

ASSESSMENT OF SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY OF MASS EVENT PARTICIPANTS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY XXIII RZESZOW JUWENALIA

Joanna Woźniak¹

Abstract

In the literature of the subject, the issues relevant to customer satisfaction research are raised quite frequently in the context of products or services having a commercial character. However, there is a lack of research within the scope of the quality and innovativeness of mass events. Taking this into consideration, the authoress is going to raise the issues of customer loyalty to a specific product which is constituted by Rzeszow Juwenalia. The objective of this publication was to determine the degree of loyalty of participants in the event. Striving to attain the adopted objective, and to verify the formulated hypothesis, in February 2017, a survey research, made accessible in the Google form, was conducted. The respondents were requested to provide their responses to the following question: 'How high is the probability of you recommending Rzeszow Juwenalia to your acquaintances?' The question was formulated upon the basis of eleven-point scale, on which using the digit '0' means: 'Without any doubt, I will not recommend the event,, whereas using the digit '10' means: 'I will recommend the event without any doubt.' The questionnaire contained respondent's as well. In that section, respondents were requested to provide the information about their gender. For the analysis of data, the STATISTICA 12 program was applied. In the statistical analysis, it was principally tables of numerosness, with the application of which the numerical collation, as well as the per cent one, of appropriate responses, were presented. To attain the verified hypothesis, the ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis test by ranks was applied. The obtained results also made it possible to verify the adopted research hypothesis, and to ascertained that there is, most likely, not existing correlation between gender and inclination for the part of the participants in Rzeszow Juwenalia towards promoting the event amongst their acquaintances. Both women, and men alike, assess the organization of Rzeszow Juwenalia similarly and express willingness to advertise this event amongst their acquaintances.

Keywords: *customer, loyalty, mass event, NPS, service.*

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1. Introduction

Achieving the maximum customer satisfaction is becoming the fundamental task of organizations striving to develop, and to improve their position on the market. The reason is that a customer is the central subject of the interest of all manufacturing enterprises, and also service-providing business organizations (Zimon, 2016). The companies know that it is the condition of achieving success to direct their attention to customers, regularly monitoring their needs and expectations, and quickly reacting to their needs (Chen, Reilly & Lynn, 2012). Information relevant to the behaviors of consumers and the factors which determine these behaviors are the foundation for determining corporate sales policies, and the starting point for developing the optimum quality of services (Kim, Kim & Jang, 2011). They are, as well, the source of inspirations, and they make it possible to verify marketing decisions made at every single stage of developing a market offer (Bowen & Chen, 2001).

Research into the attitudes of consumers aims at determining how to exert the most effective influence on the behaviors of purchasers. Manufacturers and services-providers look for the response to the following question: what ought to be done to make their product recognizable and demanded? They wonder how to encourage customers to purchase offered products, and how to exert influence upon their attitudes. Entrepreneurs are aware of the fact that the effectiveness of marketing activities is dependent, more than anything else, on the precise identification of the customers' needs, and adjusting their financial offer more skillfully (Chiou, Droge & Hanvanich, 2002). For that very reason, companies are devoting, even more, time to the search for information about customers, and also conducting numerous research within this scope (Santouridis & Veraki, 2017).

It is worth emphasizing that the behaviors of consumers, and also the decisions relevant to their purchases, are exerted influence upon a number of factors both of internal and external kind alike. Amongst the most important are the following factors: personal-demographical, psychological, economic, marketing, and social-cultural.

An important issue, which ought to be taken into consideration in the course of conducting research, is differentiating between the notion of customer loyalty and that of customer satisfaction. Following the opinion of the authoress, customer loyalty is a notion broader than that of satisfaction. The former one means not only the inclination for the part of a customer towards making a purchase in the same company one more time but also to promote its brand in the customer's environment.

As for the sector of services is concerned, it is possible to formulate a non-ambiguous conclusion that customer content is built upon the basis of two

essential aspects – technical quality, and functional quality. A major feature of technical quality is a particular kind of a static character. That includes all those elements of a service which a consumer may assess before a service even starts to be provided. Functional quality, in turn, determines the manner of performing services with the application of the factors defined within the frameworks of technical quality. A major feature of this kind of quality is its dynamic character.

Considering a consumer that consciously looks only for a certain product, or services, a major feature of which is appropriate parameters that the consumer determined in advance. It is possible to assume that it is no one else, but a customer that decides if, and within what scope, a given services or tangible assets fulfill their requirements and needs (Ahrholdt, Gudergan & Ringle, 2017). As a result, a consumer assumes the role of a judge in terms of assessing the quality of a given product or service, not only while making a purchase but also while using them. To put it differently, the assessment made by a customer is the ultimate standards of the quality of services or material assets. At this point, it ought to mention that the standards of quality, constituting the foundation for a quality management system, are comparatively difficult to be determined because a customer expects that products or services will be tailored to their expectations in mind (Zimon, 2017). The principal factor determining conditioning the level of the quality of services is, in our times, both a service-provider (together with their expertise, and their abilities), and also a customer (acting in the role of the arbitrator in terms of the service being offered) alike (Jung & Yoo, 2017).

