

## Customer Value and Its Contribution to the Longevity of Relationship with Service Provider: the Case of Theatre Industry

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*After there had been proved the benefits of customer retention for an enterprise, the numerous researchers were directed their efforts towards finding the best solutions to achieve customer relationship longevity. Identification of the main predictors of long-term customer relationships still is a relevant object of scientific researches. This article emphasizes that creation and delivery of unique customer value is a basis for most marketing decisions, enabling to attract new customer as well as to retain recent one. So the clarification of determinants of customer value becomes the main task for enterprises working in today's competitive market environment.*

*The analysis of more recent studies on question under investigation showed, that despite the abundance of scientific literature, still there is not reached consensus on customer value research possibilities as well as on the value concept itself. Furthermore disagreement occurs when considering customer value impact on behavioral intentions. Considering different methodological approaches analyzing customer value, it can be maintained that clarification of customer value, its determinants and their importance on customer relationships longevity is still relevant object for scientific discussions and necessitates further theoretical and empirical studies.*

*Having analyzed scientific literature on the possibilities to identify the main factors influencing customer value creation and its delivery, it was pointed out that different concepts, which explain value creation and its delivering from customer perspective, are closely linked together, however, there is no any obvious criteria identified yet that might ensure the one best way to distinguish customer value determinants. So referring to a literature analysis the concept of extended product was chosen for identification of customer value determinants in order to reveal contribution of customer value to relationships longevity. It is suggested that components comprising different product's levels might be viewed as the customer value determinants, and integration of customer evaluation analysis from the components viewpoint allows identifying critical enterprise activity areas related to customer relationship development and taking adequate customer retention decisions.*

*Theatre sector is selected for the empirical research and analysis of theatre product and its attributes as customer value determinants is carried out. First of all an expression of customer value determinants in different*

*theatres are presented, revealing its dependence on socio-demographic factors and the character of customer's involvement into relationships with theatre. And finally, the relations between customer value determinants and customer longevity, expressed in terms of intention to visit once again, intention to recommend and intention to subscribe, was determined.*

Keywords: *customer value, value determinants, long-term relationships, customer behavioral intentions, theatre product.*

### Introduction

It has been widely acknowledged, that a choice of customer mainly depends on the value that a company offers him/her (e.g., Smith, Colgate, 2007; Zeithaml, 1988, Kuvykaitė, 2001; Egan, 2001; Christopher, Payne, Ballantyne, 2002; Payne and Holt, 2001; Tzokas and Saren, 1997; Raval and Gronroos, 1996; Gronroos, 1997; Woodruff, 1997; Cronin et al., 1997; Oliver, 1999 et al.). The creation of the best, unique customer value is considered as a basis for most marketing decisions, as the main factor that increases a competitive advantage and ensures customer loyalty.

Despite the abundance of scientific literature on these themes, the analysis of more recent studies (e.g., Smith, Colgate, 2007; Wang et al., 2004; Huber et al., 2007) allows us to maintain, that still no consensus is reached on customer value research possibilities as well as on the value concept itself. Referring to the research performed by Payne and Holt (2001) it could be stated that customer value, its creation and provision are analyzed from many different perspectives, depending on the methodological approach which is taken into consideration. Moreover, the disagreement occurs when considering customer value impact on behavioral intentions. For example, results of the research performed by Lam et al. (2004), Wang et al. (2004) show, that customer value influence on customer intentions are indirect – through customer satisfaction. Whereas Cronin et al. (1997), Cronin, Brady and Hult (2000) proved that there is a strong direct relation between customer value and customer behavioral intentions in different service sectors that have been analyzed. Furthermore customer value in scientific literature traditionally is analyzed from transactional perspective, treating it as customer perceived value. Analyzing it in such way usually efforts are directed towards

determination of customer perceived value impact on his/her behavior in the stage of making buying decisions. Acknowledging the importance of customer retention to the activity of service provider, value should be analyzed in adequacy with circumstance of changed marketing orientation.

Thus the analysis of customer value remains a relevant object of both scientific and practical researches. In the context of orientation towards development of long-term relationships, customer value determines not only success of attraction of new customers, but the possibilities to maintain customer relationships as well. Considering above mentioned aspects, the *problem* of the research is formulated as the following question: what are the determinants of customer value and what kind of relations exists between them and the longevity of customer relationships?

**The aim of this paper:** after the identification of determinants of customer value to clarify the relations between them and customer relationships longevity (expressed in terms of behavioral intentions) and to test it empirically in the case of theatre industry.

**Research object:** customer value as a contributor to customer relationship longevity.

**Research methods:** systemic and comparative analysis of scientific literature; empirical research employing quantitative survey method.

### Theoretical and empirical background

Analysis of literature shows that exploration of customer value concept depends on the methodological approach selected. Referring to the literature (e.g. Payne, Holt, 2001) analysis there could be distinguished these main directions of customer value analysis: customer perceived value, extended product concept and analysis of possibilities of creation and delivering of the best value for customer.

