

# Unveiling the Internal Customer Perspective on Social Media-Enabled Co-Creation for Digital Experience Enhancement in the Telecommunication Sector

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of social media in enhancing customers' digital experience through customer co-creation, from the perspective of internal customers within the telecommunications sector. While social media is widely utilised for external customer engagement, there is sparse empirical evidence on how internal stakeholders leverage these platforms to facilitate co-creation and drive an exceptional digital experience. Thus, in addressing this gap, the study aims to explore internal customer perspectives and practices related to social media use for co-creation in a Malaysian telecommunications company. Employing a single case study approach, data were gathered through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 14 employees across key divisions within the organisation. Data were analysed using thematic analysis assisted by NVivo software, from which two dominant categories emerged: digital communication and offline customer co-creation, illustrating how customer engagement manifests across both digital and physical environments. Thematic analysis reveals that although social media is regarded as a valuable tool for real-time interaction and personalised engagement, it remains underutilised for structured co-creation due to organisational silos, insufficient training, and a lack of strategic alignment. Employees also raised concerns over data security, intellectual property, and limited customer interest, reinforcing the organisation's continued reliance on offline methods such as focus groups and direct observation for structured collaboration. The findings underscore the need for cross-functional collaboration, targeted training, and integrated social media strategies to embed co-creation into digital experience initiatives. These insights offer practical implications for telecommunications companies seeking to enhance customer-centric innovation by strengthening internal capabilities and strategic alignment around social media use, thereby fostering more effective external engagement and collaboration. The study further suggests avenues for future research, including incorporating external customer perspectives, comparing platform-specific dynamics, and employing quantitative or longitudinal designs to examine the broader applicability of these findings across various service industries.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Digital Experience, Customer Co-Creation, Internal Customer, Telecommunications

## INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian telecommunications sector operates in a highly competitive environment where retaining customers has become equally as critical as gaining new ones. Since 2008, Malaysians have had more freedom to switch providers without changing their numbers thanks to the implementation of Mobile Number Portability (MNP), which has increased operator competition (MCMC, 2009). According to research, many Malaysian customers are quick to cancel their subscriptions when they are unhappy with the level of service or engagement, even though customer retention is more cost-effective than acquisition (Mustafa, Ling, & Razak, 2021). As a

result, telecommunication companies looking to fortify enduring partnerships now place a high premium on customer experience. Social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and WhatsApp have become central to how customer experiences are shaped. These platforms enable immediate interaction, personalised communication, and continuous engagement, making them vital in the customer journey (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Yi & Gong, 2013). Yet, while widely adopted for marketing, promotions, and customer service, social media is less frequently applied in structured ways that allow customers and employees to work together to shape services. This is where co-creation becomes essential, in which customers contribute ideas and feedback that can be used to enhance products, services, or experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

Co-creation with the customers through social media has immense potential, yet Malaysian telecommunication companies have left the opportunity largely untapped. Employees, as the company's internal customers, are primarily the ones who operate the organisation's digital platforms and make sense of patrons feedback from the internet. Employee perspectives are critical to evaluating social media's effectiveness in enhancing digital customer experience, yet remain rarely examined in the literature. Specifically, the micro-level internal dynamics through which frontline and internal employees perceive, experience, and shape social media-driven customer interactions remain under-researched (Zhou et al., 2023). Departmental silos, inconsistent strategies, and limited training often break up existing practices, making it harder for employees to use social media for meaningful co-creation (Martini, Massa, & Testa, 2014; Moghadamzadeh, Ebrahimi, Radfard, Salamzadeh, & Khajeheian, 2020). This study examines how internal customers perceive and use social media for co-creation, and how these practices might be better aligned to strengthen customers' digital experience within the Malaysian telecommunications sector.

## Problem Statement

Technological developments have long been seen as the main force behind innovation in telecommunications (Ranju & Versha, 2012). Yet technology alone does not explain innovation outcomes; recent studies point to the equally significant role of people. Employees, functioning as internal customers, equally impact innovation outcomes. They influence the collection, analysis, and utilisation of customer data in co-creation (Cui & Wu, 2016). As a result, these employees largely determine whether customer insights are translated into digital innovations and improved services. Social media has also transformed how businesses engage with customers, enabling real-time interaction, message customisation, and continuous feedback. However, its role in organisations, especially in helping employees work together to create new things, has gotten a lot less attention. Therefore, many businesses are still not ready to fully use social media to improve the customer experience and make their practices more customer-focused.

In the Malaysian telecommunications industry, the use of social media remains heavily skewed towards outward-facing functions, primarily marketing campaigns, promotional activities, and frontline customer service interactions. While these applications strengthen visibility and external engagement, far less emphasis is placed on using social media internally as a platform for employees to collaborate, exchange insights, or co-create solutions with customers. Organisational silos, fragmented responsibilities, and the absence of coordinated, cross-functional strategies further limit its potential to support internal collaboration (Moghadamzadeh, Ebrahimi, Radfard, Salamzadeh, & Khajeheian, 2020). Consequently, opportunities for employees to harness social media as a shared space for capturing customer input, working across divisional boundaries, and contributing to the design of customer-focused services remain largely underdeveloped.

Prior literature demonstrates that while social media offers scalable spaces for interaction, the extent to which organisations systematically integrate these inputs into daily operations remains uneven (Barlatier, Cusin, Huet, & Rehm, 2022; Martini, Massa, & Testa, 2014). This gap suggests that social media's potential to enhance digital experience and foster meaningful co-creation in the telecommunications sector remains largely untapped. Exploring how internal customers; the staff members in charge of overseeing digital platforms, interacting with users, and analysing online feedback; perceive and use social media in co-creation is necessary given these limitations. Understanding their viewpoints and the challenges they confront is critical for progressing beyond surface-level interactions and incorporating co-creation more thoroughly into customers' digital experience

strategy. Addressing this gap would not only improve Malaysian telecommunications businesses' utilisation of social media, but also ensure that customer interaction activities are more consistent, collaborative, and focused on long-term value.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed how organisations operate, compete, and engage with stakeholders. Among these technologies, social media has emerged as one of the most significant drivers of interaction in the service industry. Rather than functioning solely as communication tools, social platforms enable continuous dialogue, information sharing, and relationship building, creating opportunities for firms to extend engagement beyond traditional channels (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Adikari, Burnett, Sedera, de Silva, & Alahakoon, 2021). In highly competitive sectors such as telecommunications, these platforms are increasingly viewed as strategic assets for both customer engagement and innovation.

In parallel, the concept of co-creation has gained prominence as organisations recognise the value of involving both external and internal stakeholders in shaping products and services. Co-creation reframes the relationship between firms and their stakeholders, shifting from a company-centric to a more collaborative, participatory model of innovation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Jayashankar, Johnston, Nilakanta, & Burres, 2020). Social media has expanded the avenues for this collaboration by offering accessible, scalable spaces for interaction. Yet, the extent to which organisations integrate these inputs systematically remains uneven, pointing to a gap between engagement and structured innovation (Martini, Massa, & Testa, 2014; Barlatier, Cusin, Huet, & Rehm, 2022).

A further dimension of this discussion lies in the customers' digital experience, which represents the perceptions customers form through their interactions with a firm's digital channels. Digital experience extends beyond the usability of websites and mobile applications to include the emotional and relational quality of interactions across all digital touchpoints, including social media (Yi & Gong, 2013; Toytari, 2015). Recent research highlights that digital experience is no longer shaped by isolated encounters but by integrated, seamless journeys across online and offline platforms (Neslin et al., 2022; Ramasundaram, Alsaad, & Vijay, 2023).

The conceptual foundation of this study is based on three domains which are social media, co-creation, and digital experience. These domains draw attention to how internal customers who are the organisation's employees use social media to collaborate internally, and how this, in turn, shapes customers' digital experience in the telecommunications industry, alongside the more commonly studied external-facing interactions.

### Telecommunication Industry In Malaysia

The telecommunications industry in Malaysia has undergone substantial transformation since the late twentieth century, primarily driven by rapid technological advancements and increasingly shorter product life cycles. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), established under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Act of 1998, serves as the regulatory authority responsible for overseeing the sector. It ensures compliance with established guidelines, policies, procedures, and service quality standards while facilitating and coordinating the overall growth and modernisation of the industry.

