Learning resource integration by engaging in value cocreation practices: a study of music actors

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper explores how actors engage in the situated learning of resource integration (RI) within value cocreation practices (VCPs). VCPs are collectively shared and organized routine activities that actors perform to cocreate value.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper draws on a qualitative study of how successful music actors engage in VCPs and learn RI. Interviews and observations were used to collect data that were analyzed by drawing on the Gioia methodology.

Findings – The findings illuminate the types of VCPs actors engage in to learn RI, the ways in which actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs, and how social contexts condition actors' learning of RI.

Research limitations/implications – This paper offers a framework for understanding actors' situated learning of RI by engaging in VCPs. It illuminates the VCPs that actors engage in to learn RI, how actors advance from peripheral to core participation through their learning, the ways in which actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs, and how social contexts condition actors' situated learning of RI. Implications for the scarce prior research on how actors learn RI are presented.

Practical implications – To contribute to innovative solutions and sustainable growth, managers and policymakers need to offer actors opportunities to learn and make space for actors with competencies that may be important and needed in future VCPs.

Originality/value – In focusing on how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs, this study draws on theories of communities of practices and situated learning, as well as practice theoretical service research.

Keywords Learning, Music, Resource integration, Value cocreation

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Service-dominant (S-D) logic suggests that value is cocreated by actors through resource integration (Rundle-Thiele *et al.*, 2019; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Gummesson and Mele (2010) have defined RI as "the incorporation of an actor's resources into the processes of other actors" (p. 263). An "actor" here is a person or a group of persons (such as an organization) that takes on a social role with an expected socially defined pattern of behavior (Akaka and Chandler, 2011). In S-D logic, a distinction is made between actors' integration of operant resources, which denote knowledge and skills, and operand resources, which are related to tangible assets and material resources. Operant resources are primary. Therefore, S-D logic researchers have suggested that actors need to learn the relevant knowledge and skills to contribute to RI. For example, Lusch and Vargo (2014) argue that ". . . resource integration competency and learning competency . . ." are two of five ". . . sources of collaborative advantage" (p. 150). In addition,

Hibbert *et al.* (2012), who studied how customers learn about RI, argued "that customers must acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective resource integrators as they engage in activities that facilitate or create value" (p. 247).

Despite the critical role of actors' learning of RI in prior S-D logic research, this topic has not been studied systematically. While Hibbert *et al.* (2012) have published one of the few studies attending to the learning of RI, their work is conceptual and not based on empirical findings. It is also restricted to one type of actor—the customer—while service researchers have emphasized that several types of actors commonly engage in RI (Edvardsson *et al.*, 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). In addition, prior studies have shown that actors engage in shared value cocreation practices (VCPs) to simultaneously integrate resources and learn RI. VCPs are collectively shared and organized routine activities that actors perform to cocreate value. However, how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs has not been explicitly explored in empirical research (Echeverri and Skålén, 2021; McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2012; Skålén and Gummerus, 2022). Therefore, there is an urgent need for explorative empirical research that focuses on how actors learn to integrate resources by engaging in VCPs. By generating such knowledge, we will also gain insight into how actors' learning can be facilitated.

Following the suggestion of Wägar (2007), we draw on theories of communities of practices in general, and the notion of situated learning in particular (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999), to illuminate how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs. This perspective suggests that learning takes place *in situ* by diverse actors who engage in shared practices, which then change the actors' cognitive structures. Hence, the notion of situated learning fits well with our positioning in practice theory-informed service research, in which it is implicated that people primarily learn RI not through formal learning in schools, but by engaging in VCPs (Echeverri and Skålén, 2021; McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2012; Skålén and Gummerus, 2022). Empirically, this paper draws on a study of successful music actors. By inquiring into the lived experiences of these actors, our aim is to explore how actors learn to integrate resources by engaging in VCPs.

We contribute to the literature by outlining a framework of actors' situated learning of RI by engaging in VCPs. Specifically, we illuminate the types VCPs that actors engage in to learn RI. We also show that actors gain access to these VCPs in a stepwise fashion, thus advancing from peripheral to core participation. Our study further clarifies the ways in which actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs. In addition, we show how generic social contexts condition actors' situated learning of RI in a specific context, such as the music industry, which is the focus of this paper.

This paper proceeds as follows. In the first section, we review the literature on RI and show how theories of situated learning will be drawn on to advance our understanding of how actors learn to integrate resources by engaging in VCPs. We also describe what facilitates and conditions this learning. We continue with a presentation of how the study of the music actors was conducted, followed by a description of the findings. The paper ends with a discussion of the contributions of our study.

Theoretical background
This section reviews prior research on RI and discusses how the theory of situated learning and research on VCPs can be drawn on to explore how actors learn to integrate resources.

Resource integration
An important contribution to the research on RI is the article by Kleinaltenkamp *et al.* (2012), which identifies five focus areas for future research: (1) resource integrators, (2) resources, (3) integration of resources, (4) evaluation, and (5) value. Integrating resources implies that attention be paid to the research integration process and how actors collaborate, which is a call for research that has been heeded by service researchers. A prominent example is the

study of RI by Akaka *et al.* (2012) that differentiates between three steps in the RI and value cocreation process of actors: (1) access to resources, (2) the adaptation of resources to fit with other resources, and (3) the application of resources to cocreate value (see also Laud *et al.,* 2019). Here, the authors argue that learning is an essential feature of RI because actors need knowledge to apply resources and cocreate value, a point that is further emphasized by Caridà *et al.* (2019), who argue that co-learning by actors that engage in VCPs is an important part of the RI process. However, existing studies of the RI process do not delve extensively into the details of such learning.

Another topic that has been investigated in prior research is the embeddedness of RI. Embeddedness refers to economic activity that is shaped by certain social factors, such as identity, norms, and power structures. Laud *et al.* (2015) have contributed to this line of research by identifying three types of embeddedness of RI: structural, relational, and cultural. In line with other S-D logic studies on RI (see, e.g. Edvardsson *et al.,* 2012, 2014), research on embeddedness suggests that actors' learning is based on the outcomes of RI and value cocreation processes that may change actors' skills, thereby affecting future RI. This understanding of learning RI is consistent with the extant S-D logic research on service ecosystems, according to which actors cocreate value and integrate resources that are enabled and constrained by the social norms, values, and rules—or the institutions—of the social context. However, how social contexts influence actors' learning of RI remains an undetermined issue (Akaka *et al.,* 2012; Akaka and Chandler, 2011; Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Edvardsson *et al.,* 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

Following the call for research by Kleinaltenkamp *et al.* (2012), other studies have focused on the resource integrators and their motivation (Findsrud *et al.,* 2018), actors who facilitate other actors' RI, value cocreation, and learning, with the latter being examined, for example, via the roles of service orchestrators (Breidbach *et al.,* 2016) and coordinators (Laviere *et al.* 2017). Furthermore, Hughes and Vafeas (2018) set out to explore resource enhancement and development among interacting actors. Here, the process of resource enhancement and development refers to how actors develop skills with respect to management, commercial operations, and relationships. Hence, engagement in such activities implies that actors are learning, but this aspect of the topic is not explicitly focused on by Hughes and Vafeas (2018).

