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From proposed to realized narrative: tracing the application of service-dominant logic's foundational premises as theory travelling

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine how the foundational premises (FPs) of service-dominant logic (SDL) have been applied and interpreted in scholarly research. By distinguishing between SDL's proposed and realized narratives, the study advances understanding of how SDL has evolved through cumulative use and interpretation, and proposes directions for future research and theory development in marketing.

Design/methodology/approach – Using a data set of 4,371 papers published between 2004 and 2019, complemented by a qualitative analysis (2020–2025), the authors combine quantitative mapping and interpretive analysis to trace how SDL as a theoretical framework has travelled through the literature and how its meanings have shifted over time.

Findings – Results show a consistent yet evolving application of the FPs across journals, disciplines and ranking levels. While SDL remains a cohesive theoretical framework, its use reveals increasing conceptual variety, reflecting both stabilization and drift in its realized narrative. Recent developments highlight stronger ecosystem and institutional orientations, marking SDL's continuing theoretical maturation.

Research limitations/implications – The study provides a lens for examining how marketing theories evolve through cumulative scholarly use and adaptation. It underscores the need to balance theoretical coherence with interpretive flexibility.

Practical implications – The overall message of the framework for managers is in its advocacy of a company's service orientation. The essentials of such a service orientation lie in the company's proactive stance *vis-à-vis* its business context and its capability to identify and seize emerging opportunities for service provision.

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Originality/value – To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study offers the first large-scale, longitudinal analysis of SDL from 2004 to 2025, revealing how its FPs have travelled from a proposed to a realized narrative in scholarly discourse.

Keyword Service-dominant logic

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Vargo and Lusch (2004) introduced service-dominant logic (SDL) in their seminal *Journal of Marketing* article, marking a major conceptual shift in marketing thought. The article proposed a transition from a product-centric to a service-centric logic of exchange, articulated through eight foundational premises (FPs) that redefined value creation as a process of service-for-service exchange rather than goods-based transactions (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). After that, Vargo and Lusch, as originators of SDL, revised and expanded the original set of 8 FPs to 11 FPs, 5 of which were later granted axiom status (Vargo and Lusch, 2006, 2008, 2016). The FPs articulate SDL's proposed narrative – a normative storyline deliberately constructed by its originators to define what SDL is intended to represent, thereby serving as a guiding script for subsequent scholarly use and development (Weick, 1989; Pentland, 1999).

Beyond its originators, hundreds of scholars have contributed to developing and extending SDL. Through continued debate and dialogue, researchers have refined, reinterpreted and sometimes contested SDL's content, analysing relationships between the FPs (Williams, 2012), proposing alternative logics such as service logic (Grönroos and Voima, 2013), customer-dominant logic (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015) and public-service-dominant perspectives (Osborne, 2017). These diverse uses and reinterpretations of the FPs form the realized narrative of SDL – the storyline that materializes through cumulative scholarly use. It captures how the theoretical framework's elements are interpreted, emphasized and combined across studies, revealing how its meaning evolves in practice (Merton, 1973; Teplitskiy *et al.*, 2022). In this sense, the realized narrative represents the empirical manifestation of the proposed narrative – the theoretical framework as it is enacted, rather than prescribed, in academic discourse.

The distinction between a theoretical framework's proposed and realized narrative builds on established work in the sociology and philosophy of science. The refinements of SDL's proposed narrative by its originators, and the emergence of a realized narrative through its cumulative use, illustrate a broader process of scientific development (Popper, 1959), wherein theories are reshaped through interpretation as they become embedded in academic discourse (Merton, 1973; Kuhn, 1962). Theories, and here theoretical frameworks, "travel" (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996; Said, 1983) as they are adopted, adapted and reinterpreted across disciplines and contexts. In this process, they may drift from their original definitions (Hirsch and Levin, 1999), acquire new meanings (Bijker *et al.*, 1987) or fragment into distinct strands. SDL provides an exemplary case of such travelling: the theoretical framework has diffused widely across marketing, management and related fields (Vargo and Lusch, 2017; Vargo *et al.*, 2023), while attracting diverging interpretations and critiques (e.g. Grönroos, 2008; Williams, 2012; Campbell *et al.*, 2013; Kleinaltenkamp *et al.*, 2024; Kleinaltenkamp *et al.*, 2025).

Building on this notion of travelling, the purpose of this study is to analyse how SDL has travelled through scholarly literature, to contrast its proposed and realized narratives and to propose directions for future research. SDL's explicit articulation through FPs provides a distinctive opportunity to examine empirically how a theoretical framework's constitutive

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elements are enacted in cumulative scholarship (Ulaga *et al.*, 2021). The FPs serve as the unit of analysis, and by examining how individual FPs are applied and combined in academic work over time, we reveal how SDL's proposed narrative has materialized into a realized narrative in scholarly literature. Specifically, we address three research questions:

RQ1. How are SDL's FPs applied and combined across the literature?

RQ2. What realized narrative emerges from these patterns of FP use?

RQ3. What themes for future research can be articulated based on this realized narrative?

To answer these questions, we conducted a two-phased, large-scale empirical mapping of SDL's realized narrative. The first phase involved manual extraction, coding and quantification of 4,371 peer-reviewed articles citing SDL between 2004 and 2019. This analysis examined the frequency, emphasis and co-appearance patterns of individual FPs to explore SDL's developmental trajectories across time, journals and disciplines. In the second phase, we conducted a focused, qualitative content analysis of articles published in the *European Journal of Marketing* in 2020–2025 to capture more recent conceptual developments, particularly the realization of SDL's systems turn, emphasizing the integrated and evolving interactions among social, technological and natural elements to understand complex phenomena (Jaakkola *et al.*, 2024). This phase provided interpretive depth and temporal continuity, allowing us to contrast established citation patterns with emerging trajectories of use. Together, the two phases provide a comprehensive account of SDL's realized narrative and offer a coherent foundation for formulating directions for future research.

Despite sustained scholarly attention, little is known about how SDL has evolved through cumulative use and interpretation. Unlike previous reviews and bibliometric analyses (e.g. Wilden *et al.*, 2017; Pohlmann and Kaartemo, 2017) that examine SDL's thematic applications, we turn the analytical lens inward to explore the theoretical framework itself – its coherence, fragmentation and evolution. This study makes three interrelated contributions to advancing SDL and to understanding theory development in marketing. Firstly, building on the sociology of science, we introduce the distinction between proposed and realized narratives as a conceptual lens for analysing how theories and theoretical frameworks evolve (Weick, 1989; Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996; Pentland, 1999). The proposed narrative captures the normative storyline articulated by a theoretical framework's originators, whereas the realized narrative reflects how a framework materializes through cumulative scholarly use. By analysing this distinction in the concrete case of SDL and operationalizing it through a mixed-method research design – combining quantitative and qualitative analyses – we offer a transferable framework for assessing theoretical development across disciplines. Secondly, we provide the first large-scale empirical mapping of SDL's realized narrative, examining how its FPs have been applied, combined and emphasized in over 4,000 publications. The results reveal clusters of focus (e.g. value co-creation and ecosystem linkages) alongside systematic silences (e.g. rarely co-appearing or neglected premises) in the realized narrative of SDL. Thirdly, we propose a set of future research themes grounded in the dynamics between SDL's proposed and realized narratives. These themes address neglected premises, unresolved ontological tensions and opportunities to advance SDL's systemic and institutional dimensions, thereby providing a foundation for the continued evolution of SDL as a theoretical framework within marketing and service research.

In the following section, we elaborate on the concept of the realized narrative and review the conceptual foundations of SDL's FPs. We then outline our two-phased methodological approach, combining quantitative and qualitative content analyses, before presenting the

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results of both phases. Finally, we develop themes for future research, derived from our findings and discussions of proposed and realized narrative and discuss the theoretical and methodological implications of the study.

2. Foundational premises of service-dominant logic

2.1 Evolution of foundational premises

To expound upon the fundamental tenets of SDL, Vargo and Lusch (2004) outlined eight FPs, as illustrated in the left column of Table 1. Vargo and Lusch iteratively refined their original set of eight FPs, progressing to nine (2006), ten (2008) and ultimately 11 (2014, 2016) FPs.

As summarized in Table 1, revisions to the FPs vary considerably in scope – from minor linguistic refinements to substantial conceptual reformulations. Several premises (e.g. FP2, FP3, FP5 and FP8) underwent only modest changes in terminology, reflecting a gradual streamlining of SDL's language rather than shifts in meaning. Others evolved more profoundly. For example, FP1 was simplified by replacing the original description of "the application of specialized skills and knowledge" with the more abstract notion of "service", thereby strengthening the conceptual unity of the framework. By contrast, FP6 represents the most significant transformation, evolving from the early notion of the customer as a "co-producer" to the multi-actor view of value co-creation articulated in later versions. Similarly, FP9 and FP10 expanded SDL's scope by introducing the ideas of resource integration and value determination by the beneficiary, while FP11, added in 2016, anchored SDL's institutional and ecosystem perspective and was elevated to axiom status alongside FP1, 6, 9 and 10.

2.2 Foundational premises as the proposed narrative of service-dominant logic

FPs represent the core articulation of SDL's proposed narrative – the normative, intentional formulation of what the theoretical framework aspires to explain. Each FP expresses an essential component of SDL's worldview, defining how markets, exchange and value creation should be understood. Collectively, the FPs and their subsequent revisions illustrate how SDL has evolved from a theoretical framework focused on service exchange towards a broader (meta-)theoretical framework for understanding value creation within interconnected systems of actors, resources and institutions (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2016).

In its early form, SDL emphasized a shift from goods to service, positioning service-for-service exchange and value-in-use as the fundamental units of analysis (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). This represented a paradigmatic break from the goods-dominant view of marketing but remained largely interactional and dyadic in nature, focusing on the exchange between provider and customer. As SDL evolved through successive revisions of the FPs, this focus expanded towards a systems-oriented understanding of value co-creation. Later premises explicitly incorporated multi-actor configurations, indirect exchange mechanisms and institutional arrangements as enabling structures for value creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, 2017), referred to as a systems turn in SDL (Jaakkola *et al.*, 2024). The systems turn is most clearly visible in the later FPs, which reframe service as a process of resource integration within institutionalized systems. FP9 positions social and economic actors as resource integrators, while FP10 emphasizes that value is determined by beneficiaries rather than delivered by providers. FP11 completes this progression by embedding value co-creation within institutional arrangements that coordinate and stabilize actor interactions.

The FPs, therefore, function not only as a set of theoretical statements but as an evolving meta-theoretical architecture that codifies SDL's proposed identity. They provide coherence

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Table 1. Evolution of the foundational premises (FPs) of service-dominant logic, 2004–2016

FP	Vargo and Lusch (2004)	Vargo and Lusch (2006)	Vargo and Lusch (2008)	Lusch and Vargo (2014), Vargo and Lusch (2016)
FP1	The application of specialized skills and knowledge is the fundamental unit of exchange	No change	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange	No change *Axiom Status* (2014)
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental unit of exchange	No change	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange	No change
FP3	Goods are a distribution mechanism for service provision	No change	No change	No change
FP4	Knowledge is the fundamental source of competitive advantage	No change	Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage	Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit
FP5	All economies are services economies	No change	All economies are service economies	No change
FP6	The customer is always a coproducer	The customer is always a co-creator of value	No change	Value is co-created by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary. *Axiom Status* (2014)
FP7	The enterprise can only make value propositions	No change	The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions	Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions
FP8	A service-centred view is customer-oriented and relational	No change	A service-centred view is inherently customer-oriented and relational	A service-centred view is inherently beneficiary-oriented and relational
FP9	Non-existent	Organizations exist to integrate and transform micro-specialized competences into complex services that are demanded in the marketplace	All social and economic actors are resource integrators	No change *Axiom Status* (2014)
FP10	Non-existent	Non-existent	Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary	No change *Axiom Status* (2014)
FP11	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Value co-creation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements. *Axiom Status* (2016)

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and cumulative direction to the theoretical framework by defining the conceptual boundaries of what counts as "service", "value" and "exchange". Further, the FPs encapsulate the proposed narrative of SDL's systems turn: a shift from an interactional logic centred on dyadic value co-creation to a more process-relational systemic logic emphasizing the integrated and evolving interactions among social, technological and natural elements (Jaakkola *et al.*, 2024). This proposed narrative provides the benchmark against which the present study examines SDL's realized narrative – how these premises have been taken up, interpreted and combined in the scholarly literature.

3. Methodology

To answer the research questions, we conducted a two-phased, large-scale empirical mapping of SDL's realized narrative. The first phase involved manual extraction, coding and quantification of 4,371 peer-reviewed articles citing SDL between 2004 and 2019. This analysis examined the frequency, emphasis and co-appearance patterns of individual FPs to explore SDL's developmental trajectories across time, journals and disciplines. In the second phase, we conducted a qualitative content analysis of articles published between 2020 and 2025 to capture more recent conceptual developments – particularly the realization of SDL's systems turn, emphasizing ecosystem and institutional contexts.

