

Value Co-Capture in B2B Platforms: A Case Study in the Tavern Sector in South Africa



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Research submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business

Johannesburg, 2023

DECLARATION

I, Boipelo Mekgwe, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Name: Boipelo Mekgwe

Signature:



Signed at Morningside

On the 21st day of August 2023

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my beloved and ever-so-amazing son when Mama started this Master's journey; you were just a little gorgeous toddler and still breastfeeding. I almost gave up but looked at you and found inspiration. You have grown and really given me the strength to finish what I started despite the ups and downs that come with life, thank you for being the most consistent part of my life, and thank you for being my North Star Boitshepo. With more time on our hands, I look forward to pouring quality time back into our lives; you are the most precious gift and responsibility ever bestowed upon me. Thank you for choosing me to be your Mama my “Sonshine” the brightest light in my life. I love you dearly Poke.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank my God, YAHUAH for the gift of life and the ability to ensure that I finish my studies. I am the clay, and You are my potter. Thank you for moulding me in this journey and seeing me through it.

I would also like to thank my supervisor for his continued support, patience, guidance, and correction throughout the course of my studies. You are appreciated, Professor Nixon. I never told you how thankful I was to be gifted with an academic mind that looks like me, it is rare and to me, it serves a deeper purpose: showing our generations to come that it is possible and has been done. You are smart but, it was your strict yet gentle way of working that got me to keep going whenever I stumbled.

I would also like to thank my family for your continued support during my studies. I know it was not easy with me missing out on some key occasions, but you made it worthwhile and kept encouraging me: more especially my beautiful prayer warrior, Mama. When you furthered your education later in life with three children, a demanding career, and an amazing husband, my beloved Daddy: I had no excuse, Dikeledi Rapudungoane: I love you. Thank you for praying and keeping me sane in this process. Thank you for giving me permission to go for my dreams and block out the noise when it came.

To my siblings and their better halves: Ipeleng, Thekiso, Phindy and Maruping: thank you for encouraging me to swim against the tide and just do it. My sis Ips, I remember reading your Master's dissertation and when it was my turn, you showed up, took my boy: well, your "favourite child" and stepped in to fill in my gaps despite international travels: I see you queen, thank you my darling. To Resego, Tshiamo, Reorapetse, Boineelo, Mellow and Reatilehile: the pieces of my heart: I hope this shows you some things take time but go for your dreams and make them happen anyways: in the end: I promise you will be rewarded for hard work. To my close tribe: Meido, Bonolo Mkonz, Shikara, Keba and Mrapper Tsholo thank you for holding me down and waiting patiently for me to finish this, your girl is back: let's celebrate.

ABSTRACT

The focus of the study is on value co-capture in B2B platforms: A case study in the FMCG sector in South Africa. The underlying issue is that small businesses in the FMCG sector are facing competition from established organisations and now require the use of information and technology systems to be competitive. AB InBev therefore created the BEES B2B platform to ensure that tavern owners amongst other businesses utilise technology to meet their aims and objectives. This study aims to determine how value co-creation can be realised by using the BEES application in the operations of tavern owners in the Gauteng Province. The research employed a qualitative approach to capture the opinions and perspectives of participants. The study utilised semi-structured interviews of 12 participants who were purposefully selected and gave consent to be participants.

Through deductive thematic analysis as the data analysis method, the study discovered that since the adoption of the BEES application by tavern owners, there has been a perceptible increase in the efficiency of business operations as well as a noticeable achievement in the retention of competitive advantage. This is through utilising features such as browsing to make purchases and review and feedback to ensure the effectiveness of the application. Tavern owners utilising BEES B2B, have enhanced service quality in their operations. From the study, it was discovered that despite the discernible advantages there are also technological challenges with the use of the application due to issues of cyber security and a lack of internet education. This has had an impact on the effective use of the application as most tavern owners are not technologically savvy. The use of the application is also challenging due to a lack of access to the internet by tavern owners. Access to the internet remains a challenge in the developing world as the internet is not equally shared and there are associated charges that impact the effective use of the internet by tavern owners. The use of the BEES platform is also difficult for users because of the complexity of its application. Additionally, the lack of educational qualifications of tavern owners profoundly impacts how they use the application and therefore affects how they comprehend such an important application. This study recommends that AB InBev enhance internet education and skills development for tavern owners. The rationale is that it will ensure that tavern owners understand effectively how they can utilise the application. There is a need to ensure that the application is user-friendly, and the study also advocates that a point system as a reward for the use of the application be utilised.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the study is to explore the concept of value co-capture by tavern owners who adopt B2B platforms seeking the sustainability of their businesses within the Gauteng township economy. It is the aim of the study to look at the value derived both by the platform provider, AB InBev, a global corporation together with tavern owners (TO) who operate their business in South African townships by selling beer directly to consumers of legal drinking age. Tavern owners are critical customer who link AB InBev to the end consumers of the alcohol products that they brew.

1.2 Background of the Study

Since South Africa's first reported case of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in March 2020, subsequent events such as lockdowns, social gathering restrictions and other mitigating measures have impacted the performance of businesses, including those operating in the informal sector (Vusi, 2020). In as much as informal businesses were facing challenges pre-coronavirus era, the arrival of the virus changed how business organisations had to operate which in turn posed a challenge to their competence and effectiveness (Omar, 2020). This meant that business organisations had to look for new and informed methods to operate and ensure that they achieve and retain competitive advantage within this new business environment. It is therefore the focus of this paper to investigate the business-to-business (B2B) platform approach as utilised by tavern owners in South Africa and the value co-capture emanating from this approach.

Vinod and Gagandeep (2020) are of the view that a B2B approach stems from one business making a commercial transaction with another and this typically occurs when the business is sourcing materials for their production processes for output, a business requires the services of another for operational reasons or when a business re-sells goods and services produced by others. This is the conventional method of conducting business by tavern owners in South Africa who re-sell beer to their customers within their communities. Murray (2021) therefore argues that adopting the B2B approach is important because each business needs to purchase products and services from other businesses to launch, operate and grow.

Small businesses are critical to the socio-economic development of South Africa as they employ more than 85% of the population (Stats SA, 2021). Small businesses ensure that there

is poverty reduction, employment creation and general achievement of sustainable development goals (OECD, 2020). Be that as it may, the development trends in South Africa have challenged the operations of informal businesses including tavern owners as local malls and small shopping centres are being constructed (Statistics South Africa, 2020). These infrastructures attract big brands and challenge the operations of small businesses that must compete with such enterprises. This situation was further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic which affected the operations of informal business enterprises.

Frustrated by the impact on their businesses by prohibitions imposed on the sale of alcohol in 2021, the National Liquor Traders Council (NLTC), which represents more than 34 000 tavern owners wrote an open letter to President Cyril Ramaphosa, advocating for alcohol sales for livelihoods to be protected through the uncertainty and volatility of the economy in South Africa (News24, 2020). In this letter, supported by the National Liquor Traders Council (NLTC), a partnership plea was made to better address issues linked with irresponsible alcohol consumption and the negative effect of the sales ban on the sector.

With the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in South Africa, taverns could resume operations. They are now in dire need of solutions and programs to help them accelerate growth and recover from the deep challenges inflicted by this economic and social storm that hit the entire world. To this effect, AB InBev, the world's leading brewer of beer created a B2B platform called BEES with the intention of using technology to better service their customers, tavern owners being part of their customer base. The benefit that AB InBev highlights with BEES is that customers can realize growth in sales through the adoption of this platform.

AB InBev, the biggest single category fast moving consumable goods (FMCG) company in the world prides itself in its global purpose which is linked to selling beer sustainably, their purpose highlights the need to advance sustainability in countries where they operate, drive category leadership and innovation to meet ever-evolving customer and consumer requirements, use technology and data to link with customers and consumers and make a lasting impact in local communities around the globe in moments that matter the most. It is therefore the aim of this study to comprehensively investigate the use of this B2B platform in value co-creation within the FMCG industry in South Africa with reference to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province.

Be that as it may, tavern owners in South Africa are finding it difficult to comprehend this B2B approach in the form of the BEES platform and this poses a challenge to their development.

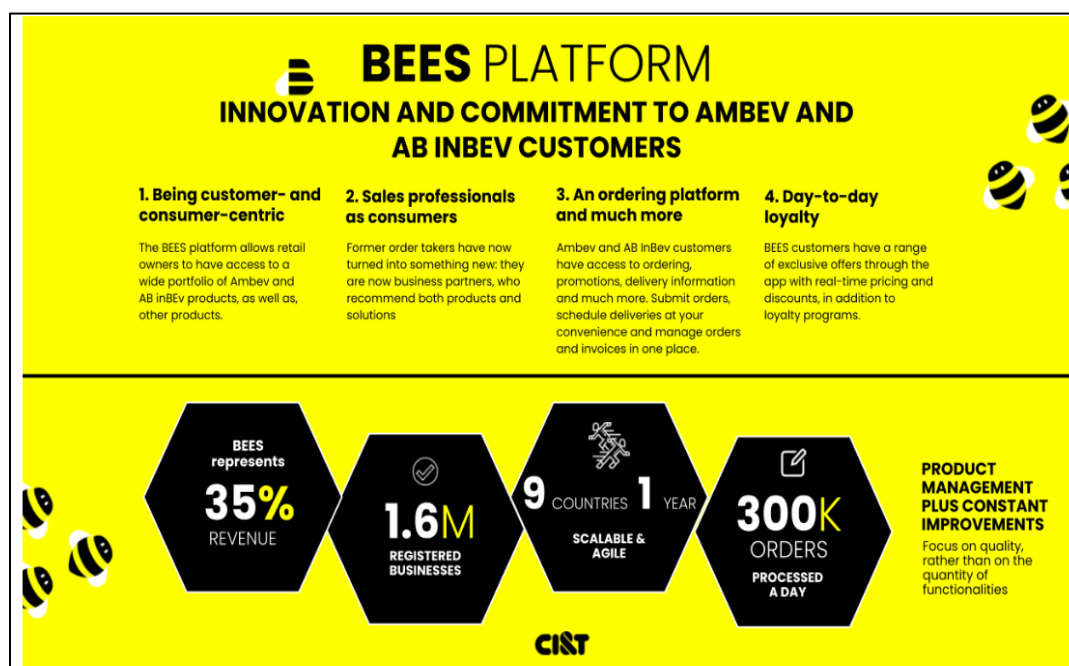
BEES approach is failing to add sustainable value to tavern owners as the latter may not have used technology solutions nor have access to ongoing training and expertise to ensure that they utilise this system effectively. In addition, tavern owners are still practising their conventional business methods of selling beer and not yet fully integrating this technology-led approach and methods that ensure development. There is a need therefore to integrate operations with the B2B platform approach which ensures effectiveness and development.

1.3 Context of the Study

BEES was created in Brazil in 2019 and launched in South Africa in 2020. In its simple terms, BEES is an application in which small and medium-sized business retailers can browse for products, place their orders, earn rewards, arrange for deliveries, manage invoices, and access business insights from all places. In other words, BEES is a mobile business-to-business application created for businesses that sell beer by allowing businesses to check the selection of beers available for sale while allowing them to place an order of the beer they sell the most and automatically re-order based on previous order history.

BEES' B2B platform is regarded as one of the most effective platforms that ensure that small businesses are accessing products and ensuring that they remain competitive and effective in the business environment (Johnston, 2021).

Figure 1.1: Features of BEES Platform



(Source: ciant.com 2021)

1.4 Research Problem

The adoption of BEES' B2B platforms for value co-capture in the South African FMCG sector is essential for development, yet taverns are still facing challenges based on the adoption of this platform in their business operations. The B2B platform aims at ensuring the development of systems, products, or services through collaboration with managers, employees, and other company stakeholders (Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010). As noted by Murray (2020), B2B platforms are facing a challenge in small businesses in creating value if there is a lack of adoption of such platforms. Furthermore, small business owners fail to comprehend the importance of B2B approaches and this limit on their effectiveness (Nerd, 2019). Small business owners are still practising conventional business methods in which they fail to integrate technology and other developments in their businesses, and this brings about challenges to their performance and lack of sustainable growth in the long term especially because small businesses operate in highly competitive environments, to survive, they must be innovative and do things differently.

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 Primary Research Question

The primary research question of the study interrogates:

- How value co-creation can be realised in B2B digital platforms?

1.5.2 Secondary Research Questions

The study answers the following questions:

- How is the adoption of BEES B2B platform important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province?
- What are the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa?
- How should the adoption of BEES B2B platform enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa?

1.6 Rationale of the Study

This study intends to add to the existing body of knowledge as it relates to e-commerce value co-creation in the township economy of South Africa. The objective of the study is to unpack

how e-commerce is used by SMEs, particularly tavern owners, what the adoption of the AB InBev B2B platform, BEES looks like and what value lies in providing this business tool to tavern owners. The study is about value co-capture so the value derived by AB InBev will be looked at too, it aims to look at how both the big corporation and the SME derive value through the B2B platform.

It is also the focus of the study to identify the challenges faced by tavern owners in the adoption of B2B platforms and propose interventions on how value co-capture can support business sustainability when organisations find themselves running their businesses more effectively and efficiently because of having this new technological platform. A conceptual framework will be created to assist corporate application developers, tavern owners, data analysts, marketing teams and sales managers in their respective roles. The framework will foster a deeper understanding of the interchanges between the parties.

The study will highlight factors to be considered when driving the adoption of B2B platforms in the township economy, therefore, contributing to the conversation of adopting e-commerce in SMEs to service consumers that increasingly get exposure to and perhaps start demanding more efficient ways to enjoy the end product, in this case being beer, when they want it, at the right price (value matters most in the township economy because there is less disposable income) and in the right way: consumers love a cold beer.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations of the study are those factors that will not be considered in the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The first boundary of the study is that the focus will not be on SMEs that do not sell beer, the township is full of small businesses offering many products and services, but this study is focused on the adoption of a B2B platform that was built for businesses that sell beer only. Furthermore, the study will focus on Gauteng-based tavern owners and not owners in the rest of the country. AB InBev has launched this app which tavern owners all over South Africa use, but the Gauteng tavern owners are more accessible for such a study, making the study possible to conduct within a year.

In addition, the study only focuses on Tavern owners who have ordered using the BEES App. B2B applications can be downloaded but not always used. To understand value co-creation, the app must be used by the tavern for at least three months because it takes time to become familiar with the app, unpack the features and see results.

The study focuses on the BEES B2B e-commerce platform only. Technology is ever-evolving, and many applications are launched to help businesses grow, scale or be available for consumers or customers. However, for this study, the BEES platform will be the chosen platform as it has been launched all over the world and focuses only on growing beer value and volume for AB InBev. Other applications will not feature here so that there is a clear focus on the industry, the customer, and the corporate relationship to unpack the value derived by both.

1.8 Definition of Terms

The focus of this section is on the definition of terms underpinning the study.

1.8.1 Business to Business Platform

Vinod and Gagandeep (2020) are of the view that B2B is a situation in which one business makes a commercial transaction with another, and this typically occurs when the business is sourcing materials for their production processes for output, a business requires the services of another for operational reasons or when a business re-sells goods and services produced by others. According to Chen, Mansa, and Courage (2020), B2B is a form of transaction between businesses, such as one involving a manufacturer and a wholesaler or a wholesaler and a retailer.

1.8.2 Value Co-creation

Value co-creation is the joint creation of value by the company and the customers, allowing the customers to co-construct the service experience to suit their context. It is a synergistic process of creating, delivering, and exchanging value with key actors that are involved in service consumption for mutual benefit (Vusi, 2020)

1.8.3 Tavern Owners

In the South African context, taverns refer to small, sometimes informal businesses that operate in townships focused on selling alcoholic beverages to consumers who are of legal drinking age. The tavern owners run and own these businesses (Rod, 2014)

1.8.4 BEES

BEES is an application in which small and medium-sized business retailers can browse for products, place their orders, earn rewards, arrange for deliveries, manage invoices, and access business insights centrally (BEES, 2022)

1.8.5 Value Co-capture

While value creation is all about the additional benefit created in transforming the input to output, value capture refers more to the ability of a business to ‘capture’ that value, as your retained profit. (Startup Sloth, 2021) In other words, value co-capture would then investigate the value captured by users of an e-commerce platform as well as the value captured by the creators of that very platform.

1.9 Assumptions

The following are the assumptions of the study.

- The value of the BEES app is seen more on AB InBev’s side than on the side of the tavern owner.
- AB InBev now has access to real-time data and insights based on the use of the app while tavern owners may still face adoption or challenges in the usage of the B2B App
- The use of the BEES B2B app could be challenging for tavern owners who are accustomed to manually ordering and paying for beer.
- Business sustainability for SMEs in the township economy is not affected by the adoption of B2B platforms.
- Respondents will not answer questions honestly if they are aware that the researcher was an employee of AB InBev.
- Respondents will answer the questions honestly when the consent form explains the nature of the study as well as the protection of anonymity and confidentiality.

1.10 Chapter Outline

The study is structured to include the following chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter focuses on the introduction in which aspects such as the background and purpose of the study, research problem, research questions, significance of the study and delimitations of the study are presented. The focus of this chapter is to present an introduction that also outlines the research problem.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The second chapter focuses on the literature review and theoretical framework as well as the presentation of the conceptual framework. The focus of this chapter is to define key terms underpinning the study as well as the relationship between research variables.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The chapter will focus on procedures and methods that will be adopted in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings from the study.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Results Chapter Four will seek to underscore the presentation of results underpinning the study.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings

In Chapter Five, the study will attempt to provide a robust discussion of the main findings from the research.