The concept of value in scientific literature when analyzing it from customer perspective, commonly is treated as relation between two components – benefits and sacrifices (Zeithalm, 1988; Kuvykaitė, 2001; Cronin et al., 1997; Wang et al., 2004; Lam et al., 2004). This relation determines the preferences of customers towards different alternatives. Despite the universality of this definition, it could be maintained, that this point of view reflects the analysis of *perceived customer value* and its influence on customer buying behavior mainly from transactional perspective, emphasizing importance of unique value for customer when seeking what alternative to choose in initial stage of buying process. Sweeney, Soutar (2001) have explored customer value in more detailed and identified four types of value: emotional, social and two types of functional value. Like many others they examine customer perceived value. In this case the main attention is paid to customer attraction and customer value offered by product is analyzed determining consumers' preferences for the different sets of attributes before use of it. Besides this point of view has a limitation when providing services with intangibility, heterogeneity and other elements dominating.

Acknowledging that customer value proposition determines not only customer attraction success (Zeithalm,

1988, Kuvykaitė, 2001; Oliver, 1999 et al.), but also opportunities for customer relationship development (Egan, 2001; Christopher et al., 2002; Payne and Holt, 2001; Tzokas and Saren, 1997; Raval and Gronroos, 1996; Gronroos, 1997; Flint, Woodruff and Gardial, 1997), companies must evaluate those aspects of customer value proposition that determine the customer's decision to maintain or to terminate relationship with a company.

In this context it is insufficient only to point out what benefits customer receives or what sacrifices he experiences. Referring to Boguslauskas, Valančienė (2003, p.49) it is much more important to know what attributes of product offered determines these benefits or sacrifices. Identification and evaluation of these attributes allows to find out which of them needs to be maintained, modified or eliminated from the product in order to offer greater value to the customer (Temporal, Trott, 2001; Boguslauskas, Valančienė, 2003).

The necessity to evaluate customer value proposition is reflected in different interpretations of customer value concept. According to them, value could be interpreted as satisfaction, which customer receives from the offer delivered (Tzokas, Saren, 1997, p.111) or as customer attitude towards the ability of product to satisfy his/her needs (Kuvykaitė, 2001, p.21). Similar like latter researches value treats Holbrook (1994). Flint et al. (1997) proposed that customers' perceptions of value consist of values, desired value and value judgments. Woodruff (1997) looks at desired value in more detail, proposing desired value hierarchies. According to him, desired value „is composed of preference for specific and measurable dimensions - the attributes, attribute performances, and consequences linked to goals for use situations“ (Woodruff, 1997, p.143). Referring to him desired value influence the customers' perceptions about product in its use situation, as their evaluation of the experience is based on the same attributes, their performances, and consequences.

Treating customer perceived value in above mentioned way it could be stated that in order to analyze customer value the identification of customer value influencing attributes is becoming a priority. For the same purpose, many researchers analyzing customer value concept, seek to clarify the process of value creation and delivering by identifying separate stages in it (Christopher et al. 2002; Payne, Holt, 2001; Lanning, Michaels, 1998). For example, Payne and Holt (2001) treat “value process” as a cycle and define four stages of it: 1) value definition; 2) value creation; 3) value delivering; and 4) value judgement. The decisions included in customer value delivering process proposed by those authors are useful for customer value analysis and could be treated as customer value determinants as well.

The analysis of works of Payne, Holt (2001), Flint et al. (1997), Lanning, Michaels (1998), Christopher et al. (2002) confirms, that in order to create and deliver a unique customer value it is insufficient to analyse what value (social, emotional, etc.) customer gets – it is important to understand what creates value for customer, to clarify the process of value creation and marketing decisions supporting it.

Concept of extended product is another methodological approach useful for better understanding of

customer value and attributes influencing it. There could be found various interpretations of extended product concept in scientific literature. According to customer's perception Levitt (1981) excludes five levels of product: essential benefit (service customer is buying), basic product, probable product, expanded product and potential product. Whereas Kotler (1992) excludes three levels of product: the core product, actual and augmented product. Hill et.al. (1999), Kolb (2000); Kotler and Scheff (1997) adapted extended product concept to performing arts. Literature analysis shows that despite different interpretations of extended product concept the idea of this concept remains unchanged: every additional level of product contributes to customer value. But there is still questioned the importance of those levels on customer behavioral intentions. Gabbott and Hogg (1998) have distinguished two levels of service product (core and peripheral) and determined that the importance of these levels on customers' overall judgments is different. Their position was strengthened by Kolb (2000) who emphasizes the importance of peripheral level of the performing arts product to both customer satisfaction and behavior. Directly applying the recommendations of above mentioned authors without thorough examination of the importance of different product level attributes to customer relationship longevity may lead to inappropriate customer retention decisions.

Thus, based on an investigation of scientific literature it is proposed, referring to Boguslauskas, Valančienė (2003); Gronroos (1997), that identification of distinct determinants of customer value proposition and evaluation of the importance of determinants identified has to be treated as a basis for customer value delivering process, which determines both company resource distribution and planning of value creation process for different customer groups.

Literature analysis allows stating that different concepts, which explain value creation and its delivering from customer perspective, are closely linked together, however, there is no any obvious criteria identified yet that might ensure the one best way of distinguishing customer value determinants. Referring to a literature analysis the concept of extended product was chosen in order to reveal the contribution of value to customer relationships' longevity. Components that comprise different product levels might be viewed as the customer value determinants, where integration of customer evaluation analysis from the components viewpoint allows identifying critical enterprise activity areas with regard to customer relationship development.

But in order to clarify the relations between value determinants and customer relationships longevity it is crucial not only to identify value determinants, but also to relate them to consumer behaviour intentions. Referring on various researches (see, e.g., Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2000; White, Schneider, 2000) on factors influencing long-term relationships it could be stated that customer longevity might be expressed in terms of customer behavioural intentions. Taking into consideration that there are two possibilities for treating customer behavioral intentions (as one-dimensional or multidimensional construct), in this article we refer to Soderlung (2006) and

consider them as a multidimensional construct. In this way we seek to determine customer value relations with separate indicators of customer longevity. It is supposed that the results of such kind of analysis will lead to adequate customer retention decisions.

## Research design

Theatre sector is selected for the empirical research and the analysis of theatre product and its attributes is carried out applying the extended product concept. Four main theatre product levels and their components were distinguished for uncovering the characteristics of the theatre product, which creates a customer value: 1) core benefit (play itself); 2) basic product (actors performance, stage direction, music, decorations, topics and actuality of repertoire); 3) extended product (price relevance, theatre location, cloakroom service, theatre atmosphere, tickets' availability, playtime, box-office, service personnel, response to requests and complains, toilets, etc., theatre coffee-bar, theatre interior, variety of repertoire, halls equipment, parking convenience); 4) whole product (possibility to communicate with actors, subscription system). Indeed, the components that comprise different theatre product levels can be approached as being the theatre product customer value determinants. Assessing customer evaluations of the determinant and their relations to customer behavioral intentions allow identifying critical theatre activity areas for customer relationship development.

The most appropriate research method has been chosen according to the Churchill (1996), and Pranulis (1998) marketing research recommendations as well as to the suggestions of specific performing arts customer research analysts (Hill et al., 1999; Kolb, 2000; Kotler and Scheff, 1997). Having evaluated strengths and weaknesses of various research methods, selection of a survey is stipulated. However, interview by post or phone cannot be utilized in this research because of the lack of Lithuanian theatre customer databases. Therefore, the survey is considered as the most appropriate research method that suits to achieve the main aim of the empirical study – to determine which theatre product value determinants are most important pursuing long-term relationships with theatregoers.

An instrument for the empirical study was constructed based on the: 1) theoretical studies; 2) results of the exploratory research. Purport of the instrument is related to the following aspects: theatre product customer value determinants, which were identified on the basis of theoretical studies applying extended product concept; and customer relationships longevity indicators, expressed in terms of customer behaviour intentions. It is worth mentioning that questions, which are related to the identification of customer relationship longevity, are constructed on the basis of Garbarino and Johnson (1999) methodology, and on the literature analysis performed. Three types of customer behavioural intentions in the case of theatre industry were identified: intentions to visit once again, intentions to recommend and intention to subscribe. The fourth possible type (intention to become a member of

theatre friends' society) was not included in research due to specific situation in theatres analyzed.

The reliability of the instrument was statistically verified using Cronbach's alpha and the reliability ( $\alpha=0.942$ ) was not lower than  $\alpha=0.6$ .

According to both relationship marketing approach and specifics of the phenomenon under investigation, sample selection is stipulated. Drama theatres were chosen for the study on the characteristics of relationship marketing in developing theatre product market. Theatres under investigation are situated in the same geographical unit - Kaunas city. According to Churchill (1996), Clark et al. (1998), and Pranulis (1998) recommendations, non probability quota sampling method was chosen because of its applicability when the population is comprised in accordance with the kind of economic activity of a particular organization (e.g., universities, hospitals, etc.). Answers of 401 respondents were included into further analysis.

The following statistical techniques were chosen to analyse research results. Data of the research conducted were analysed using both statistical program of the *SPSS (15.0 for Windows)* and Microsoft Excel program. *Descriptive statistics* was applied (mean, ratio and percentages frequencies, and standard deviation were calculated); *multivariate* statistical techniques (the Pearson correlation coefficient). *MANN-WHITNEY* and *KRUSKAL-WALLIS* (two-way test  $p \leq 0.05$ ); nonparametric statistical tests were applied; Cronbach alpha coefficient and *z-ratio* values were calculated.

## Research results and interpretation

Research results are presented in the following order: first of all applying descriptive statistics methods, an expression of customer value determinants in different theatres are presented. Then its dependence on socio-demographic factors and the character of customer's involvement into relationships with theatre is revealed. And finally, the relations are analyzed between customer value determinants and customer longevity, expressed in terms of intentions to visit once again, intentions to recommend and intention to subscribe.

As it was pointed out in the previous section, the theatre product's customer value determinants were singled out applying extended product concept. The aim of the research was to examine relation of each determinant to customer future intentions, so the factor analysis of these determinants was not performed. Such separation of the determinants of customer value of theatre product is purposeful in order to determine the aspects of the theatre products' presentation to the consumer that need perfection and to make appropriate decisions of developing relationships with consumers. According to the concept of extended product, these determinants are comprised into certain levels of the product, and are given conditional titles. This conditional connection of the customer value determinants into groups allows summarizing the consumers' evaluations of various theatre products' presentation aspects, pointing out the theatre product's features that mostly influence the development of

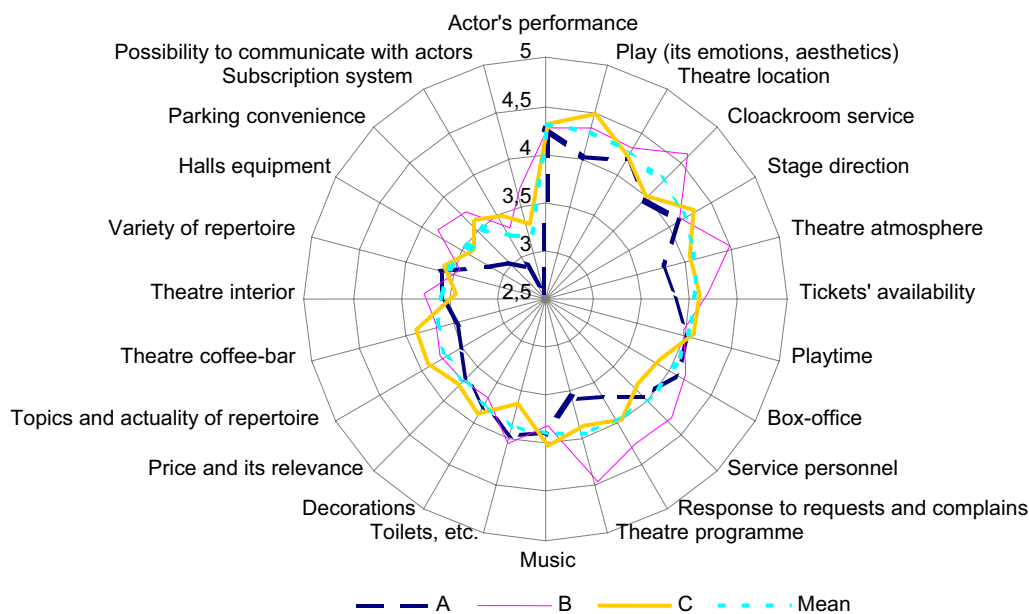


Figure 1. Evaluation of product attributes in different theatres (A, B, C)

relationships between the theatre and its consumers. It also allows comparing the results acquired with prevailing rules of service marketing literature, with regard to the

importance of different service product levels in view of both customer evaluations and their further intentions.

Having examined the way consumers rank customer value determinants (see Figure 1) it was revealed that the performance of actors (average value 4.25), play (4.24), theatre attainability (4.19), locker-room service (4.14), direction (4.13), and atmosphere of the theatre (4.07) were ranked higher in all the theatres than the diversity of the repertoire (3.56), theatre installation (3.45), parking convenience (3.43), system of season-ticket (3.21), the opportunity, provided by the theatre, communication with actors, and directors (3.15). Having examined the ways that theatre visitors rank customer value determinants it was revealed that the determinants, which are related to core benefit and basic product levels, were ranked higher in all the theatres than determinants related to the remaining two product levels.

Applying nonparametric statistical criteria according to *MANN-WHITNEY* and *KRUSKAL-WALLIS* (two-way test  $p \leq 0.05$ ) the dependence of above analysed evaluations on socio-demographic criteria were tested. The results showed that all the attributes, depending on the gender of the respondents, females ranked them more positively. Indeed, younger visitors appreciated many of the attributes (except of the convenience in buying tickets, theatre installation and the work of the café), and conversely the most critical evaluations were presented by the respondents older than 55 years of age. The research findings indicate that the consumers who visit theatres seldom (once per year and less) rank the majority of the theatre products' attributes mostly negatively.

These findings suggest that the evaluation of the theatre products depends on the character of consumer involvement in the relationships with the theatre. It is necessary to point out, that in this paper, the character of the involvement in the relationships with the theatre is analysed considering the attendance frequency, without distinguishing the subscribers and single ticket buyers (this practice is popular in foreign researches, but it is inadequate for Lithuanian market).

