

## RELATIONSHIP MARKETING DIMENSIONS EXPRESSION IN KLAIPĖDA HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

The article reveals the essence of relationship marketing concepts and expression in Klaipeda health care institutions. Investigated the following main relationship marketing dimensions: trust, commitment, interdependence, reciprocity, cooperation, power, communication, satisfaction, value, justice and empathy. It is stated that the direct impact on consumer loyalty in health care market has the confidence, commitment and satisfaction. Relationship marketing principles – mutual interaction and power – in health care market only partially causes consumers loyalty.

KEY WORDS: *relationship marketing dimensions, Klaipėda health care institutions.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: M310, I110.

### Introduction

Increased prices of personal health care services, lack of funding, resource-saving necessity, rapid growth of patient wishes and needs, constantly increasing competition makes health care institutions leaders to think about how with lowest cost remain competitive in the market, not to lose good institution image, and best meet current and potential users' expectations. One of the ways to do this – to assess how effectively in institutions are applied relationship marketing, which focuses on – long-term relationships with consumers' creation and maintenance. For customer loyalty and advantage, all the employees of the institution must have a thorough understanding of qualitative dimensions of relations – relations support key features. Personal health care institutions relationship with customers must be based on absolutely all institutions employees marketing relations dimensions compliance, which would allow it to move to a qualitatively higher level and strengthen market participants – health care institutions and user interrelationship. Mutually beneficial long-term relationships with consumers and business customers support should become a priority for those institutions which seek to operate profitably in competitive market conditions, because the steady improvement of these relations give institutions a competitive advantage that is difficult to copy (Jurgelevičiūtė, Sūdžius 2010: 118; Juščius, Navickas 2009: 6; Juščius, Grigaitė 2011: 71).

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Relationship marketing and its key dimensions wide and successful application in institutions are analyzed by many Lithuanian and foreign researchers. But each of them, taking into account investigations undertaken its context describes different exploration subjects, highlighting different aspects of the new business events. Berry (1995), Kotler, Armstrong, Saunder et al (2003), Payne, Ballantyne and Christopher (2005), Palmer (1996), Perpers, Rogers (1995) relationship marketing examines as consumers attraction and maintaining tool. Das (2009), Gummesson (2007), Grönroos (2004), Žvirelienė, Bučiūnienė (2008) in relationship marketing concept highlights not only the relationship establishing and maintaining between consumers and office but also mutual interaction and compliance of promises. Czepiel (1990), Morgan, Hunt (1994), Sheth, Parvatiyar (2002) – distinguishes only supplier and consumer relationships.

However, these studies do not take into account health care institutions and patient relationship management specifics. This raises the scientific problems: what is relationship marketing position in Lithuanian health care market; how broadly the relationship marketing techniques are used in institutions, what real benefits they provide and what new opportunities application of relationship marketing dimensions can provide for institutions.

The aim of research: Reveal the relationship marketing peculiarities of expression in Klaipėda health care institutions.

The object of research: the relationship marketing dimensions expression in Klaipėda health care institutions.

The objectives of the research:

1. Reveal the relationship marketing dimensions diversity and interaction between them.
2. To determine how broadly the relationship marketing dimensions are applied in Klaipėda health care institutions, what real benefits provide their application and identify what new opportunities for institutions could provide application of relationship marketing dimensions.

Research methods: scientific literature analysis, systematization, classification, comparison, interpretation, generalization, synthesis, quantitative analysis, logical conclusions. For Klaipėda health care institutions workers and consumers' opinions comparison and hypotheses verification was applied Student's t-test for independent samples, analysis of dispersion (ANOVA), correlation analysis and Chi-square test. Results processed with IBM SPSS Statistics 20 program.

## 1. Theoretical aspects of relationship marketing dimensions expression

Scientists relationship marketing define from different standpoints: one examines consumer attraction and maintaining tool, while others emphasize not only the relationships establishing and maintaining but also mutual interaction and compliance of promises, yet others – only indicates the supplier and consumer relations. Although so far there is no consensus about the relationship marketing, and it is examined from various angles, but each scientist's opinion do not interfere with each other, they complement each other and reveal the relationship marketing as a new marketing concept essence. Some authors the relationship marketing define as the attraction of new customers, the relationship between them and institutions creation, development, and strengthening, if necessary, termination for both consumers and office purposes.