Chapter Six: Recommendations and Conclusions

The focus of the last chapter is the presentation of recommendations and conclusions from the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The focus of the previous chapter was on the introduction of the study on value co-creation because of the adoption of a B2B Platform: A case study in the South African FMCG sector. This chapter also highlights the literature review underpinning the study. The literature review is an important aspect of research studies as it helps present scholarly work and their views and findings towards the determination of the research problem. In addition, the importance of a literature review in research is that it focuses on the synthesis of information concerning research objectives through the presentation of the relationship between the variables in the study. This chapter, therefore, is purposefully structured to define concepts underpinning the study, the importance and impact of adopting B2B platforms for value co-creation, challenges towards the adoption of BEES B2B on value co-creation and interventions to enhance the effectiveness of BEES B2B on value co-creation to operations. The Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) theory and its relevance to the study will also be unpacked.

2.2 The Nature of Digital Platforms

According to Chen, Mansa, and Courage (2020), B2B is a form of transaction between businesses, involving a manufacturer and a wholesaler or a wholesaler and a retailer. This approach to business often refers to business transactions conducted between companies rather than between a company and an individual retailer. This is confirmed by Vinod and Gagandeep (2020) who are of the view that B2B is a situation in which one business makes a commercial transaction with another, and this typically occurs when the business is sourcing materials for their production processes for output, a business requires the services of another for operational reasons or when a business re-sells goods and services produced by others. B2B transactions tend to happen in the supply chain in which one organisation purchases resources from another to conduct business or enhance its growth and development (Gary, 2011).

The discourse of B2B is characterised by digital B2B platforms. As noted by Schwab (2016), Digital B2B platforms encompass all the digital communications, sales, commerce, and engagement channels that organisations can use to communicate with prospects, customers, employees, and colleagues. There are various B2B tools, and these include websites, videos, applications, and social media channels created to encourage B2B value and a direct connection between the platform owner and platform user, this is in the pursuit of achieving overall business growth for both partners.

Digital B2B platforms ensure that organisations can keep up with the market and in the process, enhance their competitive advantage, Grey (2022) argues that the main benefit of digital B2B platforms is that real-time transactions can be achieved. These platforms make the concept of 24/7 a reality as this technology has made data analysis and storage easier and more accessible to business organisations. The Economist Intelligence Unit in 2015 reported that 50% of organisations were ensuring real time transactions by using mobile phones. In this perspective, digital B2B platforms ensure that there is convenience on the part of the consumer and in the process enhance the competitive advantage of the organisation.

Accelerated product development is also another important element of digital B2B platforms. Lomate and Ramachandran (2021) argue that digital platforms have enhanced accelerated product development as large portions of data can be stored in the cloud, accessed, and used effectively. The importance of such storage is that information can be sourced for further improvements on what the organisation is offering. Accordingly, Gray (2022) argued that storing data is advantageous in analytics and decision-making processes as the more data an organisation has, the better placed that entity is at adding value to the products and services it is offering. Digital B2B platforms ensures that there are product reviews through online feedback and competitor analysis together with correct market segmentation and this provides an effective understanding of the product. Therefore, products that are developed best suit the needs and demands of customers (Lomate and Ramachandran, 2021).

Another advantage of digital B2B platforms is that they ensure that there is better customer interaction through web and mobile channels. Gray (2022) thinks that when businesses go under digital transformation, customers are interested in the simplicity and real-time services being offered. Technological advancements have the main goal of improving customer experience which has been made possible by digital platforms through shifting focus to customer needs, analysing data from customer interactions and utilising results to make meaningful changes. Data-driven organisations are more likely to acquire customers, retain customers and achieve a competitive advantage than those that do not utilise these platforms. Nerd (2020) also adds that digitalisation makes it easy to assist customers and achieve customer satisfaction.

2.2.1 Approaches to B2B Platforms

As noted by Lomate and Ramachandran (2021), B2B can be conducted through two different approaches. The first approach or model is the vertical B2B model which is generally oriented

to business. Vertical B2B organisations are those that provide goods and services within one industry (Virto, 2021). Figure 2.1 below presents the vertical B2B Model

Figure 2.1: Vertical B2B Model



(Source: Virto, 2021)

Vertical B2B specialises in a particular niche and as a result, the focus is aimed at allowing higher profits through a narrower customer base and more cost-effective marketing campaigns. The aim of utilising vertical B2B is that an entity can gain more experience and, in the process, improve its competitive advantage (Grey, 2022).

This model can be divided into two directions which are upstream and downstream. Producers and commercial retailers in this model can establish a supply relationship with upstream suppliers, including a manufacturer and form a sales relationship (Chen et al., 2020). A vertical B2B website can be like the enterprise's online store and through the website, an organisation can promote its products vigorously, efficiently, and comprehensively which enriches transactions as they help a customer understand the brand of the organisation (Lomate and Ramachandran, 2021). The website can also be used as a marketing tool which enables the organisation to expand and promote its transactions.

The advantage of utilising the vertical B2B approach is that organisations that grow using this approach gain a significant competitive advantage over competitors who do not utilise this

approach. Through utilising this approach, an organisation can gain expertise on trends in regulations, customer needs, requirements and compliance (Nerd, 2020). In addition, another advantage of this approach is a specialisation which helps in containing competition, sustaining higher prices, excel and be innovative. In addition, from a marketing perspective, the vertical B2B approach is more cost-effective as the narrow focus leads to better campaigns and a more unified marketing effort (Lomate and Ramachandran, 2021).

However, vertical B2B has its challenges. A specialisation in its approach to reach a potential market could potentially serve as a disadvantage in the application of the model. Virto (2021) argues that a smaller customer base may limit the revenue of the organisation. Furthermore, since vertical B2B approaches are utilised by entities that are content with the products they offer, lack of innovation can be another challenge as an organisation is likely to be satisfied with the current status quo and then may fail to develop services that are demanded by customers. Murray (2020) argues that customer needs are constantly changing, and organisations must ensure that they are working towards satisfying customer needs. However, through the application of a vertical B2B model, businesses may fail to innovate.

Another model for B2B is the horizontal B2B model which is the transaction pattern for the intermediate trading market. As noted by Murray (2020), this concentrates similar transactions of various industries into one place, as it provides an opportunity for trading for the purchase and supplier, typically involving companies that do not own the products and do not sell the products. It operates merely as a platform to bring sellers and purchasers together online (Chen et al., 2021). The better platforms created help buyers easily find information about the sellers and relevant information about products that are on the website. The horizontal B2B model, therefore, is an approach which seeks to maximise market outreach through catering to more customers across a wide spectrum of industries.

The horizontal B2B model does not target any particular industry but rather trade in different products and services across industries (Chen et al., 2020). The use of this platform is effective for through tending to a varying set of buyers, a large customer base can be achieved. This means that more revenue can be experienced, and an organisation also experiences fewer risks related to demand shortage (Virto, 2021). Furthermore, the horizontal model experiences fewer risks in fluctuating demand and organisations therefore are relatively immune to market changes that may significantly affect verticals. Murray (2020) further asserts that another advantage of the horizontal model to B2B is that it is a standardised approach that allows

businesses to operate at a large scale and in the process, minimise operational complexities and lowering production cost.

There are however challenges associated with the horizontal B2B approach. Chen et al. (2021) argue that operating on a horizontal marketplace does not allow an organisation to specialise in their products but rather grow through scale and expansion. This limits the revenue an organisation can achieve through specialisation. Furthermore, the relationship between service providers and customers is limited within this model. Companies that utilise this model barely have time to engage with customers and get to know their perspectives. Therefore, there is a limited relationship with the target audience in this approach (Virto, 2021).

2.3 Value Co-creation

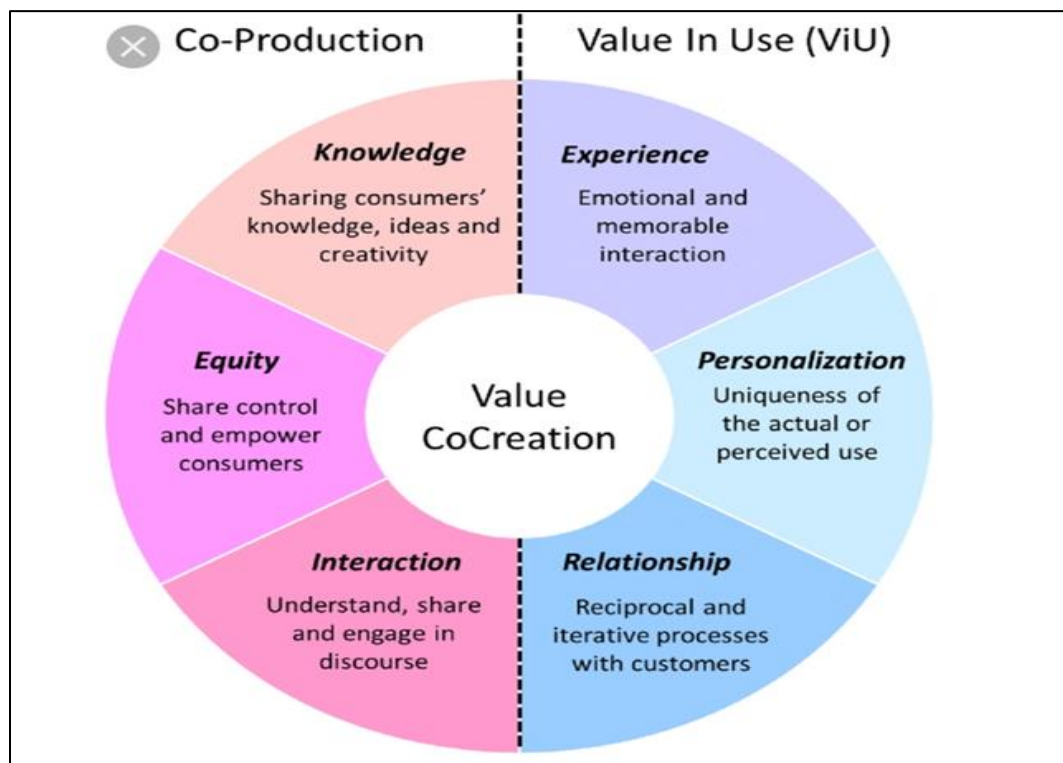
Value co-creation is the joint creation of value by the company and the customers, allowing the customers to co-construct the service experience to suit their context. It is a synergistic process of creating, delivering, and exchanging value with key actors that are involved in service consumption for mutual benefit (Vusi, 2020). To Merz et al (2018), value co-creation can be understood as the process in which organisations jointly create value from products and brands. It is therefore the process in which there is an enactment of interactional creation across interactive system environments (afforded by interactive platforms), entailing agency engagements and structuring organisations (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018). Value co-creation therefore is the process that describes the way actors behave, interact, interpret, experience, use and evaluate propositions based on the social construction of which they are a part. Value co-creation can therefore extend into future processes beyond the instant realm of exchange or without the direct intervention of another party (Ranajn and Read, 2016).

This understanding is confirmed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2020) which argues that value co-creation is the process in which an entity creates value by taking inputs from the capital and transforming these through various activities to come up with desirable output to services its stakeholders. Value co-creation is determined by the impact of the product or service as produced by the organisation and the impact on the company, stakeholders, and the community at large (Tommasetti et al., 2017). An analysis of the model as practised by the entity informs whether, to what extent, to whom and in what time scales value has been created or destroyed. The OECD (2020) therefore states that outcomes are judged on whether they have created value for the organisation, stakeholders, and the community. The reaction of these entities defines the effect of these outcomes.

Therefore, how all those constituencies experience the outcomes of an organization's business model informs an assessment of whether value has been created, and for whom.

Figure 2.2 below presents the six faces of value creation as tabulated by Tommasetti et al., (2017)

Figure 2.2: The Six Faces of Value Co-Creation



Source: Tommasetti et al., (2017)

As demonstrated by the figure above, value co-creation is based on the experience with the brand in which memorable and emotional interaction ensures that consumers are satisfied by the product or service offered (Tommasetti et al., 2017). Aspects such as personalisation where there is product differentiation satisfying the unique needs of consumers also detail value co-creation. The relationship that the brand has with customers and the interaction process also defines the effectiveness of value co-creation as consumer engagement and responsiveness by the brand must be ensured (Murray, 2020). Other aspects of value co-creation include equity where there is shared control and empowering of consumers as well as utilising the knowledge of consumers in the creation of a brand, product or service that adds value (Tommasetti et al., 2017). It is important to add that value co-creation for this study will be looked at from a B2B

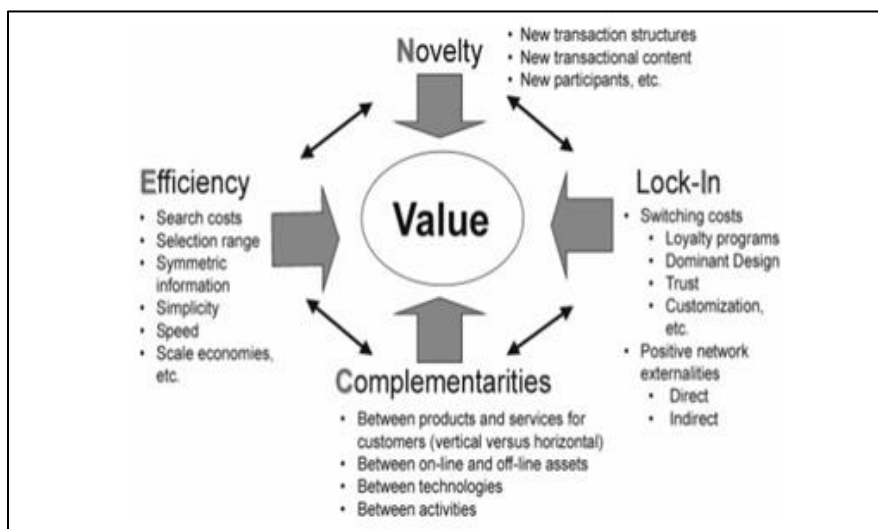
and not an end-consumer point of view. However, the overall principles observed will be applied to this endeavour.

2.4 Importance of adopting B2B Platforms for Value Co-creation

Overall, value in the Business-to-Business context is defined as an actor's subjective experience as an outcome of a co-creation process in which value propositions (a product, service, or solution) act as conveyors of potential value in the exchange processes between the organisation and the customer firms (Kohtamäki & Rajala, 2016). The importance of Value Co-Creation (VCC) in the B2B context has blown up, especially in the global, digitally connected, service-oriented, always-on and innovative economy (Pathak et al., 2020). Sheth (2020) argues that the co-creation of value is more prevalent in all B2B markets and almost universally inherent in B2B services. This VCC practice could manifest in various ways, e.g., co-design, co-conception of ideas and co-marketing (Frow et al., 2015).

Figure 2.2 below depicts the four sources of value creation in e-business that emerged from the data analysis. The term 'value' refers to the total value created in e-business transactions regardless of whether it is the firm, the customer, or any other participant in the transaction who appropriates that value. These four sources of value creation can therefore be leveraged to determine the importance of the BEES B2B platform in value co-creation.

Figure 2.3: Sources of value creation in B2B platforms



Source: Kohtamäki and Rajala (2016)

The importance of BEES B2B platform on value co-creation can be referenced from the lock-in perspective where an organisation can enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction. As noted by Boyde and Koles (2019), the lock-in approach in the B2B platform is managed through coming up with aspects that ensure that costs are minimised such as loyalty programmes, creating a dominant design to attract clients, building trust and customisation of goods and services. These ensure that customer service quality is achieved, and product differentiation as a result (Kohtamäki and Rajala, 2016). The lock-in approach also exhibits the creation of positive networks which are critical for building relationships between organisations in the B2B platform. Communication either through direct or indirect channels guarantees customer loyalty and satisfaction as customers perceive the organisation as catering and responding to their needs. This aspect of B2B therefore can help establish the importance of the BEES B2B platform in value co-creation.

BEES B2B platform is critical to value co-creation based on the feature of complementarities which is associated with B2B platforms. As noted by Lomate and Ramachandran, the B2B approach can either be vertical or horizontal, meaning that customers have a wide range of areas that they can utilise to service their demands. These avenues also ensure that there is feedback from customers on how best to enhance service delivery and this is where the notion of value co-creation as offered by B2B platforms (Kohtamäki and Rajala, 2016) is realised. In addition, B2B practices have also developed capacities that ensure that there is online and offline interaction and interaction between activities and this form of interaction ensures that there is the tabulation of needs, concerns and demands of both parties. This ensures the effectiveness of the value-co creation as it relates to B2B platforms.

Another role and importance of the BEES B2B platform for value co-creation is efficiency. Each business organisation aims to ensure that there is effectiveness (Murray, 2020). This is catered for by B2B platforms that ensure that customers can search, access, scale costs and access a wide range of information at their convenience (Vusi, 2020). In the contemporary business environment where organisations are competing against costs, time, and other resources, it is essential that business practices be conducted in a timely and effective manner (Frias-Jamilema, Polo-Pena and Rodriguez-Molina, 2017). This is offered by B2B platforms where an entity can search for products that are being offered and compare a wide range of prices and other aspects. The utilisation of this development has ensured effectiveness and

convenience in conducting business. Therefore, the role and importance of the BEES B2B platform for value co-creation is efficiency in business processes.

Kohtamäki and Rajala (2016) assert that the novelty of B2B platforms can also be leveraged to detail and explain its importance in value co-creation. The use and adoption of the BEES B2B platform for example is a new and novel phenomenon which offers a full range of services to customers, meaning that organisations that leverage this platform can enhance their competitive advantage (BEES, 2022). Research and industry examples alike have provided evidence that E-Commerce (EC) initiatives can have a positive impact on firm sales. Some studies have suggested that EC increases sales in three different ways such as market expansion, brand switching and relationship deepening.

However, contradictory arguments have also been observed. Various reports and research have highlighted concerns regarding the possible drawbacks of EC, such as increased channel conflict and intensified price competition, which may hurt a company's future cash flows (Tsay and Agrawal, 2004). Thus, while the benefits of EC initiatives are recognized from a revenue perspective, the cost implications are less clear, suggesting that the overall performance impact due to EC initiatives may be more complicated than expected. (Tsay and Agrawal, 2004)

2.5 Challenges with the Adoption of B2B on Value Co-creation

In as much as the importance and impact of adopting B2B on value co-creation has been tabulated, there are still challenges within this practice especially to small businesses that may not be technologically savvy or who are still exploring the value of integrating technology-based tools to enhance the operations and sustainability of their businesses. It is, therefore, the focus of this section to identify the challenges in the adoption of B2B on value creation with a special focus on the FMCG sector. The challenges identified in this section are practical and inhibit the adoption of B2B platforms on value creation.

