicability of theories of digital transformation; and 3) representativeness: EB is a representative CCI that exemplifies common CCI responses to digital transformation.

The data collected in this study can be categorized into primary and secondary source data. This study employed qualitative interviews to collect detailed primary data (Patton, 1987). This study explored EB's digital transformation processes in depth. Secondary data were sourced from EB's case work and official records, including from websites, newspaper and magazine interviews, and production reports. Finally, a thematic analysis of these sources was conducted, revealing salient themes. To ensure accuracy, this study conducted a content validity analysis on the primary interview data, secondary data, and participant observations. The interview data served as the principal data source and were supplemented by the secondary data. All interviewees were asked the same questions, which facilitated cross-validation of the data (Cardinal, Sitkin, & Long, 2004).

3.2. Case Analysis Framework

The present study adopted the theoretical foundations of digital transformation and value cocreation to construct an analytical framework, with reference to the digital transformation strategic planning framework of Correani et al. (2020). Kretschmer and Khashabi (2020) noted digital transformation to have a substantial influence on organizational processes, and Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2018) and Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) have observed that during digital transformations, the mutual interactions among participants create value. The case analysis framework, as shown in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1. Case analysis framework.

4. Case Briefing

4.1. Company Introduction

EB was established in 2008 in Taipei's Datong District. It provides three types of services: printed fabric products, silkscreen printing courses, and customized corporate gifts. In addition to selling its own "EB Together" brand, EB invited 20 local handicraft design brands to sell their wares in dedicated spaces in its stores. Moreover, EB integrated a coffee shop and handicraft sales into the shopping experience, providing consumers with a uniquely local designer lifestyle brand experience. Furthermore, EB products are available at more than 10 physical locations, and EB operates its own website and e-commerce platform. Recently, EB has focused on developing customized corporate gifts and brand licensing services.

4.2. Digital Transformation of EB

This collaboration established purchase, sales, and inventory management system for raw materials, products, and semifinished products as well as an OMO point-of-sale system, a membership data management system, and a customer relationship maintenance system.

EB's brand marketing departments and brand directors oversee data interpretation and analysis through these systems. EB receives government subsidies for its digital transformation, and it encourages its partners to use the common "New Chic Taste" brand to codevelop creative products, produce a designer lifestyle

brand with Taipei cultural characteristics, increase brand-name value, and attract consumers who prioritize quality living and cultural identity. Participating micro CCIIs in the New Chic Taste brand are Oringo, Wednesday Ceramics, Small House Miniroof, Ware Way, and Stay Parenting Workshop.

5. Findings and Discussion

Since EB began its digital transformation in 2017, the company has gradually accumulated substantial professional knowledge and developed accurate market insights that enable it to understand the preferences of consumers and respond to changes in market trends. This experience enables EB to continue producing innovative designs and maintain high quality production standards. In the beginning of 2024, recognizing collaborating partners' inability to understand their customers' profile, EB's chief executive officer (CEO) invested in digital transformation and shared insights from precision marketing with partner firms, establishing a data-sharing mechanism to enhance the customer experience on EB's digital platform.

EB began network marketing early and encountered numerous e-commerce challenges. The company established its flagship store in Taipei City. In addition to selling its own branded products, the company invited more than 20 Local design and handicraft brands to sell their wares in its store. Leveraging its collaboration experience with partner brands, EB promoted value cocreation by organizing the "Jointly Creating a Chic Lifestyle Brand" project and proposed data sharing among cluster members to help them rapidly acquire consumer information, adjust pricing strategies through its digital platform, and expand their market influence through common brand management.

Relieving Stakeholder Concerns. Independent designer brands and micro lifestyle brand manufacturers often depend on third-party platforms or temporary marketplaces to sell their products, rendering direct interactions with consumers and feedback collection a challenge. Because they lack direct sales channels and professional data-analysis tools, numerous independent designer brands cannot effectively collect and analyze consumer data, which limits the effectiveness of their product development, market positioning, and marketing strategies.

In this study's interviews, cluster member described how they used EB's digital platform to enhance marketing insights: "I share market trend reports, backend data reports, charts, and visual dashboards at each regular meeting to let EB know about the design style or color of upcoming products. On the basis of these reports, EiB provides advice on product development to help me address blind spots in my response to consumer behavior." The CEO of EB also noted, "Through analyzing the browsing history and click behavior of customers on the platform, we can understand whether customers accept and are willing to pay our prices, which helps us ensure that our products are affordable. Designers also frequently launch a variety of products on the platform, which enhances the fun and freshness of the customer shopping experience."

