The absence of customer value in the healthcare sector

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ABSTRACT

The healthcare system faces challenges nowadays. One of these challenges is the absence of an understanding and use of customer value. A qualitative research has been conducted in order to discover the customer value of a specific part of this healthcare sector, which is in this research the extramural elderly care. This research was structured by using the consumer decision making process in order to discover the customer value of this target audience. This process has been analyzed and therefore also the values of the customers of this target audience have been found. The values that are important to customers of this specific target audience are very diverse. The most important values are the social part of interaction between the customer and employee, a feeling of safety and flexibility of the personnel. This research can improve the value offering to this target audience and enhance business for relevant organizations within the healthcare. Other significant discoveries are an absence of the use of digital media and an absence of internal information search by the target audience within the consumer decision making process.

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Keywords

Consumer decision making process, customer value, healthcare sector, target audience, value offering

1. INTRODUCTION

The healthcare sector faces different challenges nowadays. One of these challenges is the absence of a good understanding and use of customer value within their business. This lack is caused by the fact that organisations within this sector focus on the ongoing business every day (Atia, 2015). Somehow they do not see the potential of a superior knowledge about customer value when doing business. Woodruff (1997, p. 139) already stressed back in 1997 the emerging trend of taking into account the customers when making improvements, laying a basis for a superior customer value as an competitive advantage. It seems that quality of a product or service no longer seems to be solely key in order to have a competitive advantage over other organizations (Woodruff, 1997, p.140). Therefor all organizations need to have at least considered the customer value of their target audience, whereas the healthcare sector does not seem to have done it thoroughly until now. Therefor this research focuses on the discovery of that customer value of a specific target audience of the health sector in order to improve the knowledge about the customer value of this target audience. All this in order to improve the value offering to this customer and to enhance business for organizations with this target audience, which are the elderly people who live extramurally.

1.1 Context of the research

When one is doing a research, the environment always needs to be taken into consideration (Gévaudan, 2016). At first the organization in which this research is being conducted is further examined and afterwards the actual environment of the health sector is further elaborated. Patyna (in which this research has been conducted) is an organization which merged from two different organizations, namely Plantein and Zorggroep Tellens. As it stands today, Patyna has over 2800 employees who are working in the west, and south-western parts of the province Friesland. They are currently helping over 3.000 elderly located in one of the 30 locations that they have. They offer services such as meal service at home, well-being services, care alarm, day care and nursing (Patyna, N.D.). The environment that Patyna operates in is very competitive, and also focused on cost reduction. This can be seen by the recent bankruptcy of TSN, which went bankrupt because the municipalities did want cost reduction, because of their shortening budget (NOS, 2016). Other important factors within the environment are for example the decentralization of the responsibility of the healthcare from the government to the municipality and the automation of the healthcare. Also the government wants the target audience of this research to live longer at home instead of going to a nursing home. An analysis of the environment that the healthcare sector (elderly people) operates in is clarified through a PEST analysis which can be found in the appendix.

1.2 Goal of the research

This research will give an overview of what the selected target audience values. This also can have an implication for organizations, since they can use this knowledge in order to strengthen their value offering. Furthermore it will also show the process of a customer of the selected target audience in order to discover the customer value.

In order to achieve this goal, the following research question was formulated: What do customers in the selected target audience value and what is the effect on the value offering of Patyna? In order to reach an answer to this research question, the theory of the consumer decision making process will be used as a tool in order to identify the whole process of a customer of the target audience, also discovering the customer value.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Important concepts

Several important concepts and theories will be analyzed in order to conduct this research successfully. The most important concept within this research is customer value, since the customer value of the target audience is tried to discover in order to improve the value offering to the target audience. The concept described by Woodruff is a widely used conceptualization of this phenomena. Woodruff (1997, p. 142) describes the concept of customer value as "a customer's perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations". The second critical element in this research is the concept of value proposition, mainly concerning the effect of the research on the value offering of the healthcare sector. This is defined by Hassan (2012, p. 82) as "the entire set of experiences that an organization brings to customers, including value for money". This concept is important because this can change due to this research, with a possibility to enhance business. The last important concept of this research is the customer's choice, since this is what is focused on within this research. Why does a customer choose this product and why do they choose this service and this company? This concept is defined since it is all about the customer's choice, what do people want and what they think is important. Bettmann et al. (1991) describes consumer choice as ''a set of alternatives, each described by several attribute'', which could either be uncertain attributes (durability) or certain attributes (fixed size of a tool).

2.2 Theoretical framework

The key tool within this research in order to find the customer value of the this target audience, is the consumer decision making process. With the help of the consumer decision making process the customer value of the target audience can be found. When a customer has a problem or a need and needs it to be solved, it will go and search for a product in order to solve this problem. This customer will than go through this process and eventually choose a products that it wants. Before selecting this product there a several stages in which this customer performs several actions, in which one is the evaluation of alternatives. This stage is particularly interesting in order to discover the customer value, since than this customer will evaluate the different brands and their products or services. These products all have their different attributes and what people think is important when buying this product. These important values or attributes that people want in a product or service when they purchase it, is the customer value. Therefor this consumer decision making process is a method of finding the customer value of this target audience.