3.1 The first phase of the study: quantitative analyses on foundational premises

3.1.1 Searching for articles and establishing the review data set. We conduct a systematic literature review (MacInnis, 2011; Palmatier *et al.*, 2018; Kitchenham *et al.*, 2011) aimed at producing a holistic understanding of the prominence and interrelation of the FPs of SDL in existing scholarly literature on SDL. Our approach involves an iterative data collection method (Holton, 2007), manually executed by multiple human coders or text miners. While exploring the potential of leveraging automated, artificial intelligence-enabled text-mining tools, such as Leximancer (Wilden *et al.*, 2017), we realized that many facets of the coding task demanded a nuanced, contextual understanding of the meanings associated with the FPs, a dimension that could not be reliably analysed through automated software alone. Consequently, we made the deliberate choice to rely on manual analysis conducted by human coders to ensure the depth and accuracy required for a nuanced understanding of the data. Table 2 outlines the protocol used for the systematic search and review of articles, following the procedures delineated by Kitchenham *et al.* (2011).

In Step 1, our initial search was predicated on the assumption that a pertinent SDL article identified in ISI Web of Science would likely cite at least one of the seminal articles by Vargo and Lusch presenting FPs (2004, 2008 and 2016). Subsequently, in Step 2, an additional search was conducted by looking for the terms "Vargo" and "Lusch" anywhere in the article. This step aimed to identify articles that referenced other works by Vargo and Lusch but specifically excluded those from the years 2004, 2008 and 2016. The objective was to broaden the results from Step 1 and encompass as many pertinent articles discussing SDL as possible. While Step 2 yielded some articles deemed irrelevant to the present research (such as those referring to earlier production by Robert Lusch on non-SDL topics or citing work by authors other than Stephen L. Vargo and Robert Lusch), it proved instrumental in identifying a significant number of additional articles discussing SDL when compared to the results from Step 1.

After searching for and identifying the pertinent body of articles, we retrieved and screened articles (see Steps 3–5, Table 2). To ensure scholarly focus of the review, we focused only on peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles, recognized as sources reflecting validated knowledge (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2005). To focus our analyses on the diffusion and

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Table 2. Overview of the article search procedure

Step	Description	Activity	Additional information
1	Search in ISI Web of Science	Search for articles citing Vargo and Lusch (2004) OR Vargo and Lusch (2008) OR Vargo and Lusch (2016)	3,927 unique hits
2	Complementary search in the five main academic databases	Search for articles that contain the WORD "Vargo" OR "Lusch" ANYWHERE in the article from databases: ABI/INFORM Complete (ProQuest), Business Source Complete (EBSCO), Emerald, SAGE Journals and ScienceDirect (Elsevier), using the delimiters described in Step 3 where possible	Additional literature searches to ensure the comprehensiveness of the review Total of 7,755 articles
3	Data exclusion 1	Exclusion of conference articles Exclusion of editorials Exclusion of book chapters Exclusion of articles written in languages other than English	
4	Data exclusion 2	Exclusion of articles authored by Vargo and/or Lusch Exclusion of non-SDL articles Exclusion of duplicates	Exclusion of articles that refer to, e.g. Lusch's previous, non-SDL-oriented research or articles in which Lusch or Vargo refer to other Lusch and/or Vargo than the SDL originators; exclusion of articles that do not cite the SDL articles nor contain instances of text that refer to the SDL
5	Document retrieval	Retrieval of full-paper documents of the articles for screening	
6	Constructing the review data set	Creation of a data extraction template containing the article information (authors, year of publication, article title, journal, journal AJG ranking, corresponding author's university ranking and article citations) (total/yearly)	Academic journal guide (AJG) used to indicate the development of dominant discourses Total of 4,371 articles

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application of the SDL and FP concepts in scholarship beyond the seminal authors, articles authored or coauthored by Steven Vargo and/or Robert Lusch themselves were deliberately omitted from our analyses.

At this point, we also eliminated all duplicates as well as non-SDL articles. The criteria here were that the article must cite any SDL article by Vargo and Lusch and contain text instances that refer to SDL. Each article underwent manual screening, applying these conditions to determine eligibility for inclusion in the final review data set. In Step 6, we extracted the article details (authors, journal and year of publication) of the identified articles. Simultaneously, we also retrieved information about the ranking of the journal of publication for each article from Chartered Association of Business Schools' (CABS, 2021) Academic Journal Guide (AJG) and whether the corresponding author's affiliation was included in UTDallas (2021). Furthermore, we retrieved the number of citations accumulated by each article by June 2023 from Google Scholar. This comprehensive approach allowed us to compile a well-rounded and enriched data set of 4,371 articles for our review.

In addition to our original database, we revised the literature review with the most recent studies. To this end, we focused on the *European Journal of Marketing*, a leading outlet that is both central to the discourse and representative of ongoing conceptual and empirical developments in SDL-informed marketing research. We systematically searched ABI/INFORM Collection (ProQuest) and analysed all articles published between January 2020 and August 2025 ($n = 61$) citing Vargo and Lusch. This procedure enabled us to update and critically assess our original findings against the latest contributions. As the original review provided an avenue for robust answers to our research questions, we did not extend the update to the entire database. Instead, the focused update served to validate that our earlier conclusions remained aligned with current scholarship. In particular, the review functioned as a diagnostic: if significant conceptual or empirical shifts had occurred, they would be visible in this journal, prompting us to reconsider our original interpretations. As no such fundamental changes were observed, the update strengthens the credibility of our findings.

3.1.2 Article coding. Table 3 summarizes the key steps of the article coding process, beginning with the formulation of a coding scheme for identifying the appearance of FP(s) in each article (Step 1). The coding scheme was developed using the definitions of the FPs presented in Table 1, along with explicit rules specifying how the presence of an FP could be determined. These rules defined the conditions under which an article was considered to explicitly discuss or elaborate on a given FP (see Kim and McMillan, 2008). To capture the full trajectory of SDL's conceptual evolution, we included all versions of the FPs as articulated by Vargo and Lusch (2004–2016) in our analysis.

To assess the initial coding scheme for the appearance of each FP in the articles (Step 2, Table 3), the coders were instructed to skim the article texts for key terms in various forms related to each FP (e.g. "unit/basis of exchange", "distribution mechanism", "competitive advantage", "co-creation", "value proposition", "resource integration", "beneficiary" and "value determination"). In the pilot round of coding, where a random sample of 200 articles was coded, the labels assigned by two different coders were compared by a senior member of the research team. It became evident at this stage that beyond identifying specific key terms and search strings, the coders also needed to assess implicit, contextual meanings in the text that might refer to particular FPs. A given article might discuss multiple FPs without explicitly using terms like "FP" or "fundamental premise" or even using the exact wording from Table 1. For instance, the concepts in FP6, "value" and "co-creation", might be expressed differently in the articles (e.g. "joint value creation", "buyer and seller generate value together" and "value creation occurs in the collaboration of the actors"). The evolution of Vargo and Lusch's wordings for the FPs over time (see Table 1) underscored the

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Table 3. Overview of the coding process

Step	Description	Activity	Additional information
1	Formulation of the coding scheme to code FP appearances in an article	Formulating the rules according to which an FP can be judged as appearing in an article	Coding scheme discussed and elaborated among the researchers
2	Pilot round of data coding	Coding a sample of 200 articles by two coders; comparing the results	Validation of the coding scheme's reliability
3	Data coding for the FP existence	Manual search for instances of text in the articles that include one or several of the FPs in their different forms according to the coding scheme	Manually, for each article, by two independent coders
4	Mismatch and inter-coder reliability analysis	Mismatch analysis to compare the coding results of the two coders; calculation of inter-coder reliability	Interpreting the inter-coder reliability
5	Third-coder intervention for resolution of conflicting codes between primary coders	A third coder compares the coding by two coders, identifies inconsistencies and resolves them by assigning the final label	Assurance of reliability of the coding process and conclusion of the coded data set for analysis A total of 4,371 eligible articles were analysed

importance of paying attention to implicit, contextual meanings in each article's text. Due to the necessity of discerning these implicit meanings, the coding task could not be automated (relying solely on keyword searches), necessitating the involvement of human coders. In the iterative coding process, alternative wordings and expressions for each FP were identified, analysed and interpreted, considering the less explicit meanings in the article texts. The pilot round of data coding (Step 2) proved instrumental in refining the coding scheme for the subsequent actual coding process and its evaluation in Steps 3–5.

In the actual coding phase (Step 3), the review data set was randomly divided into three parts, and two coders were assigned to each part independently. The six coders in total carried out the coding in isolation, with no communication or knowledge of the other coders assigned to their respective data set parts. A mismatch analysis was conducted for all of the coding parts by the first author of the article (Step 4), and a third coder was assigned to solve the mismatches to determine the final code (Step 5). The mismatch analysis indicated a high level of inter-coder reliability across all parts, with the rate of mismatches being less than 10% in each of the three parts. Consequently, the initial inter-coder reliability was exceptionally strong, reaching an overall rate of 91.8% (*Part I:* 92.4%; *Part II:* 92.7%; *Part III:* 90.4%). This robust level of reliability underscores the consistency and accuracy achieved in the coding process, validating the outcomes of the systematic analysis.

3.2 The second phase of the study: qualitative analyses on foundational premises

Phase 2 provides a focused, contemporary reading of how SDL's FPs are articulated in recent marketing scholarship. Rather than estimating new frequencies, this phase examines how premises are used in texts, what is emphasized or left implicit and how these uses relate to each article's dominant ontological stance. The design complements Phase 1's large-scale mapping and directly supports *RQ3* (coherence, fragmentation and silence in recent SDL work).

Phase 1's quantitative mapping is well suited to show how often premises appear and with which companions. Phase 2 asks questions that are best answered qualitatively: how

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premises are meant and mobilized in arguments; where implicit linkages or silences occur that frequencies cannot reveal; and how ontological commitments (substance-based vs process-relational or mixed) shape premise use. A qualitative close reading distinguishes, for example, FP6 used as a general banner from FP6 specified as a mechanism; identifies when FP9 denotes ecosystem scope versus concrete integration processes; and detects whether FP11 names institutional context or details coordinating work. Given the modest, recent corpus (61 EJM articles post-2020), qualitative analysis also avoids false precision while providing the interpretive depth required to answer *RQ3*.

We targeted the *European Journal of Marketing* (EJM) as a conceptually central outlet. Using Business Source Complete (EBSCO), we searched for EJM items published in 2020–2025 that contained "Vargo" OR "Lusch" anywhere in the record. The search yielded 61 articles, all retrieved in full text for analysis. We used MAXQDA 24 (VERBI software) as a qualitative analysis workspace for organizing full texts, memoing, logging FP/ontology evidence and retrieving relevant passages. Our objective was to produce transparent article-level summaries in three rounds:

(1) *Round 1 – Premise-by-premise reading:* For each article, we conducted a close reading to identify where and how FPs were invoked. We noted the dominant FP(s) in each article and captured short memos on how FPs were conceptualized in the study, if at all.

(2) *Round 2 – Ontological stance:* Each article was assessed for its dominant ontology, categorized as substance-based, process-relational or hybrid (when the dominant ontology remained unclear or mixed). While the articles might not have been the purest example of these ontologies, we coded them as substance-based readings if the narrative stabilized actors and resources for description, comparison or measurement; and as process-relational readings if the phenomena of interest were perceived as unfolding from relational processes (integration, enactment and institutional work).

(3) *Round 3 – Linkage:* We linked each article's FP profile to its ontological stance to examine whether particular premise configurations tend to co-occur with a particular ontological approach. This cross-walk is reported in Section 4.2 and is used to reveal the realized narrative and to feed ideas for further research by identifying areas of coherence (stable pairings of FP use and ontology), divergent strands (distinct pairings across articles) and silences (to reveal gaps).

Phase 2 is intentionally qualitative and confirmatory-diagnostic: it tests whether textual uses of FPs in EJM align with, qualify or complicate the patterns surfaced in Phase 1. By connecting article-level FP use to ontological stance, Phase 2 provides the interpretive depth needed to speak to coherence, divergent strands and silences in contemporary SDL scholarship, setting up the results and synthesis reported in Section 4 and particularly Section 4.3.

4. Results: mapping the realized narrative of service-dominant logic

This section presents first the results of the quantitative analyses, which examined the appearance and co-appearance patterns of FPs across 4,371 articles referencing Vargo and Lusch's work on SDL, published in 817 journals from 2004 to 2019. We then turn to the qualitative analysis, which focuses on articles published between 2020 and 2025 to capture more recent developments in SDL and to explore how the systems and institutional turns

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have been reflected in the literature. Together, these analyses provide a comprehensive account of the realized narrative of SDL and its evolution over time.

4.1 Quantitative analyses on foundational premises

Sections 4.1.1–4.1.3 present an overview of the appearance and configurations of the FPs across the literature. Sections 4.1.4–4.1.5 then examine whether the journal of publication influences how the FPs are applied. This question is addressed from two complementary perspectives. Firstly, we assess whether the discussion of FPs differs between marketing and service journals versus other management and business journals. Secondly, we analyse whether FP discussions vary across journals of different quality levels, as classified by the CABS/AJG ranking. Together, these analyses explore both the consistency and possible variation in how the FPs are used across publication outlets. Finally, in Section 4.1.6. We evaluate whether the inclusion and number of FPs discussed in an article relate to its academic impact, measured by citation counts. The results of these analyses did not reveal substantial differences across journal types, quality levels or citation impact, thereby allowing us to consider the use of the FPs in general rather than as journal-specific phenomena. Section 4.1.7 concludes by synthesizing the key insights from the quantitative analysis conducted in the first phase of the study.

While the previous sections outlined how the FPs and their configurations appear in scholarly articles, this section examines whether the journal of publication influences their application. We address this question from two complementary perspectives. Firstly, we assess whether the discussion of FPs differs between marketing and service journals and other management and business journals. Secondly, we analyse whether FP discussion varies across journal quality levels, as classified by the CABS/AJG ranking. Together, these analyses explore the consistency and potential variation in how the FPs are applied across different publication outlets. Finally, we evaluate if the consideration of FPs in an article is related to its academic impact, measured by citations.

4.1.1 Application of specific foundational premises in journal articles on service-dominant logic. Figure 1 illustrates the annual frequencies of articles discussing the FPs ("FP articles") versus those referencing SDL without explicit FP discussion ("non-FP articles"). The total number of SDL publications grew rapidly from 7 in 2004 to 577 in 2019 – an average annual growth rate of 31.8%. However, growth patterns differed markedly between the two categories. While both increased until 2009, the volume of non-FP articles subsequently plateaued, whereas FP articles continued to expand steadily. This divergence is reflected in their changing proportions. During 2004–2009, non-FP articles accounted for a majority (55.4%), but from 2010 onward, FP-focused studies dominated (71.9%). By 2019, FP articles reached their peak share (81.8%), with non-FP articles falling to 18.2%. A chi-square test revealed a significant association between publication period and article type (2004–2009 vs 2010–2019: $\chi^2 = 149.184$; $p < 0.001$), showing that the relative prevalence of FP-articles increased markedly in the later period.

Overall, approximately two-thirds (69%) of the 4,371 SDL-related articles published between 2004 and 2019 explicitly engaged with at least one FP. This sustained increase suggests that the FPs have become the central organizing elements of SDL scholarship, with growing specificity and conceptual precision over time – indicating the maturation and consolidation of the SDL discourse. The following sections focus on the FP-articles.

4.1.2 Application of individual foundational premises. The results in Table 4 provide insights into the distribution of articles discussing different numbers of FPs (ranging from 1 to 11) out of the 3,014 FP-articles.

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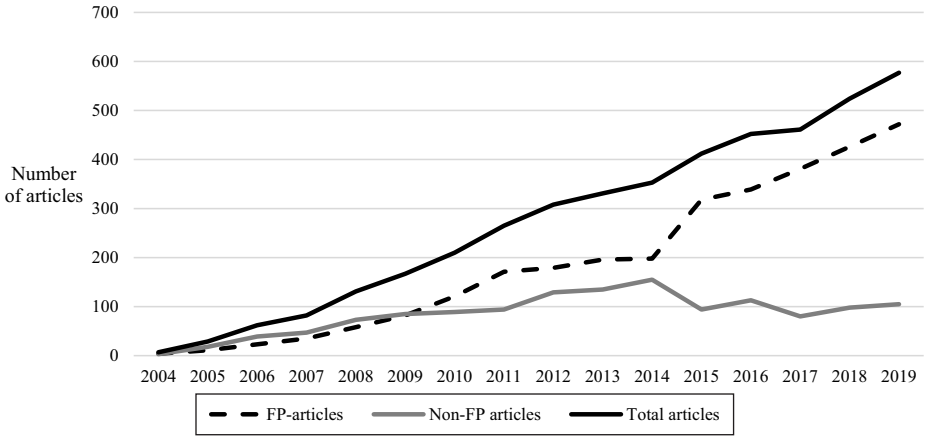

Figure 1. Frequencies of journal articles referencing SDL which discuss (vs do not discuss) specific foundational premises, 2004–2019

Throughout the entire timeframe (2004–2019), up to 58.8% of the articles focused solely on one FP. Conversely, only 0.30% (8 out of 3,014 articles) focused on discussions covering all 11 FPs. Even when considering the original set of eight FPs proposed in 2004, our analyses reveal that no more than 0.40% of FP articles (11 out of 3,014 articles) discussed all eight FPs. Additionally, the proportion of articles discussing five or more FPs did not surpass 6.2%. When examining the two distinct time periods – 2000s versus 2010s – these proportions exhibited remarkable stability. For example, the share of FP articles discussing only one FP remained consistently around 60% in both decades (2000s: 56.8%; 2010s: 59.0%). Similarly, the proportion of articles discussing five or more FPs held steady at approximately 6% (2000s: 6.6%; 2010s: 6.1%). These findings suggest a consistent pattern in the distribution of the number of FPs discussed in scholarly articles across the two decades.

For a more in-depth evaluation of which specific FPs were most frequently addressed, Table 5 presents the proportions of articles discussing individual FPs relative to all FP-articles. The table highlights the dominance of FP6, which stands out prominently: a staggering 92.8% of all FP-articles published from 2004 to 2019 focus on this specific FP. In contrast, the second-most discussed FP, FP10, lags significantly behind FP6, with only 23.4% of FP-articles exploring this particular premise. The third-most discussed FP is FP1, but it is covered in no more than one-sixth (16.8%) of the articles. Conversely, the FPs receiving the least scholarly attention are FP2 (2.5%), FP11 (2.7%) and FP5 (3.4%).

Another observation that can be drawn from the data is that the shares of articles discussing FPs without "axiom" status assigned by Vargo and Lusch (2016) decreased from the 2000s to the 2010s. In contrast, the shares of articles discussing FPs with axiom status (FP1, FP6, FP9, FP10 and FP11) tended to increase over time (with the exception of FP1, whose share of 27.7% decreased to 16.0%). While these data can be partly explained by the fact that FP9–FP11 were not specified by Vargo and Lusch until 2008–2016, it seems that particular emphasis has been put on those FPs which Vargo and Lusch considered most central, and which were given axiom status.

Table 6 further illustrates the distribution of each FP in articles. Each column represents the share held by a specific FP in articles where it appears as the sole FP (first row of Table 6)

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Table 4. No. of foundational premises (FP) discussed in articles that discuss at least one FP

No. of FPs in article	*Total period (2004–2019)*		*2000s (2004–2009)*		*2010s (2010–2019)*	
	No. of articles	*Share of articles (cumulative share)*	*No. of articles*	*Share of articles (cumulative share)*	*No. of articles*	*Share of articles (cumulative share)*
1	1,773	58.8%	121	56.8%	1,652	59.0%
2	622	20.6 (79.5)%	49	23.0 (79.8) %	573	20.5 (79.4) %
3	292	9.7 (89.2) %	20	9.4 (89.2) %	272	9.7 (89.1) %
4	141	4.7 (93.8) %	9	4.2 (93.4) %	132	4.7 (93.9) %
5	76	2.5 (96.4) %	3	1.4 (94.8) %	73	2.6 (96.5) %
6	30	1.0 (97.3) %	1	0.5 (95.3) %	29	1.0 (97.5) %
7	14	0.5 (97.8) %	3	1.4 (96.7) %	11	0.4 (97.9) %
8	11	0.4 (98.2) %	3	1.4 (98.1) %	8	0.3 (98.2) %
9	4	0.1 (98.3) %	2	0.9 (99.1) %	2	0.1 (98.3) %
10	43	1.4 (99.7) %	2	0.9 (100.0) %	41	1.5 (99.7) %
11	8	0.3 (100.0) %	–	–	8	0.3 (100.0) %
Total	3,014		213		2,801	

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Table 5. Share of articles discussing specific FPs among articles that discuss at least one FP

FP	Total (2004–2019) *Share of all FP articles (%)*	2000s *Share of all FP articles (%)*	2010s *Share of all FP articles (%)*
FP1 (A)	16.8% (507)	27.7% (59)	16.0% (448)
FP2	2.5% (75)	4.7% (10)	2.3% (65)
FP3	9.7% (291)	21.6% (46)	8.7% (245)
FP4	9.6% (289)	12.7% (27)	9.4% (262)
FP5	3.4% (103)	6.6% (14)	3.2% (89)
FP6 (A)	92.8% (2798)	84.0% (179)	93.5% (2619)
FP7	12.1% (364)	16.4% (35)	11.7% (329)
FP8	6.4% (194)	8.0% (17)	6.3% (177)
FP9 (A)	11.6% (349)	8.0% (17)	11.9% (332)
FP10 (A)	23.4% (706)	7.0% (15)	24.7% (691)
FP11 (A)	2.7% (81)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (81)
Total	*3014*	*213*	*2801*

or as part of different configurations comprising two to eleven FPs (Rows 2–11 of Table 6). The most notable observation in Table 6 mirrors the results presented in Table 5, particularly highlighting FP6. Among articles discussing FP6, a significant majority (57.5%) do not incorporate other FPs. Conversely, for all other FPs, the proportion of instances where they are discussed in isolation from other FPs is consistently below 10%, as depicted in the first row of Table 6. Specifically, in the second row of Table 6, illustrating the share each FP holds in articles discussing two FPs, FP10 and FP1, exhibit notably higher percentages compared to other FPs: 35.1% and 24.3%, respectively. These data suggest that a substantial portion of articles discussing FP10 and FP1 centre around only two FPs, with FP6 being the other primary focus (refer to Table 7). Conversely, FPs other than FP6, FP10 and FP1 predominantly show higher percentages in rows three to ten. This indicates that these FPs are more commonly discussed in articles covering two to nine additional FPs alongside the featured FP.

Given the dominant role of FP6 in the data set, Table 7 presents the distribution of FP appearances after excluding FP6. The findings indicate that FP3, FP1 and FP4 exhibit the least connection to FP6, with their appearances without FP6 accounting for 16.2%, 13.6% and 11.4% of their total occurrences, respectively. In contrast, FP11, FP2 and FP9 emerge as the FPs most intertwined in scholarly discussions with FP6; they appear without FP6 in only 1.2%, 2.7% and 4.9% of their total occurrences, respectively. Moreover, Table 7 reveals that the majority of appearances for other FPs, when FP6 is absent, are concentrated in articles discussing only one FP.

4.1.3 Configurations of foundational premises. While the previous section addressed the extent to which the articles discuss FPs in the first place, we next take a more detailed look at which specific FPs frequently appear together. That is, among articles discussing FPs, which specific FPs are frequently discussed or examined together?