The present study demonstrated that EB leverages its experience with collaborating cluster members to propose value propositions and employs data-sharing mechanisms to help cluster members jointly achieve their overall goals through digital transformation. This finding is consistent with SDL, which posits that competitive firms must present a value proposition to thrive (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Additionally, the present study revealed that integrating digital thinking into an enterprise's vision and mission can help operationalize these concepts. Finally, outlining a digital transformation blueprint before implementing digital transformation strategies can facilitate such transformation References (Correani et al., 2020).

Establishing a Service Innovation Model. After undergoing digital transformation, EB transitioned to a customer-oriented activity provider through its digital platform services, redefining its product manufacturing and service vision. All EB activities are informed by data-driven insights into customer preferences, disrupting traditional value-creation models and competitive dynamics (Bughin & Van Zeebroeck, 2017). Through EB's digital platform, EB and cluster manufacturers can easily obtain real-time information enabling them to enhance customer satisfaction, which strengthens cluster partner resilience, their competitiveness, and their sustainability.

EB's emphasis on customer-oriented activities is consistent with findings in the literature on digital transformation. For example, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) proposed that value creation is based on customer experiences and that value is cocreated through interactions between manufacturers and customers. This does not necessarily mean that manufacturers are vendors of experiences; rather, it means they provide a contextual environment for customer experiences. Payne et al. (2008) suggested that value cocreation involves the joint discovery of value as customers and manufacturers communicate and coordinate; during this joint pursuit of value, consumers and producers create additional value. Therefore, EB's practice of providing services to customers and its partners enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty, creating a win-win situation for customers and partner manufacturers.

6. Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

6.1. Conclusions

The literature on digital transformation has yet to address several theoretical and practical gaps regarding how CCIs achieve value cocreation through multifactor collaboration.

Specifically, the literature has not addressed resource integration and exchanges among micro CCIs, actor participation, and value cocreation mechanisms. The present study filled these gaps by conducting a case study of EB and its partners to explore the value cocreation behaviors of micro CCIs and the behavioral models they adopt in the digital transformation process. This study also provided a theoretical foundation and practical guidance for CCIs seeking to implement

digital transformation and value cocreation mechanisms.

This study constructed an analytical framework integrating organizational value propositions, digital platform services, and cultural resources to illustrate how CCIs promote value cocreation practices among brand suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders through digital transformation strategies. Additionally, this study demonstrated that EB, through its New Chic Taste series of shared branded products based on cultural imagery, successfully cobranded goods and services with a local style aesthetic, transforming to add value to products to the core of a value cocreation process that drives brand collaboration and customer participation. Moreover, the digital transformation of EB and its subsequent leadership of the digital transformation of its partner manufacturers exemplifies an innovative platform-oriented and culture-driven organizational reform strategy.

6.2. Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

This study also analyzed the influence of digital transformation on EB's internal and external operations. The principal theoretical contributions of this study are as follows.

First, it expands the theoretical scope of value co-creation under a service-dominant boundary, viewing design and culture as core resources for digital transformation. Second, this study responds to the call from Lerro, Schiuma, and Manfredi (2022) to expand the application of cultural creative industry theory. They reported that research on the digital transformation of cultural creative industries mainly focuses on the introduction of technological tools and the transformation of marketing practices, with little exploration of how cultural content generates value, transforms resources, and creates connections on digital platforms.

This study also proposes the following practical recommendations for promoting digital transformation and value cocreation on data-sharing platforms:

1) Joint exploration of digital transformation in CCIs to establish value cocreation frameworks: The framework proposed in this study can benefit micro or small and medium sized CCIs with limited resources. The proposed digital-platform-based value cocreation framework can be used to establish cultural brands and extend service ecosystems in response to surging digital demand. Through interdisciplinary integration, task-oriented collaborative projects, and customer-participatory design, enterprises can create products and services with cultural depth and market responsiveness and practice sustainable cultural innovation. 2) Expansion of market influence through cobranding: Leading manufacturers should share information and data with cluster partners and provide precision marketing for customer groups to improve shopping experiences, market insights, and organizational adaptiveness. Through digital marketing, cluster partners can integrate cultural value and provide customers with personalized recommendations, establishing platforms that offer value-differentiated services.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Future studies should include other types of CCIs in different regions to facilitate multicase comparisons and evaluate the generalizability of the proposed framework to other contexts. Such comparisons could be used to establish a standard model of corporate digital transformation.

Future research should expand the sample size to enable horizontal comparisons or conduct quantitative tests by using the proposed analytical framework to deepen the theory and practice of digital transformation and value cocreation among CCIs. Furthermore, other emerging technologies, such as generative AI, immersive media, and Web 3, may also profoundly affect the digital transformation of CCIs. Future research should examine how the evolution of such technologies affects SDL and value cocreation and evaluate the adaptability of production and marketing strategies leveraging cultural resources to rapidly evolving industry dynamics.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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