Without any doubt, it can be ascertained that every enterprise is dependent upon its customers.

In addition, it is no one else but a customer that plays a decisive role in its ‘to be or not to be’ on the market, that assumes the role of a peculiar ‘judge of quality’ of the products or services offered by the organization (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014). It is the intention of every organization seriously considering achieving a competitive advantage ought to do constant research into the content of a customer and subordinating all the processes occurring in the structure of a company to the requirements relevant to providing customer service. Furthermore, every organization ought to be aware of the current and the future needs of their customers, be capable of predicting and meeting them halfway. Because of this, is that kind of actions that are the key to developing a permanent success of every organization and their undertaking (Mandhachitara & Poolthong, 2011).

In the literature of the subject, the issues of research into customer satisfaction is quite frequently raised in the context of products or services of a commercial character, and there is research dedicated to the quality and innovativeness of mass events (Yoshida, James, & Cronin, 2013; Zimon, 2017). Considering this publication, the authoress raises the issues of customer loyalty

making a reference to quite a specific product, which is constituted by Rzeszow Juwenalia. It is worth emphasizing that the process of organizing mass events is very complex and time-consuming. Conducting this process correctly requires a comprehensive acquaintanceship with the tastes and expectations of customers, flexibility, and ability to react to arising difficulties in the course of an event (Yürük, Akyol & Şimşek, 2017). Also, organizers ought to be making all the efforts possible to raise the standards of quality of offered services, and also conduct continuous measurement of customer satisfaction (LoBuono, de Sevilha Gosling, Gonçalves & Medeiros, 2016) both before the event, and after it has taken place.

2. Objective of the dissertation, formulated hypothesis and course of research process

Rzeszow Juwenalia is considered to be one of the largest free-entry students events organized in Poland. For the organizers, the largest logistics undertaking is constituted by the Great Concert Final, which is an annual event organized on the campus of the Ignacy Łukasiewicz Memorial Rzeszow University of Technology. The three days of concerts, intertwined with competitions, and with numerous attractions, make (on average) more than 25 thousand of participants stay on the venue of the event every single day.

Rzeszow Juwenalia, similarly to any other mass event, requires an appropriate promotion.

The marketing activity of the organizers includes: conducting a web site of the event, profiles on social portals, and also advertising in the public space, on television, on the radio or the press. As it is commonly known, one of the ways of acquiring information is, using what one can hear on the grapevine. A lot of individuals making decisions relevant to participation in the event having beforehand contacted their acquaintances.

In connection with the above, the principal objective of this dissertation is to determine the loyalty of participants in XXIII Rzeszow Juwenalia with the application of the NPS indicator.

In the publication, it was attempted to verify the following research hypothesis: it is assumed that gender does not exert influence upon the inclination of participants in XXIII Rzeszow Juwenalia towards promoting the event amongst their acquaintances.

Striving to attain the adopted objective, and also to verify the formulated hypothesis, in February 2017, conducted a survey research made accessible in the Google form. The respondents were requested to provide their answers to the following question: 'How high is the probability of you recommending Rzeszow Juwenalia to your acquaintances?' The question was formulated upon

the basis of eleven-point scale, on which using the digit '0' means: 'I will not recommend the event without any doubt,' whereas using the digit '10' means: 'I will recommend the event without any doubt. The questionnaire contained respondents as well. In that section, respondents were requested to provide the information about their gender.

For the analysis of data, the STATISTICA 12 program was applied. In the statistical analysis, it was principally tables of numerousness, with the application of which the numerical collation, as well as the per cent one, of responses, were presented. To attain the verified hypothesis, the ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis test by ranks was applied. The processed results were presented in the graphical form.

In accordance with the authoress's opinion, the result of research may be an advantage in practice and will be constituting a valuable source of information for the organizers of Rzeszow Juwenalia.

3. Description of the applied method of research (NPS)

One of the methods of researching customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, which is becoming more popular nowadays, is the application of the Net Promotor Score. The NPS indicator makes it possible to determine the degree of customer content and customer loyalty of the organization by applying a single question: 'How high is the probability of you recommending the product (organization) to your family/acquaintances?'

A response is marked by respondents in which using the digit '0' means being completely unwilling to recommend the product (organization), whereas the digit '10' means recommending it is quite likely.