2.5.1 Neglecting customer expectations and experiences

Gandhi et al. (2019) state that customer expectations and experience matter, but this logic is often neglected when it comes to B2B. For example, IBM's Institute for Business Value 2019 reported that B2B companies lag behind their business-to-customer (B2C) counterparts in customer engagement (Bracke et al., 2019). B2B and B2C differences have been noted in the literature concerning buying behaviour, the buying process, buying decision making and the

level of complexity involved. Most importantly, B2B buying is typically seen as a collaboration between suppliers and buyers (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995) demanding co-creation to realise a win-win outcome from the relationship. Prior research on value co-creation has focused on the business-to-consumer context (Ashok et al., 2014); thus, VCC in the business-customer context has received relatively little attention (Lilien, 2016; Mustak et al., 2013) until recently (Purchase & Volery, 2020). This has increasingly become a challenge as the perceptions of customers in the B2B approach is often neglected and given little attention to challenging value co-creation as it is currently reported.

2.5.2 Heterogeneity

When applying the co-creation concept in the B2B approach, organisations face the challenge of anticipating and responding to the desires and needs of customers (Ojasalo, 2020). This is because customers value different components of the value of the supplier's proposition in different situations. This means that the challenge is heterogeneity in which customers have different views, experiences and opinions on services being offered. Nerd (2019) therefore argues that organisations must consider widely diverse perspectives and demands of customers and then be able to choose an effective way of responding to these challenges. This allows an entity to deal with the heterogeneous demands that come from a diverse customer base. This is confirmed by Prahalad (2014) who is of the opinion that organisations require the ability to listen to customers and then decide what to follow and what to bypass. Co-creation within B2B platforms, therefore, requires comprehensive learning and judgements on the best possible approach to follow.

2.5.3 Customer loyalty

Customer loyalty is also another challenge in the adoption of B2B in value co-creation. There emanates a challenge in fostering mutual trust and customer loyalty to engage with customers. Kowalkowski (2011) therefore argues that the critical factor is the ability of the service provider to build trust and keep promises to customers. Organisations lack the creation of a platform of collaborative dialogue with customers aimed at supporting knowledge sharing and enhancing the level of understanding and trust. Prahalad (2014) argues that to gain trust and have a successful co-creation relationship, service providers must be aware that transparency is an essential aspect of the co-creation relationship. To gain trust and build relationships,

companies therefore need to investigate new levels of access and transparency in how they deal with customers.

2.5.4 Customer activation

Another challenge with the adoption of B2B platforms on value co-creation is that of customer activation. It has been noted in the previous paragraphs that co-creation from B2B platforms is all about sharing and empowering customers according to their needs and to influence the value co-creation process. Ojasalo (2020) therefore states that activating customers to be able to interact in their own value creation process would require an immense level of effort, which might be a challenge to organisations. Lusch and Vargo (2014) however opine that customers could however learn to use, maintain, adapt, and repair their individual needs. Therefore, a key aspect is the ability of customers to create value with the amount of information, knowledge, skills, and other resources that they can access and use (Prahalad, 2014).

2.5.5 Security fears of customers

Another challenge to B2B platform impacting on value co-creation is the security fears of small business owners. Since the world is evolving to the adoption of the internet and e-commerce platforms, customers are still not feeling secure with the use of these online transactions, business and systems limiting the effectiveness of B2B platforms. Murray (2020) argues that many SMEs are still reverting to traditional purchase and supply where there is payment on delivery. This is challenging the effectiveness of these organisations as well as the effectiveness of B2B platforms such as BEES. Furthermore, customers also worry that their deliveries will not be made as some customers have reported late deliveries or no deliveries when they use these online platforms (Nerd, 2019). In as much as security protocols have been strengthened, there are still cases of fears by customers to engage in these transactions. Therefore, customer uncertainties are challenges faced by BEES B2B platform in value co-creation.

2.5.6 Data security issues

Santos and Zanca (2018) aver that another challenge impacting the effectiveness of adopting B2B for value co-creation are data security issues. In as much as security is upgraded on the internet, the hackers and fraudsters seem to be increasing in their abilities in gaining unauthorised access to websites and platforms (Schwab, 2016). Access to websites by unauthorised personnel has a huge impact and consequences on the operations of the organisation. Sensitive information like phone numbers, card details and addresses belonging

to business owners may be stolen (Santos and Zanca, 2018). Studies have shown that people above 45 years of age are sceptical about putting their information online due to fear of cybercrime (Schwab, 2-16). Therefore, data security issues challenge the effectiveness of B2B platforms for value co-creation.

2.5.7 Complexity of the process

Another challenge impacting the effectiveness of the B2B process for value co-creation is that the B2B buying process involves a lot of decision-makers, and the buying cycle is long and complex. The B2B purchasing workflow consists of a wide range of people within their own specific roles and responsibilities (Varley, 2015). Within BEES B2B platform for instance, there are people researching for solutions, stakeholders whose buy-ins are required to move forward, financial representatives to approve the spending and so many more. This challenges the effectiveness of such especially to small business owners who have limited understanding on these procedures. This complexity in nature challenges the effectiveness and use of such a platform as users must go through a comprehensive process to acquire goods, services, and resources in which they often do not have expertise and time to navigate (Xu and Li, 2015). In this perspective, the complex nature of B2B platforms challenges on their effectiveness.

2.5.8 Expertise in practical implementation

Expertise in practical implementation is also another challenge in the adoption of B2B in value co-creation. In practice, concrete business models focusing on outside-in-view are missing (Nerd, 2019). Hence, one of the future challenges in the adoption of B2B in value co-creation will be the creation of business models and tools that successfully integrate the service provider's process with customer's process of value creation. Instead of trying to make the customer fit into the supplier process, the supplier should be able to find an entrance into the customer's process of value creation (Murray, 2020). When the supplier gets to understand the value creation of customers, the supplier will be able to provide more effective resources and processes to support the customer value creation.

Some of the common challenges to the adoption of B2B Platforms for value co-creation are presented in the table below:

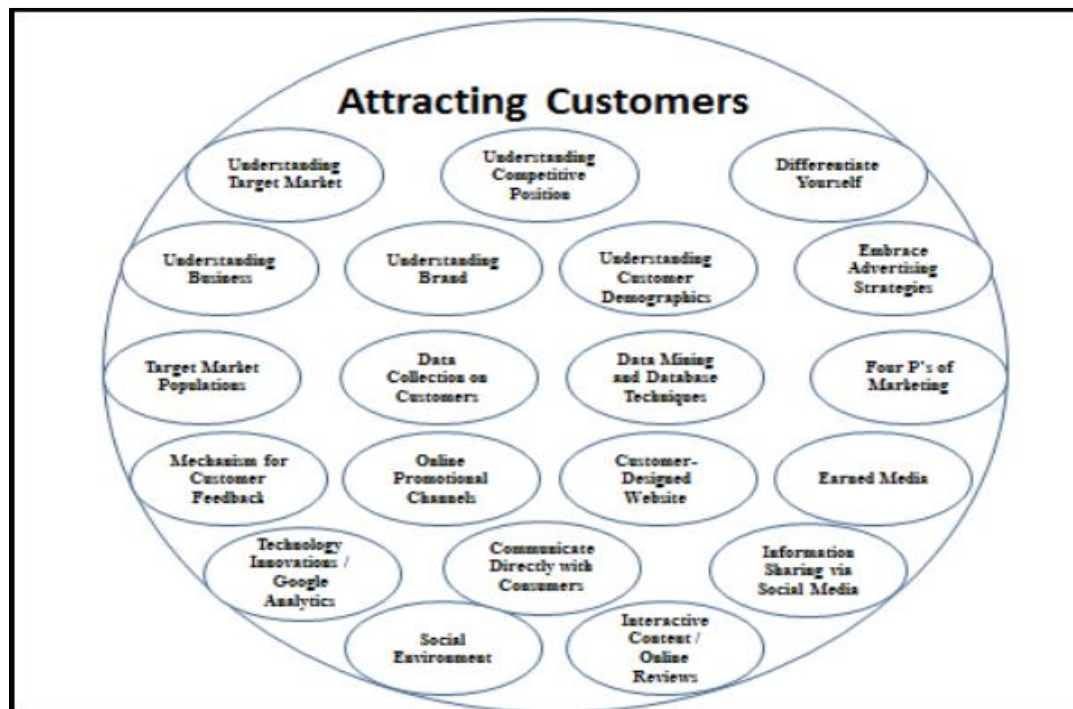
Table 2.1: Challenges to the B2B Platform

Challenges	Source
Customer expectations and experience matter	Gandi et al., (2019)
Heterogeneity	Ojasalo, 2020
Customer loyalty	Kowalkowski (2011)
Customer activation	Lusch and Vargo (2014)
The security fears of small business owners	Murray (2020)
Data security issues	Santos and Zanca
The buying process involves a lot of decision-makers, and the buying cycle is long and complex.	Varleye (2015)
Expertise in practical implementation	Nerd (2019)

2.6 Interventions to Enhance the Effectiveness of B2B on Value Co-creation.

Since the challenges to B2B platforms for value co-creation have been tabulated, some avenues can be explored to ensure the effectiveness of such an approach to value co-creation. One strategy that can be enhanced is principles to attract clients. Principles that can be leveraged to attract clients are presented in Figure 2.4 below.

Figure 2.4: Attracting Customers



Source: Bolos et al., (2016)

As portrayed in the figure above, there are top factors that key decision makers and management in organisations must implement to attract customers and meet customer satisfaction. According to Figure 2.3, some of these factors include understanding the target market, understanding the competitive position, differentiating the business, understanding the business and its trends, understanding the brand, data collection on customers and understanding the four Ps of marketing. Laudon and Traver (2015) suggests that an effective marketing plan includes all aspects from understanding the trends of the business, the target market, the competitive position within the business as well as methods to be utilised to reach the market. All these processes should be understood so that the B2B platform can attract clients. Successful business entities have attained this by understanding their business, brand, and customer demographics (Bolos et al., 2016).

Communication with stakeholders can also be leveraged to enhance the effectiveness of the B2B platform for value co-creation. As an e-business grows and attracts new followers, the business can also communicate directly with customers who are interested in the services that the organisation offers. One way of accomplishing this is through e-mail marketing. Tung (2008) mentions that businesses use e-mail marketing to send communications to customers

who have opted-in because they are interested in receiving information from the business. The marketing e-mails often come as updates, promotions, content, and other strategies to solidify brand recognition, remind people to interact with the business and drive sales (Kaur, 2012).

Engaging with customers can also be another intervention to ensure the effectiveness of the B2B platform for value creation. Kaur et al. (2015) notes that through regular contacts, responses to social media postings and other systems put in place to track consumer activities, organisations can raise their profile and improve customer experience. Furthermore, tailored options during the purchasing process and recommendations on products based on previous selections impact the consumer experience with the product and can lead to a more customised and personal experience. A classic example is that of Amazon.com when it comes to product recommendations. There is the tracking and display of the user's recent search history and offers suggestions regarding products that are viewed by customers who looked at the currently selected item. This feature allows the user to meander through the product selections more seamlessly and increases the chance of the user finding what they are looking for (Amazon, 2022)

2.7 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework focuses on the models and theories that help understand the research problem. The Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) theory is discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.7.1 The Service Dominant Logic Theory

The SD Logic theory is a perspective that introduces a new way of synthesising and articulating an alternative view of exchange and value creation in markets (Ehrenthal, Gruen and Hofstetter, 2021). The SD Logic theory is premised on the idea of service – the application of competencies for the benefit of another – is the basis of all social and economic exchange (Luca, Hibbert and MacDonald, 2015)). The SD Logic describes a shift from goods to a service-dominant paradigm in thinking about value creation. Figure 2.5 below presents the principles of the SD Logic Framework

The underlying idea for SD Logic is that there is the application of competencies to benefit others and reciprocally benefit from applied competencies through service-for-service exchange. The SD Logic is based on an understanding of the interwoven fabric of individuals or organisations, brought together into networks and societies, specializing in, and exchanging the application of their competencies for the applied competencies they need for their

sustainability and growth (Ehrenthal et al., 2021). SD logic is philosophically grounded in a commitment to collaborate processes with customers, partners, and employees; a logic that challenges management at all levels to be of service to all the stakeholders; a logic or perspective that recognizes the firm and its exchange partners who are engaged in the co-creation of value through reciprocal service provision (Luca et al., 2015).

As noted by Lusch and Vargo (2014), the SD Logic provides a paradigm and perspective for academic discourse on value creation. The SD Logic is utilised to conceptualise markets as networked systems where all actors such as firms and customers participate in value creation which is aligned with the idea of all actors being resource integrators. The SD Logic focuses on the exchange of services during which one actor uses a set of skills and capabilities to benefit another actor (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). The SD Logic is framed along three dimensions which are service ecosystem, service platform and value co-creation in which these dimensions describe value co-creation within B2B platforms.

The first dimension relevant to the research problem of the SD Logic is the service ecosystem. This is a community of interacting actors organised in a B2B network. Vargo and Kusch (2011) argue that actors in the B2B network co-evolve their skills and roles in mutual dependency to ensure effectiveness. The service ecosystem, therefore, is a self-adjusted, self-contained system of regularly loosely coupled economic and social actors. A service ecosystem connects different actors through services that foster mutual value creation and a shared institutional logic (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). This implies dynamic systems in which actors both influence and are restricted by the structural context that develops from their collective value- (viability, well-being) creating processes, through innovative resource integration and service provision. This, in turn, implies that value creation is an unfolding process, for which there is no end state to optimize or towards. Rather, it is an emergent process within an ever-changing context, including ever-changing resources; it is, by necessity, an entrepreneurial process. This therefore means that tavern owners must utilise change as provided within the environment which includes the use of BEES B2B platform.

The second dimension of the theory relevant to the study is the service platform. Lusch and Nambisan (2015) argue that the service platform liquefies resources and enhances resource density to facilitate an efficient and effective exchange in a service ecosystem. A service platform, therefore, is a modular structure that combines tangible and intangible resources to coordinate the actions of actors. The role of the service platform is to create an architecture that

allows for scalable coordination of service exchanges to generate more opportunities for value co-creation and service innovation (Hein et al., 2016). Some rules and guidelines are developed on this platform to guide interactions and within the BEES B2B platform, this ranges from policy to restrictive rules.

The third dimension is the co-creation of value which describes the process of value creation between actors within the service ecosystem on a service platform. The SD Logic offers a clear distinction between who are the service offerors and the service beneficiaries. The beneficiaries can take the roles of the ideator, designer and intermediary (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). Each role integrates existing resources and knowledge with peers in the ecosystem and the result is new service opportunities. Therefore, for the BEES platform to be effective for tavern owners, it must establish transparency about who ecosystem actors are, what and whom they know and what they can do. In addition, the SD Logic is critical in the study for it seeks the collaboration between the company and customers to create value. Customers create value with the firm and in the process, promote the market philosophy.

2.8 Synthesis of Research Gap

The focus of this section is the presentation of the synthesis of the literature and the description of the research gap.

Table 2.2: Synthesis of the Research Gap

Research Gap	Research Theme	Reference
The nature of B2B has been described based on two platforms which are vertical B2B and horizontal B2B with each having its distinctive features	The focus of the study is on BEES b2b which is a vertical B2B platform	Johnson (2021)
The SD Logic theory has been tested on platforms to ensure co-creation within the developed world	The context of the study is on the BEES platform in the South African context referencing tavern owners	Lusch and Vargo (2014)

Numerous studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of B2B platforms in enhancing value co-creation. However, these studies have not offered significant information on the rationale of vertical B2B models in enhancing value co-creation in small businesses in the developing world	The study focuses on the importance, challenges, and interventions of the BEES platform in offering value co-creation to tavern owners	Chen et al. (2021)
The literature does not provide comprehensive solutions on how B2B platforms can be utilised to ensure value co-creation for SMEs	The focus of the study is on interventions on how BEES B2B can enhance value co-creation for tavern owners in South Africa	Kauri et al. (2015)
Literature focused on a plethora of industries (services, manufacturing)	The study focuses on tavern owners in South Africa	Tung (2008)
Literature focused on challenges faced in the adoption of B2B in value co-creation	The focus of the study is specifically on the adoption of B2B platform in the FMCG sector	Ojasalo (2020)

2.9 Research Gaps

The following is the presentation on the research gaps identified from the literature that form the basis of the research questions.

- There is limited literature on the effectiveness of B2B platforms in value co-creation in the liquor industry and specifically focusing on South African tavern owners.
- The literature reviewed shows that there is an existing gap in showcasing the importance of digital platforms in enhancing value to SMEs in the developing world.
- The literature reviewed shows that there is a gap in information on how SMEs utilise digital applications in doing their business (marketing and purchasing).
- There is a gap in the literature on the use of technology in doing business by tavern owners in the developing world.
- There is limited literature on how SMEs are leveraging learning and development capabilities that are at their disposal in enhancing their business activities.

