

## Management of client participation in public services: selection of clients

Evandzelina Petukiene<sup>1</sup>, Milda Damkuvienė<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Siauliai University, Vilniaus st. 88, LT-76285, Siauliai, Lithuania, evandzelina.petukiene@su.lt

<sup>2</sup>Siauliai University, Vilniaus st. 88, LT-76285, Siauliai, Lithuania, milda.damkuvienė@su.lt

### Abstract

Many services are shifting certain activities from employees to clients in order to create value for and with clients. It is evident that citizens (hereinafter referred to as *clients*) influence the content of many public services through their direct participation in service delivery. Client participation in the coproduction of services is recognized as an important issue of scholarly research in both public and private sectors and also as a concept enriching traditional theories of public administration with the client-centred logics. Having in mind that clients have different levels of interest in participating in service coproduction, careful client selection is treated as an important part of management of client participation. The article deals with client selection problem, supporting the idea that the number of clients with whom a service provider works in coproduction of services must be restricted. The selection of clients is the required management activity for successful service coproduction. The article answers the question how (by what tools) clients should be selected so that they become active and valuable coproducers of public services.

The article defines the selection of clients as identification of potential client characteristics, possession of resources necessary for client role performance and client information activities. The article introduces tools for client selection, which have been identified by the qualitative research (expert interviews carried out in Lithuanian elderships<sup>1</sup>), and provides the correlation of the selected tools with the activeness of client participation. Not all identified client selection tools have an equal impact on the activeness of client participation.

**Keywords:** selection of clients, coproduction, management of client participation, public services, Lithuanian elderships.

### Introduction

Academic researchers all around the world are more and more involved into discussions about client participation in value creating processes. More and more organizations seek to involve clients into joint brand creation, development of marketing strategies

<sup>1</sup> **eldership** (“*seniūnija*”) is the smallest administrative unit of Lithuania. An eldership could either be a very small region consisting of a few villages, one single town, or part of a big city. Elderships function as municipal districts. A few elderships make up a municipality. Synonyms: townships, rural communities.

(Zwick et al, 2008; Shu-Yu, 2010) and production of services (Dong et al., 2008; Etgar, 2008; Alford, 2009). Such concepts as *coproduction*, *cocreation* have recently become keywords in marketing literature as well as in public administration theories.

Involvement of citizens, as clients, into public service delivery gets constant, though not consistent attention from researchers (Alford, 2009). The client role in services has been analyzed in service marketing literature for many years. Participation as client input (sharing own knowledge, devoting own time, skills, physical abilities and other resources) provides opportunities for clients to influence the services provided, helps to develop effective services to meet client needs, and is recognized as a key driver of continuous service improvement. This is important in case of public services. Client participation in public services is treated as an important client-service provider interaction, driving constant modernization of services, allowing implementation of the “client oriented” management approach. Though scientists often discuss the client participation concept, the process of *participation management* is rarely discussed. There is a lack of researches where participation of clients is analyzed as a purposeful activity (application of management tools which are oriented towards the desired behaviour of clients) (Petukiene, 2010). The management activities can be described as actions and decisions, initiated and implemented within the organization, that enable the active participation of clients in public services (note: activeness is understood as the efficient and meaningful inputs of clients by offering necessary resources, i.e. when the client fulfils the role of a service coproducer). Client participation is managed through client selection, motivating, training, and other management activities. Having in mind that clients have different levels of interest in participating in service coproduction, careful client selection is an important part of management of client participation. The article deals with a **client selection problem**, supporting the idea that the number of clients with whom a service provider works in coproduction of services must be restricted.

Review of scientific literature allows to state that there are not many scientific publications where the selection of clients is systematically analyzed. There are no client selection tools identified, nor the link between client selection tools and client activeness is determined. Therefore this article deals with the problem of how (by what tools) clients should be selected so that they become active and valuable coproducers of public services.

The **aim** of the article is to identify client selection tools applied by public service providers (in case of Lithuanian elderships) and to determine the link between client selection tools and client participation activeness.

From the marketing point of view, clients are to be selected on the basis of some special characteristics. Only those clients, who demonstrate a wish and ability, shall offer own resources for the coproduction of service. This is especially important in public services, where a client usually does not pay for the service and the benefit of the service is public rather than individual.