In summary, while previous research suggests that learning is an important part of actors' RI, there is a lacuna of research with an explicit and primary focus on how actors learn to integrate resources. As mentioned above, in a landmark study, Hibbert *et al.* (2012) focused on how customers learn about RI, outlining "... a model of customer learning processes that facilitate resource integration. The three main components of the model are (1) the characteristics of learning contexts, (2) the learning resource integration process, and (3) customer resource integration effectiveness" (p. 251) The characteristics of customer learning contexts emphasize the role of "learning trigger events," "learning environments," and "personal factors," while the learning RI process distinguishes between five cognitive activities: (1) "goal setting," (2) "orientation," (3) the "execution of learning activities," (4) the "evaluation of the process and results," and (5) "regulation." Customer RI effectiveness is understood as a customers' proficiency in deploying resources when they engage in value cocreation. While this study is a pioneering work on the learning of RI, it does not focus on actors other than customers. Furthermore, since it is purely conceptual, it does not take into account how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs. Recently, van Thonder *et al.* (2020) elaborated on the work by Hibbert *et al.* by investigating how customers help others who are less skilled to learn how to use self-service technologies, thus focusing on customer-to-customer learning. In the present study, we continue to elaborate on and develop this work on learning RI by attending to how actors other than customers, which service researchers suggests are essential resource integrators (Edvardsson *et al.,* 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2016),

learn to integrate resources by engaging in VCPs. To accomplish this aim, we now turn to theories of situated learning.

Situated learning
Many types of learning theories exist. A common distinction to make in this vein is between behavioristic, cognitivist, and constructivist theories. Behavioristic theories suggest that learning is the acquisition of a new behavior through conditioning and cognitive changes. Cognitivist theories view learning as an internal mental process focused on building intelligence and cognitive development, thus de-emphasizing behavior as a component of learning. Constructivists, in contrast, emphasize the active involvement of actors in learning, as it is argued that learners change their cognitive structures in relation to the social contexts they experience (Olson and Ramírez, 2020). As service researchers have argued that RI and value cocreation are framed by one or several social contexts (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Akaka and Chandler, 2011; Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011), we consider constructivist approaches to be most appropriate for understanding how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs.

To study how actors learn RI, we follow the specific suggestion of Wäger (2007) in adopting the theory of situated learning (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). According to Lave (1993), situated learning implies that knowledge is not "located in heads" but that learning entails "engagement in . . . human activities" (p. 12). Through situated learning, relations and mutual understandings between newcomers and established actors are created that facilitate learning and knowledge exchange. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), "learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice" (p. 31). We argue that this *in situ* perspective of learning fits well with the research objective of the present paper, since actors primarily do not learn RI through formal education (Hibbert *et al.*, 2012); instead, such learning takes place through actors actual RI as they engage in concrete VCPs (Caridà *et al.*, 2019; Skålén and Gummerus, 2022; Åkesson *et al.*, 2016). Hence, the theory of situated learning is a particular constructivist perspective on learning of RI, suggesting that actors attune their cognitive structures to the understandings of the concrete VCPs in which they are involved.

Service researchers have drawn on general practice theory to define VCPs as ". . . the templates of collectively shared and organized routine activities and the concrete everyday activities that individual actors perform to cocreate value . . .." (Skålén and Gummerus, 2022, p. 12). Hence, to be engaged in VCPs, actors need to learn the templates or action schemas that VCPs consist of. Service researchers have further emphasized that VCPs consist of different types of elements that are resources for actors to perform concrete everyday value cocreating activities in the form of "understandings" (e.g. know-how or competencies), "procedures" (e.g. rules), "materials" (e.g. technologies, artifacts, and natural resources), and "engagements" (e.g. emotionally-charged goals; Echeverri and Skålén, 2011; Schau *et al.*, 2009; Skålén and Gummerus, 2022). Understandings are essential to our argument, as this notion emphasizes that actors learn or increase their understandings of the templates and concrete activities of integrating resources by engaging in VCPs (Echeverri and Skålén, 2021; McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2012). However, how this learning of RI takes place by engaging in VCPs in practice remains unclear in prior service research.

We argue that the theory of situated learning can help us understand how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs through its emphasis on how individuals learn through legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practices (Lave and Wenger, 1991). A community of practices refers to a collaborating group or larger collective of people linked together by common goals, interests, and practices, or VCPs (Wenger, 1999). The idea of a community of practices resonates with the notion that the social contexts that actors are embedded in enable

and constrain RI (Edvardsson *et al.*, 2014; Laud *et al.*, 2015). Legitimate peripheral participation implies that actors have the right to be involved in the VCPs of communities of practices and the RI associated with them, but initially, this participation is primarily on the fringes. However, this peripheral participation provides opportunities to engage in VCPs, gain access to the templates of VCPs, and learn RI through interactions with other actors. While actors' motivation may stem from the engagement or the emotionally-charged goal component of practices, it can also come from the individuals themselves, whose agency is not determined by practices, since they are self-reflective and free to engage in whatever activities they like (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Skålén and Gummerus, 2022).

Situated learning takes place through trial and error and by forming relationships with other actors, through which one becomes accepted by others, as explained by Akaka *et al.* (2012). Lave and Wenger (1991) have indicated that legitimate peripheral participation enables learning as an actor absorbs and is absorbed in "the culture of practice," through which actors learn how and with whom to interact and integrate resources in social contexts, as has been argued by service researchers (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Akaka and Chandler, 2011; Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011). Through the learning of RI in practice, which makes legitimate peripheral participation possible, actors may eventually become increasingly more accepted by their peers, ultimately inviting newcomers to take part in legitimate peripheral interaction.

In summary, how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs has been highlighted as an important research area in service research, but has thus far escaped systematic empirical study. We aim to address this lacuna by drawing on our empirical study of music actors, which we turn to next.

Method
This paper is based on an empirical study of successful music actors. We define successful actors as those who have managed to learn RI by engaging in VCPs, eventually becoming core actors in the setting of music.