Over the past decade, the fixed-line telecommunications market in Malaysia has remained relatively stagnant as mobile services continue to dominate. In 2022, according to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), mobile-cellular subscriptions were very high, with the mobile-cellular penetration rate reaching 145.3% in Q4 2022 (due to multiple subscriptions per person account). At the same time, MCMC reports that fixed-broadband penetration at the premises level stood at about 47.6% in 2022 (MCMC, 2022). The market is concentrated among a small number of large providers, which helps explain why product and service offerings across operators tend to be broadly similar.

In today's internet-driven economy, social media has become an integral component of corporate communication and customer engagement strategies. Telecommunication companies in Malaysia actively utilise social media platforms to enhance customer interaction, foster brand loyalty, and market their products more effectively. The presence of official corporate social media channels reflects the sector's growing emphasis on customer co-creation. Through strategic use of social media, Malaysian telecommunications companies have the potential to enhance customer experience, stimulate innovation, and sustain competitive advantage within the increasingly globalised digital marketplace.

### **Social Media and Co-Creation**

Social media platforms provide interactive spaces for communication, collaboration, and customer engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). They enable real-time feedback and help organisations integrate customer insights into decision-making (Adikari et al., 2021). Despite these benefits, companies often use social media in limited ways, focusing on promotional or customer service functions rather than embedding them into innovation processes (Reillier & Reillier, 2017). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) define co-creation as the process of collaborating with customers to generate ideas, design, and deliver products or services. This approach represents a shift from a company-centric to a customer-centric perspective. Jayashankar, Johnston, Nilakanta and Bures (2020) and Hajiheydari, Foroudi, and Nguyen (2019) provide similar definitions of co-creation, emphasising the active participation of customers in sharing ideas with companies, either through crowdsourcing or direct involvement in the creation of products or services.

Meanwhile, co-creation for innovation, as described by Witell, Kristensson, Gustafsson, and Lofgren (2011), involves customers' willing participation in the initial phases of development, sharing their needs and suggestions, and promoting mutual learning between businesses and stakeholders (Owen, Goldwasser, Choate, & Blitz, 2008). This cooperative methodology results in the alteration of business operations and a transition towards tailored customer interactions (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, 2016), fostering inventive procedures in which customers actively engage in joint creation and design.

The study by Roy, Balaji, Quazi, and Quaddus (2023) strengthens this view by showing that in smart service settings, customers are motivated by more than just outcomes with factors such as the opportunity to influence development, the sense of involvement, and feedback loops encourage deeper co-creation. Furthermore, platforms enabling near-instant communication and richer two-way exchanges are critical, as the way brands foster continuous dialogue heavily dictates the efficacy of these collaborative behaviours (Yi & Gong, 2013). These insights support the notion that co-creation is not passive feedback but an active, structured collaboration.

### **Internal Customer Perspective**

Employees, also referred to as internal customers, are at the core of co-creation. They are not only actors who execute business directives, they also actively collect and gather feedback from external customers through social media to be synthesised and applied in the company's product and services. Additionally, they influence whether or not that feedback is incorporated into new ideas and service enhancements (Grace & Lo Iacono, 2015). The involvement of internal customers is vital, as co-creation efforts often remain shallow or poorly integrated without their commitment, expertise, and cooperation. However, employees face several challenges in playing this role effectively. Martini, Massa, and Testa (2014) noted that organisational silos limit collaboration among divisions, which reduces opportunities for structured co-creation. In addition, many employees may not fully understand how to make use of social media feedback or may feel unsure about taking action on it, attributed to limited coordination and a lack of proper training.

The concept of internal customers emerged in organisational literature, particularly in Total Quality Management and organisational effectiveness, to emphasise that people within organisations do not only deliver value, but also receive value from other internal units. For example, Enblom & Padovan (2023) define internal customers as those people or divisions in a company who receive services or products from other units of the same company. This broadens the co-creation framework to include how these internal exchanges influence the final

deliverables to external customers. Grace and Lo Iacono (2015) similarly emphasise that employees at all levels, from board members, executives to managers, and front-line staff, are part of the co-creation process, since their perceptions, actions, and internal service quality influence how customer input is handled.

