Self-Service as a Motivation to Choose Innovative Services

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Annotation

Self-service as an innovative service attracts many opinions about the need, use, comfort and future opportunities. Scientists recognize the advantages self-service over traditional service and conduct research on how to motivate consumers to switch to self-service. This paper analyzes application of technology-based self-service with an insight into the relationship among the participants of the service process. Another relevant issue is related to the consumer motivation for self-service. The objective is, based on the theoretical conception of self-service as innovative service, to identify reasons for choosing self-service. The theoretical part of the paper provides analysis of the essence of self-service as innovative service. Analysis is based upon the results of empirical research conducted in March 2012 in Lithuanian (N = 112). The paper highlights factors that influence consumer motivation to choose self-service identified in online survey. It was found out that companies that offer self-service as innovative service are modifying consumer behavior by liberating consumers and motivating them to act.

Keywords: service, self-service, innovation, motivating factors.

Introduction

Development and adoption of innovative services can be viewed as an important scientific and technical progress as well as a social, economic and technological modernization factor related to targeted opportunities to improve all areas of the service sector. Increasing competition in the service sector is motivating service companies to look for new technological business solutions, create new self-service-based technologies and ensure higher efficiency. Service companies may survive in a rapidly changing market environment by continually enhancing their competitiveness.

Research problem and its relevance. Innovation in the service sector is valuable insofar as it can improve business performance and create preconditions to meet user needs. Replacement of traditional service by innovative self-service should be useful not only for the company but also engage and motivate consumers to select it. Ding, Verma, Iqbal (2007) who analyze the potential of innovative self-service technology (SST) over traditional service emphasize

that customer servicing by SST is more effective than personalized service because of a shorter time of performance, reduced number of staff and possibilities to reduce service costs what will attract more customers and increase service value. Therefore it is expedient to apply a new service technology of a minimum direct contact with consumers. Zeithaml (2002) advocates self-service in the service sector and emphasizes that service provided without a direct contact not only reduces costs but also improves its quality. Therefore innovative self-service is becoming particularly important billing customers in shopping centers. It is important to investigate reasons for choosing self-service, to find out obstacles and motivation to use innovative self-service.

The paper mainly draws on foreign authors. Lithuanian authors Bivainis and Drejeris (2009) propose technologies that provide a minimum direct contact with consumers in the service sector. Foreign authors Chang (2011), Rust, Chung (2006) and Frambach, Roest (2007) emphasize innovativeness of self-service and its advantages over traditional service; Ding, Verma, Iqbal (2007), Featherman, Pavlou (2003) and Chattopadhey, Parida (2007) submit parameters that evaluate consumer motivation and SST.

Self-checkouts in the shopping centers of Lithuania are still a great innovation, thus the issue of choosing self-service by the consumer has been insufficiently studied. Literature on the theme is also lacking. Novelty of this study is based on literature review but not much information on self-service as a motivation to choose innovative service has been found, research and practical examples are also lacking. The paper on a motivational aspect of choosing self-service as innovative service is relatively new in the scientific context.

Research problem. This paper analyses the following issues: What factors, according studies, motivate consumers to use self-service? What are challenges related to suitability of a self-service technology?

Research object: self-service as an innovative service.

Research objective: to identify factors that motivate to choose self-service using the theoretical concept of self-service as an innovative service.

Reasearch methods: comparative analysis of scientific literature, online survey.

Self-service as innovative service

An increasing number of self-service points in the financial, communication, retail and other sectors has sparked an academic interest in technology and customer interaction (Huettinger, Čubrinckas, 2011, p. 203). Self-service is a type of service where the customer perceives the act of purchasing as a personal self-involvement in the service (Huettinger, Čubrinckas, 2011, p. 212). The concept of self-service combines psychological and emotional aspects but the most significant is the aspect of benefit offered to the customer (Karlof, Lovingsson, 2006). The customer's purchasing experience affects the quality of service therefore it is very important to consider evaluation of innovative service from the user's point of view. Adopting self-service in shopping centers from the consumer's point of view is related to trust in the service therefore it is necessary to analyze factors that influence the consumer's perception of innovative service to replace traditional service.

Substitution of humans by technology brings great benefit for the trade of goods and services. Innovative technology in the service sector often motivates customers to get service without assistance. For example, a credit card reader in a petrol station facilitates gasoline purchasing, the Internet –flight booking.