Data collection
The primary data collection technique for this study was a series of long interviews (McCracken, 1988). In total, we conducted 49 interviews with respondents who represented different music actor categories, including songwriters, musicians, producers, A&R representatives [1], publishers, managers, digital music streaming services, record companies, and CEOs of several organizations. To ensure the anonymity of the participants, the particular countries in which the study was conducted are not made public, and fictitious names are used to refer to the participating individuals. The interviews lasted between 50 and 100 min; see Table 1 for details on the interviews and respondents.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. To address the aim of the paper, we inquired into the lived professional experiences of our respondents. We asked open questions about how they had entered the music industry; the music contexts and activities (i.e. VCPs) in which they had been and were presently active; how they acquired the necessary knowledge and competencies; which persons, if any, had supported their careers; and what challenges they had encountered. We also asked specific questions about learning and progression, such as, "How and in what setting did you learn what is needed to perform your work?", and, "What situations were important for your learning?" Our approach made it possible to understand how the respondents' learned about resources and how to integrate them, their situated learning of RI by engaging in VCPs, and their process of moving from

Informant	Length (min)	Title
David	90	CEO, international live organizer firm
Matthew	75	Founder of file-sharing community for music
John	60	CEO, interest organization
James	85	Administrative director, interest organization
Robert	95	Music journalist, owner of independent record company
Charles	72	CEO, interest organization
Mary	93	CEO, interest organization
Joseph	100	Songwriter and independent music publisher
Gary	57	CEO, major record company
Thomas	93	Project manager, interest organization
Christopher	60	Union lawyer
Daniel	75	Songwriter
Paul	65	A&R manager, major record company
Mark	60	Marketing manager, major record company
Patricia	58	Marketing manager, international live firm
Donald	70	Lawyer, interest organization
George	62	CEO, independent record company and music publisher
Kenneth	55	CEO, independent record company and music publisher
Samuel	75	Relations manager, interest organization
Edward	66	A&R representative, major record company
Ronald	73	Artist
Anthony	55	CEO, major music publisher
Elizabeth	59	A&R representative, major music publisher
Kevin	65	A&R representative, major record company
Jason	76	CEO, major record company
Jennifer	62	General manager, major music publisher
Lisa	70	Marketing manager, major record company
Liam	74	Producer, songwriter, and musician
William	50	Manager and creative director (songwriter/producer)
Kenneth	59	CEO, independent record company and music publisher
Ethan	53	Entrepreneur, CEO
Noah	60	Bassist and producer
Alexander	76	Producer and distributor
Mason	51	Manager, digital music service
Susan	n/a	Singer/songwriter
Andrew	n/a	Producer, songwriter, film composer, and mixing engineer
Sarah	58	HRM manager, previous marketing director, major record company
Laura	57	CEO, major record company
Douglas	75	Marketing manager, major record company
Raymond	60	Marketing director, major record company
Jerry	70	Marketing manager, major record company
Amy	45	Marketing manager, major record company
Karen	60	Marketing manager, major record company
Rebecca	70	PR manager, major record company
Sharon	48	Marketing manager, major record company
Christine	64	Marketing manager, major record company
Amanda	45	Marketing manager, major record company
Denise	63	Marketing manager, major record company
Tim	70	Light technician, founder of the business

Table 1.
Key respondents

legitimate peripheral to core participation in the specific context of the music industry, without explicitly mentioning these technical concepts in the interview situation.

As VCPs are acted out through bodily movements, it is important to observe them (Echeverri and Skålén, 2011). Therefore, the interviews were complemented by participant

observations (Spradley, 1980). During the observations, field notes were collected and extended directly after the observations were completed. Two observational studies were conducted. First, three weeks of participant observations were conducted at a record company with a focus on the marketing personnel. Participant observations were primarily carried out by attending meetings and engaging in informal interactions with personnel during office hours and breaks. In addition, a two-day songwriting camp attended by 37 aspiring songwriters was observed. In particular, their interactions were subject to observation, during which the participants also shared their knowledge and experiences through informal conversations.

Data analysis

The data analysis was performed in accordance with the Gioia methodology. In line with the recommendation of Gioia *et al.* (2013), we started our data analysis by coding the extensive dataset. We identified empirical codes and constructed simple descriptive phrases in the language of the respondents to construct our first-order concepts. Based on these first-order concepts, we constructed second-order themes. As advised by Gioia *et al.* (2013), our second-order themes were grounded in the data but also detached from them to create more abstract concepts that could be applied and generalized to settings other than music. To support the process of abstraction, we drew on research on RI, communities of practices, and the theory of situated learning (see the previous section). We continued the process of abstraction by constructing aggregate dimensions, which were used as common headings for our second-order themes.

As shown in Table 2, our data analysis identified five "types of VCPs" that actors engaged in to learn RI: *acquiring* basic knowledge of resources, *orientating* toward a direction, *broadening* the scope, *mastering* RI, and *shaping* other actors' learning. Our data analysis also identified five "ways of learning resource integration by engaging in VCPs": learning through *formal education*, learning by *performing* concrete VCPs, learning by *experimenting* with technology, learning from *role models*, and learning *by solving problems*. We also illuminate the role of the generic social contexts in learning RI. With the notion of a generic social context, we refer to contexts that condition actors' learning of RI and which span specific contexts, such as the music industry. Three types of generic social contexts were revealed: the family, the community, and corporations and markets.

In the findings, we describe in detail how the data built up our second-order themes and aggregate dimensions. Based on this empirical exploration, we used the second-order themes and aggregate dimensions to outline a framework conceptualizing how actors learn RI. This framework is presented at the beginning of the discussion section.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of our findings, we used several operations suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). First, we validated the findings by triangulation. We triangulated across methods, meaning that we used several methods to collect data, including interviews and observations. We also triangulated across sources by comparing different interviews with one another, and we compared the interview data with the observational data to ensure consistency. In addition, we triangulated across researchers, meaning that the first and second authors of the paper coded and categorized all data independently. We compared the results and deleted those codes and categories that were not strongly supported by both the authors' codings and categorizations.

Trustworthiness was also ensured by securing the anonymity of the respondents, which enabled them to answer the questions sincerely without the threat of being exposed. Furthermore, we used member checks, which involved presenting our results and emerging

First-order concepts	Second-order themes	Aggregate dimensions
• Spending time in music-related contexts (i.e. record stores or festivals) • Basic training in playing music instruments (i.e. at a music school) • Preforming in a trial-and-error fashion (i.e. for family and friends)	Acquiring basic knowledge of resources	
• Working in music-related contexts • Experimenting with creating music through recording equipment • Forming new collaborations with other actors	Orientating toward a direction	
• Collaborating with other actors to form enterprises • Creating networks of actors • Recording music and acquiring essential equipment	Broadening the scope	Types of VCPs
• Becoming an expert in playing a music instrument • Managing entrepreneurship and commercial success • Working as a producer in a studio with advanced equipment	Mastering RI	
• Coaching and teaching others • Creating networks with individuals other than music actors • Providing resources, such as a studio, that other actors can use	Shaping other actors' learning	
• Attending evening school to learn to play an instrument • Participating in songwriting camps to learn to write and produce music • Studying at a university (i.e. music, marketing, or management)	Learning through formal education	
• Doing an internship at a music enterprise • Being a member of a band • Watching social media content (i.e. YouTube videos)	Learning by performing concrete VCPs	
• Playing computer games • Engaging in distance collaborations (i.e. through social media) • Utilizing broadband infrastructure	Learning by experimenting with technology	Ways of learning RI by engaging in VCPs
• Imitating senior music actors • Collaborating with skilled music actors • Participating in mentorship programs	Learning from role models	
• Dealing with disruptions and finding solutions • Maneuvering the politics of the music industry • Engaging in conflicts that encourage new collaborations	Learning by solving problems	

(continued)

Table 2.
Data structure

First-order concepts	Second-order themes	Aggregate dimensions
• Growing up in a family that plays music • Playing at weddings and birthday parties • Learning from parents active in the music industry	Family	
• Being involved with similar actors (i.e. songwriting community) • Collaborating in computer programming and gaming communities • Learning how to gain access to networks through actor connections	Community	Generic social contexts of learning RI
• Participating in market competition • Working in the music industry to acquire knowledge of the market • Starting a firm to formalize music activity	Corporation/markets	

Note(s): *RI*: Resource integration; *VCP*: Value cocreation practices

Table 2.

interpretations to several key respondents and other researchers for critique and correction. We also allowed our respondents to read the transcribed interviews and make any necessary corrections to their own statements. Some respondents took this opportunity to review our transcriptions, and a few made changes to the transcribed interviews that we accepted.

