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Master's thesis

**Relationship Development with Local Visitors.
The Case Study of Fredriksdal.**

Author: Evelina Dmitrieva

Supervisor:
Richard Ek

Examiner:
Johan Hultman

Abstract

In the tourism research most of the studies are focused on tourists while local residents of the area remain under researched. In the increasing competition regular local visitors are of a great importance for tourist attractions. Creating customer value is seen as one of the competitive advantages. In this study I decided to focus on the contribution of value co-creation to relationship development between local visitors and the tourist attraction. This study aims to build a framework suitable for tourist attractions. The framework represents the findings of how value co-creation influences local visitors' relationship building with the tourist attraction.

First this study presents conceptual framework for a better understanding of existent relationship theories and customer value concept. I used customer value dimensions in my study to see how different values influence relationships. Besides customer value dimensions have never been employed in the tourism studies. After the theoretical discussion the methodology of the research is described. To be able to support theoretical proposal a case study have been carried out. I have employed qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, in particular questionnaire survey and interview. Methodology chapter is followed by the results and empirical findings in the analytical chapter. Analysis presents how co-creation customer value dimensions individually influence relationship development. Concluding discussion and developed framework are presented in the last chapter.

One of the main findings was that regular visitors tend to co-create meaningful value that brings them back. Different dimensions of customer value concept influence visitors' behavior outcomes but not all contribute relationship development through active value co-creation. Passive and active co-creation processes have been found and their contribution to relationship presented in the developed framework.

Keywords: Customer value, co-creation, relationship development, local tourist attraction, regular visitors.

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1. Introduction

In this study I investigate relationship building process between local visitors and the tourist attraction. After doing a theoretical research upon what have been studied within tourism perspective I have found that long-term relationship were not considered. Most of the research in tourism focuses on large destinations like cities and countries and studies are focused on pre-visit behavior or tourists' motivation to visit a destination as the main issue for marketing practitioners is how to attract tourists to the destination. For my research I decided to focus on a local tourist attraction where the company concentrates more on the local residents and has a possibility to build long term relationships with them. The focus on local residents of the area where the tourist attraction is located is mostly neglected in tourism research. However with this type of customers relationships are important for local tourist attractions. There are many tourist attractions that depend on local residents as they can develop strong relationships and become frequent/loyal visitors. There is a growing and intense competition in the tourism industry, not only at the global destination scale but also on a local scale for smaller tourist attractions. In order to survive in the competition with other tourist attractions strong relationships with visitors are of a great importance. This study tries to facilitate understanding of relationship building process between tourist attraction and local visitors.

Previous research on relationship building had a marketing perspective focusing on relationship marketing and commercial friendship (Fournier, 1998, Gronroos, 1990, Price & Arnould, 1999). Those investigations on relationships with customers describe one way relationship building where companies promise their customers friendship through their marketing communication campaigns (Price & Arnould, 1999). The research stressed an importance of building relationships with customers due to its possible advantages such as marketing costs reduction, accessibility to new and existent customers, improved customer retention and profitability (Payne, Storbacka, Frow & Knox, 2009). However studies in customer oriented perspective haven't been in focus where two-way communication and customers active involvement are much of importance in the relationship building process. Empirical research in the tourism field in particular has been lacking.

There are many different aspects that influence relationships between customers and a company. Customer value is seen as a tool for attracting and retaining customers (Ziethaml, 1988, Woodruff, 1997) but value creation process haven't been studied much in the context of relationships with customers. Value co-creation concept seems to be a promising aspect to

analyze in order to facilitate understanding of relationship building with customers. Co-creation process is about interaction between the customers and a company, the experience settings and offered activities. Interaction is a significant aspect in relationship building and, therefore co-creation cannot be neglected from the relationship studies. The aim of this study is to focus on co-creation process and investigate its contribution towards relationship building with visitors. In particular the research focuses on value creation processes and identifies its relevance and significance in the relationship building with local visitors. The research focuses on maintaining long-term relationships between the tourist attraction and the local visitors and will provide new approach for such framework since its perspective hasn't been employed yet.

1.1. Aim of the research

The aim of the thesis is to understand: how does value co-creation contributes relationship building with local visitors? The research focuses on the case study - open air museum Fredriksdal.

1.2. Research questions

In order to fulfill the aim of the research next questions have been formulated:

How customer value is created from managerial perspective?

How visitors perceive value and co-create their own?

Understanding of the value creation and co-creation processes facilitates comprehension of strong relationship development and prolongation of the relationships between tourist places and local visitors.

The findings of the study can be used by other tourist attractions to build strong relationships with local residents of the area they are located in and straighten the belongingness to the local community. The research results have practical implementations to be used by managers of tourists attractions. The study also develops knowledge about local residents' attitude and relationships towards tourist attraction which can be used in the further tourism research with the focus on locals.

1.3. Research design

The research designed the way to combine different approaches and to understand the contribution of co-creation towards relationship building. This is done by following from the theoretical discussion and collecting empirical data to develop a complex framework in the analytical part of the study.

The first chapter is a theoretical chapter that is used to present theoretical discussion. The chapter is divided into subchapters and includes literature review relating relationship theories, customer value and experience concepts and co-creation discussion. It aims to provide conceptual foundation for the further investigation and building the framework for a better understanding of relationship building process.

Chapter two presents methodology used in this research, reasoning of method choices and the descriptions of methodological approach. Empirical data collection aims to support theoretical discussion and to provide empirical evidence for the framework development.

Chapter three provides an analysis of collected data which is put in relations to theoretical discussion. Chapter summary presents results of analysis and the developed framework.

The last part of thesis paper summarizes theoretical and empirical findings and provides a concluding discussion.

Questionnaire sample and the transcript of the interview are attached in the appendix.

2. Theory

In the theoretical chapter I present definitions, characteristics of the concepts and provide backgrounds of the chosen theories.

Theoretical background on relationship research is presented first to see what approaches have been employed before and if they have limitations towards tourism research. To understand better the process of co-creation the notions of customer value and experience are revised and theoretical background is presented. This is followed by co-creation process discussion which stresses the its significance for the relationship building with customers/visitors.

In this chapter I have build a theoretical fundament to be used and developed in the analytical part of the thesis. The discussion revises existent approaches and provides an opportunity for building a framework suitable for the tourism studies.

2.1. Relationships

2.1.1. Marketing research background

The study of relationship building has been in the marketing research from the 1990's. Since then research with the focus on relationship building have become one of the main issues (Fournier, 1998). There has been research upon relationship marketing and even commercial friendships. Theoreticians stress on the importance of the long term relationships with customers (Gummesson, 1987, in Gronroos 1990). Relationship with customers as a research topic is seen as an important due to its possible advantages (Payne, Storbacka, Frow & Knox, 2009). It has been highlighted in the marketing literature that the cost of retaining customers is less comparing to the costs of acquiring new customers (Blattberg and Deighton, 1996 in Payne, 2001). Understanding long-term relationships with customers have become a central activity in relationship marketing process (Payne, 2001). It's been the focus of the practitioners too since building relationship with current customers is reducing costs comparing to the costs of attaining new customers. However the topic is still considered to be under-researched 380 (Payne, Storbacka, Frow & Knox, 2009) and the definition of long term relationship haven't been found. Moreover there hasn't been an empirical research in tourism field.

2.1.2. Service industry approach

Originally companies marketing relationships with customers were explored more in the service industry due to the unique characteristics of the services (Price & Arnould, 1999). However relationships with tourist attractions haven't been in focus of the studies. In tourism field research mostly focus on analyzing tourists' behavior and motivation before the trips to study their decision making behavior but relationships between tourist attractions and local visitors haven't been in the focus yet. According to Price & Arnould (1999) relationships involve long time period, not just a single visitation, where each interaction is influenced by the previous ones (Price & Arnould, 1999). Therefore it's important to employ relationship study in the tourism field on a local scale where the possibility of having frequent local visitors is present.

2.1.3. Two-way communication

I have noticed that in earlier marketing studies upon relationships with customers there have been one way communication dominating. The shift takes place in more contemporary researches and it is even more significant to employ two-way communication process. Currently building relationship with customers requires customers' involvement into the processes of value and experience creation (Pine and Gilmore, 1998, Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In the tourism studies where consumption is connected experiences that take place simultaneously two-way relationships cannot be excluded. In the relationship marketing literature the shift from one way transaction into relationship exchange is seen (Desai, 2009). Recent change where low relation complexity is no longer valid customer play an active role in relationship building process (Desai, 2009). Nowadays customers want to establish multifaceted relationships and they expect chosen products/services to play a proactive role in their lives (Gobe, 2002 in Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). Interdependence between partners is vital for relationship to exist: 'the partners must collectively affect, define and redefine the relationship (Hinde in Fournier, 1998). Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) were discussing the importance of active actors who not only passively consume what is projected on them but become co-designers of their values and experiences. According to Pine & Gilmore (1998) customers' involvement into the value and experience is significant in the process of the relationship building. Researchers often use the term co-creation to describe dialogues and interactions between customers and companies (Payne et al, 2009). After doing theoretical research upon relationship theories I could see that co-creation of values and experiences is not employed in the analysis of relationship building process but can be seen as a significant part of it. I saw the interaction correlation in the process of value co-creation and therefore decided to use it as an opportunity to build a framework that

integrates both concepts and might provide understanding of local visitors long relationship building with the tourist attraction.

Genuine human factor is one of the factors that is stressed in commercial relationship building. According to Arnould & Price (1993) 'service providers are expected to be actively involved and share their feelings' (Arnould & Price, 1993). Nowadays customers also considered to be active and highly involved into the consumption processes (Prahallad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Previous researches showed that service employees have special relationships with the customers and provider-customer interdependence is high (Arnould & Price, 1993). Another theoretician (Blackstone, 1992) compares company-customer relationship with relationship between people where cognitive, affective and behavior processes are complex (in Heath, Brandt & Nairn, 2006). According to some theoreticians customers relationship with companies and offerings analogue their social relationship. He defines relationship as interactions between parties with the different outcome than with the strangers, however they also states that these relationships not have same depth and richness as with people (in Payne, Storbacka, Frow & Knox, 2009).

Another limitation for the research upon tourist attraction relationship with visitors can be found in previous relationship studies. There have been a focus on employees – customers interactions. According to previous research relationship building begins with the customer-company relationships based on interactions between employees and customers (Brodie, Whittome & Brush, 2009). When visiting tourist attraction this type of interaction may not be always present. For instance, parks where interaction with employees is limited. Unlike in some service companies there is not so much customers' individual relationship building (intimacy factor) with the staff comparing to the services of consultants, hairstylists, doctors etc.. Since there is no long-term relationship between an employee and the visitor it limits the theory and employee–customer human relationship cannot be considered in the research. This is also the reason why the notion of friendship is excluded. Even though this approach is limited for the tourist attractions relationships with visitors as it was mentioned before social encounter is still involved and interaction between customers is present. Besides relationships between tourist attraction and its visitors may not fully depend on interaction with employees but the environment and offered activities.

In addition theoreticians argue that 'relationship exists within the context of other relationships (Parks and Eggert, 1991 in Fournier, 1998). This aspect is significant for service and service oriented companies but limited towards visitors' interactions with tourist attraction. This argumentation also can be interpreted as various relationships can exist within customers relationship with the company and its offerings. A good example of it would be social encounter

between the customers. This is a good example for the tourism field. Specifically most visitors do not come to a tourist attraction alone and it becomes social environment for such visitors. Hence social encounters are also considered in relationship as customers might be motivated to build relationships with service providers due to social factors (Price & Arnould, 1999).

2.2. Customer value

2.2.1. Theoretical background

Customer value is considered to be a significant tool to retain customers and sustain competitive advantage (Ziethaml, 1988, Woodruff, 1997 in Payne & Holt 2001). However there is still no agreement among the theoreticians on the definition of value and customer value (Payne & Holt, 2001). Even the research and knowledge on customer value is growing it is very fragmental and not widely accepted, empirical study is limited too (Wang et al, 2004). Customer value is seen as one of the significant factors for company success now and most importantly in the future as it has an impact on customers behavior (Wang et al, 2004, Graf & Maas, 2008). Thus behavior outcome can be negative or positive direction towards relationship building and depends on individual perceptions.

There have been argumentations if there is a difference between the notions value and values. According to Holbrook (1994) customer value is ‘preferential judgment’ while customer values refer to the criteria by which those judgments are made (in Payne & Holt, 2001). Rokeach (1973) described values are ‘deeply-held and enduring beliefs of individuals’ (in Payne & Holt, 2001). Whilst value seen as a result of a trade-off and an interaction between customer and product/service (in Payne & Holt, 2001). According to said above the notion customer value is suitable for this research and will be used further on as an customers’ evaluation of received offering.

Customer value is a multidimensional phenomenon and further theoretical and empirical studies are essential. Most definitions of the concept rely on other terms that are not well defined themselves (Jensen, 2001). This makes the research upon the concept of value intricate. Different approaches towards customer value are constructed but it seems there is no widely accepted ways of pulling it together (Jensen, 2001). Customer value concept is complex. The literature provides various definitions of the concept and linkages to other theoretical constructs vary widely (Graf & Maas, 2008).