The research was carried out in Lithuanian elderships – the smallest administrative units of Lithuania (which have direct contact with clients of public services). Studies show that participation of clients in coproduction of services can be best observed in the sectors characterized by personal interrelations between clients and service providers (local public institutions) (Boyle et al, 2006; Roberts, 2003).

### **Management of client participation in the coproduction of services**

This part defines the management of client participation in coproduction of public services in order to demonstrate the place of client selection in it.

As far as the management is realized through some particular tasks and activities, the client participation management is to be analyzed as a composition of some appropriate activities. According to Melnikas (2002), every management system must cover a complex of interrelated and coordinated tools, which could ensure implementation of the management aims and interests of subjects in making the purposeful managerial impact on managed objects and guaranteeing that the management object fully fulfils the tasks and realizes the intended functions. Therefore, client participation management is supposed to have purposeful impact, which is composed of separate yet interrelated activities, and the whole process is to be planned, coordinated, organized, and controlled.

Systematization of literature allows stating that client participation management is described as formal activities of organization, which are intended to affect the behaviour of clients so that they are wil-

ling (have positive attitudes) and have needed resources (are able and are ready) to actively participate in service coproduction (Mills, Morris, 1986; Bowen, 1986; Schneider, Bowen, 1995; Rodie, Kleine, 2000; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2000; Bettencourt et al, 2002; Groth, 2005; Bowers, Martin, 2007).

Studies on client participation suggest the premise that the active participation of clients in coproduction of services can be attained by increasing the clarity of the role, by teaching and motivating clients. The mentioned authors conclude that clients, in order to attain the successful fulfilment of their role in services, are supposed to understand their role – the required tasks and actions; they must possess knowledge, skills and abilities and must be sufficiently motivated in order to fulfil their roles. It is stated that client efforts in service coproduction are linked with selection of clients, their education and motivation.

Therefore, management of client participation in this article is defined as the process during which providers of services plan, coordinate, organize and control activities linked with the *selection*, education, and motivation of clients so that they act efficiently in coproduction of public services.

Successful management of client participation needs selection of clients who are able/willing to participate actively and/or learn to participate; moreover they are supposed to have the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for fulfillment of some appropriate roles in services or be open to development of such knowledge, skills and abilities (e.g. if a person cannot or does not demonstrate any wish to participate in the coproduction of services then the person shall be identified as a consumer of services only, but not a potential coproducer). When the potential clients – coproducers are identified, other management tools are applied: increasing the clarity of the roles, improving the skills and abilities (client education), and other motivation activities.

### **Selection of clients**

Management of client participation in services is to be started from the selection of clients on the basis of analysis of clients' behaviour. Service organizations must ensure that clients have skills necessary for the fulfilment of own roles in the coproduction of services. Therefore, characteristics of clients are to be identified first. Fulfilment of roles also requires various resources, such as knowledge, skills, experience, energy, efforts, money, or time (Rodie, Kleine, 2000). Moreover, it is not enough to identify a client's characteristics as well as available resources. In order for the client to decide if he/she can, wish to participate in the service actively, he/she must be informed about roles which are to be performed wit-

hin services. Client informing is performed by applying traditional marketing tools (e.g. booklets, advertisements, etc.). The selection efficiency can be improved by the introduction of clients to all duties necessary for the fulfilment of the role within the service. Introduction should cover all information necessary for the client's decision to participate (or not) in the service delivery. Introduction of the client to tasks necessary during service delivery and to conditions gives him/her a possibility to decide if he/she is able to appropriately fulfil the roles in the coproduction of services. The concept of selection in the literature is often linked with market segmentation. And though such approach is the issue for discussion (whether the same segmentation criteria are applied in public and private services), parallels still exist. Segmentation in marketing is defined as division of the consumer market into smaller and similar groups according to some appropriate features (Boone, Kurtz, 2001). When dealing with the participation of clients in services, an organization must define which market segment has abilities and demonstrates a wish to perform the role of a coproducer and attract individuals attributed to this segment by marketing tools. According to principles of segmentation, the organization must direct own efforts towards the selection of clients who are willing and able (have necessary resources and skills) to participate (Halbesleben, Buckley, 2004).