Findings

To clarify our aim, the findings section focuses on articulating how actors learn to integrate resources by engaging in VCPs. We also report the findings on the ways in which actors learn RI and the role of generic social contexts in this process.

Value cocreation practices actors engage in to learn resource integration
Our findings, supported by prior research on RI, suggest that actors within the specific context of the music industry learn to integrate resources by engaging in five overlapping types of VCPs, and that they gain access to these VCPs in a stepwise fashion, thus advancing from peripheral to core participation.

Acquiring basic knowledge of resources. One of the types of VCPs that the music actors we studied engaged in to learn to integrate resources was acquiring basic knowledge about relevant music resources and how they could be integrated. Acquiring basic knowledge of resources is crucial when laying a foundation for becoming a resource integrator in the music context. This type of learning RI was commonly engaged in by young newcomers in the periphery of the music industry, who predominantly integrated newly acquired resources in a way that resembled what Akaka *et al.* (2012) and Laud *et al.* (2019) have referred to as accessing resources. For instance, Mary remembered that she performed in front of her family and friends, implying that she became acquainted with different musical instruments and used to sing in front of an audience. She "integrated" the musical instruments, her ability to sing, and other resources to perform music in a trial-and-error fashion. Another example is Anthony, who reported that, at a young age, he "bought a lot of records and made [his] own top-ten playlists in the neighborhood." He identified resources in the form of songs and integrated them into playlists that he shared with others. Hence, both Mary and Anthony learned about operant and operand resources and how to integrate them by becoming involved in concrete VCPs—performing in front of family and compiling playlists—that

served the purpose of acquiring resources, as suggested by the theory of situated learning
(Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999) and service research (Echeverri and
Skålén, 2021; McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2012; Skålén and Gummerus, 2022).

Although it was mostly newcomers who reported that they had learned to integrate
resources by acquiring knowledge of them through engaging in concrete VCPs, more
experienced types of actors also sometimes learned to integrate resources by attaining and
developing knowledge along their careers. In particular, our findings show that experienced
actors need to learn about new resources and how they can be integrated when they enter new
roles and engage in new concrete VCPs that develop as an effect of external changes, such as
those due to the rapid digital transformation in the music industry over the last decades or
those due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Skålén and Gummerus, 2022; Schau *et al.*, 2009). Live
performances—a kind of concrete VCP where resources are integrated—were conducted
online by using video conferencing tools and other digital platforms. As Tim described, "At
first, the quality of streaming live events was quite poor . . . I started to work with others who
knew how to do it, and after improvements, it resulted in a digital tour." Tim, despite being an
experienced actor, had to learn not only how to integrate resources in new ways by engaging
in new concrete VCPs that were unfamiliar to him, but also how to adapt to the new situation
and make new resources fit with other resources (c.f. Akaka *et al.*, 2012), which is an
illustrative example of situated learning (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999).

Orienting toward a direction. Based on the acquired knowledge about operant and
operand resources and how these can be integrated, actors continued their learning of RI by
engaging in the type of VCPs we refer to as orientating toward a direction, which implied
engaging in and being able to conduct new concrete VCPs (Caridà *et al.*, 2019; Skålén and
Gummerus, 2022). For example, William went from spending time as an interested consumer
to becoming a salesclerk in a record store, learning more about the RI that takes place there
along the way. According to William, "I started to work in a record store and continued that
work for a long time . . . Later, I started my own little record store in a small town. Then, I
became the manager for a larger store for over two years . . . You continuously learn if you are
interested and meet good people, and I did that in these record stores." This example
illustrates how situated learning takes place by actors engaging in concrete VCPs, in this case
when working in, managing, and owning a record store, and that an actor's initial acquisition
of knowledge about operant and operand resources provides them with the opportunity to
learn to integrate them toward a specific end.

By having the basic knowledge of RI, actors at the finding-a-direction stage have the
ability to realize RI by engaging in this type of VCP with new and other types of actors,
thus co-learning with other actors (Caridà *et al.*, 2019), yet mostly in their own restricted
part of the music industry context. This indicates that access to and the adaptation of
resources by engaging in VCPs has enabled the application of resources to cocreate value,
although with a limited scope (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Laud *et al.*, 2019). A deeper
understanding of how RI takes place can be developed through gaining experiences. As
Mary reflected, "From high school, I started to produce—like, setting up productions. I
was the one who were responsible for getting everything together." This early endeavor of
producing, which is a concrete VCP, shows that Mary gained knowledge and experience
by engaging in VCPs (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999) and that the
experience was formative for her future integration of operant and operand resources,
eventually resulting in core participation.

Experience with, and knowledge of, resources and RI also changed the actors' goals of
participating in the music industry. As John described, "I was interested in music and tried to
play, but found out that I was kind of bad at it . . . I was much better at taking care of the
things that happened *around* the music, such as helping friends get new gigs." In this case,
engaging in new concrete VCPs focused on helping others adapt the resource base (Akaka

et al., 2012; Laud *et al.*, 2019) allowed for the integration of resources in new ways, which led to the discovery of a more productive direction.

Broadening the scope. Well-grounded knowledge of relevant operant and operand resources and how they may be integrated implies the possibility for an actor beginning to engage in VCPs that influence other actors' engagement in such practices and their learning of RI, which we refer to as broadening the scope. In doing so, actors also broaden the scope of their own RI and the concrete VCPs they can engage in, such as by writing for a different genre of music. Daniel, who was knowledgeable about computers and an early adopter of digital technology, said "I have always played music as an amateur, but when computers came about in the 90s, I found a 'place' for my music. I met 'Bill' at a party, and he was just as different as me. The music industry back then was more focused on rock, not the house music with a queer and multi-ethnical perspective that we played ... We had great success with this." This quotation exemplifies how an actor's acquired knowledge of existing and new resources (computers in this case) and their integration within VCPs (of playing house music) provides opportunities to start collaborating with other actors, thus allowing the actor to gain access to another actor's knowledge base to broaden the scope of RI activities. In the words of Akaka *et al.* (2012) and Laud *et al.* (2019), these expanding relationships are collaborations that provide actors with both access to resources and the means for adapting resources. This allows for opportunities to learn and makes space for the competences needed for the application of resources to cocreate value.