The accomplished analysis confirms that customer value determinants should be evaluated taking into consideration the influence of socio-demographic factors as well as character of customers' involvement in the relationships with the theatre.

The results of the empirical study revealed that the theatres investigated did not use any popular means to improve the relationships with their customers so far. On the other hand, the great percentage of the customers, who plan on another visit to the theatre (87.8 per cent), indicates that theatre provides adequate value that helps to maintain relationship with recent customers. On the other hand the number of customers who "will recommend" is less (60.3 per cent). The analysis of customer future intentions, based on the frequency of attendance, also supports this conclusion.

Analyzing the relations between the determinants of customer value and distinguished customer behavioral intentions which reflect the longevity of relationships, it could be stated that play itself ( $r = 0.642$ , when  $p < 0.001$ ), stage direction ( $r = 0.490$ , when  $p < 0.001$ ), decorations ( $r = 0.453$ , when  $p < 0.001$ ), topics and actuality of repertoire ( $r = 0.402$ , when  $p < 0.001$ ), music ( $r = 0.305$ , when  $p < 0.001$ ) have stronger statistically significant relations with

intentions to recommend than with other variables of customer behavioral intentions. Whereas actor's performance has stronger relations with intentions to visit again than with intentions to recommend (accordingly  $r = 0.466$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and  $r = 0.443$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). All above mentioned customer value determinants are the attributes included in core and basic theatre products levels. Analysing the attributes, included into peripheral (extended and whole) product level, it could be stated, that only a subscription system ( $r = 0.580$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), price and its relevance ( $r = 0.403$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), response to request and complains ( $r = 0.403$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), have statistically significant relations to intentions "to recommend". While analyzing the relations of whose determinants with intentions "to visit again" it could be noted weak, though statistical significant, relation ( $r =$  from 0.215 to 0.314,  $p < 0.001$ ). It is revealed that an importance of ticket's availability ( $r = 0.390$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) have stronger relations to intentions visit again than to intentions recommend. Meanwhile, results showed, that there are no relations between theatre coffee-bar and customer behavioral intentions, so it could be stated that this attribute is secondary and does not have any influence on customer's judgments to visit theatre, to recommend it, or to subscribe. Also it could be stated, that there is no correlation between variety of repertoire and intentions to visit again, as there is no correlation between halls equipment, playtime and cloakroom service. Also it must be pointed out, that customer intention to subscribe was not detailed here as there were only weak statistically significant relations identified between intention to subscribe and theatre product attributes.

The results of correlation between customer value determinants and customer future intentions allow us to confirm that the play itself and artistic factors, i.e. actor's performance, stage directions, decorations (the attributes of core and basic theatre products levels) have greatest influence on customer future intentions to recommend the theatre and to visit it again.

The relations, which have been revealed, must be evaluated for successful theatre product market development in order to avoid inadequate decision making as well as wasteful distribution of scarce theatre resources, while developing relationships with present consumers or attracting potential ones.

## Conclusions

According to the results of theoretical research on customer value, its determinants and their importance for customer relationship longevity, it could be maintained that:

- A basis for gaining a competitive advantage in today's market is an ability to offer value that any competitor cannot do so. Thus, detecting customer value that company offers and identifying indicators that determine customer value might stipulate effective customer retention decision making in order to create and maintain long-term relationship with customers.
- Different concepts, which explain value creation and its delivering from customer perspective, are closely linked together, however, there is no any obvious

criteria identified yet that might ensure the one best way of distinguishing customer value determinants.

After the analysis of the results of empirical research, seeking to identify theatre product customer value determinants and to find out their relations with customer relationship longevity (expressed in terms of behavioral intentions), it can be maintained that:

- Components that comprise different theatre product levels *might be viewed as the theatre product customer value determinants*, where integration of customer evaluation analysis from the components viewpoint allows identifying critical theatre activity areas with regard to customer relationship development, and taking adequate customer retention decisions.
- Having examined the ways that theatre visitors rank customer value determinants, it was revealed that the determinants, which are related to core benefit and basic product levels, were ranked higher in all the theatres than determinants related to the remaining two product levels. Also the dependence of these rankings on socio-demographic factors, as well as on the character of consumer's involvement in the relationships with the theatre was revealed.
- The results of correlation between customer value determinants and customer future intentions confirmed that the play itself and artistic attributes (core benefit and basic product levels) are more important for customer relationship longevity (expressed in terms of intentions to recommend the theatre and to visit it again) than the remaining ones.

Summarising it could be concluded, that extended product concept, which has been chosen as the essence of the empirical study, uncovers the components of an organizational offer (components manifest themselves through product levels situated around the core benefit), which contribute to customer value creation and are important to customer relationship longevity.