The consumer decision-making process, which was initially formulated by Hawkins, describes that consumers go through a five stage process when they want to buy a product. This theory suggests that this process consists of five stages: Problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, outlet selection and purchase and post purchase process (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005, cit.).

The first stage is problem recognition and can also be named need recognition or problem awareness. This stage begins with need recognition, which is a realization of the thought that a consumer needs something and thus has a problem that needs to be solved. This need is usually functional and needs a time of period to be realized by the consumer. Other problems can happen through routine depletion, unpredictability, emotional or psychological needs. "The degree to which the consumer intends to resolve the problem depends on two issues: the magnitude of the discrepancy between the desired and present situation, and

the relative importance of the problem" (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012, p. 118, cit.). This problem needs to have a high level of relative importance, or else the initiator of the purchase may not be sufficiently motivated to make the purchase. In general there are three main focus points for marketing in the need recognition/problem awareness stage. The first is about the importance of consumers and the problems that they have. With this they can gain a competitive advantage through a close relationship with the consumer. The second important focus point is the fact that there are need inhibitors which can stop a purchase at any point in the process. This is mainly due to fear that they have that something might does not work out as expected. An example of this is that they do not trust the mailman to deliver their package. The last important implication for marketers is that they need to stimulate people to start the process. The consumer needs to be stimulated through advertising or other forms of marketing activities in order to start the process of buying a product. Still, the needs of a consumer are not always clear for the marketers but in this research it is the opposite (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012, page 118-119). The target group usually has a clear problem, whereas aging is a common problem. But there are many different problems, but they usually have one thing in common, the person has a disease or had a disease and is not able to do itself anymore

The second stage in the consumer decision making process is the search of information to be able to choose between different offers to solve the problem. The consumer moves to this stage when the need recognition was sufficiently and if the person is not a need inhibitor. Information search is focused on two factors, which is either internal or external. With an internal search the person tries to remember what he or she knows about the product or alternative products and the companies that produce it and thus can solve the problem. Afterwards the person thinks about methods to compare the different solutions for the problem. The person continues to the external information search if the solution that has been given by the internal information search is not sufficient for solving the problem of the consumer. The person than searches for information with sources such as personal sources, commercial sources, third party reports and personal experience (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, page 120-121). The external information search is enhanced by internet, also concluded by Moon (2004, p. 105). Moon concluded that "The internet can enhance consumer efficiency by facilitating consumers' access to consumption related information more quickly and save time, effort, and monetary cost for information collection". This implies that more and more people will use third party reports and experiences of friends or family due to the large connectivity between them nowadays.

The third and fourth stage in the consumer decision making process is the evaluation of alternatives and the purchase. This stage is at first about creating an evoked set, which is about creating a shortlist of brands which a consumer will evaluate thoroughly. A key concept for deciding which brands will be on the evoked set is the level of involvement. "Involvement is the degree of perceived relevance and personal importance accompanying the brand choice" (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012, page 122). There are several models accompanying this concept, examples are the models of Fishbein & Ajzen (1980) and Ehrenberg & Goodhart (1980). Fishbein & Ajzen is best for predicting behavior of consumers in high involvement purchases while the model of Ehrenberg & Goodhart is better for low involvement purchases.

The model of Fishbein & Ajzen is the opinion of a customer about the brand, which is uttered in beliefs. These beliefs are based upon the perceived consequences of the purchase of a brand. The attributes of a brand are weighted according to what

the customer thinks is important, which could be higher for more important attributes and lower for less important attributes. This all leads to an attitude towards the brands that can offer a product that they want. But it is not solely based upon beliefs of a customer, it is also based upon the influence from other people. This can range from friends and family to pamphlets, brochures, basically any form of marketing. Hereafter the customer makes the purchase intention and purchases it. The model of Ehrenberg & Goodhart is about low involvement purchases. Usually with this purchase process it is not worth wile to do an extensive information search since it is a straightforward purchase. This purchase is usually related to a repeat purchase of a pencil for example (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012, p. 122-123).

After weighing all alternatives and choice criteria, the purchase decision is finally performed. Now the person owns the product or service. The last stage is about the situation after the purchase, also called the post-purchase evaluation of the decision. After the purchase of a service or product a consumer could also have some concerns. "This is called cognitive dissonance. These concerns arise because of uncertainty about making the right decision." (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012, p. 124). Consumers often have this due to the rejection of other products who have other attractive attributes of its own. All in all, this stage is all about helping consumers removing these concerns and gain customer satisfaction (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012, page 122-125).

3. METHOD
3.1 Approach & population
In this research the customer value of the target audience needs to be discovered. The different values that people have when they are targeting an product or service need to be researched in order to find what is important to them. These values can vary much among different people, therefor some values that people mentioned will be generalized under one factor in order to prevent too many specific values. The discoveries will be presented in amount of people indicating that the they think this value is important to them. After each value that has been mentioned the different responses will be mentioned which fall under this value of the target audience. All this in order to discover the customer value of the target audience focused on in this research. This in order to improve the value offering to this target audience and in order to enhance business for organizations with this target audience.