Table 8 is centred on the co-appearances of two specific FPs in a given article, achieved by cross-referencing the individual FPs presented in columns with those depicted in rows. Notably, FP6 is excluded from this analysis due to its previously established dominance in co-appearances with all other FPs. There are two figures in each cell of the table. The upper figure indicates what share of the articles discussing the FP mentioned on the row also discuss the FP mentioned in the column. Conversely, the lower figure indicates what share of the articles that discuss the FP mentioned in the column also discuss the FP mentioned on the

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Table 6. Shares of articles discussing a specific FP among articles that discuss a given number of FPs

No. of FPs	*FP1* (%)	*FP2* (%)	*FP3* (%)	*FP4* (%)	*FP5* (%)	*FP6* (%)	*FP7* (%)	*FP8* (%)	*FP9* (%)	*FP10* (%)	*FP11* (%)
1	7.5	0.0	8.2	8.3	3.9	57.5	2.7	4.6	3.2	6.1	0.0
2	24.3	4.0	15.8	20.8	8.7	20.7	19.0	16.0	18.3	35.1	16.0
3	20.5	0.0	18.2	15.6	10.7	10.3	27.7	18.0	16.6	23.1	23.5
4	16.0	2.7	14.8	13.8	7.8	5.0	14.0	6.7	20.9	13.9	19.8
5	11.2	4.0	11.3	10.7	4.9	2.7	10.2	9.3	14.0	8.4	16.0
6	4.7	1.3	5.5	5.9	1.0	1.0	4.7	8.8	7.2	3.7	8.6
7	2.8	4.0	3.8	2.4	2.9	0.5	3.6	3.6	3.2	1.7	3.7
8	2.2	10.7	3.4	3.8	6.8	0.4	3.0	4.6	1.1	0.7	1.2
9	0.8	5.3	1.4	1.0	3.9	0.1	1.1	2.1	0.9	0.1	1.2
10	8.5	57.3	14.8	14.9	41.7	1.5	11.8	22.2	12.3	6.1	0.0
11	1.6	10.7	2.7	2.8	7.8	0.3	2.2	4.1	2.3	1.1	9.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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Table 7. Shares of articles discussing a specific FP among articles that discuss a given number of FPs – excluding FP6

Number of FPs	*FP1* (%)	*FP2* (%)	*FP3* (%)	*FP4* (%)	*FP5* (%)	*FP6* (%)	*FP7* (%)	*FP8* (%)	*FP9* (%)	*FP10* (%)	*FP11* (%)
1	7.5	0.0	8.2	8.3	3.9	–	2.7	4.6	3.2	6.1	0.0
2	4.9	1.3	5.8	1.7	3.9	–	3.0	2.1	0.9	2.4	1.2
3	0.4	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	–	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.0
4	0.4	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	–	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
5	0.2	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	–	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0
6	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	–	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0
7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	–	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	–	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	–	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
10	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	–	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	13.6	2.7	16.2	11.4	7.8	–	7.4	7.2	4.9	9.5	1.2

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row. For instance, looking at the bottom left corner cell of the table, 46.9% of FP11 appearances coincide with the appearance of FP1 and these articles account for 7.5% of the total FP1 appearances. In Table 8, the highest share of co-appearance for each FP is highlighted in italics. For instance, five FPs (FP2, FP3, FP4, FP5 and FP8) exhibit the most co-appearances with FP1, three FPs (FP1, FP7 and FP9) exhibit the most co-appearances with FP10 and a single FP exhibits the most co-appearances with FP7 (FP10) and FP9 (FP11). These co-appearances go hand-in-hand with the volume of these FPs, except the reversed order of FP1 and FP10, compared to their size. However, this deviation is attributed to FP10 not being part of the original list of eight FPs, which constitute a substantial portion of both FP2 and FP5 appearances. This circumstance positions FP1 as the most frequently co-appearing FP for FP2 and FP5.

To explore thematic connections/disconnections between FPs further, Table 9 details the most discussed FP configurations within 3,014 articles, with FP6 present in 20 of the 22 configurations. Given FP6's dominance in the data set, these configurations were interpreted in the context of value co-creation. The six most frequent configurations address the role of value co-creation in value determination (FP6 and FP10: 231); the basis of exchange as service (FP6 and FP1: 98); the relationship between value determination and value proposition (FP6 and FP7 and FP10: 67); resource integration (FP6 and FP9: 61); value proposition (FP6 and FP7: 58); and operant resources (FP6 and FP4: 55). Overall, the most common configurations involve FP6, either with one (in eight configurations) or two other

Table 8. Shares of co-appearances by two specific foundational premises, excepting FP6

(%)	*FP1* (%)	*FP2* (%)	*FP3* (%)	*FP4* (%)	*FP5* (%)	*FP7* (%)	*FP8* (%)	*FP9* (%)	*FP10* (%)	*FP11* (%)
FP1	100.0									
FP1–1	100.0									
FP2	*93.3*	100.0								
FP1–2	13.8	100.0								
FP3	*63.6*	23.4	100.0							
FP1–3	36.5	90.7	100.0							
FP4	*50.2*	23.2	38.1	100.0						
FP1–4	28.6	89.3	37.8	100.0						
FP5	*80.6*	60.2	72.8	66.0	100.0					
FP1–5	16.4	82.7	25.8	23.5	100.0					
FP7	38.2	18.7	31.0	28.3	*18.4*	100.0				
FP1–7	27.4	90.7	38.8	35.6	*65.0*	100.0				
FP8	*56.7*	33.0	41.8	44.3	*34.0*	51.5	100.0			
FP1–8	21.7	85.3	27.8	29.8	*64.1*	27.5	100.0			
FP9	46.4	16.9	29.5	32.7	*17.2*	38.1	26.4	100.0		
FP1–9	32.0	78.7	35.4	39.4	*58.3*	36.5	47.4	100.0		
FP10	30.0	8.4	18.7	18.0	*8.6*	*32.7*	15.3	28.2	100.0	
FP1–10	*41.8*	78.7	45.4	43.9	*59.2*	*63.5*	55.7	*57.0*	100.0	
FP11	46.9	11.1	21.0	16.0	*11.1*	24.7	17.3	*63.0*	59.3	100.0
FP1–11	7.5	12.0	5.8	4.5	*8.7*	5.5	7.2	14.6	6.8	100.0

Note(s): FP6 is intentionally excluded from the analysis as it has been previously demonstrated to dominate in all co-appearances. The upper figure in each cell indicates what share of the articles discussing the FP mentioned on the row also discuss the FP mentioned in the column. The lower figure indicates what share of the articles that discuss the FP mentioned in the column also discuss the FP mentioned on the row. The framed/blank co-appearances are highlighted as being central in the configurations presented in Table 9. The framed/grey co-appearances, while not featured in Table 9 due to their relatively low overall frequency, are recognized as mutually connected and are deemed central for SDL notions and included in Figure 2

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Table 9. Sub-sets of foundational premises are most commonly discussed together

Configuration	Freq.	Topic area: value co-creation + […]	Most-cited article of the configuration
1. FP6, FP10	231	Value determination	Ranjan, K. R. and Read, S. (2016), "Value co-creation: concept and measurement", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. (1,258 citations)
2. FP6, FP1	98	Service as the basis of exchange	Maglio, P. and J. Spohrer (2008), "Fundamentals of service science", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. (1,933 citations)
3. FP6, FP7, FP10	67	Value proposition + value determination	Grönroos, C. and P. Voima (2013), "Critical service logic: making sense of value creation and co-creation", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. (3,674 citations)
4. FP6, FP9	61	Resource integration	Frow, P., Nenonen, S., Payne, A. and K. Storbacka (2015), "Managing co-creation design: a strategic approach to innovation", *British Journal of Management*. (628 citations)
5. FP6, FP7	58	Value proposition	Grönroos, C. (2008), "Service logic revisited: Who creates value? And who co-creates?" *European Business Review*. (3,165 citations)
6. FP6, FP4	55	Operant resources	Shaw, G., Bailey, A. and A. Williams (2011), "Aspects of service-dominant logic and its implications for tourism management: examples from the hotel industry", *Tourism Management*. (672 citations)
7. FP1, FP2, FP3, FP4, FP5, FP6, FP7, FP8, FP9, FP10	43	List of ten FPs	Karpen, I., Bove, L. and B. Lukas (2012), "Linking service-dominant logic and strategic business practice: a conceptual model of a service-dominant orientation", *Journal of Service Research*. (504 citations)
8. FP6, FP1, FP10	33	Service as the basis of exchange + value determination	Aarikka-Stenroos, L. and E. Jaakkola (2012). "Value co-creation in knowledge-intensive business services: a dyadic perspective on the joint problem-solving process", *Industrial Marketing Management*. (1,127 citations)
9. FP6, FP3	29	Goods as a distribution mechanism for service	Tuli, K., Kohli, A. and S. Bharadwaj (2007), "Rethinking customer solutions: from product bundles to relational processes", *Journal of Marketing*. (1,853 citations)
10. FP6, FP8	27	Beneficiary-oriented and relational view	Chan, K. W., Yim, C. K. and S.S.K. Lam (2010), "Is customer participation in value creation a double-edged sword? Evidence from professional financial services across cultures", *Journal of Marketing*. (1,396 citations)
11. FP6, FP1, FP3	24	Service as the basis of exchange + goods as a distribution mechanism for service	Plé, L. and R. Cáceres (2010), "Not always co-creation: introducing interactional co-destruction of value in service-dominant logic", *Journal of Services Marketing*. (1,009 citations)

(*continued*)

Table 9. Continued

Configuration	Freq.	Topic area: value co-creation + […]	Most-cited article of the configuration
12. FP6, FP9, FP10	22	Resource integration + value determination	Gummerus, J. (2013), "Value creation processes and value outcomes in marketing theory: strangers or siblings?" *Marketing Theory*. (671 citations)
13. FP6, FP1, FP9, FP10	16	Service as the basis of exchange + resource integration + value determination	Perks, H., Gruber, T. and B. Edvardsson (2012) "Co-creation in radical service innovation: a systematic analysis of microlevel processes", *Journal of Product Innovation Management*. (320 citations)
14. FP1, FP3	14	*NO FP6:* Service as the basis of exchange + goods as a distribution mechanism	Shaw, E. and G. Jones (2005), "A history of schools of marketing thought", *Marketing Theory*. (599 citations)
15. FP6, FP7, FP9, FP10	14	Value propositions + resource integration + value determination	Kowalkowski, C. (2011), "Dynamics of value propositions: insights from service-dominant logic", *European Journal of Marketing*. (347 citations)
16. FP6, FP4, FP10	12	Operant resources + value determination	Mahr, D., Lievens, A. and V. Blazevic (2014), "The value of customer co-created knowledge during the innovation process", *Journal of Product Innovation Management*. (458 citations)
17. FP6, FP1, FP4	12	Service as the basis of exchange + operant resources	Valtakoski, A. (2017) "Explaining servitization failure and deservitization: a knowledge-based perspective", *Industrial Marketing Management*. (252 citations)
18. FP6, FP11	12	Institutions and institutional arrangements	Benoit, S., Baker, T.L., Bolton, RN, Gruber, T. and J. Kandampully (2017), "A triadic framework for collaborative consumption (CC): motives, activities and resources and capabilities of actors", *Journal of Business Research*. (607 citations)
19. FP6, FP3, FP10	11	Goods as a distribution mechanism for service + value determination	Witell, L., Kristensson, P., Gustafsson, A. and M. Löfgren (2011), "Idea generation: customer co-creation versus traditional market research techniques", *Journal of Service Management*. (521 citations)
20. FP6, FP1, FP8	11	Service as a basis of exchange + beneficiary-oriented, relational view	Wang, Q., Zhao, X. and C. Voss (2016), "Customer orientation and innovation: a comparative study of manufacturing and service firms", *International Journal of Production Economics*. (211 citations)
21. FP6, FP7, FP9	11	Value propositions + resource integration	Cova, B. and R. Salle (2008), "Marketing solutions in accordance with the S-D logic: co-creating value with customer network actors", *Industrial Marketing Management*. (674 citations)
22. FP7, FP10	10	*NO FP6:* Value proposition + Value determination	Gruber, T., Szmigin, I. and R. Voss (2009). "Handling customer complaints effectively: a comparison of the value maps of female and male complainants", *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*. (121 citations)

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FPs (in nine configurations). Two configurations feature FP6 with three other FPs (FP6, FP1, FP9, FP10; and FP6, FP7, FP9, FP10) and one has FP6 with nine other FPs (Configuration 7). The only FP configurations without FP6 involve FP1 and FP3 (Configuration 14) and FP7 and FP10 (Configuration 22).

Table 9, beyond the insights related to FP6, reveals that FP10 is part of three configurations with FP7 (Configurations 3, 15 and 22) and FP9 (Configurations 3, 13 and 15); in two of these, FP7 and FP9 also co-appear (Configurations 3 and 15). Similarly, FP1 is part of configurations with FP3 (Configurations 11 and 14) and FP10 (Configurations 8 and 13). Moreover, either FP1 or FP10 is present in nearly all configurations with three or more FPs in Table 9 (except Configuration 21). This underscores the pivotal role of FP1 and FP10 in SDL discourse, alongside FP6.

4.1.4 Influence of journal discipline on the discussion of foundational premises. Table 10 presents a comparison between marketing and service journals and other management and business journals regarding the number of FPs discussed in the articles within the data set (see Appendix 1 for a detailed breakdown of marketing and service journals and other management and business journals). Notably, a chi-square test did not reveal a statistically significant difference between journals from the two fields concerning the number of FPs discussed ($\chi 2 = 18.531$; $df = 11$; $p > 0.05$). Table 11 presents the distribution of articles discussing specific FPs in marketing or service journals compared to other management and business journals. Chi-square tests revealed statistically significant differences between the journals concerning the presence of FP1, FP2, FP4, FP7 and FP9. Notably, FP7 and FP9 are more frequently discussed in articles published in marketing/service journals, whereas FP1, FP2 and FP4 are more commonly addressed in other management and business journals. The more extensive discussion of FP1 and FP2 in journals outside the marketing/service domain may be attributed to the need for a more thorough introduction of the foundational principles of SDL to readers in these journals, given the elementary nature of these FPs.