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### **Vertė vartotojui ir jos svarba santykių su paslaugų teikėju ilgalaikiškumui: teatro sektoriaus atvejis**

Santrauka

Pripažinta, kad vartotojų pasirinkimas priklauso nuo to, kokią vertę jam teikia įmonės pasiūlymas. Taigi geriausias vertės vartotojui kūrimas yra visų marketingo sprendimų pagrindas, be to išskirtinės vertės vartotojui teikimas laikytinas pagrindiniu konkurencinį pranašumą didinančiu bei vartotojo lojalumą užtikrinančiu veiksniu. Tačiau, kaip rodo mokslinės literatūros analizė, iki šiol nepasiekta konsensusas ne tik dėl vartotojui teikiamos vertės analizės būdų, bet ir dėl pačios vertės sampratos. Vertė vartotojui bei jos kūrimas ir teikimas mokslinėje literatūroje analizuojamas iš skirtingų perspektyvų, priklausomai nuo to, kokių metodologinės nuostatų laikomasi. Nėgana to, mokslininkai nesutaria sąsajų tarp vertės vartotojui determinančių ir vartotojų ketinimų palaikyti santykius su paslaugų teikėju. Atlikti tyrimai parodė, kad vertė vartotojui įtakoja vartotojų ketinimus palaikyti ilgalaikius santykius netiesiogiai – per vartotojų pasitenkinimą. Tuo tarpu kiti autoriai teigė, kad vertė tiesiogiai įtakoja vartotojų ketinimus, kuriais išreiškiamas santykių su vartotojais ilgalaikiškumas. Be to vertė vartotojui mokslinėje literatūroje dažniausiai analizuojama iš transakcinės perspektyvos, siekiant išsiaiškinti, kokią įtaką vartotojo suvokiama vertė daro jo elgsenai sprendimo pirkti priėmimo etape. Pripažįstant vartotojų išlaikymo svarbą, vertė vartotojui turėtų būti analizuojama adekvačiai pasikeitusios marketingo orientacijos sąlygomis.

Taigi vertės vartotojui analizė išlieka aktualus tiek mokslinių, tiek praktinių tyrimų objektas. Atsižvelgiant į aukščiau aptartus probleminius aspektus ir, suvokiant, kad orientacijos į ilgalaikių santykių su vartotojais palaikymą kontekste vartotojui teikiama vertė lemia ne tik vartotojo pritraukimo sėkmę, bet ir santykių su vartotojais plėtros galimybes, tyrimo **problema** formuluojama šiuo klausimu: kokie yra vertės vartotojui determinantai ir kokios yra sąsajos tarp jų ir santykių su vartotojais ilgalaikiškumo?

**Tikslas:** išsiaiškinti vertės vartotojui determinantus, nustatyti sąsajas tarp jų ir vartotojų ketinimų palaikyti ilgalaikius santykius su paslaugų teikėju bei empiriškai patikrinti jų raišką teatrų sektoriaus pavyzdžiu.

**Tyrimo objektas:** vertė vartotojui kaip santykių su vartotojais ilgalaikiškumą lemiantys veiksnys.

**Tyrimo metodai:** sisteminė ir lyginamoji mokslinės literatūros analizė; kiekybinis tyrimo metodas – apklausa.

Straipsnyje atskleidžiama vertės veiksnio svarba santykių su vartotojais plėtroje. Pripažįstant, kad vartotojų pasirinkimas priklauso nuo to, kokią vertę jam teikia įmonės pasiūlymas, veiksniai, skatinantys santykių su vartotojais plėtrą, analizuotini vertės kūrimo ir teikimo vartotojui aspektu. Tačiau, kaip rodo mokslinės literatūros analizė, daugiausiai prekės teikiama vertė vartotojui analizuota akcentuojant suvokiamos vertės svarbą prekių įsigijimo etape. Tačiau vartotojui teikiamos vertės analizė vien tik minėtame kontekste, mūsų nuomone, atspindi transakcinę požiūrį, kadangi pagrindinis dėmesys skiriamas vartotojo pritraukimui, o prekės teikiama vertė analizuojama tiriant vartotojo preferencijas vienam ar kitam prekės požymių rinkiniui. Be to, reikia pripažinti šio požiūrio ribotumus teikiant neapčiuopiamumo, heterogeniškumo, vienalaikiškumo bei nekaupiamumo charakteristikomis pasižyminčias paslaugas, kurių negalima išmėginti prieš vartojimą.

Transakcinis požiūris į vartotojui teikiamą vertę neatskleidžia jos dinamiškumo – pagal jį visi vartotojai traktuojami vienodai, vietoj to, kad būtų atsižvelgiama į tai, kad vartotojo suvokiama vertė gali kisti laikui bėgant; tai yra, priklausomai nuo ištraukimo į santykius laipsnio, vartotojo prioritetai teikiamo pasiūlymo įvairių požymių atžvilgiu taip pat gali kisti. Taigi orientacijos į ilgalaikių santykių su vartotojais palaikymą kontekste, suvokiant, kad vartotojui teikiama vertė lemia ne tik vartotojo pritraukimo sėkmę, bet ir santykių su vartotojais palaikymo galimybes, įmonėms privalu įvertinti tuos vartotojui teikiamos vertės aspektus, kurie

lemia vartotojo apsisprendimą palaikyti santykius su įmone ar juos nutraukti.