2.10 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was the discussion of the literature review underpinning the study. The importance of a literature review in research is that it focuses on the synthesis of information which exists with respect to research objectives through the presentation of the relationship between the variables in the study. This chapter, therefore, presented the definition of B2B as well as value co-creation, the importance and impact of adopting B2B platforms for value co-creation, challenges towards the adoption of BEES B2B on value co-creation and interventions to enhance the effectiveness of BEES B2B on value co-creation to operations as it relates to the FMCG industry. The Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) theory and the conceptual framework were also presented.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

There are three research approaches used in research studies and these are qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed methodologies (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The quantitative approach uses mathematical measures and statistics to understand a phenomenon. This approach uses questionnaires and experiments as data collection instruments (Flick, 2016). The qualitative approach digs deeper than the analysis of data and numbers, it uses methods such as interviews with an opportunity to ask open-ended questions to document data in the form of answers from respondents being interviewed. On the other hand, the mixed methodologies are a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative approach characteristics and are employed to effectively understand a phenomenon, both interviews and questionnaires for example must be utilised (Kumar, 2014). The study however utilised the qualitative approach to enquiry.

According to (Neuman 2014), the qualitative approach to enquiry is based on the need to collect information that is based on the so-called “softer elements” such as experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions of participants towards the phenomenon that is being investigated. The goal of this research approach is a detailed exploration of the phenomenon and in the process, gathers deep insights and perspective into the research problem. This approach therefore ensures that there is effective comprehension of the perceptions, actions, and responses of participants towards the B2B platform approach in value co-creation within the FMCG space, particularly in the alcohol category in South Africa.

The qualitative approach to research is exploratory and it is used to gain access to the underlying motivations, reasons, and opinions of participants towards that which is being investigated (Flick, 2016). This is also established by Leedy and Ormrod (2015) who are of the view that the qualitative approach is leveraged in studies to capture the opinions, behaviours and thoughts of participants and present their experiences to understand the research problem. Furthermore, Creswell (2014) is of the view that the qualitative approach to enquiry is based on the need to reveal the population’s range of emotions and behaviour to gain understanding as it relates to what makes them comprehend the research problem the way they do, it is very personal and unique from one individual to the next. From this perspective, it can be noted that the results of the qualitative approach are descriptive and inductive in nature and not predictive and deductive. It is important to note that this research is to describe the importance and impact

of BEES B2B in value co-creation as it relates specifically to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province of South Africa.

There are various reasons why this approach was used. Firstly, this approach is used to explore and understand the way individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem (Welman, 2018). This comes from the use of open-ended questions that allows the researcher to probe and dig deeper to get further information with respect to the research problem. This allows the comprehension of value co-creation using B2B platforms by tavern owners which is supplied by the large global organisation, AB InBev. In addition, the qualitative approach ensures that there is an understanding of the research problem using smaller sample sizes that allow the researcher to effectively interact with participants until sufficient data is found (Walliman, 2018). Furthermore, this approach was used as it ensured that there is the collection of deep insight information through interaction with participants in their natural environment and context.

3.2 Research Design

As noted by Leedy and Ormrod (2015), the research design is the root, the blueprint, master plan, structure and process within the research study suggesting the avenues and parameters that the study intends to follow to address the research problem. This is confirmed by Teddie and Tshohakaris (2016) who say that the research design depicts the logical sequence that is important in the connection of empirical data to a study's initial research question and ultimately, the conclusions. The research design, therefore, helps with the understanding of the processes and structures of the study. There are various research designs utilised in research studies and among these include explanatory research design, correlational research design, narrative research design and many more.

The study utilised the exploratory research design. According to Howell (2014), the exploratory research design is conducted in research studies where there is limited information about the phenomenon and research studies therefore are conducted to create a base of knowledge and attempt to better understand the research problem. As confirmed by Flick (2016), exploratory research studies aim at gaining insights and familiarity for successive investigations and in most cases, this research is undertaken when research problems are at a preliminary stage. This design is often used to establish an understanding of the best way to process an issue or which methodology is effective in explaining the research question. For this

study, an exploratory research design is used to capture deeper and unique information from the participants being investigated.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

According to Creswell (2014), data collection is the process of accurately collecting information from different sources to provide insights and answers about the research problem. Data can be collected through two forms of research, and these are primary data collection methods and secondary data collection methods. Flick (2016) notes that primary data collection methods are those methods where information is collected straight from the participant. Types of primary data collection include interviews, observations, focus group discussions, questionnaires, and surveys. Data can also be collected through secondary sources which include published articles, journals, videos, texts, and audio. The semi-structured interview was used as the research instrument for this study.

3.4 Population and Sample

This section focuses on the population and sampling utilised in the study.

3.4.1 Population

As noted by Bryman and Bell (2014), population is the element, unit, group of people or individuals or context that is being studied. The target population ideally entails people that are being studied with respect to the phenomenon. The target population of the study, therefore, are 50 tavern owners in an area in the Gauteng Province.

3.4.2 Sampling

In research studies, it is difficult to study the entire target population due to constraints such as time, resources, and the feasibility to study a large population. Researchers resort to studying samples which when carefully selected, represent the characteristics and traits of the target population. Sampling, therefore, is the process of selecting a subset from the entire population. Maree (2015) points out that sampling ensures that there is the collection of accurate results from the study. Sampling therefore can be conducted through probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling techniques are used in quantitative studies as every unit in the target population stands an equal chance of being part of the sample. Types of probability sampling include simple random sampling, cluster sampling and stratified sampling (Flick, 2016)

The study however utilised non-probability sampling techniques. This technique is when the researcher is actively involved in the sample selection process, meaning participants do not stand an equal chance of being part of the sample (Creswell, 2014). This sampling method meets the need to acquire information as the researcher will be interacting with participants. Types of non-probability sampling include convenience sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling.

The study utilised purposive sampling. Kumar (2014) argues that purposive sampling utilises participants who have an informed understanding of the research problem. The rationale for utilising purposive sampling is that there is a collection of information from those that are experiencing the research problem. The participants, therefore, were selected as those that have experience with using the BEES app in operating their taverns. This enhanced an effective understanding of the research problem.

The study utilised a sample size of 15 participants. Creswell argues that in qualitative research, a sample must be between 8 and 15 participants to lead to the capturing of ideal information to address the research problem. This sample size was selected to gather sufficient information to answer the research problem.

3.5 The Research Instrument

The study utilised the semi-structured interview guide as the research instrument. In general, interviews are used by the researcher to engage in a conversation with participants who understand the research problem (Flick, 2016). Interviews can be conducted through three different formats which are structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. The study will however utilise semi-structured interviews which are a combination of both structured and unstructured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews ask open-ended questions in which the participant is given a platform to express information from their perspective and the researcher can dig deeper to probe and capture information from the participants (Kumar, 2014). Semi-structured interviews have a structure and follow a prescribed text, but the researcher can often follow up on certain aspects to have a clear understanding of the matter being researched.

The semi-structured interview guide was structured as follows:

Section A: Demographic Details such as age, gender, sex, and experience of participants

Section B: The importance and impact of adopting BEES B2B platforms for value co-creation by tavern owners in the Gauteng Province

Section C: The challenges towards the adoption of BEES B2B platform for value co-creation in taverns in South Africa

Section D: Interventions to enhance the effectiveness of BEES B2B platform on value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

The interview process was conducted face-to-face within the premises of tavern owners selected in the sampling process. The interview process took approximately between 30 and 45 minutes and the reason why this was done was to give enough time to capture the attitude, perceptions, and all other related information about the research problem. Permission was sought before conducting the study and consent was asked before recording transcripts.

3.7 Data Analysis Strategies and Interpretation

Data analysis is the process of analysing data collected from the study and giving meaning to such information (Bryman and Bell, 2014). The most common data analysis methods in qualitative research include:

- **Analytic Induction**

The commonly mentioned questions in the study during the analysis are used to further collect information about the research (Bryman et al., 2014).

- **Grounded Theory**

The theory is developed from the data collected. In this perspective, cumulative research knowledge can be intended or structured to gather knowledge (Bryman et al., 2014).

- **Thematic analysis**

The study utilised thematic analysis as the data analysis technique. Creswell (2014) is of the view that thematic analysis is when the researcher thoroughly examines the data obtained from the study through reading and re-reading to see existing patterns of information that can be coded and categorised into themes. Polit and Beck (2012) are of the view that information is grouped into smaller units and then developed into different themes which inform the study. The study, therefore, leverages the Tesch steps of thematic analysis as explained by Creswell (2014) and these steps are:

Step One: Familiarity with the data

The first step within the process is familiarity with data in which there is a comprehensive reading and re-reading of the transcript (Creswell, 2014).

Step Two: Generation of Codes

The second step is the generation of patterns within the data collected. Creswell (2014) to process the data.

Step Three: Compiling of Codes

This step includes the compilation of codes where the researcher categorises the data into meaningful themes.

Step Four: Coherent Recognition of themes

Within this stage, the researcher looks at how the themes support the data and the theory and literature. Creswell (2014) argues that it is done through the process in which the researcher goes back to the list of data collected, abbreviates the topics as codes and writes the codes next to segments.

Step Five: Definition of themes

This step is characterised by the process in which the researcher defines what each theme entails, which aspects of the data are being captured and what is interesting about the themes.

Step Six: Report Writing

This stage entails the process in which the report is made on the data generated from the study. Themes that make a meaningful contribution to the study are recorded within this process and a presentation in a bid to understand the research problem is made using themes coming from the data.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

Flick (2016) postulates that the limitations of the study are those elements in the research design and methodology that affect the interpretation of research findings from the study. The following are the limitations of the study which can be used as areas for future research but not explored further in this study in order to complete the study in a year:

- The first limitation of the study is the sample size which is small enough to enhance the understanding of the research problem but not large enough to detail the use of the BEES B2B platform for value co-capture by all small businesses nationally.
- Another limitation of the study is the lack of existing literature about BEES B2B Platform, which is relatively new to small businesses, especially in the tavern industry, thus the study is exploratory in nature.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study

In qualitative research, quality assurance is enhanced through measures to enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Kumar, 2014). The principles of trustworthiness of the study are premised on the need to ensure vigour in the research and these measures include credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

3.9.1 Credibility

As described by Neuman (2014), credibility is the measure to ensure that information obtained from the research is trustworthy and this can be ensured through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, member checks and referential adequacy. The most common feature to enhance credibility is member checks. To ensure the credibility of the findings, the study ensured member checking of participants.

3.9.2 Transferability

Creswell (2014) is of the view that transferability is the generalisation of findings from the research to other contexts and situations. The context in which qualitative data collection occurs defines the data and contributes to how data is interpreted. Transferability, therefore, was ensured by making sure that the findings from the study are transferred to other studies conducted at different times.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is informed by the consistency of the research findings (Kumar, 2014). The researcher should be able to take into account of the changing conditions of the research problem, interactions with participants and the research process. To ensure this feature of trustworthiness of the study, the participants interviewed are those that had an informed understanding and experience with the research problem.

3.9.4 Conformability

Neuman (2014) is of the view that conformability refers to the neutrality of the data rather than that of the researcher. If the research is confirmable, the study should be able to find conclusions grounded in data. It focuses thus on the product of the research. Conformability was ensured via a thematic analysis in which the study shows that data gathered from the research will come from the research participants and not from the researcher.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2014) argues that ethical issues are important in research studies as they ensure that the findings from the study can be used in research studies. Walliman (2018) suggests that participants in research studies must be treated with prescribed methods and procedures to avoid unethical practices. The following ethical issues were ensured in this study.

3.10.1 Ensuring that participants have given their informed consent.

The researcher ensured that participants gave their informed consent to be part of the study. Informed consent, therefore, was achieved through educating participants about the nature of the study, the purpose of the study and what is expected of them in the study (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). A letter of confirmation from the learning institution was made available for participants wanting to ensure the study was indeed for academic purposes only.

3.10.2 Ensuring that no harm comes to participants.

Saunders et al. (2016) are of the view that it is the role of the researcher to protect participants from all forms of harm. This was ensured in the study by participants to freely withdraw from the study at any time should they feel a risk of harm coming their way while participating in the study.

3.10.3 Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

Welman (2018) argues that it is the role of the researcher to protect the identity of participants and make sure that information gathered, is protected at all costs. Anonymity was ensured through the use of participant code names. In addition, confidentiality will be ensured by making sure that the researcher only has access to transcripts from participants and data will be destroyed after three years.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology and approach used in the study. This chapter focuses on the presentation results with respect to the research on value co-capture in B2B Platforms: A case study in the FMCG sector in South Africa. The significance of this chapter is that it presents the results from the study to have a comprehensive understanding of the matter under investigation and to address the research questions. This chapter therefore is structured to present the response rate from the qualitative study which presents those who gave their consent to be part of the study. In addition, this chapter presents the demographic details of the participants which are important in having a full comprehension of the matter being investigated. In addition, through thematic analysis, this chapter also presents the results from the study where themes and categories will be used to represent findings.

The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the adoption of BEES B2B in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province.

To address the research, the following questions were asked:

- How is the adoption of BEES B2B platform important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province?
- What are the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa?
- How should the adoption of BEES B2B platform enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa?

From the study, the SD Logic theory was utilised which is a perspective that introduces a new way of synthesising and articulating an alternative view of exchange and value creation in markets (Ehrenthal, Gruen and Hofstetter, 2021). The SD Logic theory is premised on the idea of service – the application of competencies for the benefit of another – is the basis of all social and economic exchange (Luca, Hibbert and MacDonald, 2015). This theory is relevant with respect to the study because SD Logic is institutionally governed and is a framework that implies a dynamic model, in which entrepreneurial activity can be seen as the rule, rather than the exception. This therefore means that tavern owners must utilise change as provided within the environment which includes the use of BEES B2B platform. This platform ensures that

there is change management, organisational effectiveness, and value co-creation in the process (BEES, 2022). This is in line with the SD Logic theory which mentions that entrepreneurs must use systems and processes that ensure that there are effective ways to realise value.

This chapter, therefore, focuses on the presentation of results from the study using thematic analysis as the data analysis method. This is further outlined in section 4.3 where thematic data analysis and how it was applied in the study is determined. Section 4.4 of this chapter further presents the results through thematic means.

The data that was collected for the study was analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) theoretical thematic process which has the following processes:

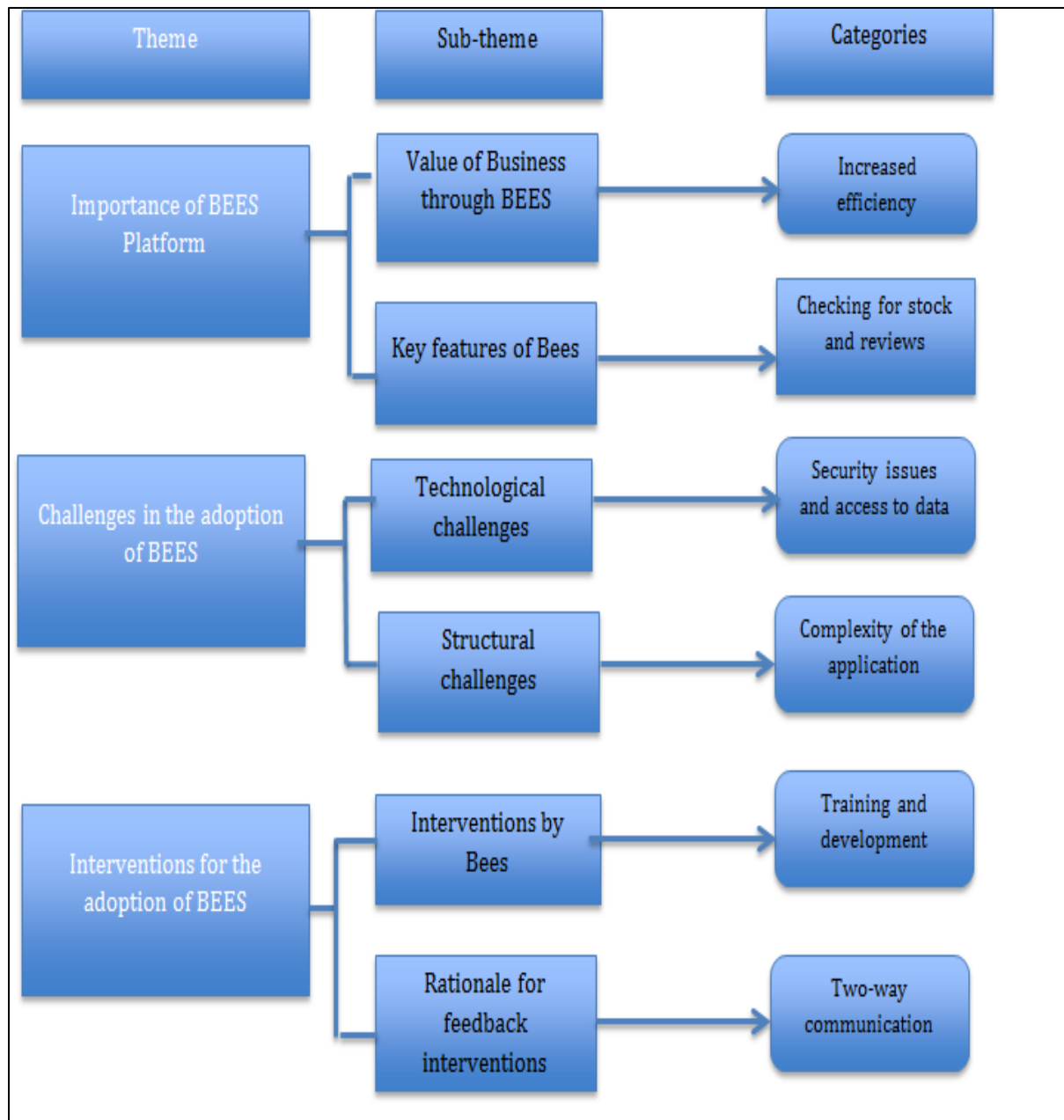
Step One: Understanding the data through listening to recordings from participants and reading the interview scripts collected.

Step Two: Generation of codes from the data and categorising the codes according to each theme that emerged from the theoretical framework.

Step Three: Interpreting and presenting results according to each theme and discussion of the relevance of the results according to the research objectives of the study.