In order to discover the customer value of the target audience a research design needs to be chosen in order to collect the data and eventually analyze the collected data. In this study a qualitative approach is used in order get data; this is usually the best method in order to get specific data from the customers. This is acknowledged by Belk, Fischer and Kozinets (2012, page 3), they say that a qualitative researches are "assumed to be specific to time, place, people and culture studied". In the same figure also the characteristics of the quantitative research are presented. One of these characteristics is that "results are generally assumed to be generalizable across contexts and cultures" (Belk, 2012, p. 3). In this research, a deeper understanding of the customer is required in order to come up with an answer to the research question. This all implies that in this case, in order to discover the customer value of the customer, a qualitative research approach is required. In this case, a depth interview is chosen as the source of data, this will be explained further in the chapter about data collection.

A conceptual framework is used in order to structure this research; in this case it is the consumer decision making process as explained earlier. But how can this help me in order to come

up with an answer to my research question? With this framework the whole process of a consumer of this selected target audience can be discovered. This also will map the motives, choice criteria and so on and therefor also the deeper lying values of the customer. With this the organizations know what motives the customers in this target audience have and can adjust their business or value offering accordingly. In the results these steps will be explained fully accordingly with the data that has been found. The customer value will extensively be discussed, since this is the most important goal of this research.

The population in this research is the target audience that lives extramurally. The definition of this concept extramurally is doing something "outside the walls or boundaries of a town or city" (Oxforddictionary, N.D.). In the healthcare sector this means that the person does not live in a nursing home. These people live longer at home and have adjustments according to their deficiencies. The sample consisted of 11 people from the region south-west of the province Friesland. More interviews were planned but sometimes the people either forgot it or had something else important. This limited the research to a smaller sample. The participants in the interviews are randomly selected from this region. There is however one restraining factor with the target audience, the briskness of the people. With this target audience not everyone is as good as the other and can give well thought answers. Therefor the sample consisted of people selected by the overseeing nurses, who are thought to be able to give good answers to the questions.

3.2 Data collection & analysis
The most used method of data collection when doing qualitative research is an interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). In this case, a depth interview has been used in order to collect the data. This is also confirmed by Belk (2012, page 31), "Depth interviews, along with observations and participant observation, form the core data collection activities of qualitative research. But why a depth interview was used instead of another form an interviewing such as a group interview? Belk (2012, page 31) also clarifies that "the depth interview seeks an in-depth understanding of a topic that the research informant is able to speak about. It is usually about something that is important in the informant's life and that he or she has a good deal of information and opinions about that they can be encouraged to reveal". In this research, this is exactly what is needed in order to answer the research question. A deeper understanding of why customers choose an organization, what criteria the target audience has, is needed. Also the consumer decision making process is personal and therefor in order to find sufficient information for the consumer decision making process and the critical customer value, a depth interview is better to perform.

This is also confirmed by Caren, Morgan & Oxtoby (1996, p. 1), they say that "Open-ended questions can also yield useful information, especially when researchers need to explore complex issues that do not have a finite or predetermined set of responses". Therefore the depth interview is chosen as method of data collection.

Within the depth interview there are also three types of interviews that can be chosen in order to collect data. From these three methods of depth interviews, the standardized open question method is chosen. This is because the informational conversational interview is too open and some topics really need to be discussed intensively. The interview guide approach and the standardized open questions are both viable options to choose in this case, but the standardized open questions have been chosen due to the selected target audience. The interview guide approach is less structured and this is not good for the selected target audience due to the fact that they can wander off from the actual topic/question that will be discussed (Turner III, 2010) (Worldbank, 2011), which is also confirmed by Robertson and Hale (2011, p. 6). In their research about analyzing the interview process with elderly they stated that "there were many triggers for story telling throughout the interviews. As the interviewees responded to the researchers questions, they used the openings as a gateway to chapters of their life stories". This implies that these people will use any opportunity given to them to tell a story and dwell of from the subject, especially when it not is structured.

In order to analyze the data gathered from the sample an analysis tool has been used. This analysis tool is Atlas 7.0 and is used in order to analyze the interviews that were held. Atlas 7.0 is a program that is "a powerful workbench for the qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual, graphical, audio and video data" (Software.informer, N.D.). Therefor it is very useful in this research since qualitative data is analyzed. Since this is an complex program with a lot features and possibilities in means of analyzing data, an guide has been consulted in order to know the main features and its possibilities and limitations (Atlas.ti, N.D.).

3.3 Experience with sample
The experience with the people in the sample has been very mixed but overall it were very pleasant interviews. Most of the randomly selected people were alone, usually meaning that their partner for life has already passed away. In the sample there was only one family who were both at a very high age, but they also were able to give good and well thought answers. The people who were alone seemed to appreciate and like it more that the interviewer came to do an interview with them. Usually before the interviews, extensive life experiences were shared. This caused the interviews to last longer than expected, the longest interview lasted almost 3 hours instead of the 1 hour that was expected. Important in these interviews were that the interviewees knew more or less what they could expect to be asked. Therefor always a brief explanation of the assignment was required before the interview in order to make it clear to them, it relaxed them more. Furthermore, the questions that were asked were mostly understood in the right manner. Sometimes it required a little bit more explanation, but usually the sample answered the questions in the right manner and if not it was clarified more in order for them to give the best answer. There was however a problem with one question which all participants in the beginning had, a question was asked to them if they knew other factors besides the ones that were mentioned to them. This is notified after the first few interviews and therefor the question before where different factors were mentioned is enhanced with more factors.