According to Morris, Brunyee, Page (1998: 360) the relationship marketing is not only for different scientists, but also for different organizations representatives means unequal things. Also due to specificity of relationship marketing implementing conditions, there is no and cannot be a single relationship marketing theory (Juščius et al, 2006: 256). It is observed that not only there is no consensus on the relationship marketing concept, but this term is often used in synonyms: new marketing, interaction approach, communication marketing. Juščius et al (2006: 4) believes that, although the agreement on relationship marketing description is not reached, the term is widely used not only in the scientific literature, but also in business practice.

Relationship marketing is a process that must be planned, organized, and its implementation process need to be coordinated and controlled. The main tool for the implementation of this process is relationship with the private and business customer management, i. e. relationship marketing values and strategies with

an emphasis on customer relations, implementation in practice (Juščius, Navickas et al, 2009: 7). Žvirelienė, Bučiūnienė, (2008: 274) summarizing the work of other scholars note that many of them recognize that the essence of relationship marketing consist of institution relationships based on trust, commitment and other qualities to consumers and other market participants support and enhancement.

For a good understanding of customer relationship management, it is necessary to correctly apply the basic principles of relationship support. Žvirelienė, Bučiūnienė (2008: 274) emphasizes that only a small proportion of research is devoted to operationalize the most important relationship marketing principles. It is also underlined that scientists distinguish and emphasize different relationship marketing characterizing principles. It is observed that in scientific point of view dominates two major dimensions of relationship marketing consist – trust and commitment, which can be regarded as the most important.

Trust – one of the essential conditions for the successful development of relationship, and is defined as a belief or belief of the other party intentions in relations. In relationship marketing context confidence means business partnership aspect that determines the extent to which each party feels that she can rely on the other party's honesty promise (Yau, Mcfetridge, 2000: 114). Navickas, Malakauskaitė (2009: 866) argues that the basis of trust – integrity and reliability, which are conditioned to first positive cooperation experience. Morgan, Hunt (1994: 22) defines trust as “the confidence in the fairness of the exchange partner, which means that first of all it has to be a belief that a partner is worthy trust”. The authors believe that trust exists from consistent and competent customer service and honest and fair treatment. This means that an institution that wishes to retain existing and attract new customers must strengthen their confidence in both the organization and the services offered way. In order to achieve this goal, Žvirelienė, Bučiūnienė (2008: 276) assertion the organization must implement ethical integrity and good business practices-based approach to the relationship between organization staff relations and organizational relationships with suppliers. As well as their relationship with consumers. For Lewicki, McAllister (1998: 438) term trust is an essential feature of a healthy personality, interpersonal relations basis and necessary condition for cooperation. Pilelienė (2008: 113) analyzing other scientists trust definitions, draws attention to the O'Shaughnessy provision, which states that “trust is a key component of customer loyalty, which manifests itself in consumers' actions based on incurred costs and received benefits calculation”. In this context it can be assumed that the higher consumer confidence in the institution, the stronger will be his loyalty. Trust is documented as an exchange relationship and is often regarded as the most important component of the business relationship and recognized as a key structural element of the relationship marketing modeling process (Yau, Mcfetridge et al, 2000: 1114; Anderson, Narus, 1991: 98; Morgan, Hunt, 1994: 28).

Commitment. Defined as the business aspect of the partnership, for the consumer and the supplier come out as unanimous functioning in order to achieve goal (Sweidan, Al-dmour et al, 2012: 157; Yau, 2000: 1113). According to Juščius et al (2006: 257): “Means a long-term commitment to keep pursuit a valuable connection in the hope that this is the equivalent exchange“. Bejou (2005: 44) said that commitment occurs when both parties are loyal to each other, when they realize that mutual relations will not only bring benefit, but also gratification. “The commitment is undoubtedly related to the trust idea, but it is unclear whether any of them should appear first. It is not clear whether the obligation is the result of growing trust, or trust stems from the decision to commit. A commitment can also be negatively related to increased competition and the existence of alternative partner relationship” (Žvirelienė et al, 2008: 275).

Interpersonal relationships established between the buyer and the seller, the commitment can be defined as a dynamic process that progresses over time (Cann, 1998: 399). Commitment process starts from the elementary seller needs to find buyers for their products, and the buyer's desire to purchase the product, which can meet its needs. Between the parties there are different forms of commitment that show different levels of relationship. The commitment contribute to the effective control of the social and business behavior in society, dispels doubts, builds confidence and helps to establish close relations (Chattananon et al, 2009: 257). In relationship marketing commitment aspect consist of the users' loyalty for the brand development and improvement also, as indicated Levitt (1983: 87), long-term relationship with the seller. Thus being able

to exist long relationship requires commitment. In significantly advanced stage of relationship, commitment is so strong that it is practically impossible to destroy (Cann, 1998: 399).

The following points highlight the key factors that influence trust and commitment relationships (Žvirelienė, 2008: 275): termination of relations costs, relationship benefits, shared values (beliefs about the general partners in a given situation important, decent and appropriate behavior traits, goals, and policies), communication, opportunistic behavior.

Reciprocity (mutual dependence). It is a business aspect of the partnership, which allows one party to provide benefits or make other concessions, then the other party shall respond the same (Olotu et al., 2010: 50; Yau et al, 2000: 1113). According to Sin et al (2002: 661), reciprocity – is an understanding of the bilateral unforeseen cases, mutually beneficial interdependence and the quality of the values upon which the parties are changing. Most of the authors' mutual dependence define as the active participation of both parties in creation of value. "Scientists agree that the user receives significant benefits when cooperate more closely with the organization and the organization in its relations with customers, achieve greater competitive advantage" (Damkuvienė, Virvilaitė, 2007: 320). All participants of relationship depend on each other, i. e., get mutual benefits. User is dependent on the services offered by the provider and the provider's business success depends on the consumer's decision to buy or not his services. Chattananon, Trimetsoontorn (2009: 257) reveals the relations between reciprocity and empathy as well as relationship marketing and exchanges. Reciprocity and commitment are linked in a way that shows mutual cooperation agreement.

Interactions. Damkuvienė, Virvilaitė (2007: 320) opinion: "Development of relations depends on the frequency of interaction, as the constantly recurring interaction between two market participants leads to links which are essential for relationship between them." In summary, it can be said that the relationship between the user and the institutions is formed during periodic cooperation. It can be assumed that the more effectively market participants communicate with each other, the stronger their relationship.

Cooperation – it is the pursuit of the harmonious and coordinated work, preparation to help or support your partner. Žvirelienė et al (2008: 277) considers that cooperation – it is the basis for learning. Relationship basis – openness, reciprocity, support and recognition – are the key elements of the learning process. So cooperation offer opportunities to quickly resolve problems, receive and impart knowledge, in other words, it allows interested parties to develop and strengthen mutual relations. Jurgilevičiūtė, Sūdžius (2010: 121) states that users with whom continuous cooperate express greater interest in maintaining the relationship with the service provider. The effectiveness of cooperation determines culture and competence as well as certain individual service or financial instrument.

Power. According to Staniulienė (2008: 122), power – it is the "two or more human relations aspect, [...] the ability to force a person to do something". Dependence – the most important aspect of power. The higher user's dependence on provider, the greater power has the provider in their relationship. The more the user is dependent on the organization's services, the easier it is for organization to convince to buy its products or services.

Communication is successful cooperation between market participants condition. Juščius et al (2006: 100) believes that communication can be defined as the formal and informal sharing of information between the user and the service provider. Žvirelienė et al (2008: 277) stresses that conscious or unconscious incorrect presentation of information for organization employees and business partners create an environment for misunderstanding and conflict situations, i.e. pose a threat to the internal relationship of organization. The inaccurate information given on the outside – customers and other business partners can destroy their trust in organization. Anderson, Narus (1991: 108) notes that communication is a strong determinant of satisfaction and if the user feels the confidence of organization, it is more able to meet the user's needs, and this is one of the most important steps in forming a long-term relationship. Žvirelienė et al (2008: 277) believes that communication is an important dimension of the relationship marketing because meaningful and timely ongoing communication between business partners strengthens the confidence, it outcome – a close relationship based on mutual commitment, satisfaction and cooperation.

Satisfaction is emotional state, which is reached when the users' wishes and expectations are fulfilled. According to Palaima, Auruškevičienė (2006: 105), satisfaction – is dimension, which mainly influences

consumer loyalty and talks. Satisfaction – is an emotional user's assessment of service, based on his personal experience over a period of time. Žvirelienė et al (2008: 276), analyzing other authors' publications, draws attention to the fact that satisfaction – is a major determining factor in continuity of relations, namely through it relationships between market participants arises supporting a higher level of commitment, and relationship termination becomes more complicated. Satisfaction is dimension, strengthening the relationship of trust between the supporting parties that can estimate how many relationships supporting market participants are satisfied with each other's activities. It predicts the confidence and leads to continuity of a relationship.

Value. Vaitkienė, Pilibaitytė (2008: 46) point of view the value concept in the scientific literature and practice is used in various senses, but in recent marketing literature dominates two concepts of value – the value to the consumer and the consumer given value for organization. Namely value to the consumer is the prerequisite for all other values, so it can be called all marketing solutions basis, because provision higher value to the consumer must be regarded as one of the most important factors which increase competitive advantage and user's loyalty. Jurgilevičiūtė, Sūdžius (2010: 121) user's perceived value describes as the ratio between the benefits received and expenses incurred. There are opinion that value to the consumer is traditionally associated with the main product derived tangible and intangible benefits and the user-experience of monetary and non-monetary cost ratio, acquiring this product.

The consumer provided value – is the ratio of the planned or unplanned cash expenditures, time, which consumers gave to purchase goods or services, the energy and the moral cost of goods, services, personnel and corporate image value. Žvirelienė et al (2008: 277) underlines that a long-term, ongoing relationship value between the organization and its business partners is created in collaboration.

Justice. This principle – social stability and humanity foundation. Murphy, Laczniak (2007: 49) believe, if the consumer and the service provider relationship is dishonest in respect of one another, do not comply with the principles of justice and decency, it is unlikely that such a relationship will last long. Every person lives in society, it must acknowledge not only their own, but also the other person's interests and benefits. All market participants must be honest, responsible and fair to each other, otherwise they will not be able to support the formation of effective relationships.

Empathy is the aspect of the business partnership, which allows parties to see the situation from the other party's perspective. It is defined as a striving to understand someone else's desires and goals. Empathy means the ability of individual parties see the situation from the perspective of the other party in accordance with certain cognitive sense (Williams, 2012: 12; Yau, 2000: 1113). According to Žvirelienė, Bučiūnienė (2008: 277) empathy – an important relationship marketing dimension, which is understood as an organization and user's and other interested parties, social aspect and not manageable parameter, it allows both parties look at the situation from a different perspective. In other words, empathy – the ability to empathize and to implement what another person is feeling. It begins with another person's emotional state identification, and then raises the other person's feeling implementation and transfer to another person. Foreign scientific studies suggest that empathy is a necessary condition nurturing positive relationships between business partners.

All dimensions of the relationship marketing are interlinked and influence each other. The following dimensions expression together with the formal institution means, such as office staff rules of behavior and code of ethics, promote the strength of the relationship and the development of relations between the supporting parties.

## 2. The theoretical model of relationship support between consumers and health care institutions

There were carried out an analysis of the relationship marketing approaches that disclosed the relationship and marketing diversity of dimensions and the interaction between them, concluded that correct result of the application of relationship marketing peculiarities – long-term relationship between consumers and enterprises, resulting in customer loyalty. The authors concluded relationship support theoretical model among



consumers and health care institutions (Fig. 1).