Šiame kontekste nepakanka vien tikta nusakyti, kokią naudą vartotojui teikia įmonės pasiūlymas bei kokias išlaidas jis suvokia: literatūros analizė patvirtina, kad ypatingai svarbu žinoti, kurie prekės požymiai tas naudas ar išlaidas lemia. Identifikavus ir įvertinus šiuos požymius galima būtų nuspręsti, kurie jų turi būti įtraukti, pašalinti ar pakeisti, kad įmonė galėtų teikti didesnę vertę turintį pasiūlymą vartotojui. Remiantis literatūros analize, daroma išvada, kad atskirų vartotojui teikiamos vertės determinančių išskyrimas ir jų svarbos suvokimas turi būti traktuojamas kaip vertės teikimo vartotojui proceso pagrindas, lemiantis įmonės išteklių paskirstymą skirtingoms vartotojų grupėms bei vertės kūrimo proceso šioms grupėms organizavimą.

Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad vertė vartotojui pripažįstama pagrindiniu veiksniu, skatinančiu vartotoją palaikyti ilgalaikius santykius su įmone, pabrėžiama, kad ypatingai svarbu, ne tik išskirti vertės determinantus, bet ir atitinkamai susieti juos (bei vartotojų vertinimus jų atžvilgiu) su santykių ilgalaikiškumą nusakančiais kintamaisiais, taip įgalinant priimti atitinkamus santykių su vartotojais plėtros sprendimus.

Mokslinės literatūros analizė parodė, kad vertės vartotojui nagrinėjimo pobūdis priklauso nuo to, kokiomis metodologinėmis nuostatomis remiamasi. Remiantis literatūros analize, galima išskirti šias pagrindines vertės vartotojui tyrimo kryptis: vartotojo suvokiamos vertės, išplėstinio produkto koncepcijos, geriausias vertės vartotojui teikimo galimybių analizė.

Tikslu empiriškai patikrinti pasirinktos išplėstinio produkto koncepcijos tinkamumą vertės vartotojų determinančių identifikavimui, buvo pasirinktas teatro sektorius. Siekiant atskleisti teatro produkto, kaip vertę vartotojui kuriančių požymių junginio, ypatumus, išskirti keturi teatro produkto lygmenys (pagrindinė nauda; bazinis produktas, išplėstinis produktas, visuminis produktas) ir juos sudarantys komponentai. Būtent šie atskirus teatro produkto lygmenis sudarantys komponentai gali būti traktuojami kaip teatro produkto vertės vartotojui determinantai, o vartotojų vertinimų šių komponentų atžvilgiu analizės integravimas su vartotojų ketinimų tyrimais leistų identifikuoti kritines santykių su lankytojais plėtrai teatro veiklos sritis bei priimti atitinkamus, šią plėtrą užtikrinsiančius, santykių marketingo sprendimus. Išskirti determinantai nefaktoriizuoti, kadangi straipsnyje siekiama iširti kiekvieno iš jų ryšį su teatro produkto vartotojų ketinimais. Toks teatro produktų vertės vartotojui determinančių atskyrimas tikslingas siekiant išsiaiškinti tobulintinus teatro produkto teikimo vartotojui aspektus bei priimti atitinkamus santykių su vartotojais plėtros sprendimus. Remiantis išplėstinio produkto koncepcija, šie determinantai apjungiami į tam tikrus produkto lygmenis, suteikiant jiems sąlyginis pavadinimus. Šis vertės vartotojui determinančių sąlyginis apjungimas į grupes sudaro sąlygas apibendrinti vartotojų įvertinimus įvairių teatro produkto teikimo aspektų atžvilgiu, išskiriant didžiausią poveikį santykių tarp teatro ir vartotojo plėtrai turinčius teatro produkto požymius, ir palyginti gautus rezultatus su paslaugų marketingo literatūroje vyraujančiomis nuostatomis dėl skirtingų atskirų paslaugų produkto lygmenų svarbos vartotojo vertinimams organizacijos atžvilgiu, o tuo pačiu ir vartotojo ketinimams.

Išnagrinėjus kaip skirtingų teatrų vartotojai vertina teatro produkto vertės vartotojui determinantus, paaiškėjo, kad aktorių vaidyba (vidutinis vertinimas – 4,25), pats spektaklis (4,24), teatro pasiekiamumas (4,19), aptarnavimas rūbinėje (4,14), režisūra (4,13), teatro atmosfera (4,07) visuose teatruose vertinama palankiau nei repertuaro įvairovė (3,56), teatro salės įranga (3,45), automobilio parkavimo patogumas (3,43), abonementų sistema (3,21) bei teatrų suteikta galimybė bendrauti su aktoriais, režisieriais (3,15). Tyrimo rezultatų analizė patvirtino šių vertinimų priklausomybę nuo socio-demografinių kriterijų bei nuo ištraukimo į santykius su teatru pobūdžio.