Moreover, the shift observed in marketing/service journals from a focus on service exchange (FP1) towards addressing multi-actor service ecosystems could account for the

Table 10. Number of foundational premises discussed in articles published in marketing/service journals versus in other management and business journals

	Marketing and service journals		*Other management and business journals*	
No. of FPs in article	No. of articles	Share of the FP articles (cumulative share)	No. of articles	Share of the FP articles (cumulative share)
0	427	*N/A*	195	*N/A*
1	587	52.8%	266	57.8%
2	254	22.9% (75.7%)	102	22.2% (80.0%)
3	133	12.0% (87.7%)	36	7.8% (87.8%)
4	64	5.8% (93.4%)	20	4.3% (92.2%)
5	35	3.2% (96.6%)	14	3.0% (95.2%)
6	12	1.1% (97.7%)	3	0.7% (95.9%)
7	9	0.8% (98.5%)	5	1.1% (97.0%)
8	7	0.6% (99.1%)	1	0.2% (97.2%)
9	1	0.1% (99.2%)	0	0.0% (97.2%)
10	8	0.7% (99.9%)	12	2.6% (99.8%)
11	1	0.1% (100%)	1	0.2% (100.0%)
Total	1,538	1,111 FP articles	655	460 FP articles

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Table 11. Shares of articles discussing specific foundational premises in articles published in marketing/service versus other management and business journals

FP	*Marketing and service journals*	*Other management and business journals*	χ^2	*Significance*
	Share of the FP articles (%)	Share of the FP articles (%)		$^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$
FP1 (A)	15.7	21.1	4.738	0.030*
FP2	1.7	3.9	4.945	0.026*
FP3	10.3	10.0	0.023	0.880
FP4	8.8	12.8	4.870	0.027*
FP5	3.1	3.9	0.517	0.472
FP6 (A)	92.3	94.6	0.010	0.920
FP7	14.2	10.4	4.002	0.045*
FP8	6.8	6.7	0.117	0.733
FP9 (A)	16.6	10.9	7.937	0.005**
FP10 (A)	26.3	23.5	1.367	0.242
FP11 (A)	3.8	2.2	2.390	0.122

relatively lower occurrence of FP1 and higher presence of FP9 in recent years in these journals compared to other management and business journals. Additionally, the emphasis on branded offerings, often synonymous with value propositions in the SDL framework, may explain the elevated discussion of FP7 in marketing/service journals. Conversely, in journals in management and business disciplines, where the spotlight is typically on firm performance, FP4 – centred on competitive advantage – may hold greater relevance to the readership, contributing to its increased frequency in these journals.

4.1.5 Influence of journal quality on the discussion of foundational premises. In terms of journal rankings, a chi-square test reveals no statistically significant difference in the number of FPs discussed among articles published in journals with varying CABS/AJG rankings (1 vs 2 vs 3 vs 4 vs 4) ($\chi 2 = 30.154$; df = 33, $p > 0.05$) (refer to Table 12). Additionally, a bivariate correlation between the CABS/AJG ranking and the number of FPs in articles indicates a statistically insignificant relationship (r = –0.022, $p = 0.09$).

Furthermore, Table 13 outlines the proportions of articles discussing specific FPs in journals with varying CABS/AJG rankings. A chi-square test reveals that, with the exception of FP6 ($\chi 2 = 8.507$; $p = 0.037$), there are no statistically significant differences in journals of different CABS/AJG rankings concerning the frequency of articles mentioning specific FPs versus those that do not.

However, Table 13. shows that articles in lower-ranked journals discuss FP6 somewhat more frequently (AJG1: 67% and AJG2: 66%) compared to articles in higher-ranked journals (AJG4, AJG4*: 59.7%).

4.1.6 Effect of discussions of foundational premises on an article's scholarly impact. Finally, we analysed whether the inclusion of specific FPs, or the total number of FPs discussed within an article, influences its scientific impact, as measured by citation counts. Because citation data are non-negative and overdispersed, negative binomial regression models were used instead of Poisson models to provide a more accurate fit. Maximum likelihood estimation was used to estimate the models. The first model (M1) incorporated dummies related to individual FPs (0 = specific FP not included, 1 = specific FP included). The second model (M2) included the total number of FPs. Table 14 presents the results of both models.

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Table 12. No. of foundational premises discussed in articles published in differently ranked journals

	AJG 1		*AJG 2*		*AJG 3*		*AJG 4 / 4**	
No. of FPs in article	No. of articles	Share of articles (%)	No. of articles	Share of articles (%)	No. of articles	Share of articles (%)	No. of articles	Share of articles (%)
0	261	28.2	399	30.0	306	30.6	174	34.7
1	400	43.1	518	38.9	412	41.2	200	39.8
2	140	15.1	212	15.9	131	13.1	62	12.4
3	61	6.6	88	6.6	74	7.4	31	6.2
4	28	3.0	49	3.7	35	3.5	17	3.4
5	15	1.6	29	2.2	17	1.7	6	1.2
6	6	0.6	9	0.7	7	0.7	2	0.4
7	1	0.1	6	0.5	3	0.3	3	0.6
8	3	0.3	2	0.2	3	0.3	2	0.4
9	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.1	2	0.4
10	8	0.9	16	1.2	8	0.8	3	0.6
11	3	0.3	2	0.2	2	0.2	0	0.0
FP articles	666	71.8	931	70.0	693	69.4	328	65.3
Articles	927	100.0	1,330	100.0	999	100.0	502	100.0

Note(s): Statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) differences were not found Articles published in journals without AJG ranking ($n = 613$) excluded from the sample ($n = 3,758$)

Both models in Table 14 featured covariates such as the publication year of the article and the ranking (CABS/AJG) of the journal. Additionally, information about whether the corresponding author of the article was affiliated with one of the institutions ranked in the University of Dallas's "Top 100 Business Schools Ranking" was included as a covariate. The first model (M1) revealed that discussing FP6 (b = 0.25, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.001$), FP7 (b = 0.21, SE = 0.07, $p < 0.001$) and FP9 (b = 0.14, SE = 0.07, $p = 0.04$) in an article predicted a higher yearly citation count. Specifically, calculated as exp(b) – 1, discussing FP6 led to a +29% increase in citation count, FP7 to a +23% increase and FP9 to a +15% increase. Similarly, the second model (M2) revealed that the number of FPs discussed overall in an article also had a positive effect on the article's yearly citation count (b = 0.04, SE < 0.01, $p < 0.001$). That is, a one unit increase in the number of FPs discussed in the article corresponded to an +4% increase in the citation count.

In both models, the covariates also predicted the number of citations in a statistically significant manner. Although the dependent variable was citation count per year (since the publication year) and not the total number of citations, publication year was still negatively related to yearly citation count (M1: b = –0.13, SE < 0.01, $p < 0.001$). This is likely because articles typically accumulate many citations only some years after publication. In contrast, both the journal ranking (M1: b = 0.40, SE = 0.01, $p < 0.001$) and the corresponding author's affiliation with a top institution (M1: b = 0.37, SE = 0.06, $p < 0.001$) predict higher numbers of citations. This is an expected outcome, as authors in later years often pay more attention to articles published in higher-ranked journals or authored by scholars affiliated with institutions of strong reputation.

4.1.7 Concluding the first phase of the study. The conducted analyses did not reveal substantial differences across journal types, quality levels or citation impact, thereby allowing us to consider the use of the FPs in general rather than as journal-specific phenomena. However, the analysis reveals substantial variation in how the 11 FPs of SDL appear and configure in the scholarly literature. Some premises dominate the discourse and structure its core, while others remain peripheral or primarily symbolic. FP6 ("Value is

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Table 13. Shares of articles discussing specific foundational premises published in differently ranked journals

FP	Presence (1/0)	*AJG1*		*AJG2*		*AJG3*		*AJG4 and AJG4**		*Total (%)*		χ^2	*Sig.*
FP1	1	103	11.1%	165	12.4%	114	11.4%	50	10.0%	432	11.5	2.388	0.496
	0	824	88.9%	1,165	87.6%	885	88.6%	452	90.0%	3,326	88.5		
FP2	1	16	1.7%	23	1.7%	17	1.7%	7	1.4%	63	1.7	0.282	0.963
	0	911	98.3%	1,307	98.3%	982	98.3%	495	98.6%	3,695	98.3		
FP3	1	53	5.7%	96	7.2%	70	7.0%	33	6.6%	252	6.7	2.164	0.539
	0	874	94.3%	1,234	92.8%	929	93.0%	469	93.4%	3,506	93.3		
FP4	1	57	6.1%	94	7.1%	66	6.6%	34	6.8%	251	6.7	0.7560	0.860
	0	870	93.9%	1236	92.9%	933	93.4%	468	93.2%	3,507	93.3		
FP5	1	27	2.9%	32	2.4%	21	2.1%	10	2.0%	90	2.4	1.779	0.620
	0	900	97.1%	1298	97.6%	978	97.9%	492	98.0%	3,668	97.6		
FP6	1	621	67.0%	876	65.9%	639	64.0%	300	59.8%	2,436	64.8	*8.507*	*0.037**
	0	306	33.0%	454	34.1%	360	36.0%	202	40.2%	1,322	35.2		
FP7	1	82	8.8%	112	8.4%	88	8.8%	31	6.2%	313	8.3	3.690	0.297
	0	845	91.2%	1218	91.6%	911	91.2%	471	93.8%	3,445	91.7		
FP8	1	42	4.5%	63	5.0%	45	4.5%	23	4.6%	173	4.6	0.088	0.993
	0	885	95.5%	1267	95.3%	954	95.5%	479	95.4%	3,585	95.4		
FP9	1	62	6.7%	121	9.1%	89	8.9%	40	8.0%	312	8.3	4.834	0.184
	0	865	93.3%	1209	90.9%	910	91.1%	462	92.0%	3,446	91.7		
FP10	1	156	16.8%	234	17.6%	153	15.3%	76	15.1%	619	16.5	2.922	0.404
	0	771	83.2%	1096	82.4%	846	84.7%	426	84.9%	3,139	83.5		
FP11	1	20	2.2%	25	1.9%	17	1.7%	8	1.6%	70	1.9	0.783	0.853
	0	907	97.8%	1305	98.1%	982	98.3%	494	98.4%	3,688	98.1		

Note(s): Statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) with italic font (FP6) Articles published in journals without AJG ranking ($n = 613$) excluded from the sample ($n = 3,758$)

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Table 14. Effect of FP discussion on article citations (per year)

	M1			M2		
Predictor	B	SE	*p*	B	SE	*p*
Intercept	262.43***	9.50	<0.001	248.39***	9.04	<0.001
Publication year	−0.13***	<0.01	<0.001	−0.12***	<0.01	<0.001
Journal ranking (CABS/AJG)	0.40***	0.01	<0.001	0.40***	0.01	<0.001
Top institutional ranking (Dallas list)	0.37***	0.06	<0.001	0.36***	0.06	<0.001
FP1	−0.09	0.06	0.13	−	−	−
FP2	−0.31	0.19	0.10	−	−	−
FP3	0.02	0.08	0.76	−	−	−
FP4	−0.10	0.07	0.19	−	−	−
FP5	−0.21	0.15	0.16	−	−	−
FP6	0.25***	0.04	<0.001	−	−	−
FP7	0.21**	0.07	<0.01	−	−	−
FP8	0.02	0.09	0.84	−	−	−
FP9	0.14*	0.07	0.04	−	−	−
FP10	−0.02	0.05	0.63	−	−	−
FP11	−0.06	0.12	0.63	−	−	−
Total number of FPs	−	−	−	0.04***	<0.01	<0.001

Note(s): *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$ and ***$p < 0.001$. B = negative binomial regression coefficient; SE = standard error

co-created by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary") clearly anchors SDL's realized narrative, appearing in over 90% of FP-related articles and in nearly all major FP configurations. Consistent with prior classifications, FP6 defines SDL's central orientation as a theoretical framework on value co-creation. It connects extensively with all other FPs, underscoring its status as the central integrative concept in SDL.

FP10 ("Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary") emerges as the second most influential premise – both in frequency and in its pattern of interconnections. Most notably, FP10 is frequently linked to FP9 (resource integration), FP7 (value proposition) and FP1 (service exchange). These linkages concretize how co-created value is formed, interpreted and experienced by beneficiaries, positioning FP10 as SDL's primary cognitive and phenomenological anchor. FP1 ("Service is the fundamental basis of exchange") ranks third in absolute appearances and maintains consistent interconnections with FP3, FP4, FP8, FP9 and FP10. This pattern reaffirms its foundational role in defining what is exchanged between actors. Thematically, FP1 is tightly coupled with FP3 ("Goods are a distribution mechanism for service provision") and FP4 ("Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit"), which together specify how service exchange occurs and through which resources. Collectively, these FPs constitute a coherent thematic cluster of service orientation – the micro-level mechanics that underpin value exchange between providers and beneficiaries.