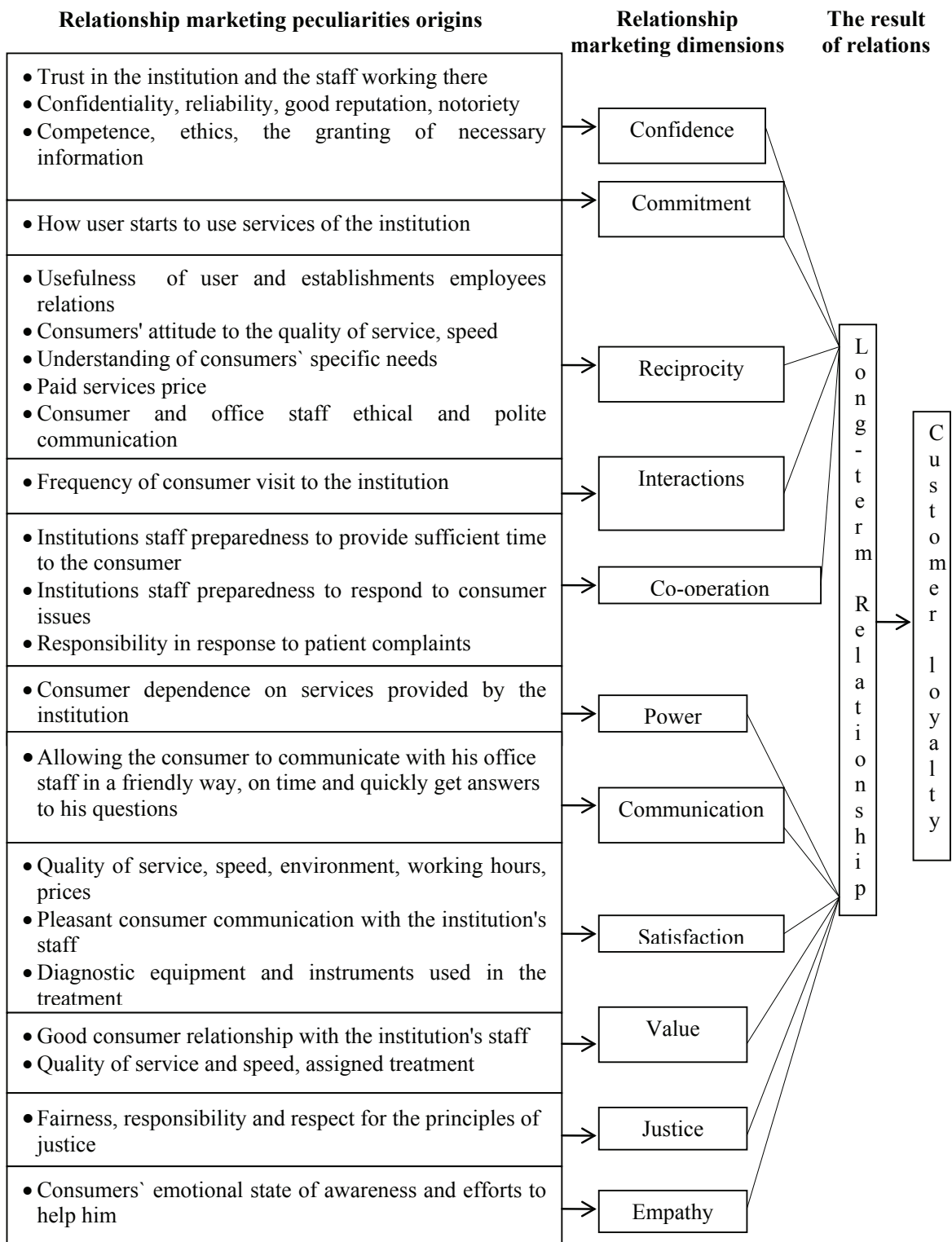


Fig. 1. Support model of relations between consumers and health care institutions

Source: created by authors

In the presented model, there are many factors that may influence the relationship marketing principles formation in a health care institution. It is also considered that all relationship marketing approaches affects

both the formation of long-term relationship between consumers and health care institutions, and consumer loyalty.

### 3. Research methodology of relationship marketing-dimensional expression in Klaipėda health care institutions

Empirical data were obtained from an anonymous structured questionnaire method for quantitative research. Questionnaire items were made on the basis of relationship between consumers and health care institutions support model. Open and closed questions were created for Klaipėda health care institution workers and consumers of these institutions. The study was carried out using a simple random selection, during which any participant of the sample had the opportunity to be heard. Personal health care workers sample is calculated regarding Paniotto et al. (Паниотто, 2009: 169) the following formula. Since 2014 in all Klaipėda health care institutions worked 3241 workers, the sample size set – 356 employees.

Interviewed health care institutions consumers sample size determined in accordance with Dikčius (2006: 129–130) recommended formula. Total surveyed 384 consumers. The study applied these methods – a percentage-graphical analysis, Student's t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) as a generalization of Student's t-test, Spearman correlation, which helps to identify the link between the features when they are ordinal and Chi-square test. The study was intended to: 1) Determine whether health care services consumers trust medical institutions and staff working here; 2) Figure out how patients are choosing a health care institution; 3) Take note of how health care institutions consumers value interaction with authority staff; 4) Set the consumer referral to health care institutions frequency; 5) To find out whether health care institutions consumers rely on the services provided by the institution; 6) Set up health care institutions consumer satisfaction with the services they receive and their value; 7) Determine whether health care institutions apply the principles of relationship marketing.

### 4. The results of relationship marketing dimensions expression study in Klaipėda health care institutions

The examination of the relationship marketing trust dimension in Klaipėda health care facilities showed that all of Klaipėda health care institutions workers say that health care institution are credible to consumers. They are well known in Klaipėda, has a good reputation: are reliable; offices workers raise consumer trust; the staff is competent; ethical and polite; capable to provide the necessary information to consumers; offices are strictly complied with confidentiality. Meanwhile, Klaipėda health care institutions consumers tend to slightly doubt on all statements. The biggest majority of consumers agree that a health care institution which they visited during the investigation, is well known in Klaipėda and that it is strictly complied with confidentiality. However, users are less likely to agree with the fact that the analyzed a health care institution has a good reputation and that office workers are ethical and polite. Nevertheless, both workers and consumers average evaluation is high enough. *P* value indicates that all differences are highly statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Examination, of the relationship marketing commitment dimension of Klaipėda health care institutions, was aimed to identify, what most commonly causes the consumer decision to choose a particular Klaipėda health care institution. Klaipėda health care institutions consumers and workers split opinion on this issue.

