

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Have you ever had a service encounter feel like a job? New research in the *Journal of Service Research* examines consumers' coproduction journeys when using expert services. The paper, titled "*Consumers on the Job: Contextualization Crafting in Expert Services*," draws on the marketplace reality of "consumer responsabilization" (the trend of firms shifting more responsibilities to consumers). Thus, consumers may face potentially burdensome work in coproduction efforts. Two studies, conducted in healthcare and financial services contexts, find that consumer efforts are indeed 'job-like' and require consumers to engage in strategies resembling those of employees. Upon this foundation, three **novel findings for service research and theory** emerged:

- (1) Expert service research typically focuses on the expertise of the service provider (healthcare provider, financial advisor, etc.). This work introduces the important distinction between two types of expertise: *content* (technical) expertise which rests primarily with service providers and consumers' *context* (situational) expertise which is specific to their unique circumstances. This work finds that consumers leverage their *context* expertise to adapt a service provider's *content* expertise to their unique circumstances—the heart of the new concept of "*Consumer Contextualization Crafting*." In juxtaposition to the traditional assumption that expert service providers drive consumer (wellbeing) outcomes, this research observes that consumers' *contextual expertise is even more critical to wellbeing*, an insight new to service research.
- (2) Shedding light on *how* the burden of job-like service coproduction is negotiated, the authors uncover three strategies ('hacks') for contextualizing providers' content expertise in light of their consumers' life conditions: *seeking supervision, developing scaffolding,*

and *adopting an entrepreneurial mindset*. Identifying these strategies reveals nuanced insights into specific consumer actions and responses to coproduction jobs.

- (3) Because service research is scant regarding how consumers move through service journeys over time, the authors also explore the fluid process of consumers' contextual crafting and discover six distinct (positive and negative) movements that shift consumers *toward* or *away from* wellbeing outcomes along their service journeys.

These findings not only enrich service theory, but they also point to **managerial implications**:

- (1) Service firms need to recognize the relevance of consumers' context expertise and crafting in order to successfully coproduce services. Managers must understand that coproduction does not end with the customer-provider encounter—rather, this is only where it begins. Firms should carefully design novel forms of customer support, through supervision and scaffolding infrastructures.
- (2) Providers should heighten their level of context expertise so that they can (i) understand how certain contexts in consumers' lives affect their coproduction and wellbeing, and (ii) cocreate strategies that align with and minimally disrupt their customers' contexts accordingly. This implication goes far beyond the existing (one-sided) focus on consumer *content* expertise, such as consumers' health literacy or financial literacy.
- (3) This research also recognizes triggering events that move consumers toward or away from wellbeing along the service coproduction journey. Therefore, firms should track consumer movements in order to identify specific triggers and consider interventions to (i) counteract negatively-valenced movements and (ii) boost positively-valenced movements that affect consumer wellbeing.