The role of technology in its various forms in service is lead to discuss the emergence of technology-enabled self-service (Fitzsimmons, A.J., Fitzsimmons, J.M., 2011, p. 96). Chang (2011) notes the advantages of adopting SST and cites, Young and Lovelock (1979) argue that "globalization and internationalization force companies to keep costs down; if the process can be designed in such a way that the customer could serve him/herself, costs can be kept down and the company can be profitable". Chang (2011), basing on Bowen's (1986) theory, supports this approach, which views the customer as the employee because it would not only save costs but also increase the quality of service.

Service can be seen as a dynamic interaction among the employee, the company and the customer. When the company has an effective self-service system, it helps to increase productivity (Dabholkar, 1996). Once technology is used in the service delivery process, not only the employee (internal customer) can use self-service and increase job efficiency but the customer will be able to get much more service by him/herself (Chang, 2011, p. 4). Companies are increasingly attempting to motivate the customer to use a range of innovative services by him/herself (Bitner, Brown, Meuter, 2000, p. 141). This allows them to be more efficient, they manage customers and may generate higher margins due to a better balance between costumers' needs and offered products (Rust, Chung, 2006, p. 570; Frambach, Roest, 2007, p. 28).

In the context of this study self-service as an innovative service is understood as an action or series of actions, marked by physical contact with the equipment or machinery that brings satisfaction to users because customers' participation in service affects interaction with the equipment. Chang (2011) notes importance of understanding the complexity of a growing infusion of technology in customer service, Parasuraman (1996) adds the impact of *technology in the "s*ervice triangle" and calls it "the service pyramid". "The service pyramid" focuses on transformations of technology for each player in the service triangle. Particularly, the process with technology the customer experiences is totally different from a traditional human contact (moment of truth) even though the outcome for the customer is usually the same (Chang, 2011, p. 3) (see Fig. 1.).

Innovative self-service changes consumers' perception of the same (traditional) service, rapid technological changes encourage them to get quickly accustomed to innovations. Using self-service technology the customer finishes the whole service process using equipment (Hoffman, Bateson, 2001) and that shows fundamental differences between traditional and self-service through differences in personal interaction.

Because the client is actively involved in the service development process, it makes him feel more responsible for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with service. This sense of responsibility is even stronger in when customers perform the biggest part of the task of service creation in the case of self-service technologies (Harris, Grewal et al., 2006, p. 425).
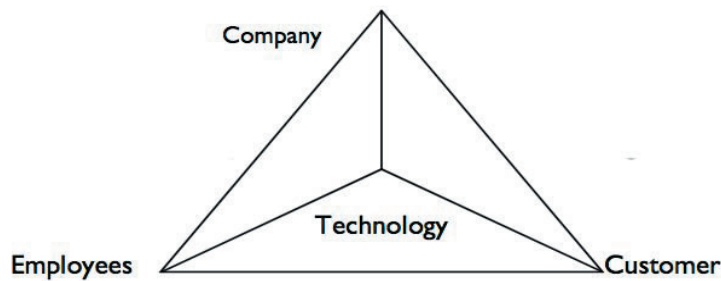
Fig. 1. Service pyramid

Sources: Kotler (1994), Parasuraman (1996).

The advantage of a contactless service technology is that the service user participates in the process and feels more responsible for his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with service which enhances his motivation. Technological innovations change consumers' perceptions about service therefore companies offering self-service as innovative service modify their behavior liberating and motivating them to act.

Self-service as an integrated innovation of motivation

The concept of innovation is variously defined in scientific literature. Melnikas, Jokūbavičiaus, Strazdas (2000) provide a clear definition of innovation saying that *innovation is a functional and essentially advanced novelty that mainly focuses on the replacement of the "old" with the "new"*. Analyzing self-service innovations that modify traditional service self-service is seen as an innovative feature that provides benefits for both the consumer and the company and motivates to act.

Self-service in the context of innovation can be named *a complex innovation* because it incorporates both *technological and social aspects*. The technological aspect is related to new technologies enabling the user to buy products without direct contact with the seller, while the social aspect is that the service user becomes a participant in the process.

An objective assessment of technologies and an appropriate choice of relevant services for each company is needed because increasing growing competition in the services market motivates service companies to look for technology that raise the quality and efficiency of service and decrease its costs (Bitner, 2001, p. 376). Technology has value only if it improves business performance and creates preconditions to meet consumers' needs. Technological modernization improves the efficiency and rationality, reduces labor costs and gives opportunities to provide improved and more modern services. New technologies must firstly *motivate service participants to use new service* because that is what each company

is seeking when it using self-service as a complex innovation.

Bivainis and Drejeris (2009, p. 95) argue that flexible service technology affects customer satisfaction – enhances their motivation; they emphasize, according to Harvey, Lefebvre (1997), flexibility of service technology identifying flexibility as one of the most important technological attributes. Studies show that the majority of respondents assess self-service technology as more trustworthy than a human salesperson (Komiak, Wang et al., 2005, p. 56). The importance of autonomy is very important in the SST context as customers can be serviced anywhere at any time they wish but that more applicable to virtual technologies than to physical technologies (self checkout points) where the place is significant.

It should be noted that different characteristics of accessibility of service as technology evaluation criteria is also emphasized by Parasuraman (2002) who argues that the characteristics of service have to comply with the tolerance limits, which are different for different users. Harvey, Lefebvre (1997) believe that different markets choose flexible service technology and that allows them to meet needs of different segments of consumers. According to Parasuraman (2002), the features of new service have to comply with consumers' tolerance limits (see Fig. 2, a, b), and only such service will increase competitiveness of a company and consumer loyalty. Especially useful are services which exceed tolerance limits (see Fig. 2, c). Parasuraman (2002) claims that new service technologies below limits tolerance (see Fig. 2, d) must be regarded as inappropriate. An organization can expect to achieve an optimal goal when introduced self-service is a complex innovation exceeding the limits of the user's tolerance.

Ding, Verma, Iqbal (2007) link choice of technology to the nature of interaction. They agree that a proper choice of service technology increases service efficiency. Analyzing possibilities of self-service technology they emphasize that self-service technology is more efficient than personalized service be-

cause of a shorter service time, reduced number of staff, opportunities to reduce costs and attract more users. They argue that right use of service technology motivates consumers to use service more frequently, increases the value of the service and the company's profitability.

A *perceived risk,* the feeling of uncertainty regarding possible negative consequences of using a product or service (Featherman, Pavlou, 2003, p. 451–474)*,* is one of the most important factors that affect consumer behavior. It is a combination of un-

certainty plus seriousness of outcomes involved, expectation of losses in terms of purchasing and privacy leading to operational risk (Featherman, Pavlou, 2003). A consumers' self-consciousness can influence willingness to use self-service. That depends on the level of the consumer's self-consciousness or its lack. An interesting fact is provided in the latest research of Featherman, Pavlou (2003): people with greater self-consciousness hesitate to use SST. A social risk is a factor influencing people's reluctance to use technology–based services.
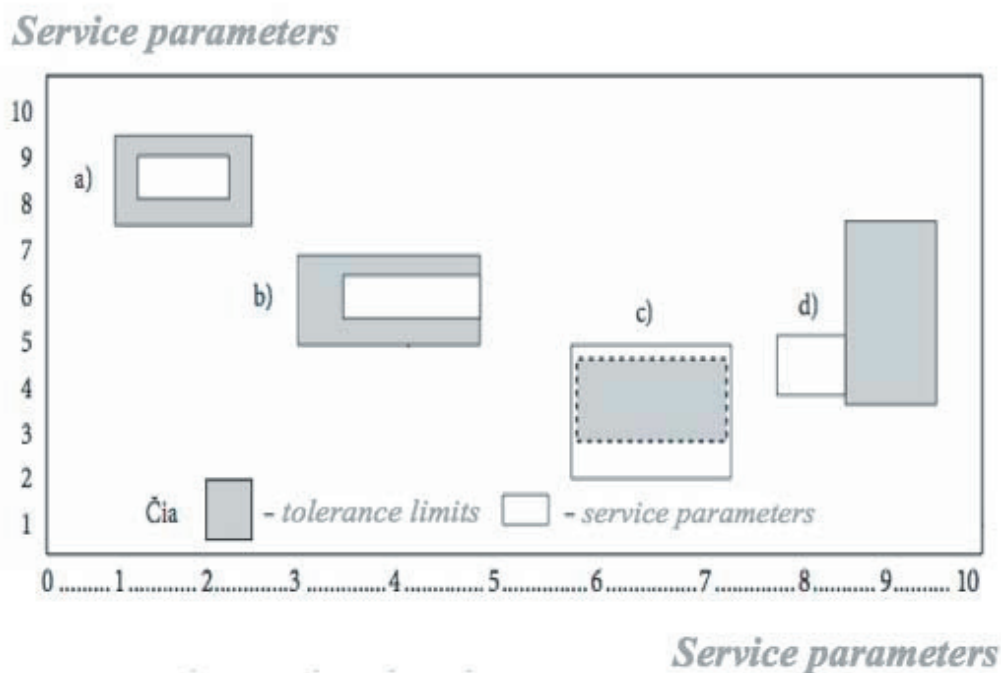
Fig. 2. Service parameters and tolerance limits for regulatory compliance

Source: compiled by Parasuraman (2002).

Suitability of service technology is determined by many different factors. Some of them directly relate to service, others to the company, the consumer and other environmental conditions. As Reid (2007) is saying in his study (quoting Grönroos): "service is an interaction between the consumer and the service provider" and "physical measures are designed solely to facilitate the delivery process" (Reid, 2007, p. 201). Parida and Chattopadhey (2007) referring to the opinions of other authors point out three groups of the most important criteria assessing service delivery technology:

• Criteria for assessing consumer and staff satisfaction with the innovation;
• Criteria for evaluating capabilities of technical equipment;
• Criteria for evaluating options of service customization.

Self-service as a complex innovation satisfies the following three categories of criteria but the fact that users can easily lose self-determination to choose new service for over-complicated features that are not easily to be understood must be taken into consideration. Users of such services very quickly get frustrated when they fail to understand them (Bitner, Ostrom, Meuter, 2002, p. 99). Introducing self-service companies must choose suitable technology because that has *a significant impact on consumers' needs*, their motivation, staff performance, service quality and results.

Research methodology

A survey method was chosen to identify factors that motivate to choose self-service using the theoretical concept of self-service as innovative service. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted in

March 2012. The questionnaire was compiled on the bases of studied scientific literature, papers, etc. on self-service as a motivation to choose innovative service. Bitner (2001); Bitner, Meuter, Ostrom (2002) who conducted research on successful introduction of self-service technology, analysed and interpreted results, Dabholkar (1996); Frambach, Roest, (2007) who focused on evaluations of new technology-based self service by consumers, Zeithaml (2002) who studied excellence of virtual service sho;d be mentioned here.

The compiled questionnaire was placed on the website *publika.lt* on 14 March 2012 with the link to facebook (most popular and fast tool of finding suitable respondents). To ensure reliability it was indicated that the respondents must have used self-checkouts in Lithuania. The survey sample is based on Tidikis (2003) and Kardelis (2005). 112 questionnaires were filled out, all respondents used self-checkouts in Maxima or other shopping centers. The obtained data were computed by Exel program using the following formula:

$$N = \sum f^n(1*R\square+2*R\square+3*R\square+4*R\square+5*R\square),$$
which

$R = R\square+R\square+R\square+R\square+R\square = 112$

R – respondents f – claims

Respondents by gender: 82 (73.2%) women, 30 (26.8%) men. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts: introduction-instruction, main and final. The questionnaire was prepared using *publika.lt* and *Word* versions.

Research results

Speaking about innovative self-service it is very importanat to understand what motivates consumers to use self-service. As it lets users actively participate in service creation the survey aimed at identifying customers' perceptions and motivation to choose self-service (see Table 1). The Likert scale was used to classify and evaluate the strength of motivating factors (see Table 2), higher scored motivating factors were stronger.

Table 1

Factors motivating to choose self-service

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
1. …I knew very well about self-checkouts when I saw them in the shopping center	8	7.14%	24	21.43%	35	31.25%	26	23.21%	19	16.96%	112
2. …I decided to use a self-checkout because I found it interesting and new	1	0.89%	6	5.36%	8	7.14%	71	63.39%	26	23.21%	112
3. …I felt confused using self-service for the first time	7	6.25%	18	16.07%	22	19.64%	47	41.96%	18	16.07%	112
4. …I chose self-service because I bought not many things	4	3.57%	13	11.61%	32	28.57%	45	40.18%	18	16.07%	112
5. …I was encouraged to use self-service mainly because it was advertised	23	20.54%	43	38.39%	22	19.64%	20	17.86%	4	3.57%	112
6. …I chose self-service because I wanted to save time	6	5.36%	20	17.86%	20	17.86%	41	36.61%	25	22.32%	112
7. …I chose self-service because I think it is more reliable than traditional service	17	5.18%	42	37.5%	34	30.36%	11	9.82%	8	7.14%	112
Total	66	8.42%	166	21.17%	173	22.07%	261	33.29%	118	15.05%	