Several prior studies underline that internal customers' motivation and competence are key to enabling meaningful external customer involvement. Chatenier, Verstegen, Biemans, Mulder, and Omta (2010), for example, found that when internal stakeholders are competent and motivated, ideas coming from customers are more likely to be incorporated than when they are not. Bartl, Fuller, Muhlbacher, and Ernst (2012) also point out that internal customer involvement in innovation projects correlates with better performance in product design and service development. In early generation phases, the internal customer often drives collaboration. Nambisan (2002) argues that internal customers lead co-creation initiatives, especially in ideation and early design phases. Cui & Wu (2016) further show that existing knowledge and prior exposure to customer feedback influence whether internal customers accept external inputs and how they integrate them into product or service design.

### **Customers' Digital Experience**

Customers' digital experience describes the overall impressions customers form as they interact with an organisation across its digital and physical touchpoints. Digital experience is formed not only by isolated transactions but by the continuity and quality of interactions across websites, mobile apps, social media channels, online chat, and face-to-face encounters. Yi and Gong (2013) emphasise that social media is an important contributor to digital experience because it enables near-instant communication, richer two-way exchanges, and a higher degree of personalisation than many conventional channels. Through social listening, targeted messaging, and real-time replies, social platforms help companies tailor interactions and respond quickly to customer needs.

Despite these capabilities, many companies still separate co-creation activities from everyday digital interactions. Formal feedback labs, co-design workshops, and joint ideation sessions are examples of structured co-creation that often occur offline, where companies can control the environment and promote targeted conversation, according to Toytari (2015). This separation creates a gap in the co-creation process. Although social media provides scalable, consistent input, converting that input into a well-planned co-creation requires coordination between online and offline elements. Integrating online and offline elements of the customers' digital experience remains a persistent challenge for many organisations. Studies show that when customers engage across multiple channels, such as websites, apps, live events, and customer service platforms, the consistency of these touchpoints strongly influences their willingness to participate in co-creation activities. Effective communication between online and offline channels improves customer co-creation, according to Cui, Xie, Zhu, Shareef, Goraya, and Akram (2022), particularly when businesses keep consistency across various points of contact. According to Moliner, Sancho, and Garay (2024), companies can improve co-creation and customer satisfaction by coordinating branding, messaging, and engagement across all touchpoints to create a smooth omnichannel experience. This perspective states that social media should complement other customer interfaces, like portals, apps, and live events, rather than functioning independently, in order to guarantee that online customer insights are incorporated into official development and decision-making procedures.

Moreover, Ramasundaram et al. (2023) introduced the idea of platform fluidity, which states the ability of a digital ecosystem to change form and reconfigure workflows to meet evolving customer needs. Fluid platforms make it easier for employees (internal customers) to capture social media signals, combine them with other data sources, and use them in iterative service design. In addition, when digital platforms and internal processes are fluid, social media feedback can be converted more quickly into prototypes or co-design sessions. This body of literature carries several implications for telecommunications companies seeking to use social media to strengthen digital experience through co-creation. Social media engagement needs to be deliberately linked to more formal co-creation forums, which could be in the form of online ideation platforms, virtual workshops, or offline design sessions. When these channels are orchestrated in tandem, customer input can move more

seamlessly across touchpoints, supporting a richer and more coherent experience (Neslin, Grewal, Leghorn, Shankar, Teerling, Thomas, & Verhoef, 2022).

Digital infrastructure and internal workflows also need to be flexible enough to let employees act quickly on insights gathered from social media. Rigid systems often cause delays or information loss, whereas fluid platforms enable staff to route, prioritise, and respond more effectively to customer input (Ramasundaram et al., 2023). The role of employees as internal customers is equally crucial. For social media data to inform meaningful service or product improvements, staff need both the skills and the authority to translate online dialogue into design decisions. Without this capacity, real-time inputs are often confined to tactical uses such as complaint handling or public relations, rather than being channelled into co-creation.

The literature also points to the need for continuous feedback loops. Social media should not be treated as a one-off communication tool but as part of an ongoing cycle where customer input is prototyped, tested, and refined across digital and physical touchpoints. Adopting this cycle creates a more consistent and customer-centred journey, ensuring that social media becomes a foundation for deeper collaboration rather than just surface-level engagement.