Figure 4.1 below presents the schematic representation of themes from the study

Figure 4.1: Schematic Representation of Results



4.2 Response Rate

Creswell (2014) postulates that the response rate in research are those participants that would have given their informed consent to be part of the research. Table 4.1 below presents the response rate from the study.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Interviews	Frequency	Percentage
Interviews Sought	15	100%
Interviews Consented	12	80%
Interviews Rejected	3	20%
Response Rate	12	80%

From the study, 15 participants were identified as the sample size. From these, 12 (80%) gave their consent to be part of the study. Those who did not consent to the study were 3 (20%). This means that the research achieved a response rate of 80% (12 participants) which is ideal enough for qualitative studies. Accordingly, Flick (2016) argues that for the findings of the qualitative study to be representative of the entire population, the response rate must be between 8 and 15 participants. Therefore, the response rate from the study is critical enough to have a full comprehension of the matter under investigation.

4.3 Demographic Details

Demographic details are important elements within research studies. Maree (2015) argues that demographic details ensure that there is an understanding of the composition of the research participants and how they represent the entire population of the study. In addition, demographic details ensure that the traits and characteristics of the target population are captured and reflected on. The study therefore captured age, gender, highest educational level, and work experience as part of the demographic details.

4.3.1 Age

Age is an important element of demographic details of participants as it gives a reflection on how participants from certain age groups comprehend the matter under study and that gives insight and perspectives into the matter under review (Kumar, 2014). Table 4.2 below presents the age composition of the research participants.

Table 4.2: Participant's Age

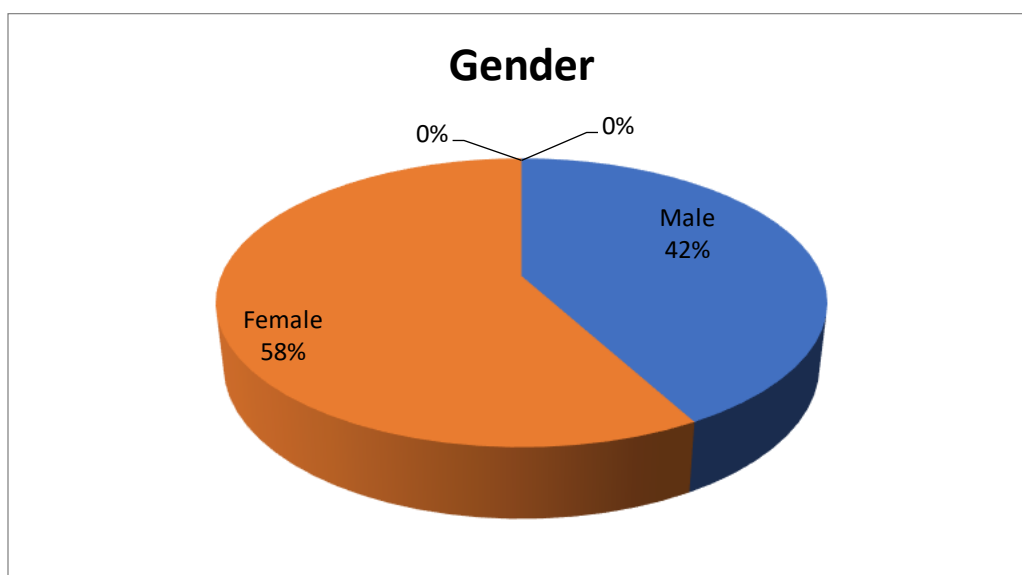
Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 35 years	3	25%
Between 36 and 56 years	5	42%
Above 56 years	4	33%
Total	12	100%

From the study, it was discovered that participants came from different age groups. This is because those aged below 35 years comprised 25% of the participants, those aged between 36 and 56 years consisted of 42% of the participants and those aged above 56 years comprised 33% of the participants. This shows that participants were from different age settings and their conceptualisation of the research problem from different age perspectives was captured in the study to derive deep and broader insights.

4.3.2 Gender

The gender of participants is also captured in demographic details as males and females understand a phenomenon differently and this can be leveraged for deep perspectives and understanding of the research problem (Maree, 2015).

Figure 4.1: Participant's Gender



From the study, it was discovered that females comprised 58% whereas males comprised 42% of the participants. In conformity to these findings, Rod (2014) makes the point that most tavern owners in South African townships are females. However, both the voices, experiences and perspectives of males and females were captured in the study, to effectively understand the matter under investigation.

4.3.3 Highest Educational Level

The educational level of an individual is important towards their understanding of a phenomenon (Maree, 2015). This is the reason the educational levels of participants were captured in the study.

Table 4.3: Educational Levels of Participants

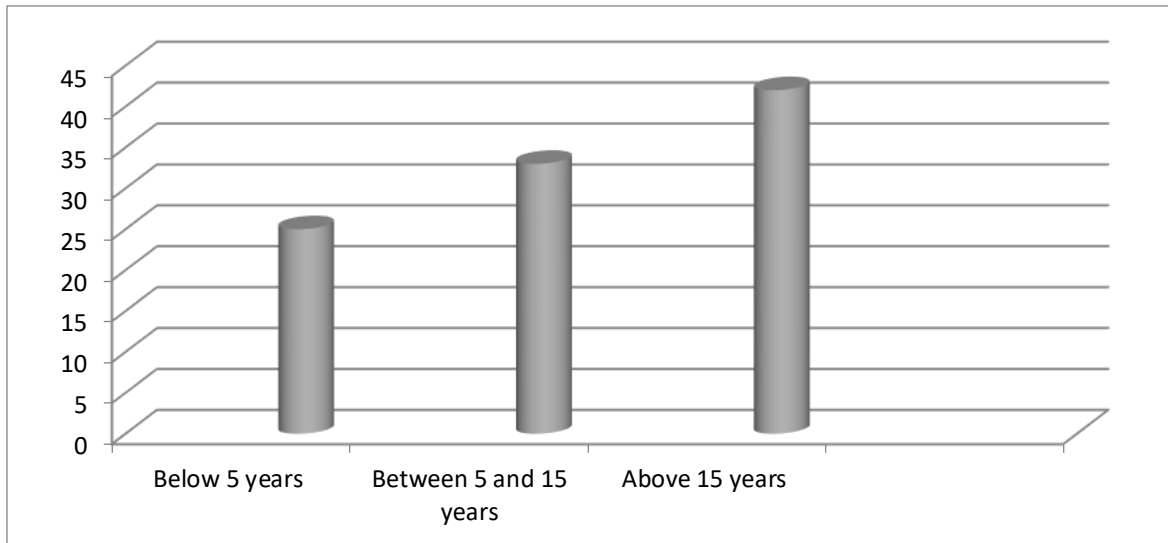
Highest Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
High School	4	33%
Completed Matric	6	50%
Certificate of Higher	2	17%
Total	12	100%

From the study, it was discovered that 33% of the participants went to high school, 50% completed matric classes and 17% have professional certificates or higher. This is supported by Rod (2014) on the profile of tavern owners in South Africa, most of them do not hold professional qualifications and these were reflected in the findings from the study. Therefore, the educational qualifications of an individual are important towards comprehending the research problem.

4.3.4 Work Experience

The work experience of an individual is an important factor in demographic details as it gives an insight into the research problem. Figure 4.2 below presents the work experience of tavern owners of participants.

Figure 4.2: Participant's Work Experience



From the study, it was discovered that 25% of the participants had worked as tavern owners for less than 5 years, followed by 33% who had experience between 5 and 15 years and then 42% who had work experience of more than 15 years. These results show that participants had wide and diverse work experience, critical towards an effective understanding of the matter under investigation.

4.4 Thematic Analysis of Results

Saunders et al. (2016) are of the view that qualitative data analysis is the process where the collected data is grouped, processed, structured, and given meaning. The rationale of the process of data analysis is that large forms of data are given structure and then presented coherently. This gives the researcher as well as the research a well-structured and analytical framework to address the research question (Creswell, 2014). Thematic analysis was used as the data analysis method when the researcher thoroughly examines the data obtained from the study through reading and re-reading to see existing patterns of information that can be coded and categorised into themes. The following steps were followed in the thematic analysis:

- Familiarity with the data
- Generation of Codes
- Compiling of Codes
- Coherent Recognition of themes
- Definition of themes
- Report Writing

Data was collected using the semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide which is presented in the appendices section was structured through research questions and sub-questions from each research question. In addition, the presentation and discussion of findings followed the principles of ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity thus codes were presented from Participant One to Participant Twelve.

4.4.1 Question One: How is the adoption of BEES B2B platform important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province?

The first research question of the study sought to determine how the adoption of BEES B2B platform is important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province. This question was based on the perspective that the BEES B2B platform has been developed to enhance the development of tavern owners and thus needs to effectively determine its importance. To answer this question, the study therefore sought to determine the value of business since it began to use the BEES B2B platform, the key features of the BEES platform often used and how effective the BEES platform has been in operations of tavern owners.

4.4.1.1 The value of business since the adoption of the BEES B2B platform

The study sought to determine the value of the business of tavern owners since their adoption of BEES platform. The following is the presentation of findings based on this assertion.

- **Increased efficiency**

In this section, the findings regarding the value of the business since the adoption of the BEES B2B platform will be presented and discussed. The research question that guided this investigation was what value has your business enjoyed since the adoption of the BEES B2B platform? Understanding the value of the business since the adoption of the platform is crucial to assess the impact and benefits experienced by tavern owners. In response to this question, Participant One argued that the adoption of the BEES B2B platform has increased their efficiency. They stated that:

The adoption of BEES B2B in the business has increased business efficiency since stock can be delivered on time and goods and services can be ordered at the convenience of the buyer. This is important because it has ensured that time taken to go and look for stock is now used to manage the business and enhance other activities. This has seen an increase in business effectiveness.

This assertion was also shared by Participant Three who noted that:

The adoption of BEES B2B platform has ensured business productivity in which goods and services now can be delivered to my tavern and that I do not need to go to warehouses to look for stock and make payments. When special guests for example arrive, I can order what is not in stock and it can be delivered on scheduled time. This has enhanced how my business operates.

In addition, Participant Seven noted that:

The use of BEES B2B platform has ensured that I manage to order stock from the comfort of my workplace and deliveries are made promptly. The supply chain of AB InBev through BEES platform is always on time and makes the business effective. When one runs out of stock, they can always order on BEES which delivers promptly.

- **Competitive Advantage**

In addition, the study also discovered that the adoption of BEES B2B has increased the value of the businesses of tavern owners as it has enhanced competitive advantage. This was in response to the question on the value of BEES B2B adoption on the effectiveness of business operations. In responding to increased competitive advantage, Participant Two argued that:

The use of BEES has ensured that customers remain satisfied and loyal to my organisation as they are satisfied with the services offered. Refreshments are delivered in time and are always in stock and this has improved business operations.

In addition, Participant Six noted that:

BEES B2B platform has helped my business attract and retain customers for they refreshments are always available at the tavern. Through BEES, I can order beer when it is running out and the rewards that I have on the platform always increases my stock levels. This is the reason why my business is still in operation whereas others are facing challenges.

This perspective was also shared by Participant Eight who highlighted that:

The use of the BBES platform has ensured that my tavern becomes the talk of the town for stock required by customers is always available. The key is to keep customers happy

and satisfied and BEES has ensured that. I can order stock at any time, pay conveniently and this has made my business a success.

4.4.1.2 Key features of the BEES platform often used.

The study also sought to determine the key features of BEES platform often used by participants. The following is a presentation of these features and their use.

- **Browsing to see in-stock beers.**

From the study, it was also discovered that there are key features of the BEES B2B platform that are often used by tavern owners. The study therefore sought to identify these common features through asking participants what key features do you use often on BEES to help run your tavern? The importance of this question was to determine the common features used by tavern owners and the importance of these features in enhancing their business operations. From the study, it was discovered that the most common feature utilised by tavern owners on BEES platform is that of browsing to see beers and refreshments that are in-stock. As noted by Participant Four:

In most cases, the BEES platform is used to look for beers that are in stock and determine how these can be scheduled for delivery. This is the rationale for using the platform so I can look for various brands that are available and can make an order for purchase.

This was confirmed by Participant Five who argued that:

On BEES platform, there is the feature of browsing to select brands if available and then can make purchase. Through that feature, there is always the opportunity to determine time for delivery and the place. This is the feature often used by retailers and tavern owners on the platform.

In addition, Participant Nine argued that:

The most common feature on BEES is that of browsing on the goods and services offered and then making a purchase of these goods. When purchases are made, then delivery can be scheduled, and this process often leads back to the most recent orders which can be clicked, and transactions made.

- **Feedback and Review**

In addition, the study discovered that another important feature of the platform often used by users is that of reviewing and giving feedback. The importance of this feature is that tavern owners can communicate with service providers and share their perspectives on services offered while also communicating their opinions on how services can be enhanced. In responding to this feature of feedback and review, Participant Seven argued that:

The feedback and review features are often used on the BEES platform where users give feedback on the services that would have been offered and give performance reviews. The importance of these features is to ensure that the application is improved, and services rendered be of exceptional quality.

This was confirmed by Participant Ten who argued that:

The feedback feature is important because it allows users to voice their opinions and contribute towards the improvement of services. Ratings are also given on organisations and deliveries and the importance of doing this is to ensure effectiveness.

Furthermore, Participant Twelve argued that:

After every purchase and delivery, a feedback review is given to show satisfaction with the services offered and how services can also be improved. This feature is important because it allows business to be conducted professionally and effectively where both service providers and clients are satisfied.

4.3.1.3 How effective the BEES platform has in operations of tavern owners.

The study also sought to discover how effective the BEES platform has been in operations of tavern owners. The following is a presentation on the findings and discussions based on the findings from this assertion.

- **Improved service quality**

Another emerging theme from the study was the improved service quality which came from the question of how effective the BEES platform has been in operations of tavern owners. This question was derived from understanding the applications used by tavern owners on the BEES platform and their features and now there was a need to determine the effectiveness of these platforms in enhancing the business operations of tavern owners. Improved service quality was therefore discovered and in supporting this theme, Participant One noted that:

The use and adoption of BEES has improved service delivery. Service of a high-quality standard is important for customer satisfaction as it ensures that there is customer loyalty. Every organisation operates and thrives on improved, sustainable organisational performance and one of the ways of doing that is through retaining customers.

In addition, Participant Three argued that:

The adoption of the BEES platform has improved service quality standards as customers are satisfied with the goods and operations offered by the organisation. the application allows services to be delivered on time and that stock is always at hand. This improves customer loyalty and retention.

In conformity, Participant Nine argued that:

The adoption of BEES has been a major step in enhancing service quality as goods and services can be acquired timely, cheaply, and conveniently. Now there is no need to wait for South African Breweries sales trucks to deliver as the BEES service providers can offer the same services effectively.

- **Product differentiation**

In reference to the effectiveness of the BEES B2B platform on the operations of tavern owners, it was also discovered that product differentiation has been ensured. Product differentiation is a business concept that enhances the performance of an organisation as it offers goods and services that competitors often fail to deliver. In describing the effectiveness of BEES B2B on product differentiation, Participant Two argued that:

The adoption of the BEES platform has ensured that products offered vary giving satisfaction to customers. The use of the BEES application means that wide brands of beer can be accessed, and these can attract and retain customers who have different needs and demands.

This was confirmed by Participant Five who highlighted that:

The use of BEES is essential because it allows the stocking of different brands that are preferred by customers. A wide menu of beers is important in the business to attract customers and the business of taverns now can also improve as clients can order what they require, and these products are offered the through BEES application.

4.4.2 Question Two: What are the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa?

The second research question of the study sought to address the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa. This research question was derived from the problem statement that the BEES platform has been effective towards co-value creation to tavern owners, yet there are still challenges limiting the use and effectiveness of the platform. To address this objective, the study sought to identify the technological challenges of using the BEES B2B platform, and other challenges encountered when using the BEES platform and to determine whether participants would use BEES more often when challenges are resolved. The use of English was also highlighted as a potential challenge as many of the participants in this study did not speak or understand English that well, yet the app language is in English for all South African taverns.

4.3.2.1 Technological challenges of using the BEES B2B platform.

The study identified that there are technological challenges of using BEES B2B platform. Amongst these challenges include:

- **Cyber-Security concerns**

The adoption of the BEES B2B platform on tavern owners is associated with technological challenges. This was discovered from the study when the question asked was what are the technological challenges of using the BEES B2B platform? This comes from the demographic details from the participants that show that many participants are from generations that are not savvy with the use of technology. Therefore, the use of the BEES B2B platform is associated with cyber-security concerns. This was described by Participant One who argued that:

It is difficult for a business owner to purchase an item that they have not seen and expect delivery. This limits the use of the BEES application for there is a need to purchase and pay online for the services being offered. There are questions such as what if the transaction is hijacked by hackers or what if the platform is not safe to use online, amongst others.

This cyber-security concern was shared by Participant Four who noted that:

There are issues with the security of my data, personal information and purchases on the internet and tavern owners worry about such. The use of the BEES platform can be

considered a risk should delivery not be made, or information and money can be stolen on the internet. This challenges the use or trust of the platform.

In conformity, Participant Nine highlighted that:

The use of BEES is limited due to security issues and concerns where tavern owners fear that their card details and information can be stolen and used against them. This technological issue has the potential of impacting the operations of businesses and tavern owners often do not want to engage in such risks.

- **Lack of expertise in internet use**

From the study, it was also noted that technological issues associated with the use of the BEES B2B platform include the lack of expertise on internet use. The demography of tavern owners includes those that are not millennials, and their use and appreciation of the internet is limited. Some owners commented that they needed their younger children or relatives to explain how to use the app for the first time. Through repeated usage of the app, the level of comfort started to improve. This, therefore, challenges the utilisation of BEES B2B for effectiveness, especially for the early stages of downloading and browsing features to understand the app in the first month or two. This was argued by Participant Four who noted that:

Tavern owners often face challenges in using the application for they lack skills in usage of the internet. Most tavern owners look for outside help which can be unreliable and challenging. The requirements of using the internet and following procedures on the BEES application challenge the effective use of the platform.