The statement "*…I knew very well about the self-checkouts when I saw them in the shopping center*" got 360 (64.3%) out of 560. It can be concluded that consumers were informed about self-service alternative. The statement "*…I decided to use a self-*

checkout because I found it interesting and new" got 451 scores (80.5%). This proves that the respondents' motivation factors to use self-service were curiosity and novelty and that, according to Featherman and Pavlou (2003), proves that the respondents in Lithu-

ania are self-confident and tend to use technological innovations. The third (negative) statement "…*I felt scared using self-service for the first time*" got 285 scores (50.9%). That shows that "technological anxiety" has a significant negative impact on customers' satisfaction and their intention to use SST; according to Bitner, Ostrom, Meuter (2003), *technological anxiety* is a demotivator, consumers tend to doubt about their abilities to act on their own because of personal reasons or non-competence related to fear and expectations.

Table 2

Strength of motivating factors

T	R	R*1	R	R*2	R	R*3	R	R*4	R	R*5	N	P
1.	8	8	24	48	35	105	26	104	19	95	360	64.3%
2.	1	1	6	12	8	24	71	284	26	130	451	80.5%
3.	18	18	47	94	22	66	18	72	7	35	285	50.9%
4.	4	4	13	26	32	96	45	180	18	90	396	70.7%
5.	23	23	43	86	22	66	20	80	4	20	275	49.1%
6.	6	6	20	40	20	60	41	164	25	125	395	70.5%
7.	17	17	42	84	34	102	11	44	8	40	287	51.3%
N		94		368		519		950		518	2,449	62.5%

* T – statement position, R – respondents, N –sum of scores, P – percentage

The statement "…*I chose to use self-service because I did not buy many things*" got 396 scores (70.7%). That leads to the conclusion that one of the reasons for choosing self-service is buying a few things, i.e. want to save efforts (functional benefit). The statement "…*I was encouraged to use self-service mainly because it was advertised*" got 275 scores (49.1%). That shows that the majority of the respondents disagreed that advertising is a strong motivator to use self-service. It should be noted that it is a marketing communication problem because advertising is extremely important in shaping customer motivation and decision to choose self-service. Further studies could focus on the importance of advertising for choosing innovative self-service. The statement "…*I chose self-service because I wanted to save time*" got 395 scores (70.5%). That proves that the majority of users feel motivated to use self-service because of a desire to save time (functional benefit). The state-

ment "…*I chose self-service because I think it is more reliable than traditional service*" got only 287 scores (51.3%). It can be concluded that more than half of the respondents (52.7%) did not feel that self-service is more reliable than traditional service. That does not support the theory of Komiak, Wang, Benbasat (2005) who say that consumers perceive self-services as more reliable than traditional, human-assisted, service.

Another objective of the study was to identify self-service as an innovative service motivating factor related to the suitability of a self-service technology. The task was to find out willingness to use self-service on a regular basis in the future and how it depends on the suitability of a self-service technology. Summed up results are presented in Table 3. The Likert scale was used to classify and evaluate the strength of motivating factors (see Table 4).

Table 3

Motivating factors related to the suitability of a self-service technology

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
1. …it was difficult to understand the menu of the self-checkout point and functions	13	11.61%	47	41.96%	36	32.14%	8	7.14%	8	7.14%	112
2. … if I wanted I could consult a shop assistant	1	0.89%	20	17.86%	22	19.64%	51	45.54%	18	16.07%	112

3. …I felt able to control the situation myself	3	2.68%	18	16.07%	45	40.18%	38	33.93%	8	7.14%	112
4. …I could use my loyalty/discount card	5	4.46%	10	8.93%	43	38.39%	42	37.5%	12	10.71%	112
5. ...I was sure about my privacy using self-service	4	3.57%	11	9.82%	57	50.89%	30	26.79%	10	8.93%	112
6. …using a self-checkout for the first time I felt I needed a shop assistant's help	4	3.57%	18	16.07%	14	12.5%	58	51.79%	18	16.07%	112
7. ...I felt safe and confident using self-service	0	0%	10	8.93%	63	56.25%	33	29.46%	6	5.36%	112
Total	30	3.83%	134	17.09%	280	35.71%	260	33.16%	80	10.2%	