A broader scope of RI also opens up a larger spectrum of learning and other possibilities for actors. Alexander started his career in distribution; he had discovered how RI took place within this system and gained insight that enabled him to make a change that ended in him working for a record label and recording studio in marketing and promotion, thus engaging in concrete VCPs that were new to him. According to Alexander, "I have never recorded anything. I'm not a technician ... so I have been focusing on A&R, warehousing, administration, contact with the authorities, royalties, and stuff like that." By drawing on previous knowledge and experiences of RI, actors like Alexander get the opportunity to enter into new VCPs, in which they learn RI *in situ* (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). By doing so, they also gain access to operant and operand resources and are granted the opportunity to adapt these to fit with other resources (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Laud *et al.*, 2019), which further broadens their RI palette. By having a broad RI palette, actors can prove themselves worthy and gain opportunities to enter areas in which they lack experience, thus engaging in new types of VCPs through which they can learn from peers.

Mastering resource integration. Mastering VCPs implies that actors have become experts on RI, meaning that they can engage in complex and "high-level" VCPs and are able to influence other actors' RI in a direct way. As William described, "I was a tour leader for X [a well-known artist], and when X was about to change his manager ... I realized that I could do it ... This was a starting point for that [being a manager]." William had never managed an artist before, but had knowledge and experience of RI from other concrete VCPs of the music industry, such as running a record store, a studio, and a record company, and booking bands. Hence, demonstrating mastery of RI within several concrete VCPs of the music industry put him in a strong position and enabled him to engage in the complex VCP of managing, thus becoming a manager in partnership with a friend. This afforded William the possibility of influencing the national music scene; or, in more theoretical language, it allowed him to influence the RI in a range of concrete VCPs. William also acknowledged that he was still learning from others by engaging in the VCP of managing, such as his management partner: "He is a musician. I do not know the industry from that perspective ... so I learn a lot from collaborating with people who are different and better than me. That's how I learn." Continuous situated learning (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999) played a

pivotal role in William's ability to maintain his position and refine his ability to master RI in several concrete VCPs of the music industry.

Those who master RI are trusted by others, which provides them with greater access to VCPs, freedom of action, and the opportunity to become involved in new VCPs, each of which generates opportunities for situated learning (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). For example, Ethan and David described how they were continuously able to be "their own entrepreneurs" by learning from situations that could open up new possibilities. As David articulated, "[Sometimes] I was allowed to do things that my manager did not like [at first], but he let me carry on . . . That's why we could develop such a great organization."

Mastering RI implies that actors have engaged in a range of VCPs, and by doing so, they have acquired deep knowledge of relevant operant and operand resources and how they can be integrated; it also suggests that they have managed to generate commercial success and are able to choose between offerings. Mason explained how he engaged in entrepreneurship VCPs and started a firm, referring to the firm as a success, and that the RI within the firm "was on a 'high level,' with lots of songwriters, studios, and publishers, etc." Based on this success, Mason gained access to additional resources and core actors in the music industry, which helped him to develop even more successful firms that later expanded on a global level. By accessing new operant and operand resources and adapting them to one another, actors like Mason who master RI still learn by engaging in VCPs, yet mostly by applying resources to cocreate value (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Laud *et al.*, 2019).

Shaping other actors' learning. The last type of VCP we identified is shaping other actors learning. Even though the core participating actors still learn about resources and how they can be integrated by engaging in VCPs, this way of learning is more deeply focused on shaping other actors' engagement in VCPs and their access to, as well as the adoption and application of, operant and operand resources to integrate resources (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Laud *et al.*, 2019). In line with van Thonder *et al.* (2020), the findings suggest that actors help other actors who are less skilled to engage with VCPs by acting as orchestrators (Breidbach *et al.*, 2016) and coordinators of RI (Laviere *et al.*, 2017) while themselves engaging in situated learning by doing so.

RI can be shaped through several concrete VCPs, such as coaching, teaching, or mentoring, as described by Joseph: "People heard of me and wanted me to present their songs in Japan, so I registered as a publisher and recruited people who wrote actively for me . . . I worked with a guy up until this year, and I have been his coach and presented his songs and material." Thus, by engaging in VCPs with less experienced actors, the latter learn the resources that are integrated in VCPs (Skålén and Gummerus, 2022) and are assisted in situated learning about the industry and the RI that takes place within it.

In this vein, David, who had been in the music industry for many years, described how he had helped and informed his younger colleagues to perform well: "When I work with younger people . . . I tell them, 'If you are going to promote an artist, you need to spend time in the clubs where the artist is playing; you need to be where the fans are, and you need to understand *why* they [the fans] are going there. Everything is dependent on the knowledge you have about who is going to buy what you are selling." This quotation exemplifies how David advised and helped actors to become involved in the concrete VCPs of promoting an artist, so that they could learn RI in the music industry in a situated manner (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). Thus, experienced actors, such as David, are able to shape the types of VCPs of the music industry by teaching others about how RI should be practiced.

The ability to influence not only other actors, but also the VCPs of the music industry as a whole, was also described by Kenneth, who stated, "I'm trying to change the system [regarding the concrete VCPs of how to make money from writing songs], so the songwriters who write for our artists get satisfactory compensation, which would make it possible to get the good songwriters to write for us." Mary also aimed to change the VCPs of the music

industry and its politics, specifically its procedures, principles, and rules (c.f. Schau *et al.*, 2009; Skålén and Gummerus, 2022), which affected and influenced the actors in the industry: "With the position I have now, I can combine [my knowledge of] everything I have worked with before to influence the politics, change the conditions for the professions, and enable the art to be developed and spread." The above quotations exemplify that by engaging in VCPs to assist others' situated learning about RI, actors also develop and learn themselves.

In summary, this section has shown the five types of VCPs that actors engage in to learn RI in the music industry: (1) acquiring basic knowledge of resources, (2) orienting toward a direction, (3) broadening the scope, (4) mastering RI, and (5) shaping other actors' learning. This section further illustrates that actors learn by engaging in VCPs, and that they gain access to these VCPs in a stepwise fashion, beginning with 1, followed by 2, and so on, although they may sometimes need to take a step back and learn in a more basic way. It has also been shown that the way in which RI is learned resembles legitimate peripheral participation (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999), which implies that while actors have the right to be involved in VCPs, they may initially do so only on the fringes. However, as the actors advance in the steps toward shaping other actors' learning, the learning becomes less peripheral and more dominated by a form we term *legitimate core participation*, which implies that the actors become full practitioners (Lave and Wenger, 1991) who access and occupy core positions in the specific social context in which they are active.

Ways of learning resource integration by engaging in value cocreation practices
The previous section reported the findings on the types of VCPs actors engage in to learn RI. Understanding the ways that actors learn RI, primarily against the backdrop of the theory of situated learning (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999), is the focus of this section.

Learning through formal education. Formal education, such as engaging in concrete VCPs related to music schools, universities, or other types of pre-arranged curricula, facilitates the learning of RI. Although the theory of situated learning drawn on here suggests that actors primarily learn by being involved in practices (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999), it also suggests that formal education may facilitate other forms of learning. As Liam explained, "Even though I did not like to learn and practice playing notes . . . it was something that I needed to know and manage . . . I learned that at the municipal music school. The municipal music school built the foundation for what I am working with today." Being part of music schools when being young provided the groundwork for understanding how RI and value cocreation takes place in practice.