FP9 ("All social and economic actors are resource integrators") appears as one of the more widely connected premises in the data set, reflecting its integrative function within the SDL framework. Together with FP7 ("Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions") and FP8 ("A service-centered view is inherently beneficiary-oriented and relational"), it forms a conceptual bridge between service exchange and value determination. FP9 defines the dynamic process of resource integration, while FP7 translates this process into actionable value propositions, and FP8 foregrounds the relational and beneficiary-oriented nature of these interactions. Both FP9 and FP7 exhibit

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strong interlinkages with FP10, reinforcing a relational view of value co-creation in which actors jointly shape outcomes through exchange and interpretation.

In contrast, FP8 rarely appears as a sole premise and, given its relatively low overall frequency, plays a secondary yet supportive role – most notably in combination with FP1, where it thematically enriches the relational dimension of service exchange.

Several other FPs occupy more peripheral positions in the realized narrative. FP2 ("Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange") ranks lowest in total appearances and rarely appears independently, showing only a mutual connection with FP5 ("All economies are service economies"). FP5, too, appears infrequently and primarily within comprehensive listings of all FPs rather than as a focal analytical construct. Both FP2 and FP5 serve primarily contextual functions, situating service exchange within the broader structure of economic systems.

Finally, FP11 ("Value co-creation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements") remains marginal, largely due to its late introduction in 2016. When present, it links weakly to FP9 and occasionally to FP6, signalling an emerging but still nascent institutional turn in SDL. Its limited diffusion suggests that while the proposed narrative of SDL has increasingly emphasized institutional coordination, this element has yet to become deeply embedded in the realized narrative of the literature.

Overall, these findings on the first phase indicate that SDL's realized narrative is anchored around a strong value co-creation core – centred on FP6, FP10, FP9, FP7 and FP1 – while its contextual and institutional dimensions (FP2, FP5 and FP11) remain comparatively underdeveloped during the first phase of analysis (2004–2019). This pattern reflects a partial realization of SDL's proposed systemic orientation. While the micro-level logic of value co-creation has become deeply embedded and institutionalized within scholarly discourse, the macro-level integration of service economies and institutional coordination – central to SDL's later, system-oriented reformulations – has not yet fully materialized in the literature. The next section focuses on a more recent data set by adopting a qualitative approach to the articles published between 2020 and 2025 in the *European Journal of Marketing*.

4.2 The second phase of the study: Insights from recent European Journal of Marketing contributions (2020–2025)

Recent contributions in the EJM underscore FP6's dominant role in shaping both theoretical and empirical advancements (e.g. Pham *et al.*, 2021; Sashi, 2021; Casidy *et al.*, 2022; Sahhar and Loohuis, 2022). At the same time, the qualitative analysis of this body of work reflects a systems turn, with increasing emphasis on service ecosystems and institutional arrangements (e.g. Simmonds and Gazley, 2021; Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022; Bauer *et al.*, 2024; Lastner *et al.*, 2024). This shift suggests a growing concern with how value co-creation is embedded in broader configurations of actors, structures and logics, thereby extending the scope of SDL beyond dyadic interactions while opening new avenues for refinement.

Many papers stage co-creation in tightly bounded settings, such as engagement episodes, journey moments and co-production encounters, so that the beneficiary's participation is legible and comparable (Bowden and Mirzaei, 2021; Casidy *et al.*, 2022; Itani, 2021; Sim *et al.*, 2022; Fuller *et al.*, 2023). By privileging interactional co-production rather than systemic co-creation, this approach tends to flatten temporal dynamics and render multi-actor coordination peripheral. By contrast, a growing set of contributions follows how value creation crosses organizational and technological boundaries, relocating explanations from isolated encounters to dynamic resource-integrating activities and coordinated participation in broader, multi-level service systems. For instance, in sales and stakeholder networks (Okazaki *et al.*, 2021; Plouffe *et al.*, 2024; Burchett *et al.*, 2024), resource integration is

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traced as sequences as work advances through shifting role constellations and interfaces. Further, platform-oriented studies show why some integrations travel and scale: institutional arrangements, boundary resources, standards and governance choices configure who may participate, with what rights and under which protocols (Bauer *et al.*, 2024; Lastner *et al.*, 2024).

In line with the systemic turn, recent studies analyse institutions as forms of coordination work rather than background "context", specifying rules, role scripts, routines and platform artifacts that shape participation and resource-integration (Bauer *et al.*, 2024; Lastner *et al.*, 2024; Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022). In parallel, phenomenological work treats value-in-use as temporal flow rather than a point estimate (Sahhar and Loohuis, 2022; Vichiengior *et al.*, 2023). This strengthens SDL's experiential core while signalling the next step: connecting time-sensitive experience to the institutional arrangements that guide behaviour.

Reviewed papers show how the systemic/institutional turn operates in SDL. Designs that follow sequences reveal FP9 as a process: integration becomes possible at brief alignments of role expectations, procedures and tools; arrangements then change and must be rebuilt (Plouffe *et al.*, 2024; Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022). Designs that surface infrastructure and governance explain when such sequences scale: boundary resources, standards and platform rules configure who may participate, with what rights and on what terms – making FP11 operational as coordination work rather than background (Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022; Schöps *et al.*, 2022). Platform and community studies show rules and norms being made, maintained and modified in use (Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022), while public-purpose service research extends coordination effects to wellbeing beyond immediate beneficiaries (Simmonds and Gazley, 2021). At the same time, designs that freeze actors and resources for cross-sectional comparison keep FP6/FP7 empirically cumulative but make FP9/FP11 harder to see (Avis and Henderson, 2022; Laud *et al.*, 2023). On the phenomenological side, FP10 gains explanatory bite when experience is sampled over time, yet is still not routinely connected – within a single study – to the institutional devices that pattern participation (compare Laud *et al.*, 2023 with Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022; Simmonds and Gazley, 2021).

An ontology-informed reading of the recent EMJ articles clarifies why these clusters appear. In a subset of papers, the analysis incorporates elements of a process-relational view (see Jaakkola *et al.*, 2024; Kleinaltenkamp *et al.*, 2025), for example, by following sequences of action and coordination rather than only describing stable entities. In that strand, FP9 is perceived as integration-in-motion, FP10 is written as temporal phenomenology that varies with practice orderings and FP11 is written as patterned coordination (Okazaki *et al.*, 2021; Plouffe *et al.*, 2024; Burchett *et al.*, 2024; Bauer *et al.*, 2024; Lastner *et al.*, 2024; Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022; Pham *et al.*, 2021; Sahhar and Loohuis, 2022; Vichiengior *et al.*, 2023). Alongside this strand, a large body of work retains substance-based assumptions by stabilizing actors and resources for measurement; this keeps FP6 (and often FP7) central but tends to push institutional coordination to the background (Bowden and Mirzaei, 2021; Casidy *et al.*, 2022; Fuller *et al.*, 2023). These findings complement the quantitative mapping from Phase 1 and lay the groundwork for the account of SDL's realized narrative that follows.

4.3 Concluding the realized narrative of service-dominant logic

Our two-phase design allows us to articulate SDL's realized narrative with both breadth and depth. Phase 1 resolves into a micro-core where value co-creation (FP6), beneficiary-determined value-in-use (FP10) and service as the basic logic of exchange (FP1) do the heavy lifting. Value propositions (FP7) and resource integration (FP9) provide the bridges

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that let studies talk across settings. By comparison, indirect exchange (FP2) and goods-as-service carriers (FP5) mostly orbit the action, and customer-oriented relationality (FP8) shows up more as background texture than as a driver – a pattern consistent with designs that follow interactions rather than channels or products. Phase-2 qualitative analyses indicate that institutional arrangements can be read as coordination devices in use, shaping participation, terms and rights. We therefore treat the domain captured by FP11 as increasingly salient, while noting that its coverage remains uneven across designs. Collectively, the realized narrative remains anchored in value co-creation, yet its macro-level and institutional dimensions are beginning to integrate more visibly. Designs that stabilize actors and resources for measurement keep FP6/FP7 empirically cumulative while pushing FP9/FP11 to the background. In contrast, designs that follow sequences of activity across roles, interfaces and rules reveal FP9 as integration-in-motion, amplify FP10's temporal phenomenology and operationalize FP11 as patterned coordination. This ontological split explains the field's twin trajectories and the gradual systems turn visible since 2020.

Figure 2 integrates both phases of our study into a single realized narrative. From Phase 1, we retain the corpus-level backbone: arrow thickness encodes co-appearance volume in the most voluminous FP-configurations (cf. Tables 8–9), and dotted links visualize theoretically central but lower-frequency pairings that fell outside those configurations. From Phase 2, we calibrate salience and interpretation: node outlines convey narrative prominence (FP6, FP10, FP1 thick; FP7, FP9 accentuated) and FP11 is upgraded one notch to reflect its emergent role as coordination-in-use rather than mere background "context". Consistent with this reading, the FP6–FP11 tie is rendered thin–solid (recurring, now empirically visible), while FP9–FP11 remains dotted but darkened/annotated to mark mechanism without mass. In short, Phase 1 supplies the structural weights; Phase 2 refines which links and labels matter in practice – together producing a reader's guide to how SDL's premises actually travel and congeal in the literature.

Figure 2 integrates the empirical and conceptual elements of our analysis to construct a realized narrative of SDL, making explicit how the FPs and their co-appearances are connected. It is crucial to emphasize that the direction of the arrows in the figure does not imply causality; instead, it serves as a guide for readers navigating the realized narrative. The realized narrative unfolds in five thematic entities. The first, grey entity only includes FP6, which is by far the most frequently appearing and discussed FP in the SDL literature. As FP6 is also basically linked to all the other FPs, we only depict its connection to FP11 to simplify the figure. This is to highlight the general perspectives associated with value co-creation and its contextualization, contributing to the overall SDL narrative. Furthermore, the orange entity (FP1, FP3 and FP4) represents service orientation, the green entity (FP7, FP8 and FP9) depicts service creation and the blue entity (FP10) illustrates service realization. Finally, the yellow entity (FP2, FP5 and FP11) represents contextual elements of value co-creation.

In summary, the realized narrative of SDL can be best understood through three synthesized sentences. The first sentence links FP6 with FP11:

(1) SDL comprises a framework that connects actors into value co-creation, which is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements. The second synthesizing sentence starts with FP3, and runs through FP1 (and provisionally FP4) to FP9, FP7, FP8 and FP10:

(2) In this framework, tangible goods as well as services are seen to provide a distribution mechanism to render service (FP3), which is the fundamental basis of exchange (FP1) [built on operant resources (FP4)], which, in turn, is created in a resource integration process (FP9) and which embodies a value proposition (FP7), [that is inherently beneficiary-oriented and relational (FP8)] that through value

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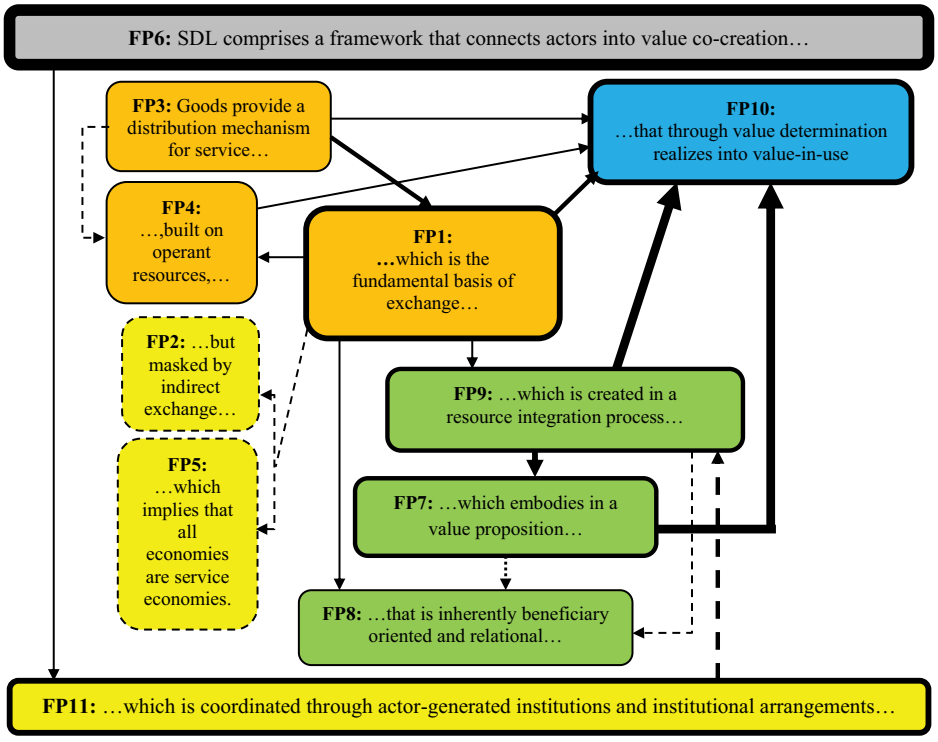

Figure 2. Realized narrative of SDL

determination realizes into the service value-in-use (FP10). Finally, the third synthesizing sentence starts with FP5 and FP2, and ends with FP11:

(3) In this framework, all economies are service economies built around service-for-service exchange (FP5 and FP2), which is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements (FP11).