The biggest majority of consumers (65 percent) say that health care institution chose themselves, 14 percent of users took into account other people's recommendations, 11 percent – indicated that was sent by a family doctor, while 10 percent of consumers say that the ambulance crew took the decision for them. The majority (59 percent) Klaipėda health care workers believe that the main factor influencing consumers considering while choosing a health care institution is the family doctor dispatch. 25 percent think that it is consumers' personal choice, 12 percent believe that the decision takes not the user, but the ambulance crew and only 3 percent of the staff believes that the decision of consumers can influence others people's recom-

mentations. Still, it can be stated that the relationship marketing trust and commitment dimensions has been successfully applied in all Klaipėda health care institutions.

Relationship marketing reciprocity, cooperation and communication dimension of the approaches in Klaipėda health care institutions research asked respondents to assess which factors are most important to consumers. As the main factors were identified – the quality of service, speed, office workers willingness to help, preparation devote consumer sufficient attention, to answer all user questions, corporate responsibility in responding to consumer complaints, understanding of the user specific needs, cost of the payable services, the institution competitive advantage, online site use of convenience, the ability to user to communicate with the office staff via e-mail, office staff the ethical issues, politeness. It was noticed that in Klaipėda health care institutions workers all factors evaluate positively. Staff poses doubts about the institution competitive advantage, the convenience use of the website and the ability to communicate with the office staff for the consumer by e-mail. Meanwhile, in Klaipėda health care institutions consumers tend to some doubt to all statements. Most consumer identified institutions competitive as an important factor. However, as workers, they questioned the importance of the web site's user convenience and the ability to communicate with the office staff by e-mail. Nevertheless, both workers and consumers almost all average evaluations are sufficiently high, and their  $p$  value indicates that all differences are statistically highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). It was also noted that the least important factor for all respondents was a possibility for the user to communicate with the institution's staff by e-mail, and the approach to it is the same ( $p = 0.468 > 0.05$ ), so there is no statistically significant difference.

Relationship marketing reciprocity dimension of approaches in Klaipėda health care institutions revealed the question how many times over the past year, consumers turned to the specific health care institution. It was found that 39 percent of respondents a health care institution in the last year visited from 1 to 3 times, 41 per cent – was from 4 to 6 times, 14 per cent – from 7 to 9 times and the smallest share of respondents – 6 percent – in the last year applied to the institution more than 10 times. It revealed, that despite the fact that for all respondents was the least important – the opportunity for consumer to communicate with the institution's staff by e-mail, relationship marketing reciprocity, cooperation and communication dimensions are successfully applied in Klaipėda health care institutions. Most health care institutions users regularly return to previously visited health institutions. It is therefore concluded that relationship marketing interaction dimension is also successfully used in the analyzed individual health care institutions.

Relationship marketing power dimension of approaches in Klaipėda health care institutions reveals consumers' dependence on Klaipėda health care institutions services provided. It was found that all the workers of the institutions believe that all customers are highly dependent on the health care institutions services provided. Meanwhile, not all Klaipėda health care institutions users agree with this statement. Nevertheless, both workers and consumers Average rating is high enough.  $P$  value indicates that all differences are highly statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Relationship marketing satisfaction and value dimensions of Klaipėda health care institutions reveals factors such as – user satisfaction of quality of provided services, work time of the institutions, service speed, communication with the institutions staff, institutions existing diagnostic equipment, office employees use of treatment measures, institutions external and internal environment, allocated treatment, institution paid services prices. In spite of the fact that  $p < 0.01$ , and average value of answers is high enough, there are statements with which Klaipėda health care institutions workers accept less than the users. Most workers believe that consumers are not satisfied with the institution provided paid services prices, but the same opinion is shared by a smaller number of users. Part of the institution staff also tend to disagree with the fact that good relations between employees and consumers, prone users for a service quality watch more leniently. They also less believe that the relationship between them and the consumer benefits consumers. Meanwhile, users are more inclined to agree with the following statements.