For adults, formal education at universities also facilitates their learning of RI. In particular, several respondents acknowledged that their formal education in music business and management facilitated their ability to engage in VCPs and secure positions within the music industry, for example at record companies, which provided them with access and opportunities to advance to more central positions in this industry. As Douglas indicated, "I studied music management at university. I got a bachelor's degree, and as a part of that, I did an internship with a management agency for six months. This led to getting an interview here [at a record company], and I got a job in the marketing department." Hence, formal education and classroom-based activities facilitate the learning of resources and RI. Although formal education contributed to the actors' learning of how to integrate resources, we found four ways in which actors learn in a more informal way by engaging in VCPs.

Learning by performing concrete value cocreating practices. Learning by performing or by carrying out concrete VCPs was emphasized among the music actors studied. This type of learning implies being educated in an informal learning-by-doing way, as suggested by the theory of situated learning (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). For Noah,

since his brothers played and practiced music both at home and at a music school, "that was my way into music. I had instruments available to play at home." Several respondents also described how YouTube and other social media facilitated their learning of RI by allowing them to engage in concrete VCPs relevant in the music context. For example, Liam indicated that his learning was greatly facilitated by YouTube videos on computer programs for creating and mixing music. Thus, by engaging in social media, here considered a concrete VCP, actors learn RI. Another type of concrete VCP that allowed actors to learn RI informally was engaging in TV music talent shows. On these shows, the actors performed by playing and singing every week, which entails spending a lot of time practicing and learning how to play, act, and even choose the right songs. As Joseph revealed, "I was playing on a TV show every week . . . which allowed me to focus on my own songwriting." This was an important way of learning and a means of integrating resources with core participating actors.

Respondents at the record company where the participant observation was conducted also emphasized the importance of learning by performing concrete VCPs. Some, such as marketing manager Jerry, even suggested that this type of learning was more important than formal education when it came to understanding his own trade of marketing. "I am not saying that the marketing theories are wrong," Jerry stated. "But I think that to some extent, you can learn to market by doing it because it is not rocket science. I think that you can be an equally good marketer through practicing it compared to attending university."

Learning by experimenting with technology. We also found that actors were learning RI by experimenting with technology within VCPs in a trial-and-error fashion (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). Daniel, a songwriter, addressed this point as follows: "I have always played computer games. In the 90s, when computers came into the picture, I found a space and place to start writing music." Hence, Daniel's general understanding of computers facilitated his ability to learn how to integrate information and communication technology (ICT) resources in such a way that he could start making music and find alternative (digital) markets in which to perform it. Several other actors also reported that engaging in ICT VCPs, such as video conferencing and being active on social media, facilitated their learning, as it increased the opportunities to collaborate and integrate resources with other actors in other parts of the world.

Technology has also facilitated and promoted the learning of RI in such a way that the VCPs pertaining to how music is produced, distributed, and listened to have been transformed and innovated. Matthew described how the advent of the Internet afforded new possibilities, with individuals all over the world starting to share digital music files. In Matthew's words, "Programmers learned to program due to an open Internet and developed their understanding of downloading [and creating] often illegal files . . . it has really implied changes [for the industry], and also for society." Thus, the Internet transformed how people consumed music and how it was distributed (Skålén and Gummerus, 2022). ICT and the Internet have thus provided platforms for situated learning by creating opportunities for actors to engage in shared VCPs that have created relations and mutual understandings between newcomers and established actors, and this process has facilitated further learning and knowledge exchange (Lave, 1993).

Learning from role models. Actors reported that their situated learning of RI (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999) was facilitated by the support offered by senior actors who served as role models. Role models are defined by their deep and genuine knowledge of VCPs. Our findings reported previously with respect to mastering and shaping other actors learning suggest that a role model can explain to junior and peripheral actors how VCPs should be enacted and the resources within them integrated. Collaborating with skilled role models triggers actors' reorientation and positively affects their motivation (Findsrud *et al.*, 2018). Specifically, in the case of the music industry, engaging in VCPs by integrating resources with role models entailed learning about new music resources and how to integrate them, as indicated by Joseph: "For me, it

was important that [actor X] brought me in to be a part of his journey [in the music industry]. . . Thanks to my background and actor X, who invited me to connect with his already well-known contacts, we were able to create real good stuff." Granting access to X's knowledge of VCPs, as well as X's network and resources, facilitated Joseph's learning of how to integrate resources in new ways.

Learning by solving problems. Counterintuitively, several of our respondents described how problems experienced when engaging in VCPs facilitated their situated learning of how to integrate resources (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). Ethan suggested that engaging in concrete VCPs, such as those appearing in a festival context with different types of actors, like suppliers and visitors, allowed him to experience certain problems and find solutions to them. Ethan described a situation in which he faced problems as a campsite manager, which led him to bring in his friends as coworkers to deal with the disruptions: "It was just problem after problem . . . It started to 'burn' somewhere [a problem was identified], and there were millions of things happening at the same time. I learned a lot from this." This quote exemplifies how problems encountered by engaging in VCPs make actors experience new situations that facilitate learning to integrate resources and handle unforeseen issues.

Role of generic social contexts in learning resource integration
In the previous section, the findings illustrate that actors primarily learn RI by engaging in VCPs and, to a lesser extent, through formal education, as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). We also found that three types of what we refer to as generic types of social contexts, that span specific domains (the music industry in our case), condition how actors learn RI, which resonates with previous research on RI (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Akaka and Chandler, 2011; Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011). The three types identified are (1) the family, (2) the community, and (3) corporations and markets.

Family. Family members influence actors' situated learning of integrating resources by granting access to VCPs in the music industry context (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). Joseph came from a family where his father was a singer, artist, and songwriter, and music-related VCPs played a pivotal role in his upbringing. Kenneth and Liam also explained how their families were engaged in music related VCPs, and they were the ones who had arranged the resources needed for them to start learning how to play and rehearse. In Liam's words, "We got to borrow Simon's father's house, where he had his company, so we . . . could use [the house] for our rehearsals." According to Kenneth, "I wanted to be a rock star [because] my dad played in a band . . . My mum bought my first guitar when I was eight years old." The generic context of the family thus helped these actors learn about operant and operand resources.

Community. The findings also suggest that people learn to integrate resources by engaging in concrete VCPs in the context of communities, which is the generic social context emphasized by theories of situated learning (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). A community has been described as a collective of people who share values and are tightly coupled with each other through practices (Wenger, 1999). Through the associations that communities provide, individuals are introduced to the different ways in which others integrate resources. For example, Kenneth pointed out, "What is good with [songwriting] camps is that you can meet new people and establish new contacts, and maybe you can write something else together some other time with people you first got into contact with at a camp—so they are good for networking." These remarks exemplify how the actors had learned about RI by being involved in VCPs through the particular community of camps.