Nagrinėjat ryšį tarp teatro produkto vertės vartotojui determinančių ir atskirų vartotojų ketinimų kintamųjų, nustatyta, kad pats spektaklis ( $r = 0,642$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ), režisūra ( $r = 0,490$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ), dekoracijos ( $r = 0,453$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ), spektaklių aktualumas bei tematika ( $r = 0,402$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ), muzika ( $r = 0,305$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ) pasižymi statistiškai reikšmingais stipresniais teigiamais ryšiais su ketinimais rekomenduoti nei su kitais vartotojų ketinimus nusakančiais kintamaisiais. Tuo tarpu aktorių vaidyba stipriai koreliuoja su ketinimu lankytis pakartotinai nei su ketinimu rekomenduoti (atitinkamai  $r = 0,466$ , kai  $p < 0,001$  ir  $r = 0,443$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ). Be to, stipriausia koreliacija su vartotojų ketinimais pasižymi pagrindinę naudą teikiantys (pats spektaklis) ir bazinį teatro produktą sudarantys (aktorių vaidyba, režisūra, dekoracijos) teatro produkto požymiai. Iš periferinių (išplėstinis ir visuminis lygmuo) teatro produktą sudarančių požymių tik abonementų sistema ( $r = 0,580$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ), kainos atitikimas suteiktų paslaugų kokybei ( $r = 0,403$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ), reagavimas į pageidavimus ir nusiskundimus ( $r = 0,403$ , kai

$p < 0,001$ ), pasižymi statistiškai reikšmingais stipresniais ryšiais su ketinimais rekomenduoti, o su ketinimais lankytis pakartotinai šių veiksmų ryšys yra silpnas, nors ir statistiškai reikšmingas ( $r =$  nuo 0,215 iki 0,314, kai  $p < 0,001$ ). Tačiau bilietų įsigijimo patogumas ( $r = 0,390$ , kai  $p < 0,001$ ) stipriau koreliuoja su ketinimais lankytis pakartotinai, nei su ketinimais rekomenduoti. Tuo tarpu tarp teatro kavinės veiklos ir vartotojų ketinimų nenustatyta jokio statistiškai reikšmingo ryšio, todėl galima teigti, kad šis teatro produkto komponentas yra šalutinis, nedarantis įtakos vartotojų apsisprendimui pakartotinai lankytis teatre, rekomenduoti spektaklį ar įsigyti teatro abonementą. Su ketinimais lankytis pakartotinai taip pat nekoreliuoja repertuaro įvairovė, o su ketinimais rekomenduoti – teatro salės įranga, spektaklių pradžios laikas, aptarnavimas rūbinėje.

Tyrimo rezultatų analizė parodė, kad visi teatro produktų vertės vartotojui determinantai (išskyrus teatro kavinės veiklą) koreliuoja bent su vienu vartotojų ketinimų indikatoriumi, tačiau dauguma stipresniais ryšiais pasižyminčių determinantų patenka į pagrindinės naudos bei bazinio produkto lygmenis, kai tuo tarpu išplėstinio ir visuminio teatro

produkto lygmenų determinantai tokio stiprumo ryšiais nepasižymi. Taigi galima teigti, kad stipriausią poveikį vartotojų ketinimams turi tie teatro produkto vertės vartotojui determinantai, kurie teikia vartotojui pagrindinę naudą ir tie, kurie patenka į bazinio produkto lygmenį. Tai prieštarauja marketingo literatūroje vyraujančioms nuostatomis dėl periferinio teatro produkto poveikio vartotojų elgsenai, tačiau patvirtina teiginį dėl teatro produkto teikiamo estetinio, emocinio patyrimo bei meninių teatro produktų svarbos vartotojų santykių su teatre ilgalaikiškumui. Į šiuos tyrimų rezultatus turėtų būti atsižvelgiama priimant atitinkamus santykių su vartotojais plėtros sprendimus.

Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad pasirinkta išplėstinio produkto koncepcija atskleidžia, kokie organizacijos pasiūlymo komponentai prisideda prie vertės vartotojui kūrimo bei kokius poreikius vartotojas siekia patenkinti išgydamas produktą. Atskirus produkto lygmenis sudarantys komponentai gali būti traktuojami kaip vertės vartotojui determinantai, o jų sąsąją su vartotojų ketinimais analizė gali būti traktuojama kaip pagrindas santykių su vartotojais išlaikymo sprendimams priimti.

Raktažodžiai: *vertė vartotojui, vertės determinantai, ilgalaikiai santykiai, vartotojo ketinimai, teatro produktas.*

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