Social media, then, functions as a powerful enabler of digital experience by offering immediacy, scale, and access to rich customer signals (Yi & Gong, 2013). However, organisations must close the gap between continuous digital inputs and the formal co-creation mechanisms that turn those inputs into better products and services (Toytari, 2015). The omnichannel continuum and platform fluidity literatures point to practical ways telcos can reorganise digital systems and internal workflows to make social-media-driven co-creation a routine part of digital experience improvement.

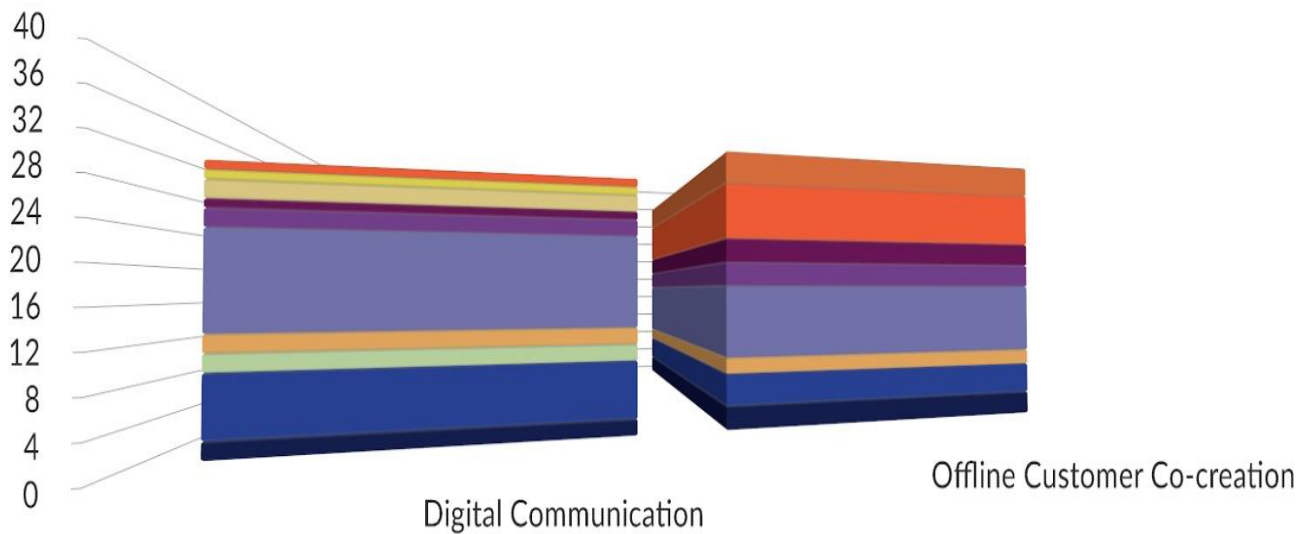
## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative single case study design, focusing on one of Malaysia's leading telecommunications companies. The case study approach was deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex organisational practices within their real-life context (Yin, 2003). Primary data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 14 employees drawn from key divisions such as product development, marketing, social media management, and customer relationship management. For a qualitative single case study aimed at exploring complex organisational phenomena, this targeted sample size of 14 participants was appropriate because it relied on highly specialised experts, allowing for the collection of deep, rich insights rather than broad statistical generalisations. Rigorous adherence to ethical research standards was maintained throughout the study. Before the commencement of data collection and audio recording, informed consent was secured from all 14 participants. Both individual respondents and their respective division were assigned unique, non-identifying alphanumeric codes for all subsequent data analysis and reporting to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. These divisions were specifically chosen because of their central role in shaping customer engagement and digital innovation. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on strict inclusion criteria to ensure diversity in perspectives, with consideration given to their roles, level of seniority, and direct experience with social media-related activities. Participants were identified and recruited against these criteria to ensure they were both knowledgeable about, and actively engaged in, co-creation and digital customer experience processes.