This was confirmed by Participant Nine who argued that:

The operations the of BEES platform requires an understanding and better command of English as a language which can be challenging. Therefore, the lack of command of English and the large prompts that are required at the platform challenges the use of the application.

In addition, Participant Eleven argued that:

The use of the BEES application requires one who understands the internet on how to browse, interact with suppliers and make payments amongst others. It is time-consuming to tavern owners as they must learn how to navigate such a site. This

challenges the use of the application and its effectiveness. The application also uses English and no other vernacular, local language in South Africa.

4.4.2.2 Challenges to the BEES B2B Platform Adoption

The study also discovered challenges to the BEES B2B Platform Adoption. Amongst these challenges include the following:

- **The application is not user friendly.**

The adoption of the BEES B2B platform is also associated with adoption issues that deter tavern owners from the full utilisation of the platform. This was discovered from the study when the question on what the challenges to the BEES B2B platform adoption are for participants. This is compounded by technological issues that participants face and then issues with the adoption of the platform. While responding to this question, it was discovered that the application is not user-friendly. As noted by Participant One:

The BEES application requires a lot of users and steps to be followed such as those searching for solutions, representatives for making transactions, and stakeholders monitoring the purchase amongst others which makes it time-consuming and not user-friendly.

This concern was also shared by Participant Three who noted that:

The application is complex in nature and requires that a user go through a comprehensive process to acquire what they are looking for. This defeats the purpose of e-commerce which should be simple and convenient.

In addition, Participant Nine argued that:

The application requires that the user goes through a comprehensive process of looking for solutions, interacting with others and making a purchase. For an individual that does not have internet expertise, it is a cumbersome process.

- **Lack of internet access**

South Africa is progressively realising the right to internet access of all population but there are still challenges in internet access as data bundles, internet connectivity and other elements are still required. This was discovered in the study that the adoption of the BEES B2B platform is challenged by the lack of internet access by tavern owners. The use of the BEES application

is the requirement of internet access or pre-loaded data, which is still a challenge, especially for tavern owners. According to Participant Two:

The use of the BEES application requires access to the internet which sometimes is limited. When one wants to make a purchase or browse through the application, internet connectivity is required which is a challenge in most townships in South Africa.

Participant Ten added:

There is a lack of internet access challenging the use of the application. In addition, there is also a lack of resources to utilise the Internet. Internet connectivity requires Wi-Fi or data bundles which are still a challenge to access.

Furthermore, Participant Twelve added to this assertion and argued that:

Townships, where these taverns are owned, are characterised by low-income people who lack access to the internet. Tavern owners survive on this business and access to the internet may be a luxury. This is why they often revert to conventional forms of delivery and purchase which can be costly and time-consuming.

4.4.2.3 Whether participants would use BEES more often when challenges are resolved.

The study sought to determine whether participants would use BEES more often when challenges are resolved. In this respect, mixed responses were discovered which are presented below:

- **Increased use of the application if challenges are resolved.**

The challenges faced by tavern owners in the adoption of the BEES B2B platform impact the utilisation of the platform in their operations. The realisation of such effects made the study seek to discover whether participants would use BEES more often when challenges are resolved. The rationale of this question was that the use and application of the BEES platform are critical towards the development of tavern owners, yet they are facing challenges in utilising this application. The study discovered that some of the participants were willing to use the B2B platform if challenges were resolved. As noted by Participant Five:

The application is useful especially when one is trained and developed to use it. I would want to use the application because it is cheap, convenient and enhances effectiveness. The application is an effective tool to ensure business development.

In addition, Participant Six noted that:

The application is important and can be used when it becomes user-friendly and can be accessed through a language that we can understand. The use of the application when I have help, is convenient, cheap and ensures that the business is meeting its required goals and objectives.

These sentiments were also shared by Participant Ten who argued that:

I would consider using the BEES application more often if it's free to access. The money that I must use to buy internet bundles to access the application can be used for other things. The application also requires a strong internet connection thus it must be accessible without the use of the internet.

4.4.3 Question Three: How should the adoption of BEES B2B platform enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa?

The third research question sought to determine how the adoption of BEES B2B platform should enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South African townships. This question was derived from the importance of the use of the platform as well as the challenges being noted when it comes to the use of the application. To answer this question, the study sought to determine the interventions that can be put in place by InBev for BEES B2B to be more effective in value co-capture, how can the feedback on the interventions be given to users from AB InBev and some pain points AB InBev should address to make the BEES App more valuable for taverns.

4.4.3.1 Interventions that AB InBev can put forward for BEES B2B to be more effective in value co-capture.

The study proposes a few interventions that AB InBev can put forward for BEES B2B to be more effective in value co-capture. These interventions include the following:

- **Training and development of users**

The adoption and application of the BEES B2B platform require that some interventions are put in place for it to be effective for tavern owners. This comes from the understanding of the effects of the use of the platform towards the operations of tavern owners and a realisation of challenges that tavern owners face in the use of the platform. Therefore, AB InBev can utilise

training and development on how to effectively utilise the BEES B2B platform by tavern owners. This was advanced by Participant One who noted that:

For the BEES B2B platform to be effective in co-value capture and creation there is a need for training and development of tavern owners to be able to utilise the different features and functionalities found on the application. This training and development can be manual, face-to-face was most preferred, using Zoom or other online methods in which tavern owners are given an orientation of the platform and how they can utilise it.

These sentiments were shared by Participant Four who argued that:

There is a need for better training and development for tavern owners on how best they can utilise the BEES B2B platform as it stands, the application is complex, and the commands are in English which is difficult for some of the tavern owners to comprehend. Stakeholders within the platform must ensure that tavern owners are provided with the skills and expertise to use the application.

Furthermore, Participant Eight argued that:

There is a need for service providers to offer online classes or ‘how-to videos in mother tongues that can be accessed in local languages explaining how to use the application and conduct business. This orientation will give users a sense of belonging and a greater understanding of the application.

- **User-friendly application**

From the study, it was discovered that the BEES B2B platform is not user-friendly as tavern owners are concerned with the prompts and other features of the platform that challenge their use of the platform. Therefore, in responding to what AB InBev can do to ensure the effectiveness of the BEES application, it was noted that there is a need to create a platform that is user-friendly even to the uneducated. Accordingly, Participant Three noted that:

The role of AB InBev to ensure the effectiveness of the BEES B2B platform to add value to tavern owners is through designing an application that is user-friendly and easy to use. This is because the current processes within the application are cumbersome to use and often confuse users, especially first-time users of the application.

This was confirmed by Participant Five who argued that:

The application must be designed in a way that is easy to use, and the prompts followed are not complex. Tavern owners have a lot to do and require the use of an application that is easy and convenient to them and not complex. Therefore, the BEES B2B platform must be designed in a user-friendly way.

In addition, Participant Eleven argued that:

The designers of BEES B2B must ensure that the application brings more advantages than harm to users. This means that tavern owners must look forward to using the application in which they can understand all processes.

4.4.3.2 How can the feedback on the interventions be given to BEES users.

The study also sought to determine how the feedback on the interventions could be given to users from AB InBev. These are presented in the following paragraphs:

- **Two-way communication**

The study discovered that there is a need to ensure that BEES users interact with the application for effectiveness. This requires that there is a channel where feedback can be shared between the users and the application. The study, therefore, sought to ask how feedback on the interventions can be given to BEES users. It was noted that there is a need to first create a two-way communication channel between the application and the users. This was argued by Participant One who highlighted that:

Users of BEES B2B must be included in the development or testing processes and all other improvements because they are part of the stakeholders. This means that AB InBev must ensure that they communicate also with clients on developments that would have been made.

In addition, Participant Five noted that:

There is a need to create a channel of communication where information can flow from users to service providers and the same. The importance of creating such a channel is that the progress made can reflect on value addition to clients as services will be tailor-made to service clients. The communication channel must be open and responsive.

Furthermore, Participant Nine argued that:

There is a need for constant communication on channels that are convenient to users on developments made on the application. In addition, users must be included in the process for the application is designed to service them. This will ensure customer attraction and retention on the part of the BEES B2B platform.

- **Engagement with stakeholders**

For every application to be successful, it must ensure that there is engagement between the service provider and users. Engagement guarantees that users are included in the development process with the application and that they are part and parcel of developments that ensure their effectiveness. Engagement, therefore, was discovered as a response to how can the feedback on the interventions be given to BEES users. This was highlighted by Participant Two who noted:

Engagement is the process where the service provider is constantly sending updates, and responding to queries from users and others to make sure that clients are serviced. This must be ensured by AB InBev on the BEES B2B platform so that every individual with the app is kept informed on all developments which enhance the features of the application.

This was supported by Participant Twelve who highlighted that:

There is a need for constant engagement and partnership between stakeholders and the service providers through channels such as social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and others that users are familiar with. This form of engagement is where news on developments, promotions, delivery updates and other necessary information is shared beyond the BEES app to ensure that everyone has access to this new information quickly.

4.4.3.3 Pain points AB InBev must address to make the BEES App more valuable for taverns.

The study also discovered the pain points AB InBev must address to make the BEES App more valuable for taverns. Amongst these include:

- **Easy access to BEES App**

The focus of the study was on the use and effectiveness of the BEES B2B platform on the operation of tavern owners. Through the study, it was highlighted that there are challenges that the application has in use with tavern owners. These pain points impact the use of the application by tavern owners. To address such pain points, the study discovered that AB InBev must ensure that there is easy access to the BEES App by tavern owners. This was mentioned by Participant One who argued that:

BEES App is effective in business operations but the requirement to use the internet is a challenging factor. There is a need to access the platform without internet use and this will see increased use of the application and value addition to operations of tavern owners.

This was supported by Participant Four who noted that:

There is a requirement for the BEES App to be more accessible to tavern owners which means that the issue of internet connectivity must be sorted. The application requires internet access which is expensive and at times not available and this hinders operations. When this is sorted, increased use and reliance on the application can be ensured.

In addition, Participant Nine argued that:

Internet connectivity is a challenge for tavern owners around the areas of their businesses. This impacts their abilities to use the BEES B2B application. It is therefore imperative that the issue of ease of access to internet connectivity is urgently addressed. When this is attended to, there will be an opportunity for tavern owners to increase their use of the application.

- **Customer-centric approach**

Customers are the most important asset of an organisation, and all developments and process must ensure that customer satisfaction is achieved. This was perceived as a response to how to address pain points that challenge the use of the BEES application for tavern owners as it was noted that there is a need to create a customer-centric approach on the use of the application. Accordingly, Participant Three highlighted that:

The BEES B2B application must be developed in a customer-centric approach where users are the target market, and the application has to satisfy their needs. This means

that the application must be easy to access, convenient and include feedback where customers determine what they need.

This was confirmed by Participant Six who argued that:

To ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty, the BEES B2B platform must be designed in a format that meets and exceeds the expectations of customers. Users of the application need to perceive the application as adding value to their business and not being challenged in its use. The feedback channel must be ensured and effective.

4.5 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was the presentation of results from the study with respect to value co-capture in B2B Platforms: A case study in the FMCG sector in South Africa. Twelve participants responded to the research giving the study value. Demographic details such as age, gender, highest educational level, and work experience were captured, and their relevance determined. Through thematic analysis, the study presented the results in respect to how the adoption of BEES B2B platform is important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province, the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa and how should the adoption of BEES B2B platform enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa. The following chapter discusses the findings from the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the presentation of results from the study. This chapter however builds from the previous chapter and focuses on the discussion of findings from the research. This chapter is important in research studies as it reviews the findings from the study and puts them into the context of the overall research. This section therefore is purposefully structured to discuss the results from the study according to the research questions and themes emanating from the research.

5.2 Question One: How is the adoption of BEES B2B platform important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province?

From the study, it was discovered that the adoption of BEES B2B platform is important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province. The following is a discussion on the importance of the platform according to the findings from the research through questions asked.

5.2.1 The value of business since use of BEES B2B platform

The study discovered that the adoption of BEES B2B by tavern owners has increased the value of their businesses. This is through the following aspects:

5.2.1.1 Increased efficiency

From the study, it can be noted that BEES B2B platform has increased efficiency in the way in which tavern owners operate. Each business seeks efficiency which can translate to competitive advantage, and this has been largely influenced by the adoption of BEES platform. BEES allow retailers or tavern owners to browse for products, place their orders, earn rewards, arrange for deliveries, manage invoices, and access business insights from all places (BEES, 2020). This allows tavern owners to access the site and look for purchases which can in turn be delivered. As noted by Johnston (2021), BEES B2B platform is regarded as one of the most effective platforms that ensure that small businesses are accessing products and ensuring that they remain competitive and effective in the business environment. Therefore, increased efficiency is associated with the adoption of BBES by tavern owners.

5.2.1.2 Competitive Advantage

From the findings from the study, it can be noted that BEES platform has ensured that tavern owners meet and retain their competitive advantage. Every business requires a competitive edge over competitors and the adoption of BEES has been effective in enhancing that. The use of BEES platform by tavern owners ensure that they can order products effectively, access various products and in the process, ensure that the demands and needs of clients are met and satisfied. In this regard, value co-creation has been created by BEES platform as it ensures that customers are being satisfied as products are always available and that there is product differentiation (Tommasetti et al., 2017). This enhances competitive advantage which tavern owners are experiencing with the adoption of the BEES B2B platform.

5.2.1.3 Synthesis

Given the deductive approach to analysis, the results of the study were interpreted considering the SD logic argued for in the literature review section. The SD logic has three commitments/characteristics which are the service ecosystem, service platform and the process of value creation. From the summary of results above, the deductive interpretation related to the first dimension of service ecosystem can be associated with the results related to efficiency such as an orientation towards lean thinking and operational excellence of the actors involved in the value co-creation process. This is in line with the argument by Landwehr et al. (2023) who claim that in building of B2B platforms, focusing on the digitization of internal processes results in operational excellence. Other empirical studies emphasize the importance of digitization to realize operational excellence as a measure of efficiency (Hein et al., 2018). By joining the BEEs platform ecosystem, several of internal processes, such as the order-delivery process now has most of its internal processes automated, by joining the BEEs platform.

The second dimension of the SD logic theory which is the service platform can also be utilised to understand the value of business since the adoption of B2B platforms. An organisation operates to ensure that it achieves a competitive advantage and then retains such an advantage (Drucker, 2017). Through the adoption of BEES B2B platform, tavern owners can increase their efficiency and development as they are able to compete in the market with established organisations as they can order stock and give value to their customers. From the frameworks of the service platform, which is a dimension of the SD Logic theory, value co-creation can be enhanced through the coordination of activities that aim at giving business opportunities. These platforms ensure that there is innovation which can enhance service delivery which translates

to competitive advantage that can be leveraged by an organisation. This perspective is in line with the argument by Hein et al. (2016) who are of the view that innovation can ensure that an organisation is able to achieve and retain its competitive advantage for it is offering goods and services that are required in the market, thus satisfying the needs and demands of customers. Therefore, through joining the BEES platform, tavern owners can enhance their competitive advantage.

5.2.2 Key features of the BEES platform often used.

The study discovered that there are key features that tavern owners often use when they visit BEES platform. Amongst these key features include the following:

5.2.2.1 Browsing to see in-stock beers.

From the study, it can be noted that BEES B2B platform offers the feature of browsing of selected beers that are in stock and then purchase is made. This feature of BEES B2B platform allows the user to search for products that are being offered and compare a wide range of prices and other aspects. As noted by Johnston (2021), BEES platform allows users to browse for products, place their orders, earn rewards, arrange for deliveries, manage invoices, and access business insights at the click of a few buttons. This can be understood from the SD Logic framework which postulates that value is added by applications as it offers a wide range of aspects that seek to ensure that businesses operate conveniently and effectively. This therefore means that the common feature of the platform is to look for products and make purchase.

5.2.2.2 Feedback and Review

The feedback and review option are also amongst the key features often utilised by tavern owners when they access the BEES platform. The use of this feature is based on the perspective that there is room for improvement on some aspects and showing satisfaction on services that would have been offered. Boyde and Koles (2019) are of the view that feedback and review feature are important on applications as they build trust and communication between the brand and clients. Tavern owners therefore utilise this option often to voice their concern and appreciate if new features are adding value to their operations. Therefore, the feature of feedback and review is often used by tavern owners on BEES B2B platform.

5.2.2.3 Synthesis

From the summary of results above, the deductive interpretation related to the second dimension of the SD Logic theory in service platform can be linked to improved services that have been ensured through the application and use of BEES B2B platform by tavern owners. The service platform offers innovation and value co-creation as there is the identification of pathways and frameworks that can be utilised to increase the potential of an organisation to reach and satisfy its goals and objectives (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). The utilisation of BEES platform by tavern owners improves their service to customers for they have found an improved and efficient path to meeting and exceeding customer needs and demands. This is explained from the second dimension of the SD Logic theory which articulates that innovation and value co-creation can be ensured through looking for more and improved methods to enhance value (Hein et al., 2016).

The third dimension of the SD Logic theory can also be leveraged to explain the use of key features of the BEES B2B platform and how these are benefiting the development of tavern owners. The BEES platform has been created to offer value and convenience to tavern owners and the interaction that tavern owners have with the platform in feedback for example, ensures that there is co-creation of value. This is confirmed by Lusch and Vargo (2014) who are of the view that in value co-creation, the beneficiaries have a role to play in voicing their opinions on what they perceive to be issues of design that can be leveraged to ensure that an organisation is able to meet and retain customer satisfaction and loyalty. As noted by Piteli and Pitelis (2023), the engagement that customers have with the brand allows the brand to look for new ways and methods for development to meet customer needs. This is explained by the third dimension of the SD Logic theory which opine that value co-creation can be ensured with interaction between the brand and consumers.