Another important factor to keep mind is that these people tend to dwell from the actual subject. It was often difficult to steer them in the right direction, due to the fact that politeness is very important with this people. Therefor interrupting these people would be very impolite and not possible. This often lengthened the conversation with a substantial amount of time. Afterwards only one of the interviews did last the expected hour and the rest lasted for longer than one and a half hour.

Another important part of the interview was the social interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. The sample really liked the fact that someone comes to them to ask some questions. This involved drinking coffee and having a biscuit with them telling a lot of stories about their children and their life. This was very important in order to make them feel at ease with the interviewer. Usually they thanked the interviewer thoroughly for the talk and the politeness, which was an indication of how the interviewer and interviewee experienced it.

4. RESULTS

In total 11 people were interviewed in order to get data to answer the research question. They were all able to give good and well thought answers to the questions. The data received from the people in the sample are used in order to identify the customer value of the target audience, using the decision making process of a customer of the extramural elderly care as a tool. Therefor it is also structured according to the different stages of the consumer decision making process. After the process is described a specific chapter will be dedicated to the customer value of the target audience. The last part of the results will be used in order to present other significant discoveries about several subjects, which includes the use of digital media by the target audience.

4.1 Need recognition/problem awareness

The first stage of the consumer decision making process is the need recognition or problem awareness stage. This stage starts with a need recognition of the consumer of the extramural elderly care. In this case the consumer realized that there is a problem that needs to be solved, this was always related to the inability of the person to do something specific such as the cleaning of the house. The person was not able to do something and therefor needed different kinds of help. The reasons for the target audience were very diverse, in which heart problems were the most common. But also rheumatism, aging problems or help because the person was in a wheelchair were common. The different reasons for help can be seen in the appendix. This could range from help with a pre-prepared dinner, homecare help, shower help or other forms of help with putting on stockings. As can be seen in the figure 1, the homecare help was usually the first form help that people required, with all people already having this form of help from an organization.
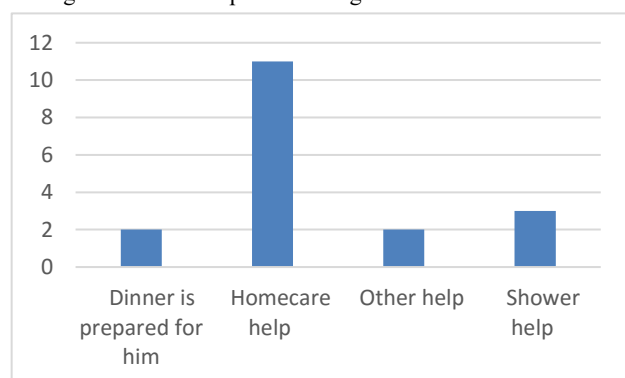
Figure 1 The help the target audience received

People usually did not dare to stand on any ladders and therefor they could not clean the top of a closet or another object. The time of realization that the target audience had a problem that needed to be solved did not differ very much among the participants, it was usually critical since they wanted to remain as solitary as possible but really needed help.

The next step is to what extend the person is willing to solve this problem. This depended on the magnitude of the discrepancy between the desired and current situation and the relative importance. With the people there was a large gap between the desired and current state since they wanted to remain solitary as long as reasonably possible. Therefor the gap was large, when it was really necessary they asked for help but if they could do it themselves they would do it. The relative importance is very high with this target audience as well since they cannot do everything themselves anymore. They of course want it to be done and solved and therefor the relative importance is also very high. Since the relative importance is very high, there are most likely

no need inhibitors. One would simply not stop the purchase process due to fear that something might not work out as expected. These persons really need the help or else they would not start the process at first.

Concluding, usually the person has a problem which implies that he or she cannot do something self anymore. This differs a lot between the persons and eventually the target audience comes to the conclusion that something needs to change and the first stage comes to an end and they start the information search

4.2 Information search

The second stage is about the information search of the people. This is all about finding information to able to choose between different offers, which is first internal research and afterwards an external research. From this research it can be concluded that there is no internal research that the target audience performs. The target audience seems to go directly towards the external research, since all the answers to the questions which go about the information search are all about the external research. Although it was no specifically asked, not a single person seemed to make use of memory in order to make a choice between the different options.

As opposed to the internal information search, the questions delivered a significant amount of information which was related to the external information search. A first example of this is that the positive information from relatives seems to be important. Five interviewees said that positive information from relatives was important in their choice where to live and what to get from which organization. This is of course related to word of mouth communication, since this interaction between the persons is word of mouth. This therefor seems to be an important part of influencing the actual decision makers, if the decision maker is the person who also gets the help. Besides this word of mouth communication, another source of information can come from brochures or pamphlets. There were five people from the target audience who got brochures or pamphlets from an organization which organized either housing or the help they needed. All but one concluded that the pamphlets were influential for them in the search for the information and hence selecting the best option. Besides this no other main communication tools were discovered that were influential. Although four of the interviewees do seem to use a television and a telephone. An extra two people were using internet, and were using it regularly. But this was the very minimum, they used it mostly for e-mail traffic.

To conclude, it seems that most of the information search is externally and that internal information search is actually not present within this stage of the consumer decision making process within this target audience. Furthermore, relatives seem to play an important role in advising the decision maker what to do and what not to do. At last, brochures and pamphlets seem to have an influence on the decision of the people and could therefore have some implications for business.

4.3 Evaluation of alternatives & purchase

The evaluation of alternatives is all about creating an evoked set which are brands that a consumer will examine and choose from eventually. In this research within this environment there were two brands that were the only ones mentioned in the interviews. The first and most mentioned organization was Patyna, the organization in which this research has been conducted. In figure 2, the numbers of the different organizations that were mentioned are presented. This shows that next to Patyna, one other organization was part of the evoked set. This other organization was Thuiszorg Zuidwest Friesland, which is located in Sneek. These are two very well-known organizations within this region,

and are therefore competitors of each other on the extramural elderly care.
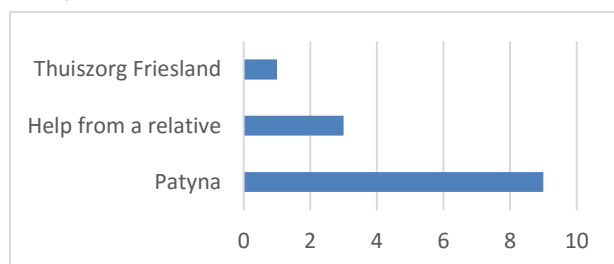
Figure 2 The organizations that were part of the evoked set

Besides this, there are also three people within this research who get help from elsewhere. These people usually get help from relatives or friends; this help is usually with cleaning or doing the groceries. It depends on the person if the helper gets paid or not. This sort of care from a relative is also known as caregiving. Some people also had a combination of different organizations or relatives and therefor these numbers do not add up to eleven.

The model of Fishbein and Ajzen is most appropriate to describe the behavior of the target audience. Mainly due to the fact that there are several important attributes and an extensive external information search. Therefor this is not something routine, it is more complex and therefor the model of Fishbein and Ajzen is best to use. This model is based "upon a belief about a brand's attribute" (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012, p. 122). Each of these attributes has an importance within the consumer and is weighted according to the mind of the consumer. In this research, this is what is focused on; the customer value can be derived from this. These attributes can vary within this target group, but the most important seems to be whether or not the social part of the help is sufficient. The results presented that ten out of eleven persons who were interviewed thought that this was important. Next to this safety is also very important to the people, they need to have a safe feeling. If something goes wrong, they want to be able to contact someone so that their lives potentially could be saved.

This all leads to an attitude of the consumer about a brand, which could be either negative or positive. But there is also influence from other people that are important for the consumer that can give their opinion on whether or not to purchase this brand. In this research it is clear that there is influence from other important people within the lives. As already stated before in the information search, relatives that have positive messages about an organization do have influence. Besides this, six of the eleven people stated that their children, relatives or friends had a huge influence in their decision what the best option was. Also three persons said that there was a moderate influence of the children within their decision, making it a very significant source of influence. Although the influence was clearly present in this process, every person stated that the decision of the purchase was their own.

This all leads to a purchase intention and eventually the purchase of the product or service. Within this purchase, ten out of eleven people experienced no problems with getting the services from the organization. The person that was missing has no help from an organization at the moment and therefor this was not applicable in this case. Other striking finds within this part of the process were that they three people choose an organization because it was close by to where they live. Also two people did not think about an organization, they just choose one organization that they saw.

4.4 Post-purchase evaluation

This phase of the process is about the time after the purchase has been done by the consumer, it is all about aftercare and removing any uncertainties that the target audience could has. Within this research, every single person that was interviewed showed a positive response to the overall satisfaction about the services and the whole aftercare. Most people (nine out of eleven) expected that if there would be a problem that it would be solved according to their likings. The people who did not responded with a satisfaction usually had another experience which was not positive. That was the reason that two people did not expect this to happen.

Related to this is the amount of people that had or have complaints at the moment. Out of eleven people eight had no complaints at this time, whereas one had a complaint a while ago and therefor nine people have no complaints now. Three of eleven did have a problem, which varied very much from washing their hands in the kitchen to no activities for the people. The target audience was not happy when this problem happened of course and it was also not satisfactory taken care of by the personnel responsible. It was clear to see that these interviewees were not happy with it, therefor it seems to be key to prevent the problem from happening. All in all, the clients which were interviewed showed a very positive state of mind against the services that the organizations delivered. It seems that as long as you keep the people happy and satisfied, there will not be much problems within this last stage of the process. The key part of this stage of the process is that the problems that occur are solved properly, or else there could be negative word of mouth communication.

4.5 The customer value

The customer value of the people of the target audience of the extramural elderly care are very diverse but there are a few that really stand out and seem to be very important. Nonetheless, figure 4 shows the factors that customers of the target audience value in their products.

This figure shows that the target audience values the social part of the service that they receive is the most important because ten out of eleven people pointed this factor out. This social part includes a wide range of activities, which are all gathered under one main factor.

Figure 3 The customer value

These activities could range from drinking a cup of coffee or tea, talking while doing the help or doing something extra such as doing the groceries for free. The target audience seems too really like the social interaction between the target audience and the

personnel, relatives or personnel. As one of the interviewees said, "There must be some time to have a nice cup of coffee and talk about random subjects".

The second most important factor that the customer of the target audience value is the safety of the target audience. This factor was often related to a service of Patyna, which is a 24/7 service which they could order. With a push of a button on a machine on the wall or with an armband around the wrist, they could get in contact with responsible personnel and call for help. The striking was that this service was always ordered when the target audience had any problems with the heart. As one of the interviewees said "I am happy with the 24/7 service of Patyna because than I feel safe". This once again underlines the importance of safety and feeling safe of the target audience. Hereafter the target audience thought that the flexibility of the personnel was an important part of the service that they received. The interviewees usually said that the personnel needed to be flexible, because I want this be done this week and that can be left for next week. They wanted to be in control over what was done and when. This is underlined by one of the interviewees who said "They need to be able to adjust themselves to me and what I want, this time I want them to do this and then that". There are two other factors related to the personnel which the interviewees thought were important. The first one was nice personnel, which was mentioned by seven of the eleven people. This is also related to the social part, it was all about being nice and friendly towards the customer and having a talk with them to make them feel nice and important. As one of the interviewees said "They were always very friendly and why would I change than?" This implies that one the plainest elements of any working personnel in service related business is very important to them.

The second personnel related part of the customer value was the enjoyment of the working personnel. This was related to the customer seeing the helper that he or she gets from the organization has joy in the work that they are doing. This was one the most striking results of this research, it was not expected that almost half of the people thought that the enjoyment of the working personnel was important when they received their service. As one of the interviewees said that "Especially showing that people like it to do their work. I do not like people who do not like their job and are also showing this". This shows that the enjoyment of the working personnel is really important to the customers. Hereafter the interviewees thought that reliance was the most important part of the service that they received. This value of three was striking since it was expected that everyone would thought this factor was important since it is a basic value. This factor is related to trust of the customer to the working personnel. This is trust in the way that the working personnel does not do anything which is not allowed, for example not stealing anything. The second part of this customer value was that the customer can trust the person who is helping the client, in a way that the working personnel is able to help the client. Another striking result was that two related factors showed a low value, namely the price quality ratio and the value for money. One would expect these factors to be important, since most of the customers would like to have the best price quality ratio and value for money. One would always want the most out of the money one has and therefor it is strange that these factors show a low value. Another factor which showed a low response and was expected to be higher is that the value that the work is done good and on time. This was also expected to be higher for the same reason as the price quality ratio, since one would expect that customers want it to be done on time and that the work is done properly. The last main value that customers seem to have is the activities for them organized by the organization that delivers the service. One of the eleven interviewees was also looking for this kind of activity because than this customer has something to do besides this as well.

4.6 Other significant discoveries

There were also some other interesting results developed from the data. The first one, which might not come as a surprise, is the fact that ten out of eleven people did not make use of digital media and is not planning to. Only one of the eleven people of the target audience said that it was in the planning to realize this due to the fact that her children and grandchildren also use it. They usually said to this person, did you hear this or that? This person never knew what they were talking about and therefor this person wanted to make use of the platform Facebook. Besides this there was also a question asked to the interviewees whether they valued the quality or the price more than the other. Everyone answered this question in the same manner, they always wanted to focus on quality and apparently did not think about the price of the service that they get. The last discovery was rather surprising since three people indicated in the interview that they chose an organization because it was close by. They stated that it was easy for the people of the organization to get too them if they needed something.

5. DISCUSSION

The results show a clear image of what the target audience does value and how the decision making process of a customer of the extramural care goes. Still there are some subjects that will be further discussed in order to find reasons why this data is like this. The first striking discovery in this research is the fact that there seems to be no to a little internal information search within the target audience. They go straight to the external information search and this phase has a lot influence in comparison to the internal information search. This could because the target audience is not used to have information available in their memory since it is new for them. This could explain why the target audience skips the internal information search and goes directly towards the external informational search, since the target audiences comes to the conclusion that they do not have any internal information. Related to this is influence of the pamphlets, it is strange since the pamphlets do not always influence a decision. This could be related to the previous since the target audience does not have any information available from memory. If they then see this pamphlet with information about the options and the different organizations, the target audience has some information to hold onto and that could explain why these pamphlets or brochures can have more influence than they do elsewhere. Also related to this information search is the fact that positive messages from relatives seem to have influence on the target audience. When people do not have any internal information they will go and search for external information, which could explain why this value is high. Furthermore, adding to the validity of this idea is the fact that relatives do have a lot influence. This research showed that five of the eleven interviewees said that there was influence from relatives in the decision that they were making. This adds further too the pre-mentioned concept because if there is a lack of internal information, the influence of positive messages from relatives will be higher since this a source of external information. The next value that was interesting to further elaborate on is the influence of the children. There seems to be a growing influence of the children on what the parents are getting and where they are going to live, although the decision is still with the target audience. A reason for this could be that the people live longer but with certain complications due to happenings in their life. With this there could be a growing feeling among the children of needing to help their parents because they cannot do everything themselves anymore. This than could explain the phenomena of

the growing influence of the children. The complexity of the purchase is also higher because of the previous, in comparison with the normal standardized rebuy. Children and relatives play a more important role nowadays due to the increasing life expectancy of the people, taking into account that in the Netherlands the target audience needs to live longer at home, one can imagine that these people have more complications at an older age. This all results in children wanting to help their parents choosing because they also want the best for their parents. This implies that the purchasing process becomes more complex nowadays.

This influence of the children and relatives is all word of mouth communication and therefor also marketing. Therefor it is important that there is no negative experience for the client who receives the service. It is critical to prevent problems from happening, but this is not always avoidable. Therefor it is critical in the post-purchase evaluation that at first these problems are obviated. But if in a rare occasion the client has a problem, this needs to be solved to the perfection of the clients will. If this does not happen, there could be negative word of mouth marketing, and since this word of mouth marketing is so important, this should be avoided at all costs.

The customer value showed different results regarding what people think is important when they are purchasing this service. Some values were not surprising at all, such as the social part of the service. Everyone would like to have someone talking to them, especially at these people because their world is getting smaller. As Findlay (2003, p. 647) stated "As the population ages and more people are living alone, social isolation amongst older people is emerging as one of the major issues facing the industrialized world" which underlines that there is less social interaction among older people. This implies why this research also showed that this target audience is so keen on the social part since they get it less than before. Another popular result was feeling safe, which is also not very quaint since everyone who is at this age also knows that they have a larger risk of passing away due to complications. Also inabilities of the target audiences can cause problems and these people want to be able to contact someone as quick as possible in order to live on. The same goes for nice personnel and the flexibility of the personnel, also not very odd results. The nice personnel is not strange due to the fact that people like nice personnel who are friendly to them since they are getting less social interaction. Almost the same yields for the flexibility of the personnel, people are not able to everything themselves anymore and need help in which one week they need to do this and the other week that. This all in order to keep the place where they live, and their own health, in the best condition possible. The first odd value that was not expected was the enjoyment of the working personnel. This was not expected due to the fact that nice personnel would cover this factor. But this was so often mentioned that it could not be covered under nice personnel. The target audience does seems to like seeing the personnel enjoying the work that they are performing. Afterwards, this does make sense since the target audience really likes the personnel visiting them in order to help them. Due to a decreasing amount of social interaction it is nice to see someone who is visiting has pleasure in working for the client.

Reliance was also a factor which was lower than expected. This could come because the target audience thinks that personnel possess this value already and therefor did not mention it. Another unexpected low value was noticed with the price quality ratio and value for money. But this also had an obvious reason, the target audience has a health insurance and also another insurance which is now under supervision of the municipality in which the client lives.

5.1 Implications
This research has discovered the customer value of the target audience. As can be seen in the results the customer value is clearly found, which was mainly from the third phase of the consumer decision making process. For the customer this research means that the target audience will get a better focused value offering to themselves. This research has identified several important values that the customers could have. With these values companies can adjust their value offering and make sure that these values are improved or emphasis on the fact that this organization does poses this value in the best possible way. Furthermore in addition, this research has proven that there is no internal information search within these target audience and solely external information search. This has consequences for organizations that operate with this target audience. Also has been proven that the target audience does not use digital media enough in order to be an effective marketing tool. This means that another form of marketing with these people needs to be made. Pamphlets & brochures seem to have influence on the decision of people and could therefore be a viable option.

5.1.1 Directions for further research
A larger research can be done in order to have a large sample which increases the validity and reliability of the research. Another option to cope with the scale of this research is to perform a quantitative research in order to determine which values are more important. This researcher than can show the values that the customer potentially could have to the customer and then he or she can indicate their importance. Furthermore, the lack of internal information search can be further researched in order discover if there needs to be an adjustment for this specific target audience. Also the reason for the absence of the use of digital media can be further researched. This can be in combination with a research which researches the effectiveness of digital media with this target audience and the best target audience to focus on if digital media is used. Maybe the children can be better focused on in the future with digital media marketing.

5.2 Limitations
The main limitation of this research was time related. Only ten weeks in total are available in order to do conduct the research and to write the report. Besides this, the only limitations is the target audience and then especially the ability of the target audience to give well thought answers. Although the people were selected based upon the fact that they would be able to give good answers, the interviewees still had small problems sometimes with answering and understanding the questions that were asked. This often required extra explanation, which was one of the reasons why the interviews lasted longer than expected. Besides this some people were also forgetting the appointments for an interview, which did not speed up the process. Another time consuming part was finding people who were able to do an interview and wanted to do it. After talking with several people, it was chosen to let the nurses contact the sample and see if it was possible to do an interview. Afterwards, the actual appointment still had to be made and the people were not always home. Also when making the appointment they did not want the helper and me in their house on the same day, which also lengthened the process of interviewing.

6. CONCLUSION
Customers of this specific target audience value different aspects when they are purchasing a certain service. Several factors have been found which are important and some which are less important. An overview of the different values that the customers of the target audience have can be found in figure 4. The most

important value is the social part of the service because, people like to make a talk since their world is getting smaller through inabilities and passings of their family or friends. Another important value is that the target audience wants to feel safe with the working personnel as well to have an insurance in order to contact someone when something unforeseen happens to the client. Three other important values for the target audience are all related to the working personnel. At first people would like to see nice personnel which is friendly and open to talk with them. Secondly the target audience wants the working personnel to be flexible because, they want to be in control over what is done and when. Lastly, one of the most striking results in the customer value was that they would like to see personnel who enjoys to do the work that they are doing. It was expected that this would be covered by the value nice personnel but it was so extensive that a separate value was made for it.

A few factors which also did surprise were reliance, mainly due to the fact that it was expected that everyone would value this. But it could be that the target audience thinks that this is automatically present within a person that works for such an organization. Other values that were surprising at first were the amount of interviewees that pointed price quality ratio and value for money, but afterwards this was explained due to the fact that they have a good insurance and other insurance controlled by the local municipality. Therefor the target audience needed to pay only a small contribution.

Besides the customer value there were some other significant discoveries, which included the fact that the target audience is not actively using digital media. On top of that, the internal information search does not seem to be present within the phase informational in the consumer decision making process. Therefor the external information search is more extensive present and could have more influence with this target audience.

6.1 Implications for Patyna

The effect of this research on the organization in which this research has been conducted is that a change needs to happen in the value offering. Now that this organization knows what to focus on when they are offering their product or services to the customer, they can adjust it accordingly and focus on the values that the target audience do value. Next to this, it also knows what the buying process is like of the customers that they are offering extramural care too and could use this information to further enhance their business. Other results such as the absence of internal information search, can be used in order to determine the best marketing tool. Recently this organization introduced pamphlets as a marketing tool and this already seems to be effective, which is underlined by this research. Furthermore this organization also knows that this target audience is not to be focused on when using digital media. Instead it shows that children do have influence on the decision and are therefore a better choice to use digital marketing tools on. A potential threat for Patyna is the changing social environment, people live longer at home. Now this organization has a focus on intramural care and extramural care, but due to the changing environment they might want to shift their focus towards extramural care eventually because people are living longer at home with adjustment according to their deficiencies. The last implication that this research also underlines is the importance of word of mouth communication. They need to make sure that they offer their customers the best service possible and avoid any problems. If these problems do occur, it needs to be solved to the likings of the customer. If not than this could cause negative word of mouth marketing, which could cause a loss of current customer and potential future customers.

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9. APPENDIX
9.1 Appendix 1 The PEST analysis
Political

- Governmental policies about the target audience who need to live longer at home with adjusted care (Rijksoverheid, N.D.). This is due to the shift in responsibilities of the elderly care (Tea Huitema, 2015).

- Decentralisation of the healthcare from the government to the municipalities and health insurance (Rijksoverheid, 2015).

- From the AWBZ to the WLZ, which is a new healthcare system.

- The responsibility of the extramural care has gone to the health insurance companies.

Economical

- Heavy focus on cost reduction, organizations need to do it for less and less more (NOS, 2016). This is focused on the WMO, which is the guidance and the homecare since the local municipalities are responsible for this.

Social

People live longer and longer healthier, which implies that more people could need extramural care. (CBS, 2011).

Technological

- Automation in the healthcare (IEEE, N.D.).

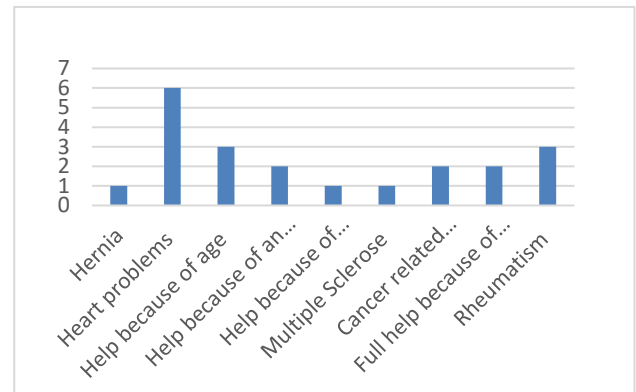## 9.2 Appendix 2 The different problems that the target audience had

Figure 4 The problems of the target audience

9.3 Interview questions
Interview questions:

1. What are the services that you are receiving? Or is it not necessary at the moment?
2. Why did you choose to get a certain service when you needed it? Was there a need too?
3. How did you find information about which options were available for you in terms of organizations?
4. Which communication channel did you use to find this information? Do you make use of digital media to find information?
5. Which options did you consider in terms of organizations?
6. Did the children play an important role with the choice of which healthcare organization you were choosing? And who did take the final decision?
7. Show a list with certain criteria and let him/her point which they think are important.
8. Why do you think these ones are important?
9. What did convince you to choose for a certain organization with the services?
10. Do you see the price as an important factor or is it more focused on the quality of the service?
11. What do you think is important when you are a looking for this kind of services? Why those?
12. Do the complaints get taken care of well according to you?
13. In short, do they listen to you when you have a complaint?
14. Was the request for the service flawless for you? No complications?
15. What did you think of the service that you finally received from the organization?