Every interview was recorded, transcribed verbatim, systematically coded, and member checking was utilised where the key findings and emergent themes were presented back to a subset of participants to validate the accuracy of the researchers' interpretation of their statements, thus enhancing the credibility and dependability of the data. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, assisted by NVivo software, which facilitated the organisation and identification of recurring patterns. Through this process, two dominant categories emerged: digital communication and offline customer co-creation. This structured approach yielded important insights into how internal customers perceive and use social media for value co-creation. Using NVivo as the primary analytical tool, the coding process further visualised these two categories: *digital communication* and *offline*

*customer co-creation*. These categories illustrate how customer engagement manifests across both digital and physical environments as depicted in the figure below.

Figure 1: NVivo Analysis Visualisation: Digital Experience



## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In the course of this study, it emerged that social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and WhatsApp are routinely used by employees for promotions, updates, and basic customer communication, while their potential for more meaningful collaboration remains largely untapped. When it comes to structured co-creation activities, such as co-designing services with customers, joint innovation workshops, or formal ideation processes, there is little evidence of systematic implementation (Barlatier et al., 2022). Employees explained that this is partly due to the way divisions work in isolation, making it difficult to share customer insights or coordinate ideas across teams. Some also mentioned that they have not received enough guidance or training to use social media effectively or to make sense of customer feedback in a practical way. In addition, the lack of clear direction and cooperation between divisions has made it hard to include co-creation as part of normal work routines (Martini, Massa, & Testa, 2014).

In regards to the digital experience, social media does deliver clear benefits: employees reported improvements in the speed of interaction, more immediate feedback loops, and a greater capacity for personalised engagement with customers. However, these strengths often fall short of generating meaningful co-creation, as many of the co-creation efforts still rely on offline means such as focus groups or in-person workshops (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In effect, social media is viewed more as a channel for engagement and communication than as a platform for collaborative innovation.

The findings show that the telco uses a range of channels to gather feedback and ideas from customers, but it remains cautious about relying on social media for co-creation. Interviewees indicated that organisational risks related to data security, confidential information exposure, and intellectual property ownership, combined with limited customer interest in social media platforms, lead the company to favour offline methodologies. The firm relies primarily on focus groups, surveys, personal interviews, telephone communication, and direct observation. To complement these efforts, field service visits (truck roll) are conducted to collect contextual insights on-site, while structured Scrum processes are used to incorporate user feedback into product development. These approaches allow the company to keep discussions more focused, protect sensitive information, and gain richer insights through face-to-face interaction, which also helps strengthen customer relationships.

Figure 2: Digital Experience Emerging Themes

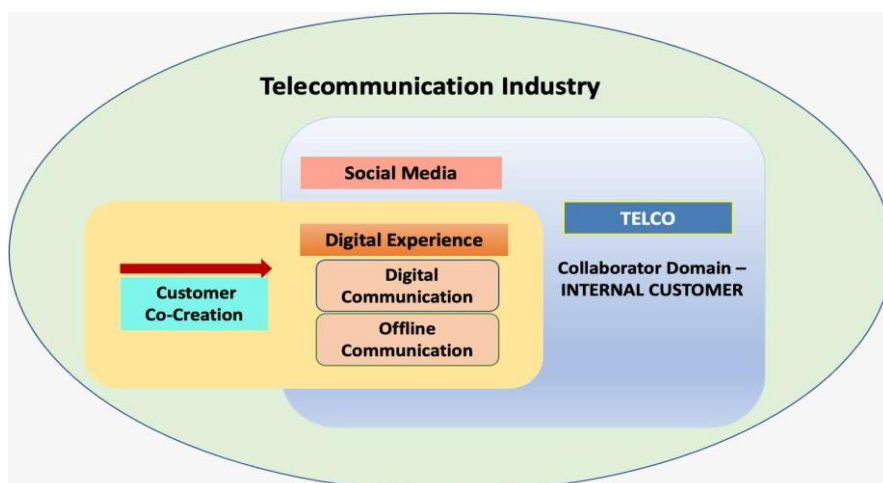


Although the telco has experimented with combining both offline and online approaches, its social media channels have not been effective in driving meaningful co-creation. Customers were often reluctant to participate, partly due to a lack of incentives and concerns about ownership of the outcomes. Instead, the company's social media platforms are dominated by complaints and negative feedback about products and services. As a result, much of the telco's efforts in this space are focused on managing dissatisfaction rather than fostering collaboration.