5.2.3 How effective the BEES platform has in operations of tavern owners.

The study also sought to determine how effective the BEES platform has on the operations of tavern owners in the Gauteng Province. These are discussed below:

5.2.3.1 Improved service quality.

BEES platform ever since its use has been effective to the operations of tavern owners as it has ensured service quality. Service quality is guaranteeing customers with consistent, effective supply of goods at the right time (on-time-delivery) and delivery on its promise as per the

contractual agreement. This is what BEES offers and these gains can be translated into sales where tavern owners in turn satisfy customers. Kohtamaki and Rajala (2016) argue that B2B platforms improve service quality as they ensure that costs are minimised such as loyalty programmes, creating a dominant design to attract clients, building trust and customisation of goods and services. These are all features of the BEES platform which is enhancing service quality on operations of tavern owners. In this perspective, when the goods and services delivered by the organisation are meeting customer needs, there is customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

5.2.3.2 Product differentiation

Product differentiation has been ensured by BEES platform which advances the development of operations of tavern owners. Product differentiation allows for the access to different goods and services not previously serviced by the organisation. However, through BEES application, tavern owners can now expand their menu and access refreshments that are required by customers. The use and adoption of BEES B2B platform for example is a new and novel phenomenon which offers a full range of services to customers, meaning that organisations that leverage this platform can enhance their competitive advantage. In this perspective, product differentiation has been ensured through use of BEES platform.

5.2.3.3 Synthesis

From the summary of results above, the deductive interpretation related to the first dimension of the SD Logic theory of service ecosystem can be leveraged to determine how effective the BEES platform has been to the operations of tavern owners. Vargo and Kusch (2011) suggest that actors in the B2B network co-evolve their skills and roles in mutual dependency to ensure effectiveness. This is the aim of the application of BEES B2B platform by tavern owners so that they enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. This can be associated to return on investments which is a business process where an organisation seeks to achieve maximum profits from the investment they have put in (Smith, 2023) In reference to this first dimension of the SD logic theory, tavern owners seek to achieve effectiveness and efficiency from the investments they would have made in adopting BEES B2Bplatform.

The third dimension of the SD Logic theory in co-creation of value can also be utilised to understand the effectiveness of the adoption of BEES B2B platform by tavern owners. The interaction that comes between service owners and service beneficiaries ensure that there is

continued innovation which can lead to product differentiation (Smith, 2023). When the owners of the service constantly interact with service beneficiaries to determine what can be done for the service to be effective, there is innovation and development of the service to tailor-suit the needs and demands of users (Drucker, 2017). This is represented by the third dimension of the SD Logic theory which postulates that the interaction between BEES B2B platform and tavern owners ensure that there is product differentiation which increases the potential of the operations of tavern owners as they are classified as innovative and adding value to their businesses.

5.3 Question Two: What are the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa?

The study discovered that there are challenges faced by tavern owners in South Africa in the adoption of BEES B2B platform. The study identified that there are technological challenges and other challenges affecting the adoption of BEES platform by tavern owners. The study also discovered that if these challenges are addressed, tavern owners would effectively utilise the application.

5.3.1 Technological challenges of using the BEES B2B platform.

It was discovered that there are technological challenges associated with the use of BEES application. Amongst these include:

5.3.1.1 Cyber-security concerns

From the study, it was discovered that the impact of BEES application is limited due to security issues and concerns. Customers are still not feeling secure with the use of these online transactions, business and systems limiting the effectiveness of B2B platforms. This is characteristic of the generation of tavern owners who do not utilise the internet for they fear the inconveniences that come with the use of online transaction such as identify theft and cyber security. Murray (2020) argues that many SMEs are still reverting to traditional purchase and supply where there is payment on delivery. This happens a lot more in businesses that run from townships. In addition, hackers and fraudsters seem to be increasing in their abilities in gaining unauthorised access to websites and platforms – a phenomenon that unfortunately adds to the scepticism of the BEES platform by tavern owners.

5.3.1.2 Lack of expertise on internet use by tavern owners

From the study, it was discovered that the use of the BEES application has proven to be exacting for tavern owners due to a lack of expertise in the use of the internet. From the profile of tavern owners, it can be noted that most are in advanced ages and this generation do not understand the use of internet, more especially those residing in townships. Varleye (2015) argues that the B2B buying process involves a lot of decision-makers, and the buying cycle is long and complex. To people who do not have internet expertise as well as do not have a command of English, they face challenges in use of the application. Therefore, lack of internet use expertise is a challenge towards co-value creation by BEES platform.

5.3.1.3 Synthesis

From the summary of results above, the deductive interpretation related to the first dimension of the SD Logic theory can be referenced. The service ecosystem as articulated by Lusch and Nambisan (2014) requires that there is an interaction of actors within the B2B platform in which such interaction must be equal and accessible to all. The development of B2B platforms however requires that there is an understanding of the ecosystem or environment where users are. This is confirmed by Schwab (2016) who argues that the fourth industrial revolution is failing to achieve benefits in the developing world as the system is not equipped or does not have resources that are required for the success of such an initiative. This confirms to the service ecosystem as the first dimension of the SD Logic theory which provides that there is need for actors in the B2B network to co-evolve their skills and roles in mutual dependency to ensure effectiveness (Vargo and Kusch, 2011). This however is not enhanced in the application of BEES B2B platform, leading to technological challenges in the use of the platform.

The third dimension of the DS Logic theory in co-creation of value can also be leveraged to determine the technological challenges that are affecting the application and use of BEES Platform. As noted by Lusch and Vargo (2014), co-creation of value requires that there is interaction between the service owner and the service user to effectively utilise the B2B platform. This is confirmed by Drucker (2017) who argues that an organisation and customers have to collaborate if they are to ensure that value is created, and that goods and services being offered are meeting and exceeding the needs and perspective of customers. However, the application and use of BEES B2B is lacking due to the gap that exists between tavern owners and service providers and this has an impact on value co-creation.

5.3.2 Challenges to the BEES B2B Platform Adoption

It was also noted from the study that there are challenges associated with the adoption of the BEES B2B platform by tavern owners. These challenges include:

5.3.2.1 The application is not user-friendly.

The study discovered that BEES application is not user friendly as there are a lot of aspects that the user must satisfy to make a purchase and confirm delivery. Within BEES B2B platform, there are people researching for solutions, stakeholders whose buy-in is required to move forward, financial representatives to approve the spending and so many more. This challenges the effectiveness of such especially to tavern owners who have limited understanding on these procedures. This complexity in nature challenges the effectiveness and use of such a platform as users must go through a comprehensive process to acquire goods, services, and resources in which they often do not have expertise and time to navigate. Therefore, the lack of user-friendly nature of BEES application challenges its use.

5.3.2.2 Lack of internet access

The study discovered that internet issues are a challenge to the use of BEES B2B platform. This is because there is a requirement that internet be available for access to the application which is often a challenge to tavern owners. Internet connectivity is still a challenge as well as resources to access the internet. There is still a gap between South Africa and the developed world on internet access in which the majority of South Africans cannot afford internet connectivity. This is different from the developed world where internet access is cheap and often provided for. Schwab (2016) argues that the developing world is still behind in access to internet due to technical and financial challenges and these can be seen from the lack of access to internet by tavern owners, impacting on use of BEES application.

5.3.2.3 Synthesis

From the summary of results above, the deductive interpretation related to the second dimension of the SD Logic theory in service platform can be utilised. The role of the service platform is to create an architecture that allows for scalable coordination of service exchanges to generate more opportunities for value co-creation and service innovation (Hein et al., 2016). This means that the service being offered must be user friendly and be effective to use by service users. However, the BEES B2B platform is not satisfying this requirement as there is a gap in appreciating the value of the platform as tavern owners feels that the application is not

user friendly. Schwab (2016) argues that B2B practises should be tailor-made in the image of users they seek to attract for them to be effective. This should be comprehended if there is need for value co-creation with the adoption of B2B platforms.

The third dimension of co-creation of value from the SD Logic theory can also be used to identify the challenges to the adoption of BEES B2B platform. The co-creation of value dimension describes the process of value creation between actors within the service ecosystem on a service platform (Lusch and Nambisan, 2014). The assumption is that service providers and service users should agree on the principles and use of the application in which the application should be equal in serving these two actors. Smith (2023) concurs with this assertion and argues that the development of a product or service must satisfy both the designer and the user for it to be effective and ideal. However, the challenges associated with BEES B2B do not ensure that there is value co-creation as one actor feels the product is not serving their interests.

5.3.3 Whether participants would use BEES more often when challenges are resolved?

From the study, it was discovered that tavern owners would be open to more use of BEES platform if challenges associated with the platform are addressed. This is explained in the following paragraphs:

5.3.3.1 Increased use of the application if challenges resolved.

From the study, it was discovered that participants would use BEES platform if challenges they face in using the application are addressed. For example, BEES is cumbersome to use due to complexities that require stakeholders to interact (Murray, 2020). When these are removed or the process is easy to understand, then participants can utilise the platform effectively. In addition, the use of the application is limited due to internet connectivity and thus if the application is free to access, participants would utilise it. This means that there is positive approach to BEES platform which only require that challenges to use of the platform be addressed.

5.3.3.2 Synthesis

From the summary of results above, the deductive interpretation related to the first dimension of the SD Logic theory in service platform can be utilised. The service ecosystem outlines that it connects different actors through services that foster mutual value creation and a shared institutional logic (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). This is confirmed by Schwab (2016) who

argues that the development of fourth industrial revolution and technologies can be best utilised when service providers and service users feel that their needs and demands are met in the process of creating value. Service providers must understand the ever-changing context of value co-creation and be able to evolve and in the process, also consider the views and perspectives of customers. When this is enhanced, there is a possibility that value co-creation can be achieved.

The third dimension of the SD Logic framework also is critical in understanding how tavern owners can leverage the BEES B2B application if their concerns are met. As noted by Lusch and Vargo (2014), value co-creation can be ensured through interaction and collaboration between service providers and service users on how the platform can be ensured and how the developments can be applied. This process of value co-creation is similar to what brands do when they test their products, brands often go to the market, constantly communicate with customers in promoting a brand and ensure that customers are part and parcel of product development (Smith, 2012). This process ensures that there is value co-creation as opportunities in the ecosystem are identified and that challenges that are faced are communicated to users. In value co-creation, users feel that owners of the brand or platform must communicate so that the developments add value.

5.4 Question Three: How should the adoption of BEES B2B platform enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa?

The third research question of the study sought to determine methods and mechanism to ensure value-co-creation to operations of tavern owners in South Africa through interventions on development and use of BEES platform.

5.4.1 Interventions that AB InBev can put forward for BEES B2B to be more effective in value co-capture.

It was noted that there are various interventions that AB InBev can put forward for BEES B2B to be more effective in value co-capture. Amongst these include:

5.4.1.1 Training and development

It was noted that AB InBev can implement training and development to ensure that tavern owners have the knowledge to utilise BEES B2B. This can ensure that the platform is more effective in value co-capture. This can be done through traditional campaign where sales agents can target tavern owners and give them tutorials on how to utilise the application. Furthermore,

through the introduction of technology, how-to videos in native languages can be made and then circulated with ease to tavern owners so that they can be guided step by step to effectively utilise the application. As noted by Bolos et al. (2016), business entities that are successful have attained this through understanding their business, brand, and customer demographics. Therefore, training and development is required to ensure success of BEES B2B platform.

5.4.1.2 User-friendly application

From the study, it was discovered that for BEES B2B to add value to tavern owners, it must be designed in the process where it is user-friendly. This comes from the perspective that the value chain within the application is cumbersome and requires a lot of buy-in from stakeholders. This defeats the purpose of e-commerce which must be convenient to users. As noted by Kaur et al. (2015), B2B platforms must be designed in a way that there are tailored options during the purchasing process and recommendations on products based on previous selections. This is user-friendly and can impact on consumer experience with the product and can lead to a more customised and personal experience. In this perspective, BEES B2B must be designed in a way that it attracts users.

5.4.1.3 Synthesis

From the summary of results above, the deductive interpretation related to the first dimension of the SD Logic theory in service platform can be utilised. Lusch and Nambisan (2015) are of the view that the service platform to value creation is an unfolding process, for which there is no end state to optimize or toward to. Rather, it is an emergent process within an ever-changing context, including ever-changing resources; it is, by necessity, an entrepreneurial process. as an entrepreneurial process, there is need for training and development of individuals in their environment to be able to realise the gains of the product or feature that is being used (Carroll, 2021). This means that when individuals have the knowledge and expertise to utilise a certain development, value can be developed.

The third dimension of the SD Logic in value co-creation can also be leveraged in this perspective. For value co-creation to be effective associated with the application of a B2Bplatform for example, there is need to ensure that resources are effectively allocated so that the audience is in a better position to appreciate the product. Drucker (2017) equates this to training and development initiatives that are done on-site within jobs where employees are trained and developed to be able to understand new business processes or other innovations

that an organisation would have implemented. A plethora of empirical studies agree with this perspective in which there is a positive correlation between training and development and co-value creation (Smith, 2023). In this perspective, value co-creation is better appreciated by those that have prior knowledge on the feature being promoted.

5.4.2 How can the feedback on the interventions be given to BEES users.

The study also sought to determine how the feedback on the interventions can be given to users from AB InBev. The findings are discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.4.2.1 Two-way communication

From the study, it was noted that communication which is comprehensive can be used to relay the feedback on the interventions be given to users from AB InBev. This communication process has to ensure that information is given quickly and effectively to customers and that customers are also part and parcel of the communication channel. The SD Logic theory also postulates that for value addition to be ensured, applications or systems that connect people have to ensure that there is a channel for effective communication and engagement. This adds value and ensures that customer satisfaction is achieved. Kaur (2012) argues that businesses must make sure that their communication on feedback is given effectively to customers on the channels that they can understand. From this perspective, there is a need for communication through effective channels from AB InBev to stakeholders on feedback on developments on the BEES B2B platform.

5.4.2.2 Engagement with stakeholders

There is need for engagement between AB InBev and tavern owners on the developments that would have been made on BEES B2B platform. Engagement is important in any business practice for it allows for customers to be able to add value to the products and services that they are being offered. Brands that engage with customers have a high rate of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Kaur et al. (2015) therefore notes that through regular contacts, responses to social media posts and other systems put in place to track consumer activities, organisations can raise the profile and improve on customer experience. In this perspective, engagement ensures that developments made are known to users and that the voice of users has been captured within the process.

5.4.2.3 Synthesis

From the SD Logic theory, the first dimension postulating about service ecosystem can be referenced in detailing the above discussed results. As outlined by Vargo and Kusch (2011), a service ecosystem a community of interacting actors organised in a B2B network. These actors interact and evolve their skills to better appreciate the developments of the B2B network and add value to their processes. Associated with this dimension is constant communication and interaction which is important to develop new processes and ensure that the value is being added. To Smith (2023), value co-creation can be ensured through constant communication where products and features are always developed to meet the demands of customers. This is important within the B2B platform where features are communicated to ensure that they meet and exceed the expectations of customers.

The third dimension of the SD Logic framework in value co-creation can also be leveraged to understand interventions and how they can be given to BEES B2B users. As suggested by this dimension, service providers and service users together have a role to ensure that they interact and communicate to enhance service delivery and co-create value. This is confirmed by Schwab (2016) who argues that developments of any process require a comprehensive effort where both service providers and service users are engaged in interaction to ensure that what is being developed is adding value. Product differentiation can be a result of such where the product being developed satisfies both the user and service provider and is able to add value.

5.4.3 Pain points AB InBev should address to make the BEES App more valuable for taverns.

The study discovered the various pain points AB InBev must address to make the BEES App more valuable for taverns. These include:

5.4.3.1 Easy access to BEES App

There is need to ensure that there is easy access to BEES app for tavern owners if the application is to add value to the latter. Schwab (2016) argues that the developing world is facing internet connectivity challenges that need to be addressed. This is because for an older population of tavern owners, access to the internet is quite often a difficult exercise. BEES application requires internet connectivity to use which is challenging to use. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that the application is internet-free for it to be effective. If this area is

addressed, there is an opportunity that the BEES B2B platform can be critical for the development of tavern owners.

5.4.3.2 Customer-centric approach

BEES application must be tailor-made to meet the expectations of customers and satisfy them. This is because customers are the greatest asset of an organisation and when they are satisfied, the organisation is likely to meet its goals and objectives (Murray, 2020). When customers feel like the organisation can meet and retain their demands and that developments are communicated to them, they feel part of the organisation. Therefore, BEES application must be modelled in a way that it satisfies customers and that they are often looking forward to engaging with the application in their business operations.

5.4.3.3 Synthesis

From the above discussion, it can be noted that the second dimension of the SD Logic framework can be applied to ensure that the BEES B2B platform is effective to tavern owners in their operations. Lusch and Nambisan (2015) argue that the service platform liquefies resources and enhances resource density to facilitate an efficient and effective exchange in a service ecosystem. This means that both the users and developers of the B2B platform work together to develop the platform to best serve their interests and, in the process, ensure value co-creation. As suggested by Smith (2023), value co-creation is best enhanced when a platform is supported by both service providers and service users.

The third dimension of the SD logic theory in value co-creation can also be used to determine the effectiveness of use of the BEES application from both the efforts of service providers and the users. To Luca et al. (2016) the SD logic is philosophically grounded in a commitment to collaborate processes with customers, partners, and employees; a logic that challenges management at all levels to be of service to all the stakeholders; a logic or perspective that recognizes the firm and its exchange partners who are engaged in the co-creation of value through reciprocal service provision. Therefore, when the views and perspectives of users are utilised in the development of a service, then value co-creation can be ensured.

5.5 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was the discussion of the findings in respect to the study on value co-capture in B2B Platforms: A case study in the FMCG sector in South Africa. The importance

of this chapter was that it gives meaning, structure, and value of the research as it explains the research findings in a more profound way.

This chapter therefore discussed the findings in respect to the adoption of BEES B2B platform important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province, the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa and how an adoption of the BEES B2B platform could enhance value co-creation to the operations of taverns in South Africa.