Upon the basis of the responses, the respondents may be divided into three principal categories:

- Score: 0-6 – represents so-called brand detractors. These are individuals not satisfied with a product. They may disseminate negative opinions about the organization, and also about the products or services offered by this organization. It ought to be remembered that respondents included into this segment may as well become a valuable source of information, indicating, among others, what aspects ought to be improved by the organization to raise the quality of its activities.
- Score: 7-8 – represents individuals included into the group of passive consumers. In this case, the respondents demonstrate a relevant content with the offer proposed by the organization being researched. Customers included into this segment will most likely go over to the competition when more attractive possibilities appear.

- Score: 9-10 – represents those referred to as brand promoters. These are individuals that use the offer of an organization on a regular basis and are fully satisfied with it. The respondents included into this segment may demonstrate inclinations towards expressing a positive opinion about this organization.

The NPS indicator is defined as the difference between the per cent share of promoters and brand detractors ($NPS = \% \text{ promoters} - \% \text{ detractors}$). The higher the NPS indicator is, the stronger loyalty towards the organization is. It is assumed that the positive result for an organization ought to amount to no less than 50% (Seth *et al.*, 2016).

The principal advantage of the NPS method is simplicity in the field of constructing and conducting the research and the analysis of the obtained results. In turn, the shortcoming is the limited quantity of information which may be obtained by a canvasser. The reason for that is that this indicator shows the level of customer content and customer loyalty customers solely. However, it does not make it possible to determine the fields which ought to be improved precisely.

4. Presentation of the results of research

4.1. Profile of respondents

During the research, 1,876 individuals completed the questionnaire. 354 of the respondents declared that they did not participate in XXIII Rzeszow Juwenalia; therefore, the survey was not continued. The final research sample included 1,520 individuals.

As it was presented in Figure 1, the majority of the members of the studied group are women, the number of whom equals 838, which constitutes 55% of the total number of the surveyed. The questionnaire was also completed by 682 men that constitute 45% of all the respondents.

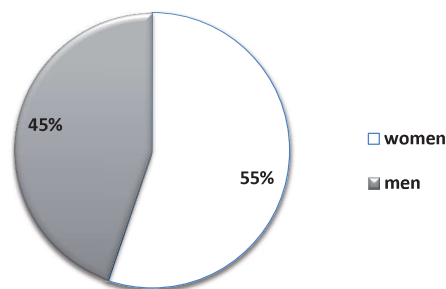


Figure 1. Profile of respondents – gender

4.2. Determining the loyalty of participants in XXIII Rzeszow Juwenalia

Table 1, and Figure 2, present the results of the research relevant to the answers to the question. The results of the research indicate that 798 of the surveyed (51.91%) specified that they would without any doubt recommend Rzeszow Juwenalia to their acquaintances. In turn, as few as four individuals (0.26%) would not promote the event in their location.

Table 1. Table numerosness for obtained responses

Scale	Number	Accumulated number	Per cent	Accumulated per cent
0	4	4	0.26	0.26
1	0	4	0.00	0.26
2	6	10	0.39	0.66
3	11	21	0.72	1.38
4	10	31	0.66	2.04
5	29	60	1.91	3.95
6	53	113	3.49	7.43
7	106	219	6.97	14.41
8	235	454	15.46	29.87
9	277	731	18.22	48.09
10	789	1,520	51.91	100.00

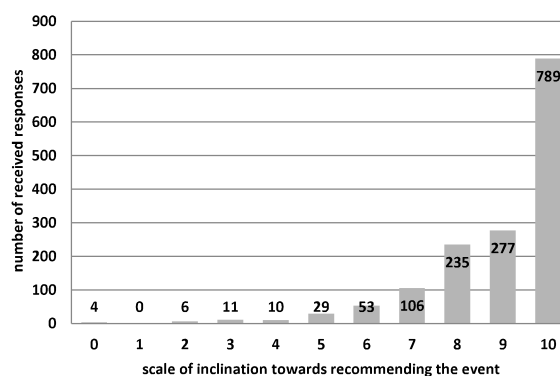


Figure 2. Graphic presentation of the obtained results of research

Analyzing the received results in the context of the NPS method, it is possible to formulate the following conclusions:

- the detractors of Rzeszow Juwenalia, who chose a response between 0 and 6, constitute merely as few as 7.43% of all the respondents. Their number amounts to 113 individuals;

- into the group of passive participants, and that means individuals that chose a response between 7 and 8, 341 respondents were included. They constitute 22.44% of the total number of the studied;
- promoters of Rzeszow Juwenalia is the largest group amongst the surveyed – 1,066 individuals. They constitute 70.13% of all the respondents,
- after determining the difference between the per cent share of the promoters (70.13%) and that of the detractors of Rzeszow Juwenalia (7.43%), it is found that the NPS indicator amounts to 62.70%. It is possible to conclude that this is an excellent result. It indicates a high level of satisfaction with participation in last year's event, and willingness to promote the event in one's environment.

4.3. Determining correlations between gender and loyalty

It was resolved that in the further part of research it will be checked whether there was a possible influence of gender upon the inclination of participants in Rzeszow Juwenalia towards promoting the event amongst their acquaintances. To attain this objective, the ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis test by ranks was applied.

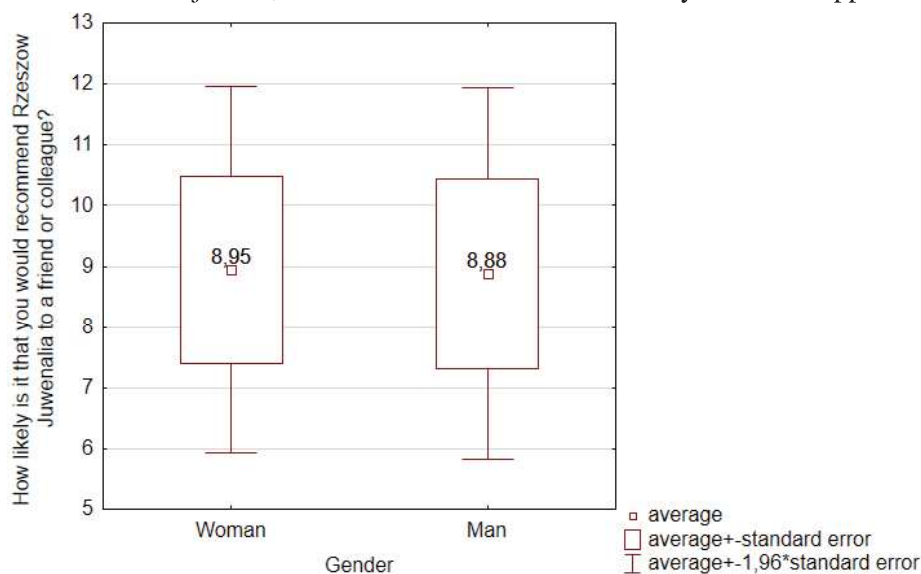


Figure 3. Analysis of the correlation between gender and inclination of participants in Rzeszow Juwenalia towards promoting the event amongst their acquaintances

The described results demonstrate the p test probability level, and the adopted level of significance = 0.05, making it possible to adopt the null hypothesis. Therefore, the value of ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis test by ranks $H(1, N = 1,520) = 2.145402$, and also $p = 0.1430$, made it possible to ascertain that there is no correlation between gender and the inclination of participants in Rzeszow Juwenalia towards promoting the event amongst their acquaintances.

In addition, the data contained in Figure 3 make it possible to ascertain that the average obtained results of assessments in particular studied groups differ insignificantly. The average assessment amongst the women amounted to 8.95, and, in turn, amongst men, the averaged result was at the level of 8.88.

5. Conclusions

Customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, are undeniable issues which ought to be constantly monitored by the organizations of all types. The reason for that is that the collected information within this scope is the starting point for developing a product or a service in the acceptable standards of quality (Markey, Rethierheld & Dullweber, 2009; Wolniak, 2013). The issues of the quality of services provided during mass events is certainly a priority because their level determines the frequency, which is a significant criterion for a successful event. Taking that into consideration, attention to this dissertation was focused on the analysis of customer satisfaction with the received service, the expression of which is loyalty. Upon the basis of conducted research, it was established that a clear majority of participants in Rzeszow Juwenalia was satisfied with the organization of the event. In addition to that, 70.13 % of them promote this event in their environment.

The results of the research made it possible to verify the adopted research hypothesis, and to learn that, most likely, there is no real correlation between gender and inclination of participants in Rzeszow Juwenalia to promote the event amongst their acquaintances.

Both women and men alike assess the organization of Rzeszow Juwenalia and similarly express willingness to advertise this event amongst their acquaintances.

In addition, the obtained results ought to be a valuable piece of advice for the organizers of the future events, and they will make it possible to make the optimum choice of events exerting influence upon the increase in the attractiveness of the event.

To summarize, attention ought to be paid to the highest standards of customer service. Mass events participants change their tastes and requirements under the influence of earlier participation in the event. Due to these circumstances, the organizers ought to annually analyze their offer,

make changes, take actions, and perfecting it in accordance with new trends. This way, they will raise the quality of the project, which will also contribute to increasing the satisfaction of participants, and the prestige of the event.

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Biographical note

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