This three-sentence synthesis unveils the holistic logic prevailing between the FPs and the corresponding thematic areas they represent. The realized narrative of SDL, illustrated in Figure 2, provides the groundwork for developing research themes for future research in the following section.

Vargo and Lusch (2016) articulate an integrative depiction of SDL that weaves the FPs into a coherent, system-level narrative of value co-creation. This depiction offers a compact conceptual synthesis that brings together actors, resource integration and institutional coordination into a theoretically generative storyline. The resemblance between this integrative depiction and the realized narrative synthesized in the present study is therefore expected, given the ways in which SDL has developed through cumulative scholarly use. The resemblance reflects a process of discursive sedimentation through which influential articulations of SDL stabilize into familiar narrative forms as the theoretical framework travels. At the same time, the analytical value of reconstructing a realized narrative lies precisely in what an integrative depiction cannot, by design, make

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visible. Whereas Vargo and Lusch (2016) condense SDL into a coherent conceptual storyline, the realized narrative provides an empirical diagnosis of how that storyline is enacted across cumulative use: which premises are routinely foregrounded or left implicit, how strongly particular premises are coupled in practice and where persistent silences or simplifications remain. This interdependence does not imply a reduction in either direction. Rather, the similarities point to narrative stabilization around a shared SDL storyline, while the differences underscore why tracing realization matters: it reveals the uneven, contingent, and sometimes selective ways in which an integrative vision of the framework is carried forward in scholarly practice.

5. Discussion

The realized narrative of SDL (Figure 2) highlights clusters that anchor the framework and silences elements that are not applied. In this chapter, we build on that synthesis to interpret its implications and chart a path forward. Specifically, we extend the model into explicit research themes that emerge from the discussion of dynamics between proposed and realized narrative of SDL. This discussion illustrates how the notions of proposed and realized narrative can serve as a diagnostic lens for assessing the development of theories and theoretical frameworks more broadly.

5.1 The dynamics between proposed and realized narrative as a mechanism of theory development of service-dominant logic

The distinction between the proposed and realized narratives of SDL provides a conceptual bridge between its intended metatheoretical structure and the ways it has evolved through cumulative scholarly use. The proposed narrative, as articulated by Vargo and Lusch (e.g. 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2016), defines SDL as a meta-theoretical framework aimed at reorienting marketing around service-for-service exchange, resource integration and value co-creation within service ecosystems. The axioms articulate an integrative logic: service as the basis of exchange (FP1), value as co-created (FP6), actors as resource integrators (FP9), value as phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (FP10) and markets as institutional arrangements that enable and constrain value creation (FP11).

Our analysis of more than 4,000 scholarly articles reveals how this proposed narrative has taken shape in academic discourse. Although most studies citing SDL engage with at least one FP, the resulting narrative exhibits uneven emphasis across the premises. FP6 (value co-creation) emerges as the dominant conceptual anchor, appearing in almost all FP-referencing articles and functioning as the connective hub linking the other premises. This centrality confirms the broad acceptance of value co-creation as SDL's defining concept, yet it also signals a narrowing of SDL's theoretical scope. In contrast, premises central to SDL's systemic and institutional dimensions – particularly FP5 (all economies are service economies) and FP11 (institutional arrangements) – remain underrepresented, appearing infrequently and often only peripherally in empirical work. However, for FP11, this may reflect its later introduction, as evidenced by our analysis in Phase 2 of the study.

These patterns suggest that while SDL's proposed narrative envisions a holistic, system-level metatheory, its realized narrative continues to revolve around a processual and interactional interpretation of value co-creation. The realized narrative, therefore, reflects a partial translation of SDL's intent: the dyadic roots of the original 2004 formulation continue to shape how scholars mobilize the theoretical framework, even as its later revisions encourage a systemic turn. In essence, the realized narrative reflects both SDL's success and its constraint – it demonstrates the framework's diffusion and legitimacy while revealing a slower uptake of its institutional and ecosystemic extensions.

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Previous discussions of travelling have primarily focused on the level of concepts, examining how specific constructs can maintain or lose precision as they move across contexts. For instance, Yg (1989) conceptualized concept travelling as the ability of well-formed concepts to retain definitional integrity while being applicable across diverse empirical settings, in contrast to concept stretching, which denotes the erosion of meaning through overextension. While such analyses illuminate the dynamics of conceptual precision, they stop short of addressing how entire theoretical frameworks evolve as they travel through scholarly use and reinterpretation. Our study advances this discussion by examining the travelling of a theoretical framework – that is, how SDL as a metatheoretical system transforms through ongoing academic engagement (see Teplitskiy *et al.*, 2022).

We conceptualize the interaction between SDL's proposed and realized narratives as the key mechanism through which travelling of a framework occurs. The proposed narrative articulates SDL's original metatheoretical structure, whereas the realized narrative represents its evolving form as interpreted and operationalized by the scholarly community. As scholars apply, combine and recontextualize the FPs, they both preserve and transform the theoretical framework's meaning. From this perspective, travelling extends beyond the application of isolated concepts to capture the institutionalization and transformation of theoretical frameworks over time. SDL's realized narrative thus illustrates how a theoretical framework develops through iterative cycles of use, reinterpretation and stabilization – an ongoing process in which meaning evolves not by diffusion alone, but through scholarly negotiation and selective integration across contexts.

In this sense, the realized narrative of SDL is not a derivative version of the proposed one, but a generative mechanism of theory development. As researchers repeatedly mobilize the FPs in new settings, they collectively reshape SDL's theoretical boundaries and internal logic. The dynamics between the proposed and realized narratives therefore constitute a broader mechanism of theoretical evolution – one that reflects both the travelling and transformation of a theoretical framework within its academic ecosystem. To inspire reflection on these dynamics and their implications for the future development of SDL, as well as for theory evolution in marketing more generally, we focus on three interrelated themes: ontological alignment and drift, interpretive flexibility and theoretical adaptation and institutionalization and openness of evolving metatheories.

The first theme concerns the ontological foundations of theoretical development. The proposed narrative of SDL – particularly in its later articulations (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, 2017) – rests on a process-relational ontology, in which actors, resources and institutions are viewed as emergent and co-constitutive. Yet the realized narrative demonstrates how, as theoretical frameworks travel, their ontological premises can drift. Many SDL applications adopt a substance-oriented stance, treating actors and resources as discrete entities and co-creation as an interactional event rather than an emergent systemic process. This ontological drift highlights a recurring challenge in marketing theory development: as ideas diffuse across contexts and methodological traditions, their foundational assumptions often become simplified or fragmented. This may be particularly the case if the ontological assumptions of the proposed narrative remain unclear. The SDL case thus exemplifies how ontological coherence is both a strength and a vulnerability as theoretical frameworks travel. For marketing scholarship more broadly, maintaining awareness of ontological assumptions is essential to avoid fragmentation and to sustain theoretical depth across interpretive communities (cf. Kleinaltenkamp *et al.*, 2025).

The ontological drift identified in the realized narrative is not only a matter of how SDL is applied in empirical studies, but is also anchored in how some of the FPs are historically articulated and subsequently mobilized in the literature. Several premises, such as FP2,

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which distinguishes between direct and indirect exchange, and FP4, which differentiates between operant and operand resources, are formulated in ways that implicitly rely on substance-ontological distinctions, presuming relatively stable entities that enter into exchange or interaction (Vargo and Lusch, 2008, 2016). From a process-relational perspective, by contrast, actors, resources and institutional arrangements are understood as emergent and co-constitutive, continuously formed and re-formed through ongoing processes of value co-creation rather than as ontologically prior categories (Vargo and Lusch, 2017; Jaakkola *et al.*, 2024). Recent work has begun to engage the ontological implications of this tension more explicitly, for example, by advancing process-ontological accounts of resource becoming and by questioning the operant–operand distinction as an analytically stabilized rather than ontologically given separation (Kleinaltenkamp *et al.*, 2024, 2025). Our contribution is not to resolve these tensions at the level of FP reformulation, but to make them empirically visible through an analysis of how the FPs are taken up and combined in scholarly practice. By reconstructing the realized narrative, the analysis shows how process-relational ideas are increasingly enacted in SDL research, even as their realization remains shaped by the substance-oriented distinctions embedded in the existing premises. Making this tension explicit is analytically consequential, as it clarifies how the use of historically articulated premises both enables and delimits process-relational interpretations of SDL, thereby identifying concrete points at which future work may reflect on the relationship between ontological commitments and the formulation of the premises themselves.

The second theme relates to interpretive flexibility – the capacity of a theory to adapt through use and reinterpretation. SDL's realized narrative illustrates how scholars have extended its vocabulary and logic to diverse domains such as digital innovation, service ecosystems, sustainability and public service. This flexibility is not a sign of conceptual weakness but a marker of theoretical vitality: it enables the theoretical framework to travel, attract interdisciplinary engagement and remain relevant. From a broader perspective on theory development in marketing, interpretive flexibility is the mechanism through which theories evolve – they survive not by strict replication but by translation (cf. Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996). However, flexibility also introduces risk: as ideas adapt, they may lose internal coherence or drift away from their original logic. The SDL experience underscores the need to balance translation with theoretical integrity, suggesting that productive theory development depends on a continuous negotiation between fidelity and innovation within scholarly communities (cf. Merton, 1973; Weick, 1989).

The third theme concerns institutionalization – the process through which theories achieve stability, legitimacy and recognition as shared reference frameworks. SDL's evolution demonstrates that as theories and theoretical frameworks travel, they become embedded within institutional structures of academic practice – journals, conferences and educational curricula – that both stabilize and constrain further development. SDL's realized narrative has institutionalized key notions such as value co-creation and service ecosystems, giving them the status of taken-for-granted reference points in marketing discourse. Yet institutionalization also creates closure pressures: once widely accepted, theories and theoretical frameworks risk becoming reified and less open to alternative interpretations or paradigmatic renewal. SDL's continuing reinterpretation across contexts shows that maintaining a degree of openness – inviting new perspectives and integrating adjacent theoretical traditions – is crucial for viability. More broadly, this theme reflects a central tension in marketing scholarship between stabilizing consensus and encouraging pluralism: theories and theoretical frameworks mature when they achieve enough institutional structure to guide inquiry, yet remain sufficiently open to accommodate new problem settings and emerging logics.

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These three themes depict travelling as a dynamic equilibrium between coherence and change. The SDL case illustrates that theoretical development in marketing is rarely linear or unidirectional: it involves ongoing negotiation between ontological commitments, interpretive communities and institutional forces. The interaction between proposed and realized narratives thus represents not merely the diffusion of ideas, but the recursive re-creation of the theoretical framework. Read against SDL's proposed narrative, the realized narrative points to a constructive next step: make the systems turn and process-relational stance explicit in future studies so that use aligns with intent while remaining faithful to what has emerged. Practically, this requires stating ontological assumptions and working with concepts, which enable following proposals, coordination and experience over time. Framed this way, SDL can pursue coherence with change, retaining its meta-theoretical architecture while evolving through scholarly use. The next chapter turns this stance into concrete research tasks.

5.2 Topics for further research

Building on the identified realized narrative above, we develop a service-flow programme that operationalizes the systems turn and a process-relational orientation in SDL research. By service flow we mean the passage of resources, rights and meanings between proposed value (intentions and value propositions) and experienced value-in-use as activity traverses roles, interfaces and rule regimes – a tractable unit that lets studies follow integration-in-motion, coordination-in-use and temporal phenomenology within the same design while retaining the clarity of interactional scenes (see e.g. Karpen *et al.*, 2012; Lusch and Vargo, 2014). We organize the topics for further research around three themes: (i) how flows form, hold and change (treating coordination as work rather than backdrop); (ii) coupling flow sequences with experiential trajectories (treating value as becoming rather than a point); and (iii) comparability by design via minimal reporting of the operative apparatus and its versioned changes. Together, these themes maintain theoretical coherence while enabling cumulative change as SDL travels across settings.