Selection performed by service organizations is based on the premise that reliable and valid information concerning the potential clients is available. Unfortunately not all organizations (especially in public sector) make investments in market researches which allow the characterization of the market segments. Many organizations offering business services limit their actions to defining peculiarities of clients' characteristics and behaviour during personal contacts. Of course, such personal contacts have a chance to develop and become long-term relations. Moreover, clients having previous experience with participation in services can be selected; or social networks could be the source of information necessary for selection of clients. The more complex the production-related skills and knowledge required of the client, and the greater the extent and length of client involvement, the more resources one would expect to be directed at the selection of clients with higher a priori ability to perform within the service operation (Mills, Morris, 1986).

Following the mentioned arguments, it is possible to make a premise that public sector institutions (such as elderships), being the closest to clients, have a possibility to individualize the selection mechanisms by considering potential features of clients as well as available resources.

Here the priority is given to the long term, more or less close relations between the client and service provider or, as an alternative, social networks. The belief that the highest possibility for individualization and maintaining of long-term relations in public sector organizations can be observed in local administrative units is one of the strongest arguments why the case of elderships has been selected for this study. Even though some people are looking for possibilities to participate by themselves, the majority desires "to be asked to" and in cases they know the one who is asking and trusts him/her, it is more likely that they shall participate (Birchall, Simmons, 2004).

The premise can be offered that existence of the local community in solid social networks guarantees the effective selection process. Especially important role is given to local non-governmental organizations (NGO), members of which are active local citizens. Local NGOs participating in coproduction of public services for citizens operate as strategic partners (Pestoff, 2006). Non-governmental organizations in this article, within the process of the client selection, are treated as those participating in administering the participation of clients. Therefore the selection of clients in this article is defined as identification of characteristics of potential clients, estimation of resources necessary for fulfilment of roles in services they have, and informing of clients (instructing about the services which require coproduction, specification of roles).

## **Research methodology**

Identification of client selection tools was performed by using individual semi-structured interviews with elders (the leaders (heads) of Lithuanian elderships). Selection of the samples (elderships) was realized under the 'snowball' principle; it enabled to select active elderships with regard to citizens' participation. Elderships participating in the research did not sufficiently represent the general set. Therefore, the mixed objective criterion selection was applied in this qualitative research and the sample units were selected from the population under criterion defined by the researchers. The number of samples was not set in advance, because when carrying out qualitative research the issue of the sample size is not the key factor (Bitinas et al, 2008); informative features of the data are much more important. The data were collected until repetition appeared in the data (the saturation point has been reached).

The quantitative research (questionnaire for actively participating clients) was performed to test the relationship between client selection tools and client activeness. Active existing (not potential) clients of public services were surveyed (N=600). Statistical da-

ta analysis was performed by using SPSS 16.0 software. The data were analyzed by applying methods of descriptive statistics, scales formation method, statistical hypothesis testing method, and method for assessing links between variables.

### Client selection tools applied at elderships: results of qualitative research

Two client selection dimensions were identified: the first – identification of client’s potential to

participate (client characteristics and resources), the second – informing of client. Therefore, after the interview data analysis, forms for defining the client potential for service coproduction and client information tools are identified.

After categorization of the interview data, the following forms of client selection can be identified (Table 1):

Table 1

**Forms for defining the potential of client participation**

Form	Description
Direct-personal	Potential clients are identified within the personal service delivery process. Potential client is personally familiar with the person initiating the participation in services (the managing subject) or other employees at the institution. Potential clients are defined on the basis of previous experience of their participation in service delivery.
Indirect-personal	Potential clients are identified by references of the third parties (other clients, members of NGOs, members of other local organizations).
Indirect-not personal	Potential clients are informed about possibility to participate by various forms of advertisements (the right to decide about own possibilities to participate is left for the client).

*Direct* form of client selection means that the organization identifies the client potential to participate without any mediators; meanwhile *personal* form of client selection means that identification of client potential requires personal contact. *Direct-personal* form for identifying client potential to participate also means that the organization can follow the latent identification of the clients’ possibilities to participate. In such a case important variables within the identification process are personal links, experience of the client’s participation as well as the manager’s management experience. Such form of identification of client potential to participate is a subjective process, depending upon the manager’s values and priorities.