The examination of the relationship marketing justice dimension in Klaipėda health care institutions, both consumer and employees were asked to answer whether they agree that in the institutions are working honest, responsible and in accordance with the principles of justice personnel. In order to investigate the empathy dimension in these establishments all respondents were asked whether they agree that Klaipėda health



care institutions workers are well aware of consumers' emotional state and try to help them. For comparison of consumers and staff opinion was used Chi-square test. It was found that the institution's employees are more likely to agree with statements analyzed, that is, they themselves and their colleagues describe as an honest, responsible and committed to the principles of justice specialists who are well aware of consumer's emotional state and try to help them. Meanwhile, consumers opinions were divided – 70 percent completely agree that in the health care institutions are applied equity dimension and only 59 percent of consumers believe that the institution's staff is aware of their emotional state and try to help them. Workers and consumers in the analyzed issues stood out significantly because all the Chi-square test p-value is less than 0.01. For most consumers dependence on Klaipėda health care institutions services provided to show that in these institutions function successfully relationship marketing power dimension. It is also revealed that in analyzed institutions is also applicable to relationship marketing satisfaction, values, justice and empathy dimensions, despite the fact that the respondents' opinions on some of the statements relating to the characteristics analyzed, slightly parted.

The majority – 94 percent – Klaipėda health care workers believe that consumers are loyal analyzed institution, with this statement partly agree 5 percent of the employees and 1 percent – have no opinion on the matter. Meanwhile, consumers' opinion is different: 59 percent consider themselves loyal to analyzed institution, 19 percent say they are partly loyal, 14 percent consumers did not know the answer to that question, 3 percent believe that to some extent are not loyal to a health care institution, while 5 percent of all questioned consumers do not consider themselves loyal. Workers and consumers in the analyzed issue stood out significantly because the Chi-square is equal to 131.69; number of degrees of freedom (df) is equal to 4, Chi-square test p-value is less than 0.01. For all Klaipėda health care institutions workers seems that consumers do not desire to change the health care institution. Meanwhile, health care institutions consumers were asked to evaluate their experience. Most of them – 60 percent – say that they did not consider the possibility to change the health care institution, 19 percent say that only partly disagree with the statement, 4 percent of consumers has no opinion on analyzed issue, 10 percent – partly agree with the statement, while 7 percent of questioned consumers report thinking of the possibility to change the medical institution. Workers and consumers in the analyzed issue stood out significantly because the Chi-square is equal to 176.14; number of degrees freedom (df) is equal to 4, and Chi-square test p-value is less than 0.01. Observed a direct relationship between customer loyalty and their willingness to change the medical institution. Loyal customers do not care or extremely little think about the possibility to change the health care institution, while users who are considering the possibility of changing the health care institution – are not loyal.

The study identified the following features of the origins of the relationship marketing, analyzed the relationship between consumers and health care institutions support model having the greatest impact on customer loyalty:

1. Consumer confidence in Klaipėda health care institutions workers.
2. Klaipėda health care institutions quality of service and speed of customer service.
3. Consumers communication with Klaipėda health care institutions workers: workers' willingness to help consumers, workers' preparedness give for consumers due attention, quick staff response to consumer concerns, and understanding of individual consumers' needs, employees' responsibility to respond to consumers' complaints.
4. Consumers dependence level from Klaipėda health care institutions services: the more consumers rely on the services provided by the office, the more loyalty they feel.
5. Klaipėda health care institutions available diagnostic equipment and medical instruments.
6. Klaipėda health care institutions working hours.
7. Klaipėda health care institutions internal and external environment.
8. Klaipėda health care institutions provided cost of the paid services.

Relations between consumers and health care institutions support model the lowest impact on consumer loyalty has these relationship marketing dimensions:

1. Klaipėda personal health care institutions notoriety.
2. Klaipėda health care institutions reputation.
3. Klaipėda health care institutions web site comfort of usage.
4. Allowing users to interact with Klaipėda health care institutions staff via e-mail.
5. Frequency of the consumers visits to Klaipėda health care institutions, that is, the more often users visit facilities, the lower are their loyalty.

## Conclusions

The main dimensions of relationship marketing is – trust, commitment, interdependence, reciprocity, cooperation, power, communication, satisfaction, value, justice and empathy. Trust and commitment are dimensions, showing the size and importance of the existing relationship between the institution and the consumer, but is not specifically clarified whether the commitment are the result of growing confidence or confidence comes from the decision to commit. The value is associated with the trust of the consumer side. In the event that are satisfied user's wants and needs, the user perceived value leads to satisfaction. Mutual dependence and the commitment are associated with mutual agreement, which has an impact on empathy, and shows the cooperation between both sides. Service institutions and consumer interaction formed during cooperation, that is, more often they interact with each other in accordance with the principles of justice, the stronger their relationship, and the more power has one market participant forcing him to take the next appropriate solution. Communication directly affects the trust and indirectly – commitment. Sharing relevant and timely information strengthens both of these elements.