Theme 1: How service flows form, hold and change? A process-relational SDL asks how co-creation becomes possible and stays possible. This theme investigates the formation of flows (what assemblages of rules, interfaces and role scripts bring a flow into being), their holding conditions (what keeps participation coordinated over successive episodes) and their change mechanisms (what rule revisions, boundary-resource updates or role respecifications re-configure the flow). Empirically, this calls for studies that bracket the phenomenon clearly, trace episodes over time and document how altering the apparatus re-cuts the flow and reorders the flow. The payoff is an account of coordination that moves beyond static "context" and shows how service systems are maintained and modified in practice.

(1) What needs to be in place for a service flow to start? Which combination of a clear value proposition, access rights and simple rules gets activity moving from proposal to use?

(2) What keeps a service flow on track over time? Which coordination routines or checkpoints keep actors aligned across episodes and where do breakdowns typically occur?

(3) How do rule or tool changes reshape the flow? When a policy, standard or interface is updated, how does the flow re-organize and how quickly do practices and experiences adjust?

(4) What are the smallest effective fixes to restart or scale a flow? Which minimal changes to propositions, access or roles repair stalled flows or extend participation without locking actors or resources into rigid forms?

Theme 2: Coupling flow sequences with experiential trajectories (beyond individual phenomenology). If value has been treated as phenomenologically determined, a process-

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relational stance asks whether "experience" should be located only in individual consciousness. Here we treat experiential trajectories as socio-material and temporally patterned: meaning is enacted across human–technology–institutional relations as service flows pass through interfaces, scripts and rule changes. The task is to examine the time-coupling between coordination events (e.g. access rights, standards and governance moves) and shifts in experience, while also tracing the mediations that co-produce that experience (devices, algorithms and platforms). Ontologically, it frames experience as relationally constituted rather than solely individual. The studies in this theme could open room for post-phenomenological, practice-theoretical and agential-realist analyses of how technologies, rules and organizational arrangements participate in value determination.

- What changes in experience follow specific co-ordination events?
- How do people and technologies create experience in practice? In everyday use, which parts of the experience are shaped by tools and algorithms, and which by human coordination? How do these parts fit together across service flow?
- How do individual and shared experiences move together (or apart)? In teams, communities, or platform groups, when do people's experiences converge into a shared trajectory and when do they diverge? What explains the difference?
- How do workarounds and personalization re-shape later experience? When participants tweak interfaces, bend rules or personalize settings to keep flow moving, how do those adjustments change the next episodes of the service flow and the experiences that follow?

Theme 3: Making flows comparable across settings. To build cumulative knowledge, flows must be comparable without forcing uniform measures. This theme develops light-weight comparability by standardizing how researchers report mechanisms and apparatus at the flow level. Authors should name the apparatus that bounds the phenomenon, version its changes and authorization and link those changes to observed shifts in activity and experience. Doing so surfaces macro–meso–micro linkages – policy and professional norms shaping apparatus updates that, in turn, reshape participation and meaning – while keeping coordination an analytical object rather than rhetoric. The result is comparability by design: different contexts, similar evidence logic.

- What is the minimal set of facts every study should report so flows can be compared across cases? For example: what changed, when and by whom; which rules or interfaces were updated; and which roles were affected.
- How accurate and repeatable are these reports? Compare researcher notes with system logs and version histories, and test whether different coders reach the same conclusions.
- Where should we draw the boundary around a "flow" for fair comparison? Examine how alternative choices about what to include or exclude change the findings.
- What simple templates and data formats make results easy to reuse? Try a one-page flow record, a versioned change log or an open table linking changes to observed shifts in activity and experience.

The service-flow lens offers a practical bridge from SDL's systems turn (Jaakkola *et al.*, 2024) to a process-relational orientation (Kleinaltenkamp *et al.*, 2025). It gives researchers a way to study how propositions travel into flow sequences, how those sequences depend on coordination devices and how beneficiaries' experiences evolve over time. If adopted, it will

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enable explanations that connect flow sequences to coordination devices while keeping interactional scenes observable and giving temporal experience the time it needs, yielding a realized narrative that aligns more closely with SDL's proposed map by making mechanisms and temporality observable where value is actually made.

5.3 Theoretical contributions

This study advances SDL research by providing, to our knowledge, the first large-scale empirical analysis of how its FPs are used across more than 4,000 studies. Whereas prior reviews have examined SDL's thematic applications (e.g. branding and innovation) or its conceptual refinements (Tregua *et al.*, 2021; Pohlmann and Kaartemo, 2017; Wilden *et al.*, 2017), none have systematically traced how the framework's core building blocks – the FPs – are emphasized, combined or underused in scholarly practice. By analysing article-level prevalence and co-appearance of premises, we reveal SDL's realized narrative: the storyline enacted in the cumulative literature. This empirical lens surfaces patterns otherwise hard to detect – such as which premises dominate (e.g. FP6 on value co-creation), which are consistently underused (e.g. FP9 and FP11) and how these emphases and silences shape SDL's coherence and blind spots. In doing so, we shift attention from SDL's proposed narrative (as articulated by its originators) to the realized narrative that has emerged in practice – documenting use patterns rather than adjudicating correctness.

Secondly, our study advances the conceptual development of SDL by diagnosing how different FPs have been elaborated in the literature and where their uptake remains limited. While SDL has gained widespread adoption, much of its use has been descriptive, with central constructs – particularly value co-creation (FP6) – frequently referenced but often in simplified or dyadic ways that constrain analytical rigour (cf. Barney and Felin, 2013; Storbacka *et al.*, 2016; Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018). Our mapping shows that while FP6 and FP1 have become deeply embedded in the realized narrative, other premises – such as FP9 (resource integration) and FP11 (institutional arrangements) – are referenced far less often and rarely appear in combination with more dominant premises. This uneven uptake, visible both in the prevalence of citations and in the co-appearance patterns across articles, reveals which elements of SDL have been foregrounded in shaping its realized narrative and which remain at the margins. Such selectivity does not imply that underutilized premises are theoretically weak, but it does highlight how SDL's realized narrative both consolidates around certain anchors and constrains the framework's broader potential. This tension echoes concerns raised in prior debates: that SDL's conceptual ambiguity has fostered multiple interpretations (Grönroos, 2011; Williams, 2012; Kleinaltenkamp *et al.*, 2024) and that attempts to position SDL as a general theory risk overextension if claims are not carefully grounded in empirical evidence (Akaka *et al.*, 2021). By surfacing these patterns, our study contributes a diagnostic account of SDL's realized narrative, clarifying how selective uptake shapes its conceptual trajectory without collapsing it into a single normative articulation.

Relative to the realized narrative revealed by our first phase analysis, the second phase reproduces the same underlying structure (FP6 as hub; FP7/FP9/FP10/FP11 as frequent attachments) but also exposes three process-relational tensions that are worth taking a closer look at:

(1) level-of-analysis ambiguity within FP6, as interactional vs ecosystemic readings coexist without explicit articulation of the analytical cut, risking category drift when "co-creation" names both (Sashi, 2021; Pham *et al.*, 2021; Sahhar and Loohuis, 2022; Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022);

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(2) coordination-logic opacity around FP9/FP11, as many studies establish the implication of institutions and integration but under-specify how arrangements pattern participation trajectories (Okazaki *et al.*, 2021; Bauer *et al.*, 2024; Lastner *et al.*, 2024; Plouffe *et al.*, 2024); and

(3) valence pluralism in value outcomes, as recognition of co-destruction and constraints (e.g. institutional lock-ins and exclusionary dynamics) fragments how value trajectories are described and compared (Sahhar and Loohuis, 2022; Leipämaa-Leskinen *et al.*, 2022; Simmonds and Gazley, 2021).

Thirdly, we contribute to the future development of SDL by translating insights from the realized narrative into structured research themes. Our analysis shows that SDL scholarship consistently clusters around three domains – service orientation, service creation and service realization – while situating these processes within the broader contextual elements. These domains and contexts (Figure 2) are not abstract inventions but the patterns that emerged from how FPs have been emphasized, combined or left silent in practice. Framing them as a diagnostic synthesis, we show how SDL's realized narrative both consolidates around certain premises and neglects others, especially institutions and institutional arrangements, which remain conceptually central but inconsistently mobilized (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Building on this diagnosis, we outline targeted research questions for each domain and context, offering a roadmap that is anchored in cumulative practice yet oriented towards future theorization. In this way, the themes function not only as a guide for advancing SDL but also as a diagnostic lens for assessing the health of theoretical frameworks and meta-theories more broadly.

5.4 Managerial implications

The framework depicted in Figure 2 provides a basis for articulating managerial suggestions to help implement the framework in practice. The framework's overall message for managers is in its advocacy of a company's service orientation. The essentials of such a service orientation lie in the company's proactive stance *vis-à-vis* its business context and its capability to identify and seize emerging opportunities for service provision. Accordingly, market and customer segments should not be primarily considered as a venue for selling products but as a composite of versatile customer needs whose identification, understanding, classification and fulfilment provide the foundation for a viable business. For example, managers should consider how to build and reinforce capabilities through which to effectively and efficiently translate the idea of desirable customer value into a product or service concept. Moreover, in addition to identifying potential customers and their needs, the service orientation encourages managers to identify and consider the needs of other kinds of service process actors (e.g. suppliers, service providers, government and regulatory bodies), as well as test the viability of their product and service concepts with agile experiments in real-life settings. Furthermore, in addition to identifying and monitoring service process actors, the service orientation entails taking an active stance towards monitoring and reacting to contingencies that occur between the service process and the external environment. When it comes to increasing resilience in reacting to the dynamics in the external environment, managers should focus on building capabilities to develop and reinforce relationships with existing/known service process actors as well as with potential new actors to introduce flexibility in their operations. Finally, the most crucial phase of the service process occurs when the product or service is put into use in the customer domain. To improve the chances of success in this phase, managers should proactively develop organizational capabilities related to training the customers to use the product/service and thus increase the value they perceive.

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5.5 Limitations and further research

The present study offers valuable insights into the discussion of FPs in the SDL literature. However, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations in the methodology and scope of the analysis. Firstly, we aimed at identifying the FPs in their recognizable form, which presents a binary coding task of finding text in the article that can be used to determine whether FP1 […] 11 appears and is discussed in an article. Despite using a multi-coder approach with high inter-coder reliability, our approach focused only on whether or not a certain FP was discussed in a given article. We did not analyse whether the articles supported or criticized the FP(s) in question, nor how central vs peripheral role a given FP played in a given article. Future research could dive deeper into these aspects, providing a more nuanced understanding of the FPs' roles. Secondly, our study omits a systematic analysis of other SDL elements in the articles than those directly related to the FPs. Such elements would include, for instance, the article's focus on dyadic vs ecosystem value co-creation or on service co-production vs value-in-use. Analysis of such elements would enrich the review of the SDL literature.

Thirdly, to evaluate the impact of FP use on the yearly citations of articles, we exclude the most recent publications from our analysis. Despite the timeframe of 16 reveals development pattern of the use of the FPs, the inclusion of works published in the most recent years (2020–) could further enrich the findings. Notably, future research endeavours can leverage our data set, which we may make available as an open-source resource, to unearth additional trends in SDL research. This resource offers the potential for scholars to sidestep extensive, time-consuming analyses of thousands of articles, as these have already been meticulously examined and documented within our data set. Fourthly, the present research did not extensively explore journal- or discipline-based nuances, opting for broader categorizations. A more focused analysis on specific marketing and service journals, for instance, could reveal insights not apparent in a broader classification. Exploring these nuances would be beneficial for a more detailed and discipline-specific understanding of SDL literature.

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Appendix

Table A1. Journals of the data identifying the 39 upper-median split journals

Journals	Articles
Industrial Marketing Management	228
Journal of Service Management	148
Journal of Business Research	142
Journal of Service Theory and Practice	137
Journal of Services Marketing	125
Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	103
Marketing Theory	94
Journal of Service Research	94
European Journal of Marketing	80
Service Industries Journal	76
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	68
Journal of Marketing Management	50
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	49
International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences	48
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	44
Journal of Marketing	42
Tourism Management	42
Australasian Marketing Journal	38
Journal of Macromarketing	36
International Journal of Hospitality Management	36
Sustainability	35
International Journal of Bank Marketing	31
Management Decision	31
International Journal of Operations and Production Management	31
Service Science	30
Marketing Intelligence and Planning	30
Service Business	29
Journal of Product Innovation Management	28
International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management	28
Journal of Strategic Marketing	26
Production Planning and Control	26
International Journal of Production Economics	26
European Business Review	26
Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	25
Public Management Review	24
European Management Journal	24
Journal of Retailing	21
Journal of Cleaner Production	21
Journal of Business Ethics	21
Total upper median-split (39 identified journals above)	2,193
Total lower median-split (778 other journals of the data)	2,178
Total (817 journals)	4,371

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Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Technovation, Marketing Theory, European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Service Management, Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, Technology Analysis & Strategic Management, and Applied Energy, among others. Hannu Makkonen is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: hannu.makkonen@uwasa.fi

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