*Indirect-personal* form of client selection relies on the formation of social networks and vice versa –existing social networks guarantee more or less effective process of client selection. Here interrelations and personal links among participants of social networks are important. *Indirect – not personal* form

means that the mass client information tools are applied with the expectation that clients shall decide about their possibilities to participate in the coproduction of some particular service. In such case the manager’s responsibility is to clearly and effectively give information about roles and conditions necessary in services coproduction.

It can be said that relationships between the manager (an elder in our case) and the person (a client), experience in the relationships, availability of information about clients, as well as local social networks define the forms and tools of client selection. According to the research data, identification of client potential to participate and information of clients usually are simultaneous and integral processes, therefore Table 2 presents tools that semantically cover both dimensions of client selection.

All the identified *selection* tools applied at elderships can be grouped into two types: delegating (obliging) and voluntary decision (Table 2):

Table 2

**Selection tools applied at elderships**

Types of selection tools	Tools
Delegating	Personal request by the elder, other employees of the eldership.
	A client, as a potential coproducer, is personally delegated by other clients.
	Under the references of formal local institutions a potential coproducer is not only identified, but also personally asked to participate in services.
	A member (or a former member) of the institution is delegated by endeavours of local institutions.
	A potential coproducer is identified and delegated by the NGOs.

Voluntary decision	During the public meetings (meetings with local citizens) spheres that require client participation are introduced with expectation for voluntary decision of clients.
	Clients themselves look for information within the environment of the local community.
	Clients themselves are looking for information within the environment of the local institutions they are employed at.
	Clients are looking for / find information in local channels of information (outdoor/indoor announcements).
	Clients are looking for / find information on the premises of NGOs.

The approach, according to which the selection tools are presented, can be expressed as follows: tools of selection are intended for the information of clients about services requiring coproduction, about roles necessary for the service and, depending upon the situation, delegation of the client to participate or allowing him / her to decide about the participation.

In case of group delegation, the managing subject a priori identifies a client's possibilities to fulfil some roles in the service, therefore the client, as the most suitable candidate for fulfilment of the necessary role in the service, is personally asked (or even delegated) to participate.

Informants in many cases stated that the best result is attained during the personal contact with individual clients. Many of them supported the idea that not all clients should be selected for service coproduction (i.e. there is no need to massively activate all local community). It is necessary, and often obligatory, to select those who wish and / or are able to participate in the coproduction of services.

The voluntary decision group is based on the client initiatives to look for information about possibilities to voluntarily participate in public services and consciously make participation commitments. From the sociological perspective, these selection tools are more or less driven by the features of local community, maturity of civil society. Realization of voluntary decision tools within the responsibility of the manager is based on the development of enabling environment. In other words, the client must be offered conditions for the voluntary decision concerning participation as well as other processes are to be managed, e.g. cooperation with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This is the reason why tools of voluntary decision in this article are treated as tools for managing the client participation in services.

Usually delegation is also on the voluntary basis, however the personal delegation of a client for activities of coproduction of services, obligation of personal responsibility also mean the recognition of the client's competence; this drives higher motivation to participate and is likely to be more effective.

Client participation management activities in public services (at Lithuanian elderships) can be observed, but these management activities are more epi-

sodic, separate administration tools than a planned process. It was estimated that client participation management activities are more developed in village-type elderships with higher economic-financial independence.

Within discussion of all identified selection tools, the importance of personal relationships is observed. According to the research results, it is possible to conclude that more concentrated elderships (from geographical point of view) with the characteristic rural lifestyle in community (more intensive, close communication; visible direct relations, the elder (or other eldership employees) being native in the local community); and those elderships that do not encounter high turnover of citizens, are more effective in applying personal contact – delegation for client selection.

### Impact of client selection tools on activeness of participation

In order to define relationship between separate variables, the data analysis was performed with a dependent variable ("activeness of participation") and "selection tools" as independent variables. A hypothesis was put forward about the equation of mean value; the comparison was performed by comparing dispersions among and within the groups. Therefore, the single-factor dispersion analysis ANOVA model was applied and the non-linear correlation coefficient  $\eta^2$  was calculated.