Nevertheless, social media remains an important customer service channel. Many customers continue to use these platforms to seek help, ask questions, and clarify product or service issues. The study suggests that the telco could strengthen the role of social media in co-creation by forming closed online communities of loyal customers, improving the usability and security of its digital platforms, and offering incentives to encourage participation. These measures would help shift social media use beyond complaint management and enable more meaningful collaboration to enhance the digital customer experience.

Recent studies align with these observations, where Strich, Giermindl, Mayer and Fiedler (2023) found that employees often struggle with overloaded information, unclear channels of responsibility, and diverse levels of digital literacy. These constraints reduce their ability to engage in co-creation, even when social media tools are available. The study recommends stronger alignment, capacity-building, and strategy integration to make co-creation more systematic. Figure 4.2 below synthesises these findings, illustrating how social media use, the internal barriers identified in this study, and their combined effect on customers' digital experience relate to one another.

Figure 3: Summary of Key Findings: Social Media, Co-Creation, and Digital Experience



Social media has thus improved some aspects of the digital experience, such as faster responses and more personalised contact, but has not yet reached its full potential for co-creation. Organisational silos, workplace culture, and limited skills continue to hold back more structured and meaningful collaboration. To move forward, telcos need to close these gaps so that social media is not only a space for responding to customer issues, but also a platform for working together with customers to shape better experiences and services.

## CONCLUSION

Social media is widely valued as a tool for customer interaction, yet its role in structured co-creation within the telecommunications sector remains limited. Employees, understood as internal customers, acknowledged the benefits of platforms such as Facebook, X, and WhatsApp in improving responsiveness, enabling real-time feedback, and supporting personalised engagement. However, the findings show that these tools are used mainly for outward-facing communication, with little integration into systematic co-creation practices. Key barriers include organisational silos, fragmented responsibilities, insufficient training, and the absence of cross-functional strategies. These constraints prevent employees from fully utilising social media to capture and act upon customer input. Overcoming these barriers through targeted training, stronger cross-divisional collaboration, and clearer strategic alignment would allow social media to play a greater role in shaping the digital customer experience.

The findings highlight the dual role of employees as both interpreters of customer knowledge and enablers of value co-creation (Grace & Lo Iacono, 2015; Cui & Wu, 2016; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). More recent contributions confirm that employee motivation and robust organisational support are central to realising this potential (Roy et al., 2023). This study adds to the literature by showing how these factors operate in the Malaysian telecommunications context, where social media has improved aspects of digital experience but remains underutilised for structured co-creation. For practice, the study suggests that telecommunications companies need to move beyond treating social media primarily as a promotional or service channel. This requires embedding co-creation into internal processes, aligning divisional objectives, and giving employees the skills and authority to act on customer insights. Social media can then function as a bridge between internal collaboration and external engagement, strengthening the digital customer experience.

Notwithstanding these contributions, this study is subject to several limitations. The research design draws exclusively on internal customer (employee) perspectives, which constrains the findings given that value co-creation is inherently a collaborative, reciprocal process. External customers, who directly engage with the organisation's digital services, were not included; consequently, the study cannot speak to how these users perceive the provider's co-creation initiatives, nor identify what motivates their participation. Moreover, although the study addresses routine digital tool use, it does not examine individual social media platforms, and so cannot account for platform-specific characteristics such as algorithmic design, interactive features and user demographics that may differentiate co-creation across platforms for instance Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

These limitations point to several directions for future research. Studies should incorporate both internal and external customer perspectives to capture the complete co-creation dynamic, and compare social media platforms to clarify how design, functionality, and demographics shape outcomes. Quantitative evaluation is needed to establish co-creation's actual impact on satisfaction, engagement, loyalty, and business performance, complemented by mixed-method or longitudinal designs to validate these findings and track their evolution over time. Future research should also examine whether the challenges identified here are specific to Malaysian telecommunications or shared across industries and regions, with comparative studies clarifying how cultural, organisational, or sectoral factors shape social media's use for co-creation.

Collectively, these findings suggest that the effective use of social media for customers' digital experience depends not only on platform availability but on how well organisations empower employees and align their strategies. When these conditions are met, social media transcends its conventional role as a reactive communication channel to become a strategic mechanism for sustained co-creation, mutual value generation, and enduring service relationships.

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