The statement (negative), (demotivating factor) "…*it was difficult to understand the menu of the self-checkout point and functions*" got 385 scores (68.8%). The majority of the respondents disagreed that the menu and functions of self-checkout points are difficult to understand. According to Bitner, Ostrom, Meuter (2002), it can be concluded that most customers do not lose *consumer readiness* to use self-service because of technology, it is not too complicated. The statement "…*if I wanted I could consult a shop assistant*" got 401 scores (71.6%), help of shop assistants was ready. According to Fitzsimmons, A.J., Fitzsimmons, J.M. (2011), availability of a *contact employee* is strategically important for the consumer when he needs help using technology; he must be confident he gets it in case the system does not function or he is not competent to use it (security benefit).

The statement "…*I felt able to control the situation myself*" got 366 scores (65.4%). It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents controlled the situation using self-service, it is one of motivating benefits. The majority of the respondents understood their role, knew what to do (Bitner, Ostrom, Meuter, 2002), were prepared to use self-service, had skills, mental and physical abilities. The statement "…*I could use my loyalty/discount card*" got 382 scores (68.2%). It means that such incentives as discount/loyalty cards are important in self-service.. Bivainis and Drejeris (2009) say that flexibility affects customer satisfaction, so it can be concluded that SST was flexible for the respondents. According to Harvey and Lefebvre (1997), flexibility is one of the most important characteristics of technology..

Table 4

Strength of motivating factors related to the suitability of a self-service technology

T	R	R*1	R	R*2	R	R*3	R	R*4	R	R*5	N	P
1.	8	**8**	8	**16**	36	**108**	47	**188**	13	**65**	**385**	**68.8%**
2.	1	**1**	20	**40**	22	**66**	51	**204**	18	**90**	**401**	**71.6%**
3.	3	**3**	18	**36**	45	**135**	38	**152**	8	**40**	**366**	**65.4%**
4.	5	**5**	10	**20**	43	**129**	42	**168**	12	**60**	**382**	**68.2%**
5.	4	**4**	11	**22**	57	**171**	30	**120**	10	**50**	**367**	**65.5%**
6.	18	**18**	58	**116**	14	**42**	18	**72**	4	**20**	**268**	**47.9%**
7.	0	**0**	10	**20**	63	**189**	33	**132**	6	**30**	**371**	**66.3%**
N		**98**		**398**		**840**		**908**		**296**	**2,540**	**64.8%**

T – statement position, R – respondents, N – the sum of points, P – percentage.

Half of the respondents (50.9%) had no clear opinion about the statement "…*I was sure about my privacy using self-service*", it got 367 points (65.5%). 35.7% of the respondents believed that self-service ensures greater privacy. That confirmed the theory of Bitner, Ostrom, Meuter (2002) who say that some

customers prefer self-service to avoid direct contact with service staff). The statement "…*using a self-checkout for the first time I felt I needed a shop assistant's help*" (negative motivating factor) got 268 scores (47.9%), that was the lowest score. Most users using self-checkouts for the first time confirmed

that they needed help. That factor has a big impact on the quality of users' experience when his stress related to service is reduced. It is particularly important to ensure high quality of service, the value of *service staff* significantly increases because of the customer's *need to interact with service staff*. Technological preparation of service staff as well as their interpersonal skills are very important when such problems arise (Fitzsimmons, A.J., Fitzsimmons, J.M., 2011, p. 106; Chang, 2011). The majority of the respondents had problems using self-checkout points in Lithuania for the first time but that is not accurate because in some cases they needed help buying alcohol beverages or tobacco (the respondents' age needs to be checked). The statement "*…I felt safe and confident using self-service*" got 371 scores (66.3%) and was evaluated as sufficiently positive but it should be noted that more than half of the respondents (56.3%) had no clear opinion (neither agreed nor disagreed). It can be stated that 34.9% of the respondents felt really confident and safe about self-service and assumed that SST functioned well and consumers' confidence in self-service is largely related to loyalty.

All motivating factors could collect minimum 784 scores (112 * 7) and maximum 3,920 scores (112 * 35). Collected 2 540 scores (64.8%) allow concluding that the majority of the respondents positively assessed self-service as innovative service s and its technical suitability. It should be noted that almost all respondents recognized significance of technology (individual questionnaire) in self-service as an innovative service process, valued it highly, did not avoid using SST - average significance of technology in their lives was measured by 79.4%.

Conclusions

- The fact that self-service is defined as innovative service means that technology development gives consumers a possibility to use SST without any direct contact with service staff. That saves customers' time, reduces costs, makes it easily accessibile and gives more pleasure than personalized service. All these benefits motivate customers to use self-service again.

- Flexibility of service technology, an essential feature of self-service, affects customers' satisfaction , enhances their motivation and increses capabilities to introduce self-service. Altthough introducing self-service is difficult, as with all innovations, gradually it will be introduced in Lithuania and extend user tolerance limits.

- The study showed that the respondents are self-confident in Lithuania and do not avoid technological innovation. That confirms Featherman and Pavlou (2003) who claim that success of techno-

logical innovations depends on how customers react to SST and how they assess innovative services. Therefore self-service as innovative service has a future in Lithuania and motivates consumers to choose this kind of service.

- Research findings showed that innovative self-service as motivation had more influence on women (73.2%), so it can be concluded that women buy goods for the family, are educated enough and receptive to innovations.

- Although research findings confirmed that motivating factors related to self-service technology are influential enough, self-service checkout points are not completely adequate to replace traditional service (especially when buying many goods) and therefore it is necessary to use both modes of service.

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Savitarna kaip motyvacija pasirenkant inovatyvias paslaugas

Santrauka

Inovatyvių paslaugų kūrimas ir jų taikymas gali būti suvokiamas kaip svarbus mokslo ir technikos pažangos bei socialinio, ekonominio ir technologinio modernizavimo veiksnys, glaudžiai sietinas su galimybėmis kryptingai tobulinti visas paslaugų sferos sritis. Stiprėjanti konkurencija paslaugų sektoriuje skatina paslaugų įmones ieškoti naujų verslo technologinių sprendimų, kurti naujas paslaugų technologijas, kurias taikant paslaugos teikiamos efektyviau. Tik nuolat didinančios konkurencingumą paslaugų įmonės gali išsilaikyti rinkoje greitai kintančios aplinkos sąlygomis.

Technologinės inovacijos paslaugose vertingos tiek, kiek jos gali padidinti įmonės veiklos efektyvumą ir sudaro prielaidas tenkinti vartotojo poreikius. Savitarna kaip inovatyvi paslauga turi būti ne tik naudinga įmonei, bet ir sudominti bei motyvuoti vartotojus pasirinkti ją, pakeičiant tradicines paslaugas. Zeithaml (2002), propaguodamas savitarnos diegimą paslaugų sektoriuje, pabrėžia, kad paslaugos, teikiamos be tiesioginių kontaktų, ne tik mažina sąnaudas, bet ir gerina paslaugų kokybę, todėl savitarna kaip inovatyvi paslauga tampa ypač aktuali prekybos centrų klientų atsiskaitymo galimybe. Aktualu ištirti savitarnos pasirinkimo motyvus, kad būtų išsiaiškinta, kas trukdo ir kas motyvuoja savitarnos kaip inovatyvios paslaugos pasirinkimą.

Straipsnio *tikslas* – remiantis teorine savitarnos kaip inovatyvios paslaugos samprata, identifikuoti šios paslaugos pasirinkimo motyvus. Kai paslauga yra automatizuojama, ne tik darbuotojai (vidiniai klientai) gali savo darbą atlikti efektyviau, bet ir išoriniai klientai (vartotojai) gali atlikti paslaugos procesą, jį valdydami patys. Nustatyta, kad savitarnos technologijos taikymas yra efektyvesnis negu individualizuotas dėl trumpesnio aptarnavimo laiko, personalo skaičiaus galimo mažinimo, galimybės mažinti paslaugų kainą ir tuo patraukti daugiau vartotojų. Tinkamai parinkta paslaugos technologija *didina vartotojų motyvaciją*, skatina dažnesnį naudojimąsi paslaugomis, kelia paslaugos vertę, todėl didėja įmonės pelningumas.

Savitarnos kaip inovatyvios paslaugos diegimas finansų, ryšių, mažmeninės prekybos ir kituose sektoriuose kelia domėjimąsi aptarnavimo technologijų ir klientų sąveikos požiūriu. Savitarna yra tokio tipo paslauga, kai klientas suvokia pirkimo veiksmą kaip asmenišką ir savarankišką dalyvavimą, kuriant aptarnavimą. Savitarnos paslaugos koncepcija apima labai sudėtingas verčių kombinacijas, kurių raiška – psichologinio bei emocinio pobūdžio, tačiau reikšmingiausias aspektas yra tas, kad apima naudą, kuri siūloma klientui.