Corporations and markets. Being involved in VCPs within the generic social contexts of corporations and markets provides opportunities for music actors to engage in situated

learning to integrate resources (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). Douglas described how working with a record company conditioned his learning about music and his career in the music industry: "As a part of studying music management at the university, I did an internship with a music manager. That gave me a job here at [a record company] as a trainee . . . I learned a lot of things and applied for a position as a marketing manager and got it, which was my goal." This example shows how learning about RI is conditioned by working—a form of VCP—in corporations.

Many of our record company respondents also emphasized that, with the advent of digital music streaming services and associated technology, they had gained access to market data that they did not have before which impacted their learning of RI. To make sense of the data, Rebecca told us how the record company she was employed by had taken advantage of this new possibility to connect to the market: "Now you can sit with analytics and watch the market statistics—'Where was the peak in listening?', 'Why did it occur?', 'Well, that was what happened.'—We learn something about our marketing for artists who have a similar target group." Hence, being involved in VCPs pertaining to market performances and statistics conditions marketers' situated learning of RI.
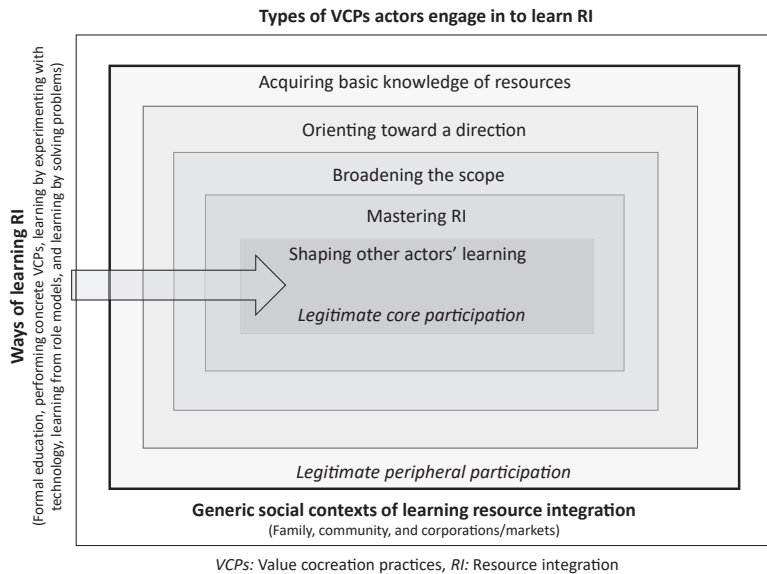
Discussion
Based on the findings and prior research, this section discusses the theoretical contributions and practical implications of the study. Suggestions for future research and limitations are also presented.

Theoretical contributions
Based on the findings and the scarce prior research reviewed in the theoretical background section, we present a framework (see Figure 1) that shows how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs. In particular, we make a contribution by outlining the types of VCPs actors engage in to learn RI. In accordance with the findings, the framework suggests that actors learn about resources and how they can be integrated by engaging in five types of VCPs: (1) *acquiring* basic knowledge of resources, (2) *orienting* toward a direction, (3) *broadening* the scope, (4) *mastering* RI, and (5) *shaping* other actors' learning. We also show that actors learn RI by engaging in concrete VCPs—such as preforming music, arranging festivals, compiling playlists, managing a record store, and producing music. It was further found, in line with the work of Akaka *et al.* (2012) and Laud *et al.* (2019), that by engaging in VCPs, actors learn by accessing new resources, adapting resources to one another, and applying resources to cocreate value. The findings specifically suggest that actors gain access to these VCPs in a stepwise fashion, implying that actors learn RI in a way that resembles legitimate peripheral participation (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999): initially they have the right to be involved in VCPs, but primarily only on the fringes. However, as they engage and advance through the types of VCPs, the situated learning of RI is no longer peripheral but is instead characterized by a form of learning we term "legitimate core participation," which is a novel notion developed in this paper. Our findings show that legitimate core participant actors not only learn for themselves by engaging in VCPs but also function as role models, orchestrators, and coordinators (Breidbach *et al.*, 2016; Laviere *et al.*, 2017), facilitating other actors' engagement in VCPs and their learning, thus shaping RI in the industry (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Accordingly, our empirical findings indicate that actors who have access to resources and learn to integrate them in a productive way have the ability to exercise agency and guide VCPs and RI, as suggested by Kleinaltenkamp *et al.* (2012, 2017) and Hibbert *et al.* (2012) in their conceptual studies of RI.

The framework also builds on the findings showing that actors learn RI in five ways: (1) through formal education, (2) by performing concrete VCPs, (3) by experimenting with

Types of VCPs actors engage in to learn RI

Acquiring basic knowledge of resources

Orienting toward a direction

Broadening the scope

Mastering RI

Shaping other actors' learning

Legitimate core participation

Legitimate peripheral participation

Ways of learning RI
(Formal education, performing concrete VCPs, learning by experimenting with technology, learning from role models, and learning by solving problems)

Generic social contexts of learning resource integration
(Family, community, and corporations/markets)

VCPs: Value cocreation practices, *RI:* Resource integration

Figure 1.
How actors learn to integrate resources by engaging in VCPs

technology, (4) through role models, and (5) by solving problems. The last four (2–5) implies that actors learn RI by engaging in concrete VCPs in different ways, which we also found to be the primary manner in which actors learn RI. Hence, we found that actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs primarily in an informal and trial-and-error way, which is in line with the theory of situated learning (Lave, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999).

In addition, the framework shows that learning RI takes place and is embedded in three generic social contexts—family, community, and corporations and markets—which, as explained in the findings section, condition actors' engagement in VCPs and their learning of RI. While specific social contexts—music in our case—and the VCPs prevalent in such contexts determine the value of the resources that actors learn about, generic social contexts support the learning of valuable resources. Hence, our findings are to a large extent consistent with and confirm other works on the role of social contexts with respect to RI and value cocreation (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Akaka and Chandler, 2011; Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011). However, by making the distinction between specific and generic social contexts, we have contributed to improving our understanding of how social contexts influence actors' learning of RI. Hence, our framework is supported by both the present findings and prior research on service, communities of practice, and situated learning.

Our paper makes several contributions to service research on RI. According to the previous research, learning is an important part of actors' RI (see, e.g. Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Caridà *et al.*, 2019; Edvardsson *et al.*, 2014), and knowledge, as an operant resource (Vargo and Lusch, 2016), is enhanced through actors' learning when integrating resources (Hughes and Vafeas, 2018). Nevertheless, there is a lack of empirical research that primarily focuses on identifying how actors learn to integrate resources. We show that they do so by engaging in shared VCPs, which elaborates on the works of Hibbert *et al.* (2012) and van Thonder *et al.* (2020). While they make the argument that customers need to acquire knowledge about resources to become effective resource integrators we show that actors more generally and not only customers do so through situated learning within VCPs.