Following statistical procedures, the tools for client selection were rated according to the strength of impact on the dependent variable (the activeness of client participation).

Analysis of statistical links between tools for selection of clients and activeness of participation indicated statistically significant links (see p-value, Table 3). The ranking of selection tools according to the strength of impact on the activeness of client participation reveals that the first positions in the rating are occupied by selection tools of the delegation type, which require personal contact and personal relations (A1, A2, A4, A6). As it has already been mentioned, the direct delegation type of client selection usually follows the latent identification of clients' potential to participate. Moreover, the personal request of the elder or obligation of the NGOs can be assessed

as a motive to participate. Personal delegation (request, obligation) for fulfilment of some particular roles in services can demonstrate trust, respect, and recog-

nition of the person. Such synergic effect can explain the high effect of the latter tools on the activeness of the participation in services.

Table 3

**Rating of selection tools according to the strength of the impact on the activeness of client participation**

Abbrevia- tion of the Tool	Selection Tools	N	F	p	Eta <sup>2</sup>
A1	Personal delegation by NGO	556	285	0.00	0.51
A2	Personal request of the manager (elder)	558	282.4	0.00	0.50
A3	Information spread through NGOs	546	219.5	0.00	0.45
A4	Personal delegation by other clients	557	165.5	0.00	0.37
A5	Information spread through local organizations (e.g., schools, libraries)	554	124.4	0.00	0.31
A6	Personal delegation by the local organization to which the client belongs	553	109.7	0.00	0.29
A7	Personal delegation by the local organization to which the client does not belong	552	75	0.00	0.22
A8	Information spread through information dissemination tools	551	64.7	0.00	0.19
A9	Information spread at local community meetings	555	47.7	0.00	0.15
A10	Information spread through clients	551	37.9	0.00	0.12

Significantly lower (though the correlation was high) effect on the activeness of participation is made by tools which triggered the voluntary participation decisions (A8, A9). Higher effect can be observed in the cases of indirect, passive forms of communication tools. It is clear that community meetings (A9), often organized at elderships, where various discussions take place, have lower impact on the activeness of client participation than delegation tools, requiring the personal contact, have. Moreover, advertisements (posters), often used in elderships, have lower impact on the activeness of participation (A8). The average impact on the activeness of participation was made by only one selection tool of the voluntary decision (A10). This confirms results of the qualitative research which demonstrated that even though the client selection is often organized by informing and selecting clients with the help of advertisements and meetings, the best result is obtained through the personal contact with a client possessing knowledge and skills or other inputs necessary for the coproduction of service.

**Conclusions**

Management of client participation in the coproduction of services is defined as the process during which the service provider plans, coordinates, organizes, and controls actions of client selection, education, and motivation in order to attain active participation of clients in the coproduction of public services.

The selection of clients is defined as the identification of characteristics of potential clients as well as their resources necessary for fulfilment of roles in services and information of clients about services that require coproduction and specification of the necessary roles to be fulfilled in them.

Management of client participation in public services is the process that can be observed at the analyzed elderships. Still, it is important to admit that traditions of client participation management in order to attain effective coproduction of services are still poor.

Client participation management activities are more developed in elderships with higher financial independence. It has been found that more intense and diverse application of the selection tools is performed in elderships of a rural type.

There were ten client selection tools identified; by nature of effect on a client they were grouped into delegation and voluntary decision. In the first group, tools are based on identification of client potential to participate (personal characteristics, resources) as well as direct encouragement to join coproduction of public services. In the second group, the base of client selection is supported by the client initiatives, client conscious efforts (information search concerning possibilities to join the coproduction of public services voluntarily). In the latter case an organization's responsibility covers the effective presentation of information about roles to be fulfilled in specific services.

It was found that in order to identify the clients' potential to fulfil their roles necessary in service coproduction, direct and indirect selection tools are applied.

It was defined that the process of the client selection is often performed with the help of local NGOs.

Higher impact on the activeness of client participation is made by client selection tools of the delegation type as well as tools where NGOs are involved. The highest impact on activeness of client participation is made by client selection tools of the delegation type, requiring personal contact and personal interrelations.