Kadangi savitarna kaip inovatyvi paslauga įgalina klientą aktyviai dalyvauti paslaugos kūrime, anketiniu tyrimu, atliktu 2012 m. kovo mėnesį Lietuvoje (N = 112), siekta nustatyti klientų suvokimą apie paslaugą bei identifikuoti vartotojo motyvaciją rinktis šią paslaugą. Analizuojant apklausos rezultatus, buvo bandoma išsiaiškinti motyvuojančius veiksnius ir jų stiprumą, lemiančius vartotojų apsisprendimą naudotis savitarnos paslauga. Tyrimo rezultatų analizė įgalino nustatyti, kad savitarnos išbandymo motyvacija siejasi su įdomumo ir

naujumo veiksniais. Vadinasi, respondentams būdingas pasitikėjimas savimi, jie nevengia technologinių naujovių. Svarbus motyvas naudotis savitarna vartotojams – noras sutaupyti laiko atsiskaitant už nemažą prekių kiekį.

Kitas tyrimo uždavinys – identifikuoti savitarnos kaip inovatyvios paslaugos motyvuojančius veiksnius, susijusius su savitarnos technologijos tinkamumu. Siekta išsiaiškinti respondentų norą pakartotinai naudotis savitarnos paslauga ateityje, ir kaip tai priklauso nuo paslaugos procese naudojamos technologijos tinkamumo. Nustatyta, kad dauguma vartotojų nepraranda ryžto rinktis savitarnos ir ateityje dėl pernelyg sudėtingų funkcijų, kurios nėra lengvai suprantamos, todėl technologijos dizainas vis dėlto pasiteisino, nes nebuvo per aukšto technologinio sudėtingumo lygio. Paaiškėjo, kad dauguma respondentų savitarnos naudojimo procese jautėsi puikiai kontroliuojantys situaciją; kontrolė – viena vartotojus motyvuojančių naudų. Pažymėtina, kad beveik visi respondentai technologijos reikšmingumą savitarnos kaip inovatyvios paslaugos naudojimo procese vertino stipriai, vadinasi, technologijomis naudotis nevengia, vidutinė technologijų reikšmingumo jų gyvenime reikšmė – 79,4 proc.

Įvertinant savitarnos kaip inovatyvios paslaugos pasirinkimo motyvaciją, galima daryti tokias išvadas:

- Savitarna apibrėžiama kaip inovatyvi paslauga, vadinasi, dėl sukurtų technologijų vartotojai gali naudotis ja nepriklausomai nuo tiesioginio darbuotojų dalyvavimo paslaugos teikimo procese, padeda klientams taupyti laiką, sumažinti išlaidas ir suteikti paprastą pasiekiamumą bei malonumą, geresnį negu individualizuotų paslaugų, todėl veikia motyvuojančiai vartotojo požiūriu.

- Paslaugų technologijos lankstumas, kaip esminė savitarnos savybė, daro įtaką vartotojų pasitenkinimui – stiprina jų motyvaciją, o tai plečia savitarnos diegimo galimybes. Nors sunkiai, kaip ir visos inovacijos, bet šios pamažu įsitvirtins ir Lietuvos prekybos centruose, praplėsdamos vartotojų tolerancijos ribas.

- Tyrimo metu nustatyta, kad Lietuvos respondentams būdingas pasitikėjimas savimi, nevengiant technologinių naujovių, o tai patvirtina Featherman ir Pavlou (2003) teiginius apie tai, kad technologinių inovacijų sėkmė priklauso nuo to, kaip klientas į jas reaguos ir kaip vertins inovatyvios paslaugas, todėl savitarna kaip inovatyvi paslauga Lietuvoje turi ateitį.

- Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad savitarna kaip motyvacija, pasirenkant inovatyvias paslaugas, labiau veikia moteris (73,2 proc. visų pirkėjų), todėl galima daryti išvadą, kad moterys aprūpina šeimą prekėmis ir yra pakankamai išsilavinusios bei imlios inovacijoms.

- Nors tyrimo rezultatai patvirtino, kad motyvuojančių veiksnių, susijusių su savitarnos technologiniu tinkamumu, stiprumas pakankamai didelis, savitarnos kasos yra netinkamos absoliučiai pakeisti tradicines paslaugas (ypač perkant daug prekių), todėl reikia integruoti abi galimybes.