It was found that in all of Klaipėda health care institutions are successfully applied relationship marketing dimensions: trust, commitment, reciprocity, interaction, cooperation, power, communication, satisfaction, value, justice and empathy. It was noticed that all of these dimensions have an impact on customer loyalty, but their influence is different – trust, commitment and satisfaction with services – has direct impact on consumer loyalty, while consumer and Klaipėda health care institutions interactions and power – have a much lower impact on loyalty. Both Klaipėda health care institutions workers, and consumers are confident that health care institutions has not only provide treatment but also care for a successful relationship with the users of its services development and maintenance, i. e. that relationship marketing dimension of approaches is necessary in all Klaipėda health care institutions.

From a consumer perspective, not all of analyzed medical institution has a good reputation, not all institutions employees comply with the principles of justice and fairness, are ethical, polite and well aware of consumers' emotional state and try to help them. Many users are dissatisfied with Klaipėda health care institutions services quality, speed, working time, communication with the institutions staff, institutions available diagnostic equipment and measures used for the treatment. Even more dissatisfaction for respondents caused health care institutions internal and external environment as well as paid services price. It turned out that the biggest majority of consumers choose institution based on of their own experience. Namely these users feel a strong loyalty to a health care institution.

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## SANTYKIŲ RINKODAROS DIMENSIJŲ RAIŠKA KLAIPĖDOS ASMENS SVEIKATOS PRIEŽIŪROS ĮSTAIGOSE

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### Santrauka

Straipsnyje atskleidžiama santykių rinkodaros koncepcijos esmė ir raiška Klaipėdos sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose. Nagrinėtos šios pagrindinės santykių rinkodaros dimensijos: pasitikėjimas, įsipareigojimas, abipusė priklausomybė, tarpusavio sąveika, bendradarbiavimas, galia, komunikacija, pasitenkinimas, vertė, teisingumas ir empatija. Pasitikėjimas ir įsipareigojimas – tai dimensijos, parodančios santykių tarp įstaigos ir vartotojų lygį ir svarbą, tačiau nekonkretizuota, įsipareigojimas yra didėjančio pasitikėjimo rezultatas ar pasitikėjimą lemia sprendimas įsipareigoti. Vertė siejama su vartotojo pasitikėjimu. Jei patenkinami vartotojo norai ir poreikiai, jo suvokiama vertė lemia pasitenkinimą. Abipusė priklausomybė ir įsipareigojimas siejami su abipusiu susitarimu, kuriam turi įtakos empatija, ir atskleidžia, kaip abi šalys bendradarbiauja. Paslaugų įstaigos ir vartotojų sąveika formuojasi bendradarbiaujant, kitaip tariant, kuo dažniau jie bendrauja tarpusavyje laikydamiesi teisingumo principų, tuo tvirtesni yra jų santykiai ir tuo daugiau galios turi vienas rinkos dalyvis skatindamas kitą priimti jam tinkamą sprendimą. Komunikacija tiesiogiai susijusi su pasitikėjimu, netiesiogiai – su įsipareigojimu. Dalijimasis aktualia ir laiku gaunama informacija sustiprina abu šiuos elementus.

Nustatyta, kad visose Klaipėdos miesto savivaldybės pavaldumo sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose sėkmingai taikomos santykių rinkodaros dimensijos: pasitikėjimo, įsipareigojimo, abipusiškumo, tarpusavio sąveikos, bendradarbiavimo, galios, komunikacijos, pasitenkinimo, vertės, teisingumo ir empatijos. Pastebėta, kad visos šios dimensijos turi įtakos vartotojų lojalumui, tik ta įtaka yra skirtinga: pasitikėjimas, įsipareigojimas ir pasitenkinimas paslaugomis tiesiogiai veikia vartotojų lojalumą, o vartotojų ir Klaipėdos asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų tarpusavio sąveika bei galia lojalumui daro daug mažesnę įtaką. Tiek Klaipėdos asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų darbuotojai, tiek vartotojai įsitikinę, kad asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigos turi ne tik teikti gydymo paslaugas, bet ir rūpintis sėkmingų santykių su savo paslaugų vartotojais kūrimu ir plėtojimu, kitaip tariant, santykių rinkodaros dimensijų taikymas būtinas visose Klaipėdos asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose. Santykių rinkodaros principai – tarpusavio sąveika ir galia – asmens sveikatos priežiūros rinkoje tik iš dalies lemia vartotojų lojalumą.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *santykių rinkodaros dimensijos, Klaipėdos sveikatos priežiūros įstaigos.*

JEL KLASIFIKACIJA: M310, I110.