Hibbert *et al.* (2012), in their conceptual study of how customers learn RI, specifically highlighted the process of learning resource integration by distinguishing between five cognitive activities: (1) "goal setting," (2) "orientation," (3) the "execution of learning activities," (4) the "evaluation of the process and results," and (5) "regulation." With respect to how actors learn RI by engaging in the five types of VCPs identified in the present study, our findings also illustrate a learning process, as we showed that actors progress in their learning by engaging in a larger number of VCPs. To some extent, the results of Hibbert *et al.* (2012) are consistent with ours, as they emphasize orientation while we highlight the VCP of orienting toward a direction. However, the overall results of Hibbert *et al.* (2012) on the learning process differ from ours, which is partly due to their conceptualization of learning as a cognitive and internal mental process, while we draw on the theory of situated learning and practice theory. Our position implies a constructivist approach to learning that emphasizes the active engagement of actors in learning by engaging in VCPs. Hence, we introduce a novel theoretical perspective for studying the learning of RI. In addition, our results may differ from those of Hibbert *et al.* (2012) as they did not empirically study the learning of RI empirically as we did; instead, they drew on previous research on self-directed learning outside of service research and restricted their study to customers learning of RI.

In addition to depicting the process of learning RI, Hibbert *et al.* (2012) generated knowledge about the characteristics of learning contexts and customer RI effectiveness. As a part of learning contexts, Hibbert *et al.* (2012) emphasize the role of "learning trigger events" and "learning environments." Learning trigger events share commonalities with our findings pertaining to the different ways in which actors learn RI. Thus, to some extent, our study supports the results generated by the conceptual analysis of Hibbert *et al.* (2012). However, while they focus on actors' expectations of whether learning will be required, external and internal drivers of learning, and simple vs multiple learning, we elaborate and extend upon their results by highlighting how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs in different ways. Specifically, we show that actors learn RI by performing concrete VCPs, experimenting with technology within VCPs, having role models who show inexperienced actors how to engage in VCPs and solving problems by engaging in VCPs. Furthermore, Hibbert *et al.*'s (2012) notion of the learning environment is similar to our findings with respect to how generic social contexts condition learning, but while Hibbert *et al.* (2012) emphasize "opportunities to learn," "learning resources," and "learning support," we emphasize the role of the family, the community, and the corporation and market (Chandler and Vargo, 2011) in learning. We also contribute to the literature by making a distinction between the role of specific and generic contexts in actors' situated learning of RI. While the former determines the value of the resources that are learned, the latter condition the learning of RI. Thus, we expand the established understanding of the role of social contexts in learning RI in several ways.

In a recent study, van Thonder *et al.* (2020) drew on the work of Hibbert *et al.* (2012) to investigate customer-to-customer learning by focusing on how customers help their less-skilled counterparts learn how to use self-service technologies. They show that different customer RI approaches are associated with different types of skill-level development. Our findings could be interpreted as supporting their claim as they suggest that an actor's skill development pertaining to RI is related to the extent to which they engage with the ways of learning RI that we identified. However, in general, our findings are quite different from those of van Thonder *et al.* (2020), which is probably due to the fact that we do not focus on customers in the context of self-services. Following from our broader scope, we also extend the general conclusion of Hibbert *et al.* (2012)—that customers must acquire or access the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective resource integrators—to a wider set of actors. We add, supported by other research (Akaka *et al.*, 2012; Laud *et al.*, 2019), that learning about the adaptation and application of resources is needed for actors to become effective resource integrators. Our framework also offers a novel contribution in showing how actors learn to

become successful resource integrators by engaging in VCPs. Hence, we expand upon the work of Hughes and Vafeas (2018), who suggest that actors can develop competencies by learning relevant knowledge during RI, by showing how this is done. We also contribute to the work of Virlée et al. (2020), who suggest that actors' co-learning is an activity influencing RI, by showing how actors "co-learn" RI by engaging in shared VCPs. In addition, we elaborate on the study of Kleinaltenkamp et al. (2017) by showing that not only are RI processes dependent upon how accessible and shareable resources are, but that learning RI is equally dependent on resources being accessible and shareable within VCPs; if not, situated learning will not ensue.

Practical implications
For an industry to develop and continue to exist, there is a need to facilitate learning RI by offering actors the opportunity to learn through legitimate peripheral participation by engaging in VCPs. This is the responsibility of senior members of a particular industry, such as managers and policymakers, and it is an especially important endeavor since Laud et al. (2015) have shown that actors are likely to protect powerful positions that can limit others' access to resources. However, accessing resources facilitates the shaping of the roles, activities, and abilities of actors to cocreate and realize value (Edvardsson et al., 2014). In our study, we identify that core participating actors who master and shape others' RI are also influential in managing others' access to resources and ability to adapt to VCPs (c.f. Akaka et al., 2012). In our case, senior actors facilitated legitimate peripheral participation, for example, by offering junior and peripheral actors the opportunities to engage in several VCPs, including mentoring, songwriting as a part of camps, and work training as a part of internships. By doing so, they were offering peripheral actors access to resources and opportunities to learn RI by engaging in VCPs, which crucially supported the junior actors ability to become more successful resource integrators with core positions in the music industry. That senior actors facilitate junior actors' learning is particularly important in the music industry, and the creative sectors more generally as these settings are often characterized by insecure and short-term working contracts. Accordingly, our study can guide senior members' facilitation of peripheral actors' learning by showing the types of VCPs that actors engage in when learning RI, the different ways in which actors learn by engaging in concrete VCPs, and the role of generic social contexts in such learning.

This study also shows that actors who learn to integrate resources and collaborate with other actors early on in their careers create networks and understandings of VCPs that can be utilized over time. Furthermore, actors should look into inviting other actors with complementary resources to be involved in RI and engage in VCPs as doing so is key for learning and advancement to core positions within the music industry. Established actors characterized by legitimate core participation also need to make space for actors with new competencies that may be needed in the future. Such initiatives are likely to contribute to the inclusion of new types of actors, innovative solutions, and sustainable growth. The findings show that new actors with digital skills and music interests entered the music industry and came up with new VCPs for distributing and consuming music digitally that were attractive to consumers. In particular, these VCPs led to the development of music streaming services, such as Spotify, which today dominate the market for recorded music in many parts of the world, thus facilitating the consumption of music. From a consumer perspective, our findings with respect to how actors learn RI by engaging in the types of VCPs that we identified may also contribute to transformative service research (Anderson et al., 2013) and research on social marketing (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2019) by providing guidance on how to include underprivileged consumers.

Future research and limitations
This research draws on a qualitative study of RI and learning by engaging in VCPs within the specific setting of the music industry. While our ambition was to create a conceptualization of how actors learn RI by engaging in VCPs, our design does not allow for the statistical generalization of the results. Therefore, the results and concepts of the present study would need to be extended and confirmed via further quantitative research. In addition, qualitative explorative research in other settings could be developed to elaborate on the framework advanced here.

Future research could also investigate how actors with different competencies collaborate within VCPs, which is a topic that has been discussed here but is not focused on in depth. As the findings also indicate that actors on social media, such as influencers, encourage other actors by sharing knowledge and expertise and informing them on how to integrate resources by preforming VCPs, future research would benefit from examining their role in more detail.

Note

1. A&R means "artist and repertoire" and refers to those who are responsible for developing new talent at record companies and music publishers.

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