2.2.2. Customer value definition

In order to facilitate an investigation of the value co-creation role in visitors relationship with the tourist attraction I decided that different interpretations of customer value need to be presented first to see the existent definitions.

Woodruff's (1997) provided a fundamental definition of customer value. He defined the concept as follows: 'Customer value is a customer's perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitates (or blocks) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations'. According to Woodruff customer value is defined as something that focuses on customers' desires and beliefs and what they get from buying and using a product or service.

Ziethaml (1988) stated that customer value is products overall assessment based on benefits and sacrifices (what is received and what is given). Same definition is adopted by Kotler (2009) where customer value is a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices (Payne and Hotl, 2001). However value assessment can be different at pre-purchase and after purchase stages (Jensen, 2001). Expected costs and benefits may not be the same after consumption and actual costs and benefits might vary from the ones at pre-purchase stage.

Holbrook (1999) describes consumer value as follows: 'When we say that consumer value is an interactive relativistic preference experience, we mean that the relationship of consumers to products (subjects to objects) operates relativistically (depending on relevant comparisons, varying between people, changing among situations) to determine preferences that lie at the heart of the consumption experience' (Holbrook, 1999: 9). According to Holbrook value creation is an interactive process that involves customers active participation.

Other authors see customer value as an emotional bond between a customer and a producer. This bond is created after the customer have used the product or service and found the product to provide an added value (Butz & Goodstein, 1996: 63).

The absence of conceptual clarity about what customer value is limits its understanding and further development in the research field. To facilitate further research *customer value* in this study refers to additional benefits that customer receives from the company's offering in the process of active interaction. Customer value can be perceived by the customer and created together with the company. But customer value is a personal judgment and perception of received offering which cannot be defined by the company.

After doing literature analysis and taking into account different approaches towards customer value I could see that the concept is multi-dimensional and there is a need for the framework that takes into consideration different aspects.

2.2.3. Customer value dimensions

In order to see relevance and significance of co-creation process for the relationship building customer value dimensions are used to build a complex framework. There have been several attempts to create customer value dimensions framework but none of them have been specifically oriented towards tourist experiences.

Some researchers define customer value through benefits and sacrifices dimensions (Ex. Woodruff, 1997). Sweeney and Soutar (2001) have limited their framework to emotional, social value, price and quality functional value. Sheth et al (1991) suggested other dimensions from customers perspective - social, emotional, functional, epistemic and conditional values as a foundations of value construct (in Wang et al). Functional value can be differentiated into price and quality aspects (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). Epistemic value refers to surprise and novelty aspects of a products; conditional value refers to the conditions of the situation where value is perceived (Wang et al, 2004). I decided to focus on this extended framework as it provides more aspects. Experience environment is vital in this research. On another hand some of the dimensions might not be relevant to the co-creation process. For instance price cannot affect the co-creation process but might have indirect sacrifice influence on relationship building.

Customer value dimensions framework have been used by researchers in their studies (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001, Wang et al) but have been adapted to the focus of their studies. Therefore I decided to employ the dimensions framework and adjust it to tourist experiences and their co-creation process, and see how they influence relationship building with customers. Following customer value dimensions - social value, emotional value, functional value, epistemic value and conditional value – will be employed in the analytical chapter of this study.

2.2.4. Created and delivered value

From the managerial perspective value can be created and delivered to the customers. Creating and delivering customer value was in focus of research in the 1990s. This work stressed the importance of delivering value to the customers in companies' success and competitive advantage (Payne & Holt, 2001). There has been an increasing interest both within academics

and practitioners in creating and delivering value to the customers. From managerial perspective creating and proposing customer value is an important process that can be seen as a preliminary step towards relationship building with the customers. For this research it's important to know what values the tourist attraction proposes to the visitors and analyze how they have been perceived.

This approach has a customer oriented focus and emphasizes the linkage between customer value and company's success (Payne & Holt, 2001). For the companies it is significant to comprehend what creates value for their customers (Payne & Holt, 2001) before defining customer value. Understanding how customers value an offering or service is vital for competitive advantage of the company (Graf & Maas, 2008). The process of customer value creation is a crucial point as customers choose the company by the value offerings it provides. Customers choose that offering which provides the highest expected gain in value for them (Kotler & Bliemel, 2001 in Graf & Maas, 2008). Hence identification, creation and proposal of customer value targets value creation activities which can attract new customers (Wang et al, 2004). However when company creates and proposes the value to the customers managers also need to be aware of individual perception outcomes.

2.3. Experience aspect

According to theoreticians companies that employ service approach towards customers are the companies that focus on customers experience creation through value adding processes (Berry in 345 Brodie, Whittome & Brush, 2009). This approach shows the relevance of the previous research towards tourist attraction cases where customers experience is the offering itself. Due to the nature of services companies in service industry are more affected by value creating and building experiences processes.

Most of the studies on relationship building have a focus on product companies. The ones that take into consideration service industry have an empirical research within medical, finance industries (Ex) or focus on big corporate brands as Disney (Pine & Gilmore), Starbucks (Thompson Rindfleish & Arsel). This limits the understanding of relationship building to the studied fields and does not provide full understanding of the phenomenon in tourism. The phenomenon also might differ since relationships between visitors and tourist attractions have special characteristics comparing to product/ service offerings. In the tourism industry experiences play primary role.

Today companies offer experiences not simply to entertain the customers they are staging experiences to engage their customers (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 30). Providing staged settings for experience creation is combined with active participation of customers in the process and creation of personal value. Experiences appear in the process of the interaction between individual, other customers and the staged experience settings. According to Pine & Gilmore (1998) staged experience settings are physical and virtual environment where besides entertainment there are other important aspects as education, escapism and estheticism. These compatible components can provide a mix to form unique personal encounters (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). These experience settings are built to engage the customer into the experience. It engages customers on a level of senses and builds the personal connections to unique experiences. However settings are designed by company even if there is customer involvement between the environment and customers. According to this approach there is no two way communication. Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) in their work emphasize the importance of the dialogue. While the environment settings are important for communication process to deliver the intended offer and designing an environment helps to transform the offering into a memorable experience, it's a dialogue that provides a stage for co-creation.

Experience is a complex phenomenon and it can include variety of aspects. An experience can consist of a product or service itself, it can also supplement a product or a service and it can be the whole package where experience turns into a mental process (Sundbo, 2008, 1). In the tourism industry can be in a visiting a place itself or consuming offerings and services. Experiences are also used as a tool to attract tourists. Many global destinations like cities and even countries focus on marketing destination experiences to capture tourists attention with a more compelling reason to visit (Hudson & Ritchie, 2009). Tourist places no longer sell physical attributes of the destinations, its culture, heritage and nature but propose experiences to the potential tourists. Experiences are majorly used by theoreticians and practitioners and tourism field is no exception.

2.3.1. Experience concept characteristics

For a better understanding of the experience concept its characteristics have been described below. The concept of experience is complex and has variety of characteristics. Only the ones that are considered relevant for this research are being discussed.

According to Pine & Gilmore (1998) experiences are *memorable*. When a customer buys experience 'he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages'

(Pine & Gilmore, 1998:2). The question what is memorable event shows up. Memorable event can be something spectacular that a person remembers throughout the entire life. In personal life it can be graduation, marriage, having a baby, getting a promotion at work etc. In economical aspects memorable events can be connected to first time purchases, special holidays and events. Most of such events happen once or several times but to be memorable events cannot have regular basis. In the tourism context exotic trips can be considered as memorable events. People start planning their vacation month ahead and it becomes spectacular experience for them. When it comes to the local tourist places that people visit more regularly it is more difficult for the company to stage memorable experiences every time when local visitors come back. In the growing competition tourist places have to differentiate themselves by offering new experience activities and thus attract customers who seek new unique events. According to this only experiences wrapped around offerings and services make using them memorable. Another aspect that makes it possible to turn products and services into the memorable events is customers engagement (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 15). 'Offering of experiences occurs whenever a company intentionally uses services as the stage [...] to engage the individual' (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 11). According to this company intentionally builds experiences and engages customers into it. Engagement and personal perceptions of the offering makes it a memorable event for the customers and the development of experience itself is not possible without customer participation in the process.

Theoreticians also mention the influence of *emotional aspect* of experiences. Companies propose the experiences that would appeal to the customers emotions. Feelings play an important role in customers perceptions and therefore experience offering involves all customers senses to enrich the event. Pien (2004) even refers experience economy as services that aim the emotional needs of individuals or groups (in Boswijk, Thijsen & Peelen, 2007). In the tourism destinations marketing messages that are based on tourist experiences appeal to the emotions of the customers (Hudson & Ritchie, 2009: 226).

Experiences also considered to be very *individual* and derive from interaction between the event and a customers prior state of mind and being (Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 12). According to Pine and Gilmore experiences are gained during the process of interaction. This is seen as the interaction through the engagement of the customer and a company. Interaction process itself is personal and it makes experiences with the offering personalized. Experiences also perceived differently by individuals. After the consumption all is left after are customers individual memories about their experiences and these memories are personal too. To be more precise it is the value of experience that 'lingers in the memory of any individual who was engaged by the

event' (in Pine & Gilmore, 1998: 13). The example of Disneyland shows that parents not only take their kids to experience the amusement park but to have the memories that remain for years after the experiencing the offer.

2.3.2. Individual perception

Experiences might be proposed by a company but they are being perceived by customers and it is a very personal process. The same environment settings will lead to different value outcomes. Experience itself might not end at the moment when customers leaves but its memories and value that extend the attachment to the experience and the tourist attraction.

'Perceived value is a customer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given' (Zeithaml, 1988 in Graf & Maas, 2008). This is when customer value defined through benefits and sacrifices. This is one of the most common approaches of customer value conceptualization (Graf & Maas, 2008). The same offering can be perceived differently due to the personal context. Customer value does not have to equal the intended or wanted customer value from the producer. Woodruff's definition (1997) of customer-perceived value: '...customer perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations' (in Payne & Holt, 2001).

Customer perceived value is not simply created on one time basis but 'delivered over time as the relationship develops' (Gronroos, 1997 in Payne & Holt, 2001). According to this statement it can be argued that customer value is created and evolves while relationships between customers and companies are developing. Customer value might change over time towards positive and negative outcomes. The outcomes might not be predicted by the company as value perception is individual for all customers. According to Tzokas & Saren (1997) perceived value could be interpreted as customer satisfaction received from the offering. Proposed value might not be perceived as planned by a company due to individual customers perception and hence might not satisfy customers expectations.

Emotions and memories considered being an important aspect in customer value creation process. As I mentioned above memorable events may only have once in a life-time regularity and might not lead to developing of long lasting relationships. Emotional engagement into the experience and valuable memories about it don't explain regular visitation and strong relationship building. To understand the phenomenon interactions through co-creation process

are employed in this research. Co-creation process involves interaction and customers' active participation in their experiences.

2.4. Co-creation

Experiences become valuable when customers are personally engaged into the co-creation process (Prahalad, 2004). The value of experience is connected to experience settings, activities and social encounter of co-creation process (Pine, Prahalad). The value derives from the interaction between the environment, surrounding people and activities they are involved into. Involvement into co-creation process is individual and extracted values from the experiences have personal outcomes.

Projected values might not be perceived by customers as planned since customers not only perceive created value individually but also co-create their own. This is the case of active participation of the customers in the process of value creation that doesn't reflect company's proposals. Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) in their work stated that co-creation process involves both customers and company. Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that customers are always co-producers in their value creation. Though the process of co-creation of value cannot be controlled by the company and customers themselves create their values by interacting with proposed offerings. Value creation and delivery process fails when customers start actively interact with the offering and company. Predominant view that value is embedded into the product or service was opposed by the view where customers value is generated in the customers sphere (Vargo and Lush, 2004).

While customer value focuses on how the product/service is perceived by customers co-creation of value focuses on the interaction between customer and producer. Customers are always co-creators of value and their involvement into the process is always required (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, Vargo and Lush, 2007). According to these theoreticians the role of consumer has changed and hence customers have a more important position than ever before. Since consumers are also active actors in the process of creation of value it excludes more the described above approach where companies create customer value and then project them on customers. In the co-creation process involvement of the customer supplemented with two-way communication. Customer can define and extract their own value themselves. The interactions of active partners become a site for co-creation of customer value (Desai, 2004).

In this process interaction itself it is significant where consumers become a part of production but not simply consumption (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This is the way of differentiating a product/

service and creating a unique value between the company and its customers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b). This is a two way communication processes where customers can co-create their own value and build relationships with the company. Created and delivered value might have different individual perceptions and depend on the situation, thus, outcomes cannot be determined by the company. The value can only be determined by the user in the experience consumption process and only in the interaction process between the company, the individual and other customers involved into value creation process (Lush, Vargo & O'Brien, 2007).

The focus on tourism seems to be missing in the co-creation literature and I couldn't find relevant empirical research in this field. However experiences and values derived from them are of a great importance and cannot be neglected. In tourism industry customers are always in search of experiences and become involved into the creation process. In their work Vargo & Lunsh argued that customer is always a co-creator of the value. Tourists are in search of interaction with the environment settings, other people etc. and become involved into the process of co-creation of their own experience. Co-creation makes experiences more personal and provides meaningful values that connect customers with the tourist attraction, brings them back and develops strong relationships. Having strong connection reduces the chances of choosing other offerings and not returning to the tourist attraction again.

Interdependence of customer value and relationships building between customers and the company is significant. In value co-creation process customers are involved into active interaction with a company. Value co-creation aspect differs from the others as it is a process that also involves during the consumption stage. In the focus of this study it depends on communication process between local visitors and the tourist attraction. Co-creation process is not only limited to received benefits and experienced sacrifices and doesn't depend completely on company's value proposals.

2.5. Summary

Literature review and the presentation of conceptual background provides a theoretical basis for developing a framework that is suitable for tourism studies and facilitates understanding of relationship development between local visitors and the tourist attraction. The study aims to investigate the contribution of co-creation process towards visitors' relationship building with local tourist attraction in a long term perspective. Different aspects and dimensions of customer value and experiences are considered and will be used in order to build the framework.

In the analytical chapter the results of empirical research will be employed in order to support theoretical discussion and create the visitors relationship building framework.

3. Methodology

This chapter explains the methods used in this study. It describes empirical data collection process and explains used methods. General reasoning of empirical approach to the phenomenon is given; limitations of the methods are discussed. Then chosen methods are described in details to provide a basis for analytical chapter.

The research consists of two studies that employ different methods and perspectives. Customer survey is used to investigate value perception and co-creation cases while interview with a manager was employed to see the background of experience and value creation processes.

3.1. Approach to the aim and research questions

Relationship building is a two way communication process. Therefore it has been decided to focus on two perspectives in order to fulfill the aim of the research.

To answer the first research question and to understand how customer value created from managerial perspective an in-depth interview has been carried out with the manager of Fredriksdal.

To answer the second question – how visitors perceive value and co-create value – visitors' questionnaire surveys have been collected.

There have been two studies carried out. The first that focused on visitors' perspective employed questionnaires collected from the previous research upon Fredriksdal. The second perspective was conducted after the survey results have been analyzed to support the findings and see the managerial perspective.

During the first research upon Fredriksdal case material have been collected for analysis but haven't been used fully. Previous analysis of the survey results employed quantitative method and only provided a general picture. However I was also interested in different types of visitors that participated in the survey. Therefore questionnaire results have been categorized into groups and analyzed separately, also employing qualitative method for a deeper analysis of open ended answers.

3.2. Case study method

To facilitate understanding of the relationship building process with local visitors I carried out the research upon a case study. A local tourist attraction - Fredriksdal - an open air museum in the city of Helsingborg, Sweden, have been chosen for this research.

To be able to explore the role of customer value dimensions and co-creation processes in local visitors relationships an empirical study needed to be performed. To have more throughout notion case study have been used in this study. Case studies aim to understand the phenomenon by investigating the examples (Veal, 2011). The basic case study has an intensive study of one single case (Bryman, 2001). Fredriksdal was chosen as a local tourist place to be investigated as a case study. Case study research offers comprehensiveness for understanding of a specific process and can be used in the situations where not so much known about the studied phenomenon (Hudson & Ritchie, 2009). Since the study aims to explore the role of co-creation in relationship building process it test any previously developed theories or models but tries to develop suitable framework. Fredriksdal case study seemed to be suitable for this thesis. Case study method considered to be very useful as it allows expanding and generalizing theories by mixing theoretical knowledge with empirical findings (Yin, 1994 in Vissak, 2010). Case study can be used even if there is lack of understanding of studied phenomenon. This research develops a framework to adapt to the tourism field and empirical material from the case study is significant. Since there is lack of comprehensive view of co-creation process contribution towards relationship building case study research design fits well into this study. The exploration of a case provides empirical findings for this study and framework development.

Case study research can facilitate understanding of how and why investigated things happened in a certain way (Yin, 1994 in Vissak, 2010). In this thesis case study research facilitates explanation of how local visitors perceive values and co-create their own at Fredriksdal. Case study method might not produce general findings that are universally representative (Veal, 2011) but can provide understanding of the phenomenon in the tourism field. The case study provides an opportunity for theoretical development of a framework and might have interesting findings towards understanding local visitors relationships with the tourist attraction. Case study aims to generate an examination of a case and then engage the findings into theoretical analysis (Bryman, 2001). In this research case study helps to understand if local residents are regular visitors of Fredriksdal and how experiences and customer value concepts are connected to the process of relationship building.

One of the other strengths of a case study research is the possibility to collect data from different sources and multiple levels (Vissak, 2010). To study phenomenon from customers perspective

questionnaire survey was carried out. In order to see managerial perspective of studied phenomenon the interview with the manager has been held.

3.3. Data collection methods

Case study approach allows using data collected from different sources and therefore having this opportunity I decided to combine quantitative technique with the qualitative. Qualitative techniques are used in different research situations among which exploratory theory building (Veal, 2011). This study employs qualitative method due to the exploratory origin of this thesis. Qualitative methods do not limit the research and allows collecting undefined by the researcher information. Empirical study aims to find out how value is created and perceived by the visitors which is a complex process and couldn't be fit into quantitative approach. It especially significant since perception and co-creation are very individual.

There have been discussions which method, qualitative or quantitative, is the most appropriate representation of the reality within studied problem (Symonds & Govard, 2010). 'All methods have inherent biases and limitations, so use of only one method to assess a given phenomenon will inevitably yield biased and limited results' (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989 in Symonds & Govard, 2010: 129). However methods provide different approaches to the explanation of phenomenon. Employing different methods also makes it possible to carry out a fieldwork on different levels. This research focuses on two approaches – customers and managerial – and various methods allow to collect more data for analysis. Each study can face limitations in one or another method. Employing several methods might not exclude the limitations but will provide a wider range of information for analysis. 'Many researchers accepted that both paradigms were legitimate and useful for providing different perspectives on the same topic (Greene et al, 2008 in Symonds & Govard, 2010:123). By using different methodological approach research can find approaches towards understanding of phenomena. It's been agreed that both methods can be used in one study. Besides 'the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 in Symonds & Govard, 2010:123). Combining methodological approaches straightens the research (Bryman, 2008) and provides a broader perspective on studied phenomenon. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study. Questionnaires were used to survey the visitors and interview was carried out to see the managerial perspective on relationships with customers. The researches that integrate elements from both methods are categorized as 'mixed method' researches (Symonds & Govard, 2010). Two data collection perspectives provided information to explore the phenomenon from two

perspective and get a broader approach. Using multiple methods of data collection improves the quality of the study, provide additional information and may lead to the new questions for the further research and will help to improve deeper understanding of studies phenomenon (Vissak, 2010).

One of the biggest limitations of quantitative method of data collection is the possibility of directing of the results. However even qualitative methods can manufacture the data instead of finding it. This happens if pre-determined research question is adopted (Silverman, 2007). To avoid data manufacturing employed in this study methods were adjusted to the interests of the research. To try to avoid directing the results questionnaires included opened questions and the interview had a semi-structured design. Both methods are described further in the chapter.

3.3.1. Customers survey

To answer the second question of the research the questionnaire survey have been used. In order to investigate visitors relationship with Fredriksdal, their perception of customer value and the process of co-creation it was important to carry out customers survey. Empirical study provides insight data from customers experiences for understanding and learning more about the phenomenon. The primary source of the research is customers questionnaire survey. One particular event was chosen for the fieldwork. The data was collected during the event called 'spirit tour'. It was carried out within two days at the beginning of November. The event was chosen for several reasons. First of all the event was held during the off season and the possibility of having tourists on this event was quite small. Second, is the number of people that come to the event. The number was limited and known in advance what gave the chance to know what percentage of visitors have been surveyed. The tickets were sold in advance and reached up to 2000 visitors within two days. This also provided a possibility to survey more customers than during regular days when number of visitors could be much less.

Third, the event proposed extra experiences and value comparing to regular visits of Fredriksdal. It offers visitors to experience folklore stories and spirits of the past through a guided tour in the park. However Fredriksdal is not the only place that provides this kind of offering. Offering themed guided tours generally is not something unique today. It seems to be quite common to employ experiences as a base when creating guided tours like that. There have been similar offerings in the region of Skåne. Hence studying reasoning of the choice and customer value perception and co-creation from visitors' perspective provides an opportunity to see how the process and different aspects influence relationship development. Through questionnaire survey

this study aimed to understand what brings regular visitors back to Fredriksdal and how of customer value co-creation influences customers' relationships with the tourist attraction.

Questionnaires were chosen as they provide a chance to collect more information from the visitors. Questionnaire based survey can be used both to gather quantified information and qualitative data by including open-ended questions (Veal, 2011). 215 questionnaires were collected throughout 2 days of the event which wouldn't be possible with interviews. In this case collecting opinions from more customers provides a richer material for analysis (Smith, 2010). Silverman also argues that 'some research questions might be better studied using largely quantitative data' (Silverman, 2007: 40). Since the study aims to develop a framework there is a need of rich material which makes the framework well supported. Questionnaires were the most suitable for other reasons as well. The event was carried out in the evening in November where standing long outside in the cold doesn't look inviting. Besides it was a family event and parents might not be willing to contribute much time for the interview while the rest of the family would have to wait. Questionnaires are less time consuming and provided a possibility to reach more people. The questionnaires were handed out at the end of the event near open cafeteria where people were spending some time after the tour and many visitors have gladly spent couple minutes to fill in the questionnaire.

Questionnaire had both closed and open ended questions. Having both facilitates to collect some statistical data and find out how different visitors perceive and build values with the company. Employing both methods still provides an opportunity to gain some insight knowledge as well as be able to survey more people comparing to the interviews. Open-ended questions give wider options for the surveyed visitors and allowed them to express their view in a more free form. Including open ended questions into the questionnaire provides with the details that couldn't be thought of by the researcher and might facilitate understanding of the studied phenomenon. 'Open-ended questions are likely to get more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to the interviewees' views...' (Byrne in Silverman, 2007: 129). The biggest limitations of this type of questions is the possibility of receiving irrelevant for the studied phenomenon answers. Besides they require more time and effort from the surveyed customers (Smith, 2010: 64).

3.3.2. Questionnaire description

The questionnaire includes twelve questions with ten closed pre-coded questions and two open-ended questions (Appendix 1). Originally questionnaires were used to evaluate the event carried

out at Fredriksdal. Thus some of the questions are not to be used for analysis in this study. Two Likert scale questions evaluate guided tour attributes and are not fully relevant for this study. Only two features are analyzed in this study as they support some value aspects.

To avoid so called ‘manufactured’ data (Silverman, 2007) questionnaires were designed the way that there is no particular questions about customer value and visitors perceptions of their relationships with Fredriksdal. For example instead of asking visitors if they are regular customers of the company the question how often they have been in Fredriksdal throughout the year have been included in the questionnaire. This was done because customers might not see themselves in the relationship with the company consciously. However the answers show the regularity of their visits. It also helps to select the questionnaires and categorize them into regular visitors answers.

Open ended questions are used to avoid limitations of answers and guidance of the results. One of these questions was placed at the very end of questionnaire form and asked for additional comments from visitors. This provided an opportunity to capture aspects that could be missed in the questionnaire design. Open ended questions gave wider answers that cannot be predicted in advance. Two questions collected personal information about age and gender of respondents. It was not predicted that many visitors would fill in questionnaires with their kids. However gender and age categorizations are not employed in this study and thus this unforeseen restriction doesn’t limit the investigation.

The event was chosen during the off season to focus on local residents and capture regular visitors of Fredriksdal. In order to make sure the focus group doesn’t go beyond this scope the question ‘How many times have you visited Fredriksdal throughout the year?’ was included. Questionnaire also contains the question asking about the possibility of coming back to Fredriksdal in the future. These questions provide the results about the regularity of visits and intentions to come back. In order to be able to investigate relationships between the visitors and Fredriksdal this information is needed to be able to categorize visitors. The questions ‘What do you think about ticket price?’ and ‘How satisfied are you with the event?’ measure functional dimensions of price and quality. The answers provided secondary data that can indirectly influence customer value and influence relationship building process. Questions why and with whom did the customers come to the event were included into the questionnaire. The question ‘With whom are you visiting the event?’ applies to the social encounter of customer value dimensions. The questionnaire sample is presented in the appendix.

The tickets for the event were sold in advance and the final number of visitors was 2000 people, 1000 visitors each day. 150 questionnaires were collected during the first day of the event and 65

during the second day. After discarding incomplete questionnaires at the end of the second day, the final result was 215 respondents. Most of the visitors were coming to the event with their families including small kids and therefore questionnaires quite often were filled by the family. This narrowed down the amount of visitors as many were coming to the events in groups. The amount of questionnaires for analysis depends on many factors (Bryman, 2008). In this case 215 final questionnaires seem to be a big enough sample group for the analysis. The collected sample is about 11 % of total number of event visitors.

The results from closed questions didn't need any further transformations for the analysis and have been assorted according to the theoretical structure of the thesis and saved in the Excel database. Open ended answers were classified into groups when possible. This is the case of qualitative data being transformed into quantitative when answers are categorized into numbers (Symonds & Govard, 2010). By doing so the research not only finds unexpected outcomes but also provides numerical correlation of these aspects. Answers that cannot be grouped or have special findings for the research are also analyzed separately. Thematic analysis of data based on words takes more inductive approach (Symonds & Govard, 2010). The findings from open ended questions can be studied deeply in the further research. Open-ended questions also give a possibility to sort the received answers into different groups. It provides new unexpected grouping of customers while creating the selection groups in advance would lead to manufacturing of data.

3.3.3. Managers interview

To be able to understand what values are delivered to the visitors and which are the co-creation of the customers I decided there is a need of carrying out an interview with the manager. It also provided with a better understanding of the tourist attraction and its offerings for me.

In order to gain the background information high level managers needed to be surveyed as they possess the knowledge and manage the processes. Fredriksdal have been contacted in advance to make sure there is a possibility to carry out an interview and then an interview with one of the managers was arranged. After making an appointment for the interview interviewed manager asked to provide a topic of discussion couple days in advance to be able to prepare for the discussion. Since the knowledge about Fredriksdals approaches towards tourists and regular visitors were limited only broad questions were included into the e-mail to the manager. It provided the manager a chance to prepare for the interview but left some opened space and didn't limit the discussion.

Qualitative interview is best suited to get a deeper notion of relationship building with local visitors and customer value from managerial perspective. This method provides managers understanding and interpretations. It also gives the flexibility since many nuances of companies strategies are not known by a researcher in advance. In-depth interview is used to get the insights and to see the background of the process in details. Using interview method provides openness for deeper explanations from the interviewed manager (Bryman, 2001).

The interview took place at Fredriksdal office and took about 40 minutes. Fredrikdal managers also work with the customers during different events. Personal interaction helped not only to see the managerial perspective but also collect data from direct interaction of the manager and visitors. Only one interview was done due to the difficulty to carry out more. Since it's a one case study research and managers within one organization have the same strategic approach it's been considered that one interview is enough to provide information for analysis. Hence it was assumed that additional interviews might not reveal new insights but would be time consuming for the managers of Fredriksdal and for transcribing the results.

The interview was done after the theoretical study. Questions for the interview have been derived from theoretical discussion of the study. It assured relevance of the interview discussion to the studied topic as they were based on existent theoretical knowledge. Preset query and topic wouldn't allow using unstructured interview while fully structured design would limit data collection. To guide the interview preliminary questions were chosen to make sure that all questions relevant to the topic were covered (Veal, 2011). Before the interview the list of questions to be covered have been done. It's often referred as an interview guide (Bryman, 2001). Checklist was used but the interview had a conversational interaction. The interview was held in a semi structured manner. Semi structured interview allows to obtain specific data but leaves space to include interesting discussions brought up by the interviewee. Particular questions had to be included to the interview in order to explore the studied topic. Determining some questions in advance focuses the interview on the studied phenomenon exactly (Wayne et al, 2008). However questions have not been structured. Having a flexible structure interview does not freeze the interview like strictly structured set of questions would (Wayne et al, 2008). It allows responding into the direction where interviewee changed the course and new significant issues may result (Bryman, 2001). Besides follow up questions can be asked in case something interesting and relevant for the topic shows up in the interviewee answers (Bryman, 2001). Opened framework facilitated deepening the collected data from managerial perspective since predetermined questions were combined with spontaneous questions that appeared during the interview. It gave an opportunity to get some insightful outcomes unpredicted in advance.

Interviewee had a freedom to enrich the information and provide new findings for the research. The interview included opened questions only in order to avoid interviewee guidance through the topic.

Since the interview is carried out with the manager there was no need to simplify the language like it was done for the customers survey. It was assumed that managers are familiar with the terminology. The interview also structured as data gathering but held as a discussion. More specific terms like customers value have been excluded until the end of the interview in order to avoid directing the interview into the specific topic and missing other significant information. It was employed only to discuss the research topic after the main part of the interview.

The interview design contained different types of questions: introducing questions – prepared questions significant for the topic, follow up questions – for the interesting issues that showed up during the interview, structuring questions – to direct to a different topic when the discussion was carried away (Bryman, 2001). Using these types of questions allowed to ensure that relevant for the research information is discussed and gave some flexibility to change the order of the questions and include the new ones where needed.

Interview discussion was not focused on one particular event. This could limit interview results to similar findings and wouldn't provide any additional valuable findings. Therefore the interview was started with the general questions about Fredriksdal and its customers, both tourists and local visitors. It has been followed by different event arrangements discussion and customers experiences, mostly focusing on what Fredriksdal offers to their visitors. Value discussion was reached through competition and customer attraction discussion. Regular visitors were in focus a lot during the second part of the interview.

The interview was tape reordered with the agreement of the interviewee. Recording was done in order to be able to transcribe it fully and to facilitate deeper analysis. Without full transcripts it wouldn't have been possible to have rich detailed data collected. The interview was transcribed and saved in the Word file for further synthesis and analysis.

The transcripts have been read through several times. General notes have been done to make the interpretation easier. More detailed notes have been made to sort out significant parts. Findings related to the concepts from theoretical discussion have been marked and categorized. Themes were developed in categorizations and related to the different theories of the first chapter. Theoretical perspective forms the base for the analysis of collected empirical material. First the discussions were separated into tourists and visitors groups. This helped to distinguish studied

group of regular visitors. Then discussions of managerial perspective were separated from visitors perceptions and examples.

3.4. Summary

This study explores relationships with the visitors through examination of how customer value is created, perceived and co-created by the visitors. There are many factors that influence relationship building process but for this research in particular customer value creation impact is analyzed. The research aims to analyze how value co-creation contributes relationship building with local visitors.

Empirical results aim to answer formulated questions and adapt theoretical approach towards tourism field of study. Tourist attractions have specific characteristics comparing to other services or products. Therefore empirical study not only provides the answers to the questions but also develops theoretical approach. The results of the analyzed material develop relationship building theory through co-creation process and facilitates comprehension of relationship building in tourism industry. Empirical findings are used in the analytical part to develop suitable for tourism research framework and facilitate understanding of relationship building process between local visitors and the tourist attraction.

4. Analysis

Empirical data collected have been sorted in order to be able to develop relationship building framework. The questionnaire results have been categorized into three groups – first time visitors, returning visitors and regular visitors - to see if there are differences between these types of visitors. The categorization provided me an opportunity to monitor how customer value aspects perceived by the groups and how co-creation process affects their relationships with the tourist attraction.

The first analytical part analyses material and presents it within customer value dimensions. This framework originally hasn't been developed for tourism experiences and therefore there are some other findings that supplement theoretical discussion. The dimensions and aspects are analyzed through co-creation perspective where possible. This is followed by the discussion how co-creation contributes relationship development between local visitors and tourist attraction.

4.1. Case study Fredriksdal

To describe the case study I used the information provided on the official web page of Fredriksdal as well as the results from the interview with the manager.

Fredriksdal is a local tourist destination – open air museum in the city of Helsingborg (Sweden). The webpage states that ‘nowhere in Europe will you find an equivalent to Fredriksdal’. It’s a miniature of a Skåne region with unique settings, buildings and gardens. In the museum the history and the diversity of countryside are preserved. Customers are offered to participate in the activities all year round – themed exhibitions and a constant program of events. Visits to Fredriksdal with its eighteenth century buildings and historical parks are like a trip where customers go back into the past. Fredriksdal attracts about 250 000 customers a year, both local residents and tourists (based on official web page information).

What is Fredriksdal have been discussed with the manager in order to understand how managers see the place and how they propose it to the visitors. The manager said that ‘there have been discussions about what it actually is’. There is a park, gardens, historical buildings, museums, a theater, a farm etc. Fredriksdal arranges different events like theater plays, guided tours, and markets. The manager compared Fredriksdal to Swedish Smörgåsbord. Swedish buffet style food serving has various foods on the table. Fredriksdal is also ‘a little bit of a garden and a little bit of farm, this and that... You get a little bit of roses, kitchen, and animals’. Coming to Fredriksdal

means that visitors can explore different parts of nature, history and culture at one place. Fredriksdal is a miniature of Southern Swedish region Skåne. The manager believes that customers see Fredriksdal the same way.

Fredriksdal is focusing on different types of customers. They are trying to attract both tourists and local residents. Fredriksdal works with cruises and different bus companies in Sweden. These companies are informed about the next year calendar and some companies even make their own tours. The manager stressed that when it comes to tourists generally they 'emphasize on the arrangements'. There are different thematic guided tours organized. There are also special events during the summer time like Midsummer festival and festival of roses. The manager says that this is a way how Fredriksdal attracts tourists. Some off season events also attract tourists. Many tourists come from Denmark for the Christmas market. However most of the visitors come from the close by area 'two hours away from Helsingborg area'. The regular tourists 'of course live nearby'. Some come very often and some even 'almost every other day'. However not all the local residents around Fredriksdal become its regular visitors. In fact many of Helsingborg citizens have never been to Fredriksdal. The manager provided an example where Fredriksdal and local newspaper 'HD' collaborated and arranged an event for 'HD' subscribers. About 3000 people came to the event and none of them have been to Fredriksdal before. And it's only the city where Fredriksdal is situated. There are many other smaller cities and villages around which residents can be considered as locals. When local visitors were discussed the manager referred to the customers that live in the area of two hours drive. These are people that can come to Fredriksdal in particular and do not travel to see attractions of the city of Helsingborg. Fredriksdal has many potential local customers within the area it's located in.

Fredriksdal focuses a lot on 'the mix between the nature and the culture'. The manager discussed the uniqueness of the gardens at Fredriksdal. Botanical gardens created as a little Skåne and visitors can experience different types of the landscape of the region. Visitors can walk through the forest; observe wild flowers from Southern Sweden and extinct flowers of the region. There is also animal farm and 'everyday visitors who come to Fredriksdal can walk by themselves' and explore nature and animal world. The organized events focus on Swedish culture and history. An event like harvest market, for instance, combines nature and culture. Visitors not only come to see the market but also can participate in garden-stuff collecting. Spirit tour event is held as a guided tour through the forest and tells old fashioned stories to the visitors. Theater plays are also open aired and visitors walk through the buildings, forest and farm.

Fredriksdal tries to show how special and unique the place is. They are being informative and have signs in the park and gardens so the visitors can understand and learn. It seems that there is

a small disagreement in terms of signs. Tourists usually tend to like to read to learn as much as possible from their trip. On other hand regular visitors comes to enjoy the nature. To resolve this difference in requests between customers Fredriksdal tried to limit the signs. 'Because when you walk in the nature you don't want to see a lot of signs'. This way 'everyday visitor can look at it (nature)' and enjoy the visit. It seems like Fredriksdal knows what different visitors want to receive when they come and try to find balance between different expectations.

Fredriksdal is also a place with experiences. On the web page it says that Fredriksdal offers 'experiences for all ages all year round' (Fredriksdal official web page). Fredriksdal is providing various experiences to their customers. It can attract visitors with separate attributes or as a museum park in general. Fredriksdal offers different arrangements that attract visitors for its uniqueness and limited durability. Most of the events are carried out within couple days. One particular event that is analyzed closely in this study is only scheduled for two evenings.

4.2. Survey results

Before the analysis of customer questionnaires results are presented in this subchapter. The results presented are both general and categorized into three groups of visitors. This allows to see the differences between chosen types of customers and compare the results.

Filled questionnaires were divided into three groups of visitors. The respondents have been asked how many times they have been at Fredriksdal this year in order to see how many regular customers Fredriksdal had at the event. The questionnaires were grouped into three categories. First group are the first time visitors this year. Visitors that said they have been at Fredriksdal 1-3 times are called here as returning customers. It is hard to define regular customers therefore for this research it was assumed that visiting Fredriksdal four and more times a year is a quite frequent regularity. Returning and regular visitors were grouped separately from the first time visitors for further analysis. The total number of filled questionnaires reached 215 among which 27 respondents were first time visitors, 126 respondents have been to Fredriksdal 1-3 times and 62 respondents were at Fredriksdal more than 4 times throughout the year.

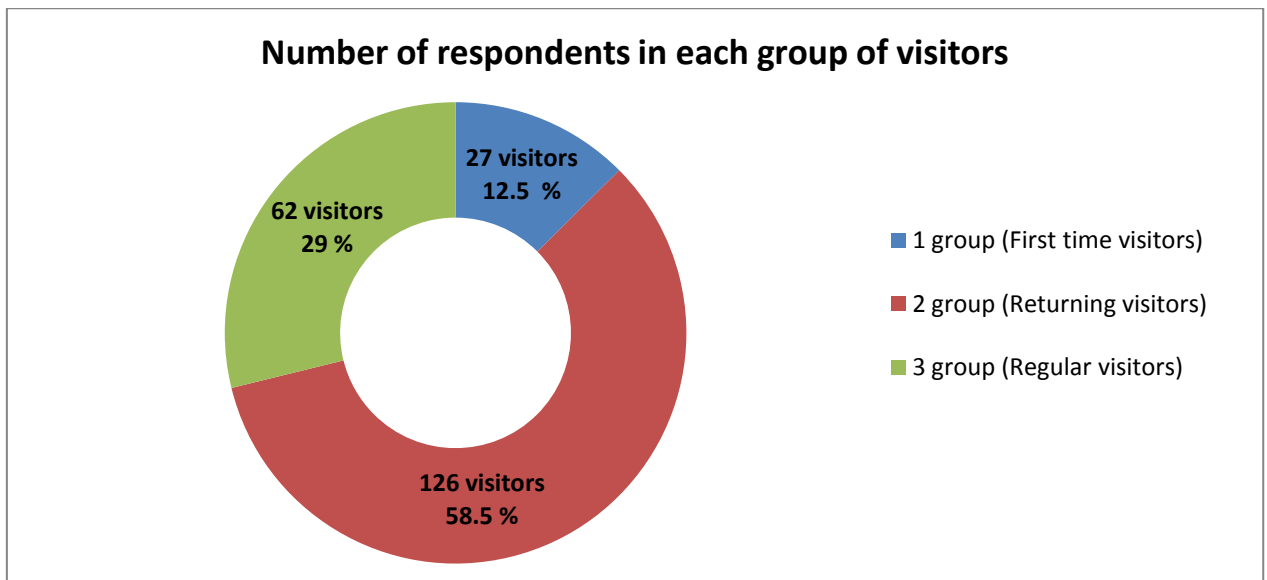


Chart 1

It can be seen that the biggest groups of visitors are returning customers that have been to Fredriksdal 1-3 times before the event. First time visitors are the smallest group what facilitated the research as the majority of respondents fit into the focus group of returning and regular customers. First group haven't been excluded from the analysis in order to be able to compare different types of customers perceptions of experiences and customer value.

Respondents were asked to answer with whom they came to the event. It's been unexpected that visitors would come in big groups and check several options. There have been only four options to chose from – Partner, Family, Relatives/ Friends and Alone. Many respondents have specified additionally with whom they came to the event. One of the biggest groups of visitors were grandparents with their grand children. These visitors checked both Family and Relatives options according to how they see their family and if grandparents with grandchildren are seen as a family or relatives. The results of the survey look as follows:

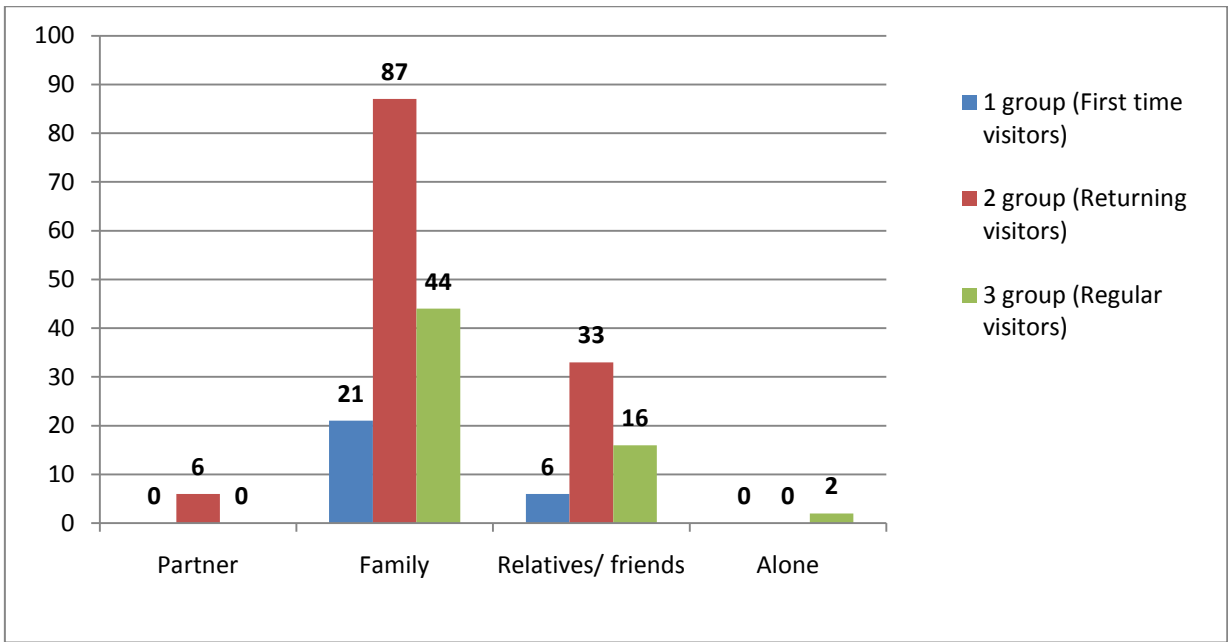


Chart 2

Two aspects from the Likert scale question have been used in this study to support family and educational values of the event. The question asked the respondents to measure the importance of these factors of the event. Only two features have been chosen to be used in this study as the rest of them do not contribute to this research. Both family friendliness and stories of the event have been ranked very high and considered as high importance for the visitors. There haven't been noticed any major differences between the three groups of visitors. Therefore general results are presented here.

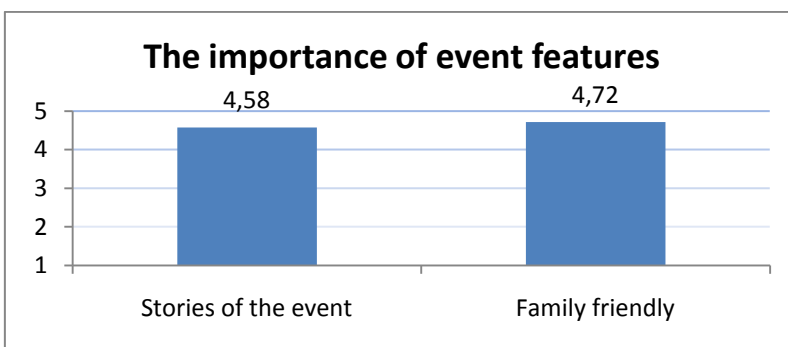


Chart 3

Satisfaction ranking on the other hand had different results between the groups. General satisfaction level of all the respondents looks as follows:

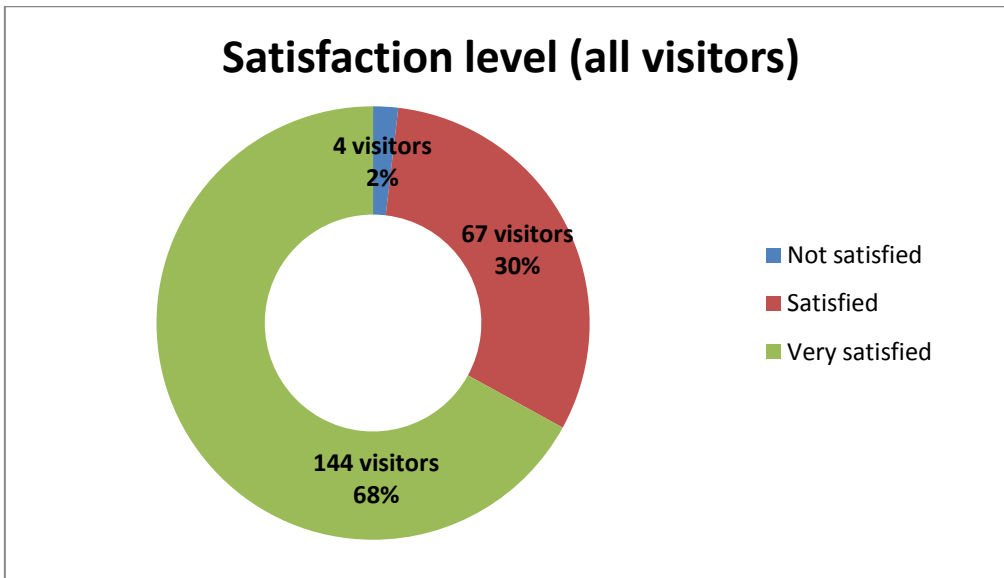


Chart 4

However, if to look at groups separately satisfaction level of visitors in different groups shows the next results:

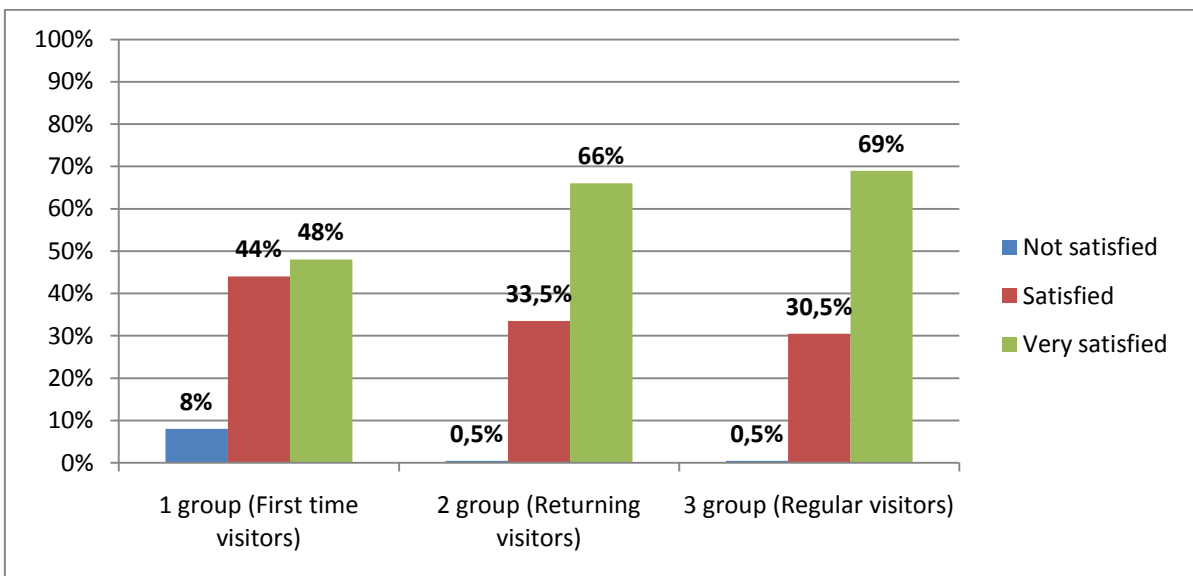


Chart 5

Ticket price perception has been collected separately as there were two types of entrance fees for adults and for children. The tickets have been sold for 120 Sek for adults and 30 Sek for children. Chart 6 presents respondents perceptions of two price categories.

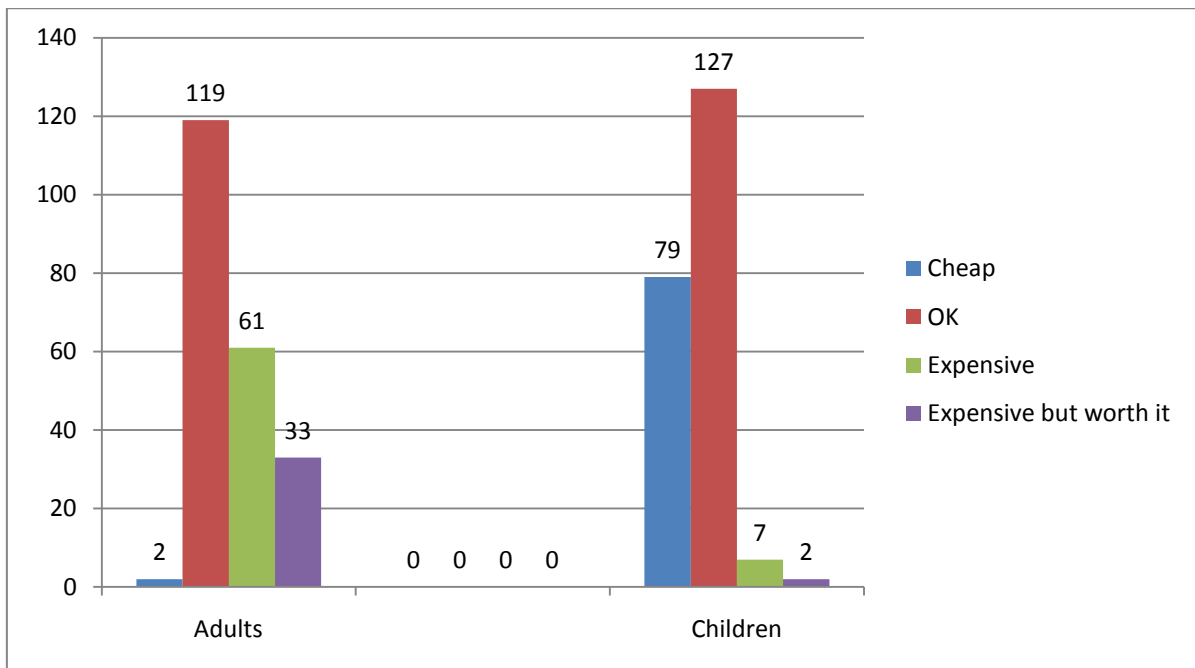


Chart 6

The answers for the open ended questions have been categorized where possible. The questions asked the respondents ‘why they came to the ‘spirit tour’ event?’ Some of the visitors had several reasonings to attend the event and therefore it made it more complicated for the quantitative analysis. The author tried to fit all the reasonings into the groups however there were some answers that were only used separately in the analysis. Only the answers that could be classified into common groups are presented in the charts.

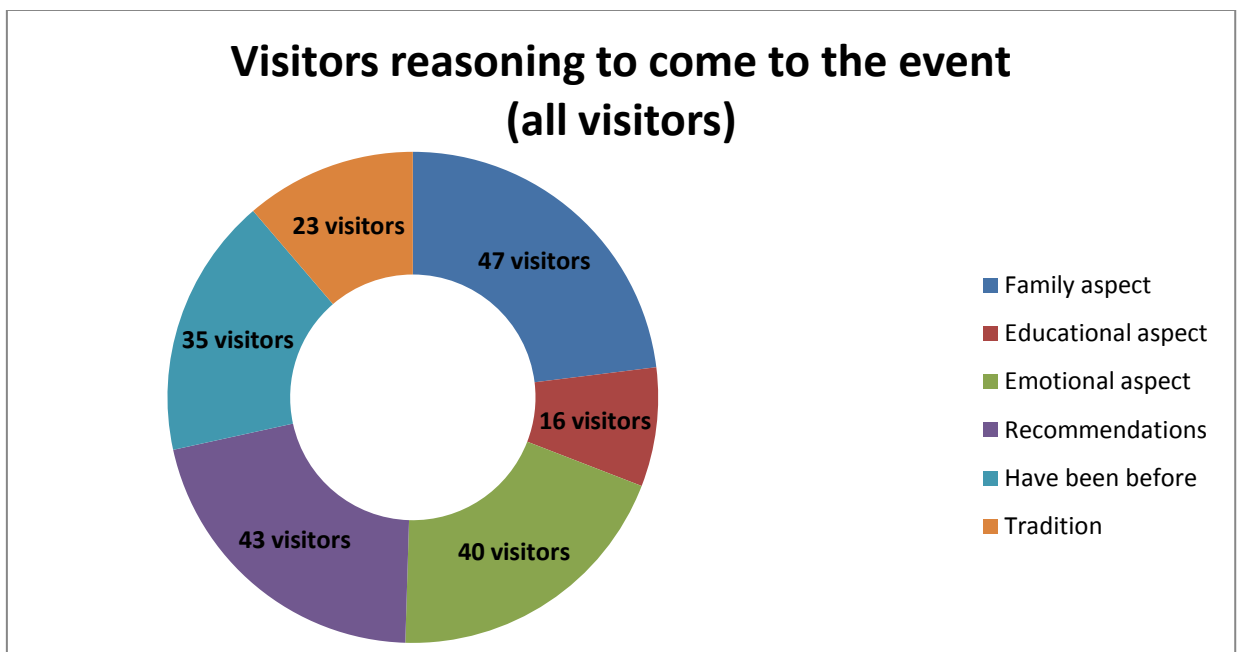


Chart 7

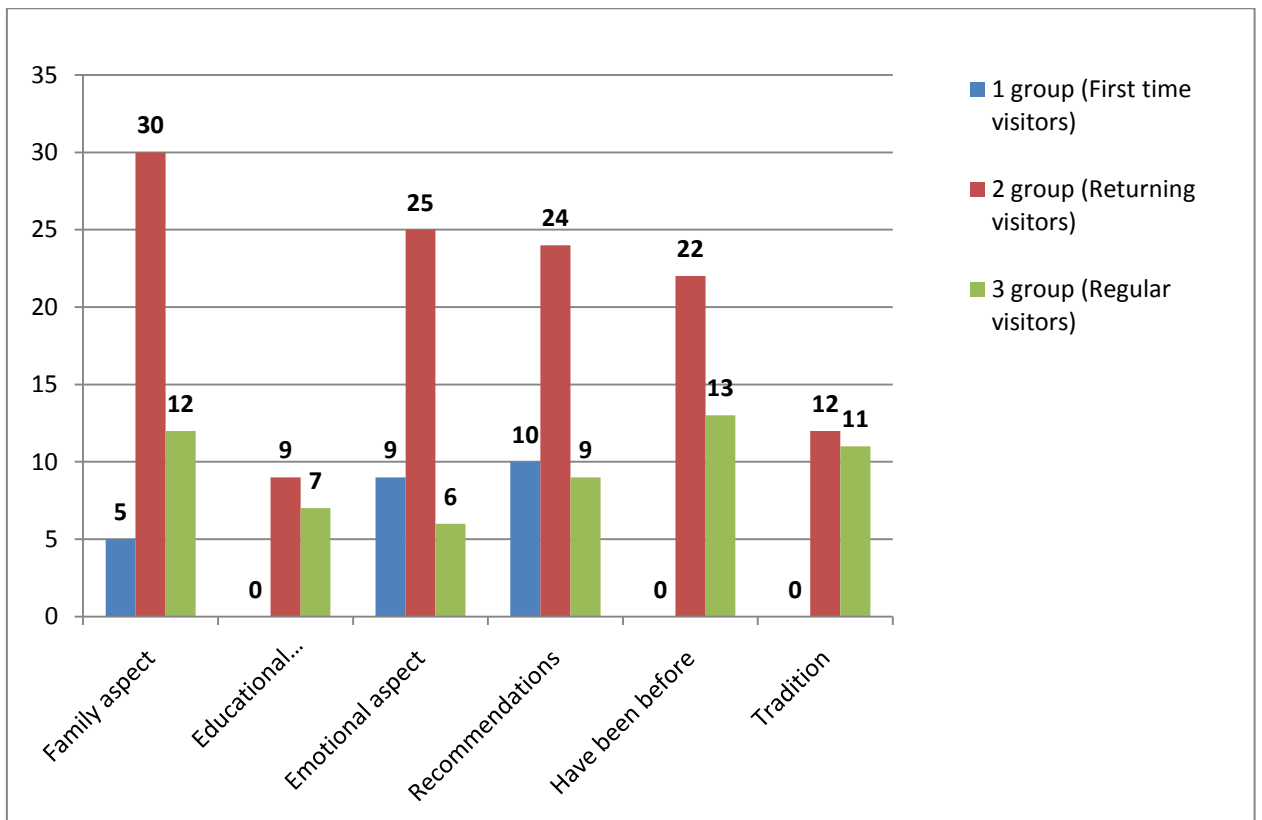


Chart 8

4.3. Customer value dimensions analysis

4.3.1. Social dimension

As it has been discussed in the theoretical chapter at the tourist attractions human interaction between the visitors and the tourist attraction can be limited. Social value presents the utility obtained from the social encounter enhancement (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). In the tourism experience social dimension enhancement mostly depends on the people surrounding but not the employees in particular. There haven't been noticed strong social interaction between the visitors and the tourist place but there are social settings provided for the customers to be engaged with other visitors. The offerings do not depend in intimate relationships between the customers and the employees but social encounter between the visitors is important. After analyzing the results of the questionnaires it has been noticed that only 2 out of 215 respondents came to Fredriksdal event alone.

From the company's perspective there have been social environment provided. One of the proposed values that have been highlighted is family friendliness. Analyzed 'spirit tour' is proposed as family event by Fredriksdal. It is held in November when children have autumn

school break. The manager stressed that ‘children should be our priority’ since the city of Helsingborg emphasizes a lot on a children. This explains arrangements of family activities and events for the local visitors.

Chart 2 presents social picture of visitations of three visitors groups. Family interaction is a dominating one in all of the groups. The picture clearly shows that visitors come to Fredriksdal with their families and extended families (grandchildren). When analyzing the reasoning to visit Fredriksdal slight difference in family aspect have been noticed. For returning and regular visitors family and kids/grandkids was more appealing reason to come to Fredriksdal. First time visitors provided other reasons that seemed more significant for them to reason their visit.

There also has been an example given about families coming with the children and when they grown up they bring their children to Fredriksdal too. This example can show different social related value that bring those visitors back. It is a social activity of bringing your children to a place where have you been with your parents. It can also be an educational value when visitors want their kids to learn something the way they have learnt it with their families back when they were little. Valuable memories about their family activity brought them back with their own families. There might be many examples of long relationships between local residents and Fredriksdal that connected to social encounters and many personal values haven’t been revealed during this investigation.

While analyzing returning and regular visitors groups another aspect of social encounter has been seen. The visitors have actively co-created their social family value. Many respondents have mentioned the notion of ‘tradition’ as the reason to come back to the event again. Visitors co-created the tradition of coming to the ‘spirit tour’ with their children or grandchildren to spend some time together.

‘It became a tradition to come here and experience autumn evening’

‘We think it’s a nice tradition to come to the event with grandchildren’

‘It’s our family tradition’

‘It became our little tradition’

‘It’s a tradition that I come here every year with my grandchildren’

‘I’m coming to the event with my three grandchildren every year’

The tradition value appeared in the analysis of results of the groups of returning and regular visitors. Many visitors said they were coming back to the event because it is a traditional thing to do with the children or grandchildren every year. The event originally was not proposed as

prolonged throughout years activity. Visitors attached their own value to the offering. It can be seen that these visitors perceive created for them value of a family friendly event but they also added their own value and personalized the offering. The survey findings illustrate the example of value co-creation. Attaching the tradition value to the event shows visitors active involvement into value creation process.

Co-created social value clearly shows the development of the relationships with the tourist attraction. This value only exists in returning visitations and becomes a reason of prolonged relationships with Fredriksdal.

First time visitors didn't tend to co-create social value and have been using provided for experiences social environment. However according to Vargo & Lusch (2004) customer value is always co-created. Therefore it is assumed that first time visitors are also co-producers in their value creation but can be seen as passive co-creators. Passive co-creation outcomes couldn't be tracked during the empirical research but it is assumed that all the visitors have personal values derived from their experiences.

The chart below presents customers perception of the event at Fredriksdal and the example of how active visitors extended social family value into actively co-created family tradition value. Co-created tradition value shows visitors the contribution to relationship building with Fredriksdal.

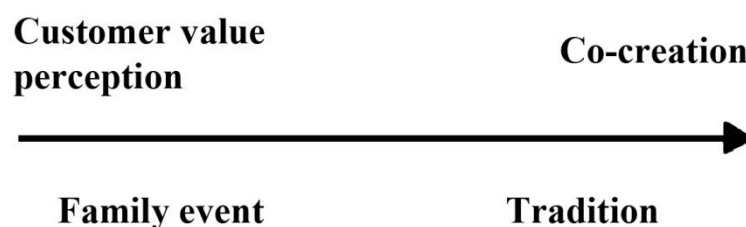


Chart 9

4.3.2. Functional dimension

Functional value can be divided into two aspects – price and quality (Sheth et al, 1991 in Wang et al, 2004). Some theoreticians (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) distinguish them as two different dimensions where price is a value for money, and quality refers to the utility from the perceived quality. Two dimensions originate from the definition of customer value - overall assessment based on benefits and sacrifices of what is received and what is given (Ziethaml, 1988). Ziethaml

(1988) also argued that some customers perceive value when it has a low price. Most of the respondents considered the ticket price for both adults and children as an 'OK' price for such offering (55 and 59% accordingly). 1% (adult price) and 36% (children price) of respondents measures the ticket prices as 'Cheap'. Different consumers measure perceived value components differently and some perceive it as a balance between the price and quality (Ziethaml, 1988). 16% of respondents stated that the ticket price is 'Expensive but worth it' for adults and 1% for children tickets. The results of the questionnaire are presented in chart 6.

Satisfaction level has been measured in order to see if the visitors were satisfied with the offering. The only difference that have been noticed is the first group of visitors. In total only four visitors said they were not satisfied with the tour - two people from the first group and two people from returning and regular visitors group. What makes it 8% in the first group and 0.5% in for each second and third groups of visitors. The percentage of satisfied and very satisfied visitors in the first group was even while in the second and third groups the percentage of very satisfied visitors almost reached 70%. It seems that returning customers know what to expect and are highly satisfied with the experiences they get. One of the respondents wrote that they 'have been to Fredriksdal before and were very satisfied' and that what made them to come back to Fredriksdal again. Another customer reasoned coming to the event because 'whatever Fredriksdal does is good'. First time visitors might have had high expectations of the event when returning customers already know what to expect and they like the offerings that Fredriksdal provides. One of the respondents commented that the event 'becomes better every year'. This could be one of the reasons why customers that have been at the event before have a higher satisfaction ranking.

Functional dimensions can be considered in a relationship building studies as price and quality affect future visitation of customers. However there is no co-creation aspect or its direct affect on relationships noticed in this study. Price of the offering can be accepted or denied by the potential customers, the quality of the experience may satisfy or not the visitors who purchased the offering. These aspects affect visitors behavior outcomes but here functional dimension only considered as a passive co-production aspects of the visitors experiences. Functional value affects customers' relationship building but there haven't been any findings in this research upon active co-creation contribution.

4.3.3. Emotional dimension

Emotional value refers to the feelings that customers derive from the offerings. Sweeney & Soutar (2001) in their work defined it as ‘the utility derived from the feelings or affective states that a product generates’. If to apply to visitors emotional value is obtained from the experiences at the tourist attraction. Some visitors commented on emotional aspects of their experience at Fredriksdal.

‘It is very fun and scary to do with the kids’

‘Fun activity for me and my daughter’

We thought it was fun and we often come to Fredriksdal events like this’

‘It’s a scary activity during the autumn’

Emotional aspect has been compared between the three groups in order to find out if there is a difference in various types of visitors. In the first group of first time visitors 33% of respondents appealed to their emotions. In the second group of returning visitors 19% of respondents, in the third group of regular visitors only 9% of respondents mentioned emotions. Emotional aspect involved in the reasoning of all three groups but it can be noticed that first time visitors have been more emotionally involved.

There have been noticed an attachment aspect towards elements of Fredriksdal offerings. From the interview with the manager it has been found out that many regular visitors have different associations with Fredriksdal and come back because of the values attached to the specific elements.

Manager referred to different reasons why visitors come back to Fredriksdal focusing on some elements like animals, nature, theater etc. The examples showed regular visitors attachment to the animals in Fredriksdal farm. The visitors do not only come to see and show their children farm animals but they have some valuable attachment to them. They see the animals not as in the farm museum but almost like their own animals. Visitors become personally involved and have emotional connections to the animals. The visitors create attachment value for themselves. It seems like they feel responsible if something is wrong and they try to help Fredriksdal employees to make it better. ‘Somehow our customers feel that it is their garden’. They care about the nature in the gardens and the park and about the animals in the farm. The manager also explained that many regular visitors come back to the event they ask where their favorite parts and characters are. ‘They have a close connection’ and this is a case of attachment to the events itself and their parts. ‘Spirit tour’ event also supports this argumentation. The stories of the tour

are being changed but not all of them and some are brought back to the program. All the stories cannot be changed because regular visitors want to hear them again. Children come and say ‘I want to see the fairy again’ or ‘the troll’. In some cases regular visitors do not want to see net attributes and learn new things from old fashioned stories. They come back to see their favorite characters again and again.

Visitors’ expressed emotions are a co-created personal reflection of their experiences while emotional attachment can be seen as a more meaningful value for the regular visitors and contributes relationship development. The chart below presents the examples of passive and active co-creation of emotional value where active co-creation of emotional attachment shows direct contribution to relationship development.

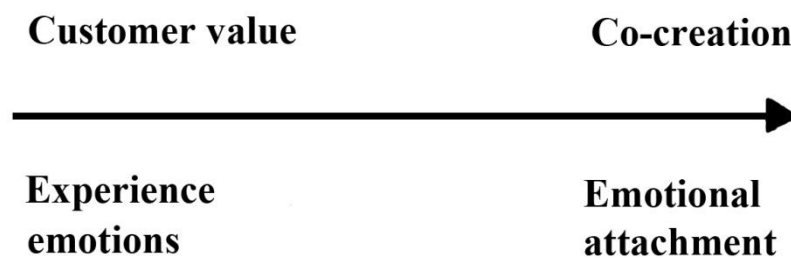


Chart 10

4.3.4. Epistemic dimension

Epistemic dimension have been excluded from the framework. It relates to novelty or surprise aspects (Wang, 2004) and cannot be applied to repeated visitations. First time visitors expressed their excitement about new experiences.

‘It sounded interesting and my son desired to come because it seemed scary’

‘We thought it would be exciting to do’

‘It sounded interesting and different’

‘We’ve heard a lot about the event and were curious to attend’

However there was no co-creation process and newness of experience doesn’t relate to relationship building with tourist attraction. Besides many of respondents were coming back to this particular event. This means that they haven’t been in search of some new experiences at Fredriksdal but they came to the same activity they have attended before. There have been some other values besides epistemic that brought them back to the activity. Visitors were coming back because they liked their previous experience. While first time visitors were more excited about

the activity and had their expectations to get fun experience. Expressed emotions and expectations of a novelty experience show customers' epistemic value before the visit. On a personal level it is a co-created value that cannot be influenced by the company. However there is so contribution toward relationship development seen and epistemic value co-creation can be considered as a passive co-creation.

4.3.5. Conditional dimension

Conditional value refers to conditional effects of a situation on value perception (Wang et al, 2004). I wasn't sure first how suitable conditional value is for this study as the focus is on co-creation process. On another hand experience settings provide an environment where value can be not only perceived but also co-created by visitors. In my study I decided to use the term environmental dimension instead of conditional to adjust in to the experience nature of tourist offerings. Experience settings can be designed by the company but provide staged physical and virtual environment for co-creation process (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Education is a part of experience settings (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Educational environment is provided by Fredriksdal to its visitors. Fredriksdal is a historical and cultural museum and educational aspect is a very important aspect. Visitors can come and experience all the parts separately or together during one visit and from managerial perspective there is a goal 'when you walked out hopefully you have learned something'. Fredriksdal wants their visitors always learn new things during their visits. Every year Fredriksdal has different themes for the season. For instance, 'tree' like this year or 'food' like last year. Most of the events become wrapped up in the theme and have new learning outcomes each year. Fredriksdal arranges new plays and changes events. The concepts always stay the same but 'learning experience is changing'. Fredriksdal generally focuses on authenticity due to its historical heritage. All the events focus on traditional aspects and try to bring visitors back in time, tell about history and culture what makes it educational. Spirit tour in particular revives old stories from the region.

The manager sees Fredriksdal as an 'excellent educational place'. All the events and activities have a focus on learning outcomes, which can be historical, cultural, natural and combined. However Fredriksdal creates educational values not only for the children. They believe that adults that come with their children or by themselves also like to learn new things and Fredriksdal tries to provide them this opportunity. All the activities teach important things but 'in a fun way'. The manager even said it's their aim to give their visitors a possibility to learn new things in a fun way. Hence educational aspect is combined with entertainment. The history and

culture are brought to the visitors through the theater performances. Fredriksdal tries to attract customers through entertaining learning of Swedish history, culture and nature.

Respondents also mentioned educational factor. Visitors were interested in history, culture and folklore and they liked that the event provided knowledge about old times and traditions to the children and that they could gain some knowledge within their interests. Visitors value educational aspect that Fredriksdal offers at the events.

'Interesting for kids to learn about our history'

'We wanted to hear old stories that are heard quite little in the daily life'

'It's instructive about traditions and important old folklore'

'Interesting theme for both me and my kids'

'We like listening about history'

'I wanted my kids to know more about old times'

'I'm interested in old stories and folklore'

'The event is a good history lecture about our Swedish folk stories'

There were also examples where visitors co-created educational aspect. Fredriksdal has a versatile nature. The nature changes all the time and every time customers come back they see something different in the park and gardens. The visitors follow those changes in the nature and in the farm. Interesting fact is that some regular visitors act 'almost like they work here because they tell if there is something wrong out in the garden. They feel a little bit like it's their garden'.

4.4. Co-creation aspects

Not all of the customer value dimensions or other empirical aspects found in empirical material involved active co-creation outcomes that clearly showed how the process contributes relationship building with the Fredriksdal. Social encounter, emotional attachment and self-education are the co-created factors that have build visitors strong relationships with the tourist attraction.

Tradition value had been created throughout the years and within long relationship between visitors and Fredriksdal. In fact the tradition to come back to the event every year developed long relationships with Fredriksdal among some of the visitors. This example shows close connection of customer value and relationships between customers and its visitors. This value brings visitors back every year even though the event doesn't change entirely and visitors will not get fully new

experience. They have employed social encounter that co-creates their experience and builds long term relationships with Fredriksdal.

An attachment to Fredriksdal as a whole or to some of its attributes was found during the study. In this study the attachment is seen as one of the values that develops local visitors relationships with the attraction. The value of attachment to Fredriksdal and its elements can be considered as a value co-creation since it hasn't been created and proposed by the company and built by the visitors themselves.

Some visitors come to Fredriksdal to observe nature and animals and changes that happen throughout a year. As the manager stressed – the nature changes all the time and there is always something happening. Regular visitors follow the changes and can always learn something new.

All dimensions involved passive co-creation of visitors value but direct contribution to visitors relationship development with the tourist attraction couldn't be seen. The next chapter presents the findings in the framework which shows how value co-creation contributes relationship building.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to get knowledge on how value co-creation process contributes visitors' relationship development. In order to understand the role of co-creation process in the local visitors relationships with the tourist attraction the research questions have been approached through empirical investigation. Customer value have been analyzed from managerial and visitors perspective to answer the research questions and to obtain extensive knowledge about the process at Fredriksdal case study.

5.1. Framework development

Co-creation is a complex process and I decided to approach it through customer value dimensions. After the analysis the framework has been developed. It illustrates how different dimensions contribute to the relationship building through co-creation. The analysis showed that not all of the dimensions relate to relationships development while other influence the process indirectly without active value co-creation.

Customer value dimensions and co-creation process in relationship building
between local visitors and tourist attraction

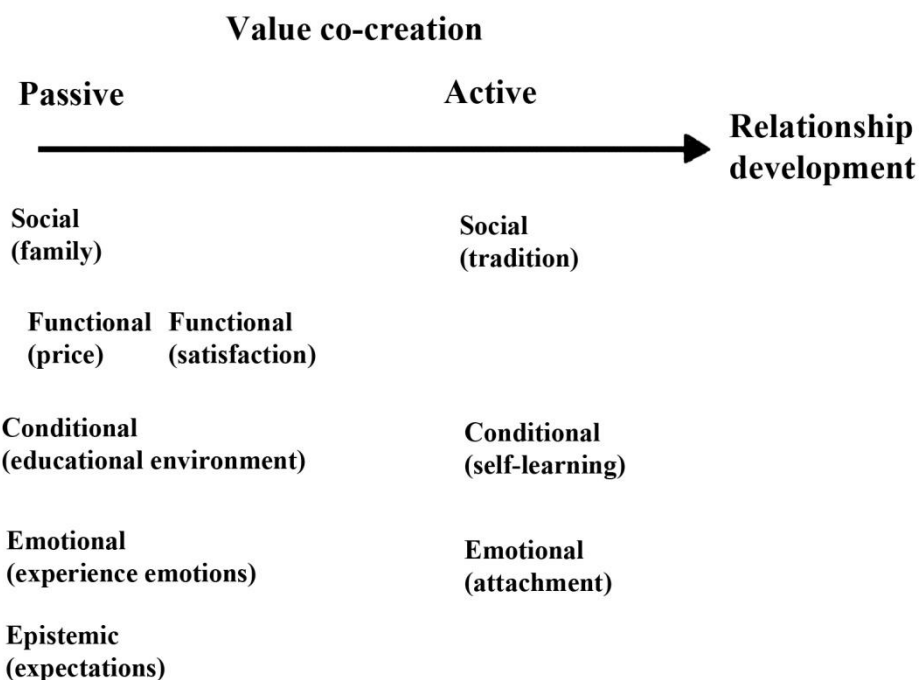


Chart 11

The framework shows how different value dimensions relate to relationship building process. Functional and epistemic value have been included into the framework since it influences visitors' relationships indirectly through satisfaction and behavior outcomes. The outcomes of the visitors expectations and functional value aspects can positively or negatively affect future relationships with tourist attraction.

Social, conditional and emotional value contributes to the relationship building through visitors active co-creation process. Co-created value relates to strong relationships between the visitors and Fredriksdal. Regular visitors participate actively in relationship development through the co-creation process.

There have been noticed cases of strong relationships between the visitors and Fredriksdal. Aspects of co-creation were tracked in the process of relationship building with local tourist attraction. After the analysis of all three surveyed groups it can be seen that active value co-creation process appeared only in the second and third groups of returning and regular customers. From the interview with the managers all the examples of customer value have been mentioned relate to the regular visitors who come to Fredriksdal. In this research first time visitors perceived delivered to them value but didn't participate actively in the co-creation process. All the found actively co-created values of the returning and regular visitors are tightly connected to long term relationships with Fredriksdal. Regular visitors are attached to some of the parts of Fredriksdal like special events, stories, characters in the stories, animals or gardens. This attachment is valuable for these visitors and they tend to come back to Fredriksdal because of this connection.

The findings show that some local residents quite often have long term relationships with local tourist attraction Fredriksdal. Developing relationships with local residents has a lot of potential for the tourist attractions. Strong relationships with existent visitors also help to attract the new ones through their recommendations and word of mouth. The questionnaire results showed that almost 50 respondents out of 215 came to the event because of recommendations and have heard positive opinions about it. For Fredriksdal there is a huge potential to attain new local customers and develop strong relationships with them.

It also important for Fredriksdal to have strong relationships with local customers who become regular visitors. At the end of the interview the manager said that Fredriksdal will not survive of regular customers. It's significant to have them because 'it gives value to the place. It's not only the place it's our visitors... our regular visitors. They become our ambassadors. They are a part of Fredriksdal'. After the interview analysis it can be seen that regular customers are important for Fredriksdal and visitors themselves become a value of a place. Regular visitors actively

create values for themselves and become a part of Fredriksdal. The place would probably be different without this close connection with its regular visitors.

5.2. Summary and further research

Local visitors as regular customers are important for local tourist places like Fredriksdal for several reasons. From a marketing point it's cheaper to have retaining customers than to attract new ones (Payne, 2001). Another reason is that regular visitors become a part of a tourist place which is an important aspect from managerial perspective (interview with the manager of Fredriksdal). Regular visitors create attachment to the place and its elements and create other values that are meaningful for them. This research showed that values can be very individual and hard to reveal. Some customers may not express what brings them back but just enjoy the offering each time they return. None of the visitors, for instance, have mentioned attachment in the survey but manager's observations provided several examples.

Value co-creation is always present (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) however this research showed that not all the customers become active participants of the co-creation process. Customer value approach, how value created and delivered to the customers, how visitors perceive it and participate in value co-creation processes facilitates relationship development understanding between regular visitors and the tourist attraction. The aim of the study was to investigate how value co-creation contributes to the relationship development. Through analysis of customer value dimensions it can be seen that customers used the process of co-creation in social, conditional and emotional dimensions actively and passive co-creation was present in all aspects. Found actively co-created values directly influence relationship prolongation since without continuing the relationships the value vanishes as well. Therefore it can be said that customer value plays a significant role in relationship developing between local visitors and tourist attraction through aspects of active value co-creation.

I have carried out one case study for my research and it showed the relation of local visitors value co-creation affect upon their relationships with local tourist attraction. The research emphasized the importance of building strong relationships with local residents. I would recommend for further research to continue the focus on local residents and their relationships with tourist attractions in the area. Further research with this focus would contribute theoretical development and provide practical knowledge for the managers.

Another area for further research would contribute customer value concept. According to Vargo & Lusch (2004) customers are always co-creators of their value. This research employed five dimensions of customer value and showed that there are cases of active and passive participation

in the co-creation process. Passive co-creation may influence relationship building. However active co-creation shows its direct contribution to relationship development and prolongation. Seeing this difference between passive and active value co-creation made me think if there should be further research upon this aspect. Further research could carry out more in-depth study about the level of customers' involvement into the co-creation process.

Practical implications of the framework and findings are also possible. There is a big potential in local residents to become regular visitors. However the importance of developing relationship with local visitors can be left out of the account by the managers of the tourist places. The focus remains on the tourists as biggest group that generates most of the income. The findings can be employed by the managers who do not focus on local visitors attraction and relationship development. Strong relationships with the locals prove a possibility to attract them throughout the year while tourists in most cases come only during the high season.

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Enkätundersökning

Fyll i enkäten och du har chans att vinna 2 biljetter till Fredriksdals julmarknad (värde 240 kr).

1. Varför valde du att gå på väsenvandringen?

2. Med vem besöker du väsenvandringen?

Ensam A. Partner B. Familj (partner/barn) C. Övrig släkt/Vänner D.

3. Hur många ggr har du besökt Fredriksdal det senaste året?

A. 0 ggr B. 1-3 ggr C. 4-6 ggr D. Fler än 6 ggr

4. Kan du tänka dig att besöka Fredriksdal igen?

A. Ja B. Nej

5. Vad **tycker du** om vandringen? Vänligen betygsätt följande inslag enligt en skala mellan 1 - 5:

	Mycket dåligt	Dåligt	Godkänt	Bra	Mycket bra
Antalet deltagare i gruppen	1	2	3	4	5
Personalens insats	1	2	3	4	5
Berättelser i vandringen	1	2	3	4	5
Vandringens längd	1	2	3	4	5
Familjevänlighet	1	2	3	4	5

6. Hur **viktigt** tycker du att följande inslag i guidade turer är? Vänligen betygsätt följande inslag enligt en skala mellan 1-5.

	Inte viktigt	Mindre viktigt	Ganska viktigt	Viktigt	Mycket viktigt
Utklädd personal	1	2	3	4	5
Innehåll i guidad tur	1	2	3	4	5
Stämning (dekorationer et.c.)	1	2	3	4	5
Specialeffekter	1	2	3	4	5
Personalens inlevelse	1	2	3	4	5

7. Vad tycker du om biljettpriset för vuxna (120 kr)?

A. Billigt B. Lagom C. Dyrt D. Dyrt men värt det

8. Vad tycker du om biljettpriset för barn under 18 (30 kr)?

A. Billigt B. Lagom C. Dyrt D. Dyrt men värt det

9. Hur nöjd är du med arrangemanget som helhet?

A. Missnöjd B. Nöjd C. Mycket nöjd

10. Övriga kommentarer

11. Kön

A. Man B. Kvinna

12. Ålder

A. under 18 B. Över 18

Namn (frivilligt):

Telefonnr (frivilligt):

Obs: För att delta i utlottningen av 2 biljetter till julmarknaden krävs namn och telefonnr.

Tack för din medverkan!

Appendix 2. Interview transcript

Interview with Fredriksdal manager Alheim Charlotte

- What is Fredriksdal?

There have been discussions what it actually is. It's a little bit of a garden and a little bit of farm, this and that. In my point of view it's wonderful. (Compared to Smargosbord): Do you know the Swedish word Smargosbord? You get a little bit of roses, kitchen, animals... that's my point.

- Do customers see it the same way?

When they come here? Yes they do. It's vague. We have a little bit of everything. But we have themes every year. This year it's a tree. Before it was food. The whole season is about tree. We have tree exhibition. All the events have something about the tree. In our history alive we give visitors branches at the entrance. And the branch is a special one and brings you back in time.

- How tourists and visitors are being attracted to Fredriksdal?

First of all we have a botanical garden. And we have collected different spices from different parts of south Sweden. And it's unique because it's a landscape of a botanical garden. It's like you walking in Skane. A miniature. So you can walk through the forest. And you can experience all the different types of the landscapes in the small area. And then on another hand we also recollecting wild flowers from south Sweden. And then we put them together in the systematical botanical garden. And people can go there and see different types of wild flowers. Some of the flowers do not exist anymore in south Sweden. They are extinct. You also can see how they are related to each other.

We also emphasize a lot on the mix between the nature and the culture. How the plants have been used in our south Swedish culture. And we write small signs next to the plants. That they have used this flowers for this purposes. Gives an example (Swedes used roots instead coffee).

- You also have a lot of different events in the yearly program?

When we talk about this garden, systematical garden we also talk about animals. That is always existing here. So is you have everyday customer, everyday visitor who come to Fr and they walk by themselves. They can enjoy this and they can enjoy it all year round. And they can see the changes in the nature. And of course we emphasize on... we have arrangements like markets – harvest market or Christmas market. And then we combine it. The nature and culture again.

- Are there any differences between tourists and local residents that come to Fredriksdal?

We are trying to attract both. They should be able to see why it's a special spot here. We are informative. But then we also try to limit because if you walk in the nature you don't want to see a lot of signs. We try to scale it down to the necessary information. So everyday visitor can look at it. But then for tourists we emphasize on our arrangements. In the summer time we have special arrangement, we have midsummer festival. We also have the roses festival which is coming soon. And this way we are attracting tourists. But we also invite tourists to come over and have a guided tour.

- What about off season events?

During our Christmas market in December we have tourists from Denmark. Quite a lot of Danes come over. We have tourists from outside the Helsingborg but mainly from the close by area. 2 hours away from Helsingborg area. We do have some tourists coming from further away. If they come from further away they come to Helsingborg for a few days. And they come to us and they go to Helsingor. For examples for the Christmas markets. And they do things in the area.

- Local visitors come to the events?

There are many that come often and of course they live close by.

- Why do they come back to Fredriksdal often?

Many of our regulars... we have people who come here for (used the Swedish name) nordic walking. So we have some groups. They choose to come to walk here. They maybe come here twice a week... all year round. We have people who come here with the dogs. They walk the dogs in our park. Some of them come almost every other day. They also feel very... because in the park you are allowed to bring your dog but you have to have in on a leash. And they feel very comfortable with that. Because when they walk their dog out in the streets there might be other loose dogs and they are scared that the other dogs will jump on their dog and attack it.

When you talk to those people why they come here... because it is so versatile in our nature here. So many flowers, plants. There always something happening in the nature, something blooming. Some follow the animals we have here. They almost like they work here because they tell us if there is something wrong out in the garden. They feel a little bit like it's their garden. They enjoy to follow the nature. They are kind of gardeners or farmers.

- What the Fredriksdal and the events are offering to the customers?

Well mission is a strong word... err if you come here to Fredriksdal hopefully you come... when you come in and after when you walked out hopefully you have learned something. It might not be very grand new idea you have learned but you have learned something. Something

new. And the city is emphasizing on the children. That should be our priority. And that's why we have a lot of family activities. And we also think that it is an excellent educational place. And what we have learned also that people come to Fredriksdal with the child. And then if you have been here as a child you learn when your mother brings you here. and when they grow up - she/he when they have a child they come back with their children.

- That's a long relationships throughout generations!

We can see that grandparents come with their grandchildren around the year . It is nice to have these families because grown ups also like to learn new things. It's not only children. And if we can learn something which in a ... of course it's serious what we are teaching but you can learn it in a fun way. I think that's our aim. That's why we emphasize a lot on a role play. When history comes alive. Where we take out the culture and history and then we make a theatre out of it. And that's very very entertaining. And you also learn something. Its attractive.

- How do you try to reach tourists?

We have long term relationships in another view. Because we have in my department we have good relationships with bus companies in Sweden. We are calling them every year and telling them what's going on in the next year. Some of them are making their own programmes. Like they are making their own tours. We have long relationships with those companies. They trust us. They have been coming here and we have a good service. And they know that they can always call Fredriksdal and we will take care of them. Those tourists come from different parts of Sweden. And we also have the cruises. Their tourists also come to visit us.

- Is there growing competition in the region?

Well we don't have the competitors. Most similar you would find close to Copenhagen and Stockholm. If you look at the families our competitions would be much more fun fares. Some families wouldn't come here because they want more excitement. They would go to Tivoli. That could be seen as competition.

- And those would be mostly tourists or local visitors?

Because our regular customers... because there is one thing that they go to ... we have the tropical area that is close to us. And they would go there and come here.

- So you attract customers with other offerings? Values?

We have other values here. Historical, educational... and the animal area is very popular. That's a big big and interesting thing. For example we had a pig a few years ago and he was a very special pig and he went on a love tour around Sweden. He was away for 5 month and our regular

were coming and asking 'where is Name, when is he coming back and what is happening to him now?'. They've been following him, coming back and saying hello to him. And now very soon (3rd of May) we will free the cows from the stable after winter and they will go out for grazing. And it's incredible to watch them when we let them out. And people come to look at that. They follow our animals very much. If something happens to our animals people are very upset, they even write about it in the newspapers and online.

- Regular customers have a deep attachment to some part of Fredriksdal?

Well it's Fredriksdal for them. When we ask our visitors why do they come to FR some say they are here for the animals. For some people it would be nature or the theater. About 60 000 people come for the opened theater. And that between mid June end of August. So if you ask some people that would be a theater.

- Do you change the play often in the theater?

It's a different play every year.

- But not all of the events change entirely? How about 'spirit tour'?

We change them a little. I think we keep three and change three stories. Normally we have six different stories. And when you see the children when they are coming (represents the child) – 'I want to see the fairy again'. There is a fairy tale. Or I would like to see the troll again'. They have some favorites. We can't change all the stories all the time. But we change a little bit and then some stories come back. But it will always be the different story because it's different people who tell the story. But the concept is the same.

And at the Christmas market we have the same concept but we change some hand crafts, some parts of the programme are changed. Customers like the concept. They want to see their favorites. Because they come back and ask where is this or that. And they feel very familiar with it. They have a close connection.

- How Fredriksdal is attracting new customers?

This quite new for us to have this history come to life. We didn't have so much advertising for that but it was spread by mouth. During the summer when we had it during July and August. We had many people coming. And that because it was the new thing. They are very curious about it and they enjoy it. Because it's for the whole family and their children like it. One child have been here for 6 times to hear the same story.

Some customers come to Helsingborg to visit their friends and relatives for several days so they can come to Christmas market at Fr.

There have been a new event this year arranged together with HD newspaper. They invited all their subscribed customers. And we had 3000 visitors who came here. It was free from them. They were mostly from Helsingborg city. We arranged different stations for them to tell about the garden, the city etc so they could walk around the Fr. And that was really interesting because its quite a big number of people who have never been to Fr. They were surprised how much it was.

- Customer value term was brought up. The manager was curious about it asking what my definition for the research was. What I'm looking for at Fredriksdal. Through explanation I brought up co-creation discussion

Somehow our customers feel that it is their garden. But there are things that we were not telling them to do.

Research idea was proposed that once time tourist who perceive what Fredriksdal projects on them but regular visitors create something else for themselves.

Tourists take what we put. Regulars... So it's what they make out of their visit to Fr.

- Do you have other examples of value co-creation and regulars active involvement?

Like I said dogs and animals. They come and read, have picnics. It's natural of course During the harvest festival customers are allowed to pick up vegetables but we tell them that they can do it. At the moment I can't think about anything else.

Well we had one interesting case. We arranged the event and all the customers received maps at the entrance to see where the stations are and participate in the tour. We had greeting people who explained what the event is about but many people didn't want to be a part of it. It was a beautiful weather and they just wanted to observe. The wanted to have their own walk by themselves. To see what is happening here. They had time time to take guided tour or not to, could have some food at food courts.

That is a very interesting term customer value and value co-creation. We won't survive of those visitors only but its good to have them because it gives value to the place. To Fr. The Fr. Its not only the place it's our visitors. Our regular. They become our ambassadors. They are a part of Fr.

We have pint pointed some examples here already. When I have a guided tour visitors say that was a fantastic guided tour and I say well its because of our relation, you helped me. It's not me only. Ok I can give a guided tour but if you are not involved that won't be a guided tour. You helped me to make it a success. It guided tour group is involved it becomes more interesting.

And I see what they are thinking what they are interested in. we want customers be interactive.
It's easy when you walk around the park you can smell the flowers, touch and look and taste.
Things happen to the visitors when they are here. They change when they come through the gate.