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Petukienė, E., Damkuvienė, M.

## Klientų dalyvavimo viešosiose paslaugose valdymas: klientų atranka

### Santrauka

Straipsnyje pristatoma aktuali marketingo tyrimų sritis – klientų dalyvavimo paslaugose valdymas. Dalyvavimo paslaugose valdymas konceptualizuojamas kaip atskirų, bet tarpusavyje susijusių veiklų visuma. Daugiausia dėmesio skiriama vienai dalyvavimo valdymo veiklų – klientų atrankai. Tik aktyvus klientų dalyvavimas sukuria vertę abiem bendrame paslaugų kūrimo dalyvaujančioms pusėms. Siekiant, kad klientai aktyviai įsitrauktų, jų daly-

vavimą reikia kryptingai valdyti. Klientų atranka – būtina valdymo veikla, siekiant aktyvaus klientų dalyvavimo kuriant bendras (kartu su seniūnijų darbuotojais) viešąsias paslaugas (bendras kūrimas, angl. *Co-production*).

Tyrimo objektas – viešųjų paslaugų teikėjų taikomos klientų atrankos priemonės. Tyrimo tikslas – apibrėžus klientų atrankos dalyvauti viešosiose paslaugose konceptą, identifikuoti paslaugų teikėjų naudojamas atrankos

priemonės ir sudaryti šių priemonių reitingą pagal įtakos dalyvavimo aktyvumui stiprumą. Objektas analizuojamas tarpdisciplininis požiūriu, t. y. iš paslaugų marketingo ir viešosios vadybos perspektyvų.

Pirmajai tikslo daliai realizuoti naudoti mokslinės literatūros analizės ir sisteminimo metodai, antrajai – pušiau struktūruotas kokybinis interviu ir apklausa. Straipsnyje apibrėžiama klientų atranka, pristatomos kokybiniu tyrimu nustatytos realiai Lietuvos seniūnijų praktikoje naudojamos klientų atrankos priemonės, taip pat pateikiami kiekybinio tyrimo rezultatai: atrankos priemonių pagal įtakos stiprumą dalyvavimo aktyvumui reitingas.

Tyrimo lauku pasirinktos Lietuvos seniūnijos kaip tiesiogiai kontaktuojančios ir arčiausiai viešųjų paslaugų klientų esančios valdžios institucijos. Mokslinėje literatūroje akcentuojama, kad aktyvus klientų dalyvavimas viešosiose paslaugose pasireiškia sektoriuje, kuris pasižymi asmeninėmis klientų–paslaugos teikėjų ir klientų tarpusavio sąveikomis. Toks dalyvavimas geriausiai organizuojamas būtent per vietines institucijas. Pripažįstant aktyvaus klientų dalyvavimo naudą seniūnijose ir pritariant, kad tik klientų iniciatyva grįstas dalyvavimas nėra pakankama prielaida efektyviai kurti paslaugas, klientų atrankos tyrimas Lietuvos seniūnijose traktuojamas kaip svarbus atspirties taškas kuriant efektyvias paslaugų teikimo sistemas.

Visų pirma, atlikus mokslinės literatūros analizę, straipsnyje apibrėžiamas klientų dalyvavimo paslaugose valdymo konceptas ir parodoma atrankos vieta valdymo procese. Toliau nusakomas klientų atrankos konceptas. Klientų atranka šiame straipsnyje parodoma kaip potencialių klientų charakteristikų, turimų išteklių, kurie yra būtini vaidmenims paslaugose atlikti, nustatymas bei klientų informavimas apie bendrakūrimo reikalaujančias paslaugas ir būtinų jose atlikti vaidmenų specifikacijas.

Kitoje straipsnio dalyje pristatoma tyrimo metodologija. Empirinio tyrimo duomenims surinkti buvo pasirinkta kokybinio ir kiekybinio tyrimo prieiga. Atrankos priemonėms identifikuoti naudotas individualus kryptingasis (iš dalies struktūrizuotasis) interviu su Lietuvos seniūnijų darbuotojais (N = 12), kurių praktikoje buvo identifikuoti aktyvaus klientų dalyvavimo atvejai. Laikomasi metodologinės nuostatos, jog tik aktyviose gyventojų dalyvavimo prasme seniūnijose dalyvavimas yra valdomas, todėl jų patirties pagrindu gali būti identifikuotos klientų atrankos dalyvauti. Tyrimo imtis buvo sudaroma „sniego gniūžtės“ atrankos principu, o tai leido atrinkti aktyvias gyventojų dalyvavimo prasme seniūnijas. Iš anksto nebuvo numatytas imties dydis, nes atliekant kokybinius tyrimus imties dydžio problema nėra labai svarbi (Bitinas ir kt., 2008), kur kas svarbiau duomenų informatyvumas. Duomenys rinkti tol, kol jie ėmė kartotis ir akivaizdžiai sumažėjo jų infor-

matyvumas. Atliktas kiekybinis tyrimas (aktyvių klientų apklausa), siekiant nustatyti klientų atrankos priemonių įtaką klientų dalyvavimo aktyvumui. Apklausos instrumentas parengtas kokybinio tyrimo rezultatų pagrindu. Kiekybinio tyrimo tikslams pasiekti buvo apibrėžtos generalinės aibės charakteristikos: seniūnijų, kurios identifikuotos kaip aktyvios klientų dalyvavimo / įtraukimo į paslaugų teikimą prasme, aktyvūs realūs (ne potencialūs) paslaugų klientai. Seniūnijos atrinktos ekspertinės imties pagrindu. Tyrimo apklausta 600 respondentų. Apklausos duomenų statistinė analizė atlikta naudojant SPSS 16.0 programinę įrangą. Tyrimo duomenys buvo analizuojami taikant aprašomosios statistikos, skalių sudarymo, statistinių hipotezių tikrinimo ir ryšių tarp kintamųjų įvertinimo metodus.

Kitoje straipsnio dalyje pristatomi empirinio tyrimo rezultatai. Išskirtos ir apibūdintos dalyvavimo valdymo veiklose naudojamos atrankos priemonės. Remiantis statistiniais skaičiavimais, buvo sudarytas atrankos priemonių reitingas pagal įtakos stiprumą priklausomam kintamajam, t. y. klientų dalyvavimo aktyvumui.

Straipsnyje daromos išvados, kad klientų dalyvavimo viešosiose paslaugose valdymas – realiai vykstantis reiškinys tirtose Lietuvos seniūnijose. Identifikuotos dešimt klientų atrankos priemonių, kurios sukategorizuotos pagal prasminius kriterijus. Atrankos priemonių kategorijos atspindi poveikio klientui pobūdį: delegavimo ir savanoriško apsisprendimo. Pirmuoju atveju priemonės remiasi potencialaus bendrakūrėjo galimybių dalyvauti nustatymu ir tiesioginiu poveikiu skatinant įsitraukti į viešųjų paslaugų kūrimą. Antruoju atveju poveikio pagrindas paremtas klientų iniciatyva, sąmoningomis klientų pastangomis ieškant informacijos apie galimybes savanoriškai prisidėti kuriant viešąsias paslaugas. Šiuo atveju valdančiojo atsakomybėje yra efektyvus informacijos apie būtinus atlikti vaidmenis tam tikrose paslaugose pateikimas. Nustatyta, kad, norint identifikuoti klientų galimybes atlikti būtinus paslaugose vaidmenis, naudojamos tiesioginės ir netiesioginės atrankos priemonės, o klientų atrankos procese dažnai naudojamos vietos pilietinių visuomenės organizacijų pagalba. Didesnę įtaką aktyviam klientų dalyvavimui turi delegavimo tipo atrankos priemonės; atrankos priemonės, į kurių realizavimo procesą įtrauktos pilietinės visuomenės organizacijos turi didesnę įtaką klientų dalyvavimo viešosiose paslaugose aktyvumui. Ypač didelę įtaką dalyvavimo aktyvumui turi asmeninio kontakto ir tarpasmeninių santykių reikalaujančios delegavimo tipo klientų atrankos priemonės.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** klientų atranka, klientų dalyvavimo valdymas, viešosios paslaugos, Lietuvos seniūnijos.

The article has been reviewed.

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