Within this section, the findings were discussed in reference to the literature review, primary findings and the SD Logic theory utilised in the study. From the study, it was discovered that the SD Logic theory in the service ecosystem dimension ensures that there is an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of service users in adding value. This therefore means that tavern owners must utilise change as provided within the environment which includes the use of BEES B2B platform.

Furthermore, the second dimension of service platform which creates architecture that allows for scalable coordination of service exchanges to generate more opportunities for value co-creation and service innovation. There are rules and guidelines that are developed in this platform to guide interactions and within BEES B2B platform, these ranges from policy to restrictive rules. The importance of this is that they allow for value to be added as more opportunities are created repeatedly.

The third dimension of the SD Logic theory as discussed in this chapter is value co-creation. Value co-creation is enhanced through communication and interaction between the service provider and service user. Therefore, for the BEES platform to be effective for tavern owners, it must establish transparency about who ecosystem actors are, what and whom they know and what they can do. In addition, the SD Logic is critical in the study for it seeks the collaboration between the company and customers to create value. Customers create value with the firm and in the process, promote the market philosophy.

The following chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and discussed the findings from the study. This chapter now considers the entire study and presents the conclusion and recommendations from the study. This chapter commences with drawing conclusions using information from the study guided by the research questions. The next section focuses on recommendations from the study which are presented in a logical manner. This chapter also presents the areas for potential study in the future.

The aim of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the adoption of BEES B2B in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province.

To address the research, the following questions were asked:

- How is the adoption of BEES B2B platform important in value co-creation to tavern owners in the Gauteng Province?
- What are the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa?
- How should the adoption of BEES B2B platform enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa?

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This section provides the summary of the findings from the study.

6.2.1 Summary of Findings from Objective One

The first research objective of the study sought to determine how the adoption of BEES B2B platform is important in value co-creation for tavern owners in the Gauteng Province. There has been increased efficiencies realised in business operations. Furthermore, there has been an increase in business operations due to convenience and flexibility in operations which allows multiple accesses to the platform. In addition, the value of the business of tavern owners has been enhanced through the adoption of BEES B2B platform as competitive advantage has been realised.

The most common feature utilised by tavern owners on BEES platform is that of browsing to see beers and refreshments that are in-stock. Another important feature of the platform often used by users is that of reviews and giving feedback. From the study, it was discovered that

BEES B2B platform has been effective within operations of tavern owners for it has ensured improved service quality from sales reps from AB InBev. Another aspect that shows the effectiveness of BEES platform on operations of tavern owners is through product differentiation to ensure tavern owners can offer a variety to their customers.

6.2.2 Summary of the Findings from Objective Two

The second objective of the study sought to identify the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa. There are technological challenges of using BEES B2B platform associated with safety issues. Another technological challenge impacting the use of BEES platform by tavern owners is that of lack of expertise on internet or technologically savvy product usage. The study also discovered that there are other challenges that are encountered when using BEES platform. The BEES application is argued to be not user friendly as it has too many features which tavern owners do not use. Another challenge with the use of BEES application is the requirement of internet access, which is still a challenge especially to tavern owners. The study also discovered that some of the participants were willing to use the B2B platform if challenges were resolved. This is because the application is useful especially when one is trained and developed to use it.

6.2.3 Summary of Findings from Objective Three

The third objective of the study sought to determine how the adoption of BEES B2B platform should enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa. For BEES B2B platform to be effective there is need for training and development of users such as tavern owners. Another intervention that that AB InBev can put forward for BEES B2B to be more effective in value co-capture is designing a user-friendly application. From the study, it was discovered that two-way communication in which both users and AB InBev is a method to relay feedback on the platform. Users of BEES B2B must be included in the development or testing processes of the platform and all other improvements because they are part of the key stakeholders. Another method on how feedback on interventions be given to users is through face-to-face engagement sessions. There is need for live engagement between stakeholders and the service providers through channels such as trade visits Zoom meetings together with sales meet and greet sessions. The study also discovered the pain points AB InBev must address to make the BEES App more valuable for taverns. There is need to ensure that BEES App is easily accessible to users. Another pain point that must be addressed is coming up with a customer-centric approach in development of BEES application. The BEES B2B application must be

developed in a customer-centric approach where users are the target market, and the application must satisfy their needs.

6.3 Conclusions

The focus of this section is the presentation of the conclusions from the qualitative study conducted in the FMCG sector in Gauteng, South Africa. It concludes the gathered data from tavern owners who use the BEES B2B platform.

6.3.1 Conclusions from Research Question One

The first research question of the study sought to determine how the adoption of BEES B2B platform is important in value co-creation for tavern owners in the Gauteng Province. Since the adoption of BEES application by tavern owners, there has been increased efficiencies realised in business operations of tavern owners. This can be explained from the lock-in approach of B2B on organisations as explained by Boyde and Koles (2019) who argue that this approach ensures business effectiveness as clients can access goods and services at their convenience. For example, the adoption of BEES B2B has increased business efficiencies since stock (beer and other resources) can now be delivered on time. For example, cold beer can be ordered at the convenience of the buyer. This is important because it has ensured that time taken to go and look for stock is now used to manage the business and enhance other activities at the taverns.

In addition, the value of the business of tavern owners has been enhanced through the adoption of BEES B2B platform as competitive advantage has been realised. Murray (2020) argues that competitive advantage is the ability of an organisation to meet and exceed customer expectations and in the process, achieve customer loyalty and profits. The BEES B2B platform has helped tavern owners attract and retain customers for refreshments are always available at the tavern. Through BEES, tavern owners can order beer when stock levels are running low and the rewards that tavern owners have on the platform result in points that can earn them discounts on future orders.

The most common feature utilised by tavern owners on BEES platform is that of browsing to see beers and refreshments that are in-stock from suppliers. In most cases, the BEES platform is used to look for beers that are in stock and determine how these can be scheduled for delivery (BEES, 2020). This is the rationale of use of the platform for owners can look for various brands that are available and can make an order for purchase at their convenient time. Another important feature of the platform often used by users is that of reviews and giving feedback.

The feedback feature is important for it allows users to voice their opinions and contribute towards the improvement of services. Ratings are also given on organisations and deliveries and the importance of this is to ensure effectiveness.

From the study, it was discovered that BEES B2B platform has been effective within operations of tavern owners for it has ensured improved service quality from sales reps from AB InBev. The use and adoption of BEES has improved service delivery for tavern owners as they are able to access products from suppliers at their convenience. In return, tavern owners can serve their customers and meet the demand. Service quality is important for customer satisfaction as it enhances customer loyalty. Every organisation, big or small operates and thrives on improved, sustainable organisational sales and one of the ways of doing that is through attracting and retaining happy customers.

Another aspect that shows the effectiveness of BEES platform on operations of tavern owners is through product differentiation to ensure tavern owners can offer a variety to their customers. Schwab (2016) acknowledges that the adoption of e-commerce and digital models in doing business allows for clients to acquire the best products from a plethora of service providers. This is the case with BEES which offers a variety of products that tavern owners can select and, in the process, ensure their business development.

6.2.2 Conclusions from Research Question Two

The second research question of the study sought to address the challenges faced in the adoption of BEES B2B platforms by tavern owners in South Africa. The study identified that there are technological challenges of using BEES B2B platform. The major technological challenge with the use of BEES B2B platform is that of a lack of trust or concerns about trusting a technology platform and the safety of platform as fraud is common in township businesses. Murray (2020) argues that since the world is evolving to the adoption of the internet and e-commerce platforms, customers are still not feeling secure with the use of these online transactions, business and systems limiting the effectiveness of B2B platforms. It is difficult for a business owner to purchase an item on the platform, especially for the first time if they have not seen the beer being delivered safely and according to their orders. This limits the use of BBES application for there is need to purchase and pay online for the services being offered. There are still concerning questions about the possibilities of transactions being hackers amongst others.

Another technological challenge impacting the use of BEES platform by tavern owners is that of a lack of expertise on internet or technologically savvy product usage. The use of BEES application requires someone who understands how to use the internet to browse, interact with suppliers and make online payments safely. As postulated by Nerd (2019), it is perceived as time consuming and scary to tavern owners as they must learn how to navigate such a site after running their businesses for many years and relying on sales reps to assist or driving to wholesalers to stock up on beer. These issues around a lack of knowledge and expertise as it pertains to using the internet seems to have limited the desire for some tavern owners to download the application and consequently has negatively impacted its effectiveness.

The study also discovered that there are other challenges that are encountered when using BEES platform. The BEES application is argued to be not user friendly as it has too many features which tavern owners do not use. Varleye (2015) argues that applications should be easy to comprehend and use by different people from different educational backgrounds. However, the BEES application is complex in nature and requires that users go through a comprehensive process or training material to gain confidence in using the B2B platform. This defeats the purpose of e-commerce which should be simple and convenient.

Another challenge with the use of BEES application is the requirement of internet access, which is still a challenge especially to tavern owners. The use of BEES application requires access to the internet which is limited most of the time in the township. Murray (2020) argues that in the developing world, access to the internet is limited and there is a wide gap of internet connectivity within communities. In townships and rural areas, connectivity to the internet is also a challenge. When one wants to make a purchase or browse through the application, internet connectivity is required with enough data which is a challenge in most townships in South Africa where taverns are predominantly situated. The B2B platform is also in English which is usually not the mother tongue of township run businesses such as taverns. This can pose a challenge of understanding how to effectively use the platform.

The study also discovered that some of the participants were willing to use the B2B platform if challenges were resolved. This is because the application is useful especially when one is trained and developed to use it. “I would want to use the application because it is cheap, convenient and enhances effectiveness” said one participant. The application is an effective tool to ensure sustainable business growth.

6.2.3 Conclusions from Research Question Three

The third research question sought to determine how the adoption of BEES B2B platform should enhance value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa. The study discovered that for BEES B2B platform to be effective there is need for training and development of users such as tavern owners. As noted by Nerd (2019), applications such as BEES do not come with a user manual and requires that users learn on how to use the application themselves. However, to middle aged populations, in which from the demographics of the study are many tavern owners, this is a challenge to them as they lack internet education. For BEES B2B platform to be effective in value co-capture and creation there is a need for training and development of tavern owners to be able to utilise the application. This training and development can be face to face with sales representatives or online in which tavern owners are given an orientation of the platform and how they can utilise it using 'how to' videos. In addition, the design of BEES platform must be re-oriented to meet the needs of those that usually use it as they lack internet education, preferably also made available in the local languages such as isiZulu and Sepedi.

Another intervention that AB InBev can put forward for BEES B2B to be more effective in value co-capture is designing a user-friendly application. The application must be designed in a way that it is easy to use, and the prompts followed are not complex. Tavern owners work long and hard hours and require the use of an application that is easy and convenient to download, sign up and use and not something which is complex with many steps to follow before placing beer orders. Therefore, the BEES B2B platform must be designed in a way that is more user-friendly or intuitive.

From the study, it was discovered that two-way communication in which both users and AB InBev is a method to relay feedback on the platform. Users of BEES B2B must be included in the development or testing processes of the platform and all other improvements because they are part of the key stakeholders. This means that AB InBev must ensure that they communicate more often with platform users on developments or feature enhancements that would have been made. Tung (2008) therefore asserts that B2B platforms must ensure that they interact with customers for such engagement can ensure the development of both clients and the service provider.

Another method on how feedback on interventions be given to users is through face-to-face engagement sessions. There is need for live engagement between stakeholders and the service

providers through channels such as trade visits Zoom meetings together with sales meet and greet sessions. This form of engagement is where news on platform developments, promotions, new product testing (beer) and others necessary information is shared and that everyone has access to or can give inputs where feasible.

The study also discovered the pain points that AB InBev must address to make the BEES App more valuable for taverns. There is need to ensure that BEES App is easily accessed by users. The BEES' App is effective in business operations but the requirement of use of internet is a challenging factor. There is an existing need to access the platform without internet use and this will see increased use of the application and value addition to operations of tavern owners. Another pain point that must be addressed is coming up with a customer-centric approach in the development of BEES application. The BEES B2B application must be developed with a customer-centric approach in mind where users are the target market, and the application must satisfy their needs. This means that the application must be easy to access, convenient and include feedback where customers determine what they need.

6.3 Recommendations from the Study

The following are recommendations from the study:

6.3.1 Internet skills and education

The first recommendation from the study is that tavern owners need access to education on how to utilise the internet. This comes from the challenge of lack of skills to navigate the internet which is challenging on the benefits of BEES Application. Internet education skills should be made available to tavern owners with the hope of accessing BEES B2B application and making it effective in their operations. Therefore, AB InBev must ensure that resources are made available such as workshops, training and development and the provision of Wi-Fi in taverns to ensure that tavern owners have access to internet education and skills. Through internet education and skills, tavern owners can leverage the BEES application effectively and increase their operations.

6.3.2 Engagement with key stakeholders

Another recommendation from the study is that of engagement with stakeholders in the development of BEES applications through application testing sessions. Stakeholders in this perspective mean those included in the supply chain process and mostly tavern owners. Through engagement with stakeholders, the challenge of the complexity of the application, long processes in the supply chain and issues to do with data security can be addressed.

Through engagement with stakeholders, the application can be tailor-made to suit the demands and requirements of stakeholders and can make the process smooth and convenient. Engagement also means that users are kept informed on the development processes on the platform and that their opinions are included in designing the application.

6.3.3 Reward system

Another recommendation from the study is that there is a need to introduce a use friendlier-to-use point system that can be redeemed. This means that whenever a tavern owner through purchases the application, points can be credited to them, currently the BEES rewards program is difficult to understand by tavern owners. These points should ideally be redeemed at one point in time and add value to the operations of tavern owners. The importance of this system is to leverage tavern owners to increase their use of the platform and enhance their operations.

6.4 Possible Limitations and Areas for Future Studies

The possible limitations of the study are that the participants were primarily from the Gauteng Province, therefore results from this sample cannot be considered as incontrovertibly representative of opinions by tavern owners across the rest of South Africa and indeed developing countries with similar dynamics and demographics.

The following therefore are possible areas for future studies:

- A quantitative study to compare the use of BEES B2B application between the developed and the developing world as it is adopted in various countries across the globe.
- A qualitative study can be conducted to capture the perspective of e-commerce growth and use of B2B platforms by small-medium enterprises in the FMCG Sector in South Africa.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent

Date: 10 August 2022

Title of the Research Study:

Value Co-Capture in B2B Platforms: A Case Study in the FMCG Sector in South Africa

Principal Investigator/s/researcher/s and affiliation: Boipelo Mekgwe, Master of Management, Digital Business student, Wits Business School

Dear participant,

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves undertaking primary research. The aim and purpose of this research are to investigate the importance and rationale of adopting Business to Business (B2B) platforms for co-value capture by tavern owners seeking the sustainability of their businesses within the Gauteng township economy. The study will involve collecting data through a semi-structured interview guide. The duration of your participation if you choose to participate and remain in the study is expected to be only 60 minutes.

Thank you in advance for participating in the study.

Boipelo Mekgwe

Appendix B: Research Instrument: Interview Guide for semi-structured interviews with Tavern Owners

SECTION A: Demographic Information

1. Age

No	Year	Tick
1.1	20 - 35 years	1
1.2	36 – 45 years	2
1.3	46 – 56 years	3
1.4	56 – above	4

2. Gender

No	Gender	Tick
2.1	Male	1
2.2	Female	2
2.3	Prefer not to disclose (liberal)	3

3. Level of Education

No	Qualification	Tick
3.1	High School	1
3.2	Completed Matric	2
3.3	Degree or Higher	3

4. Years in Tavern Business

No	Experience	Tick
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4.1	1-5 Years	2
4.2	5- 10 years	3
4.3	10-20years	4
4.4	21 and above	5

Section B: The importance and impact of adopting BEES B2B platforms for value co-capture by tavern owners in the Gauteng Province

1. What value has your business enjoyed since the adoption of the BEES B2B platform?
2. Which key features do you use often on BEES to help run your tavern?
3. Is there a difference that you have noticed since using the BEES platform in your tavern?

Section C: The challenges towards the adoption of BEES B2B on value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa

1. What are the technological challenges of using the BEES B2B platform?
2. What other challenges do you encounter when using the BEES platform?
3. Should these challenges be resolved, do you see yourself using BEES more often or not?

Section D: Interventions to enhance the effectiveness of BEES B2B on value co-creation to operations of taverns in South Africa

1. What interventions can AB InBev put forward for BEES B2B to be more effective in value co-capture?
2. How can the feedback on the interventions be given to you from AB InBev?
3. What pain points would you like AB InBev to address in order to make the BEES App more valuable for your tavern?

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

STUDENT NO: 2245369

NAME OF STUDENT: Boipelo Mekingwe

TOPIC: Value Co-Capture in B2B Platforms: A Case Study in the FMCG Sector in South Africa

I,, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me, and I understand what my participation will involve. Please circle the relevant options below.

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous: YES/NO

I agree that the study may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report: YES/NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded: YES/NO

..... (signature)

..... (name of participant)

..... (date)

Appendix D: Ethics Clearance Certificate

Graduate School of Business Administration
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg



Wits Business School Ethics Committee
Constituted under the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

Ethics Clearance Certificate

Ethics protocol number: WBS/DB2245369/717

This certificate is only valid with a legitimate ethics protocol number and signed by the Researcher (below).

This certificate is only valid if accompanied by formal permission from the relevant stakeholder(s).

Project title Value co-capture in B2B platforms: A case study in the FMCG sector in South Africa

Investigator / Researcher Ms Boipelo Mekgwe

Nature of Project MM (Digital Business)

Decision of the Committee Approved, provided stakeholders and participants are guaranteed confidentiality.

Issue Date of Certificate 2023-05-05

Expiry date Date of submission of the project / research report

Chairperson Dr Pius Oba
+27 11 717 3976
+27 82 733 6587
pius.oba@wits.ac.za

Declaration by Researcher

One copy must be signed by the Researcher and returned to the Chairperson of the Wits Business School Ethics Committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature

05 May 2023

Date: