

Here's one for the next show

The influence of four marketing tactics on consumer relationships in the performing arts

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Abstract

Purpose – Financial constraints recently confronting performing arts organizations propel them to employ various marketing tactics to not only win new visitors but also to maintain its current clientele. Fostering a long-term relationship with clients is regarded a vital solution to a survival-related predicament these organizations face. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of four marketing tactics – personalization, two-way communication, preferential treatment, and rewarding – on the dimensions of customer relationship, namely, satisfaction, trust, and commitment.

Design/methodology/approach – Data to test the various research hypotheses were collected through a survey with 252 clients of a performing arts venue in a Dutch city. Structural equation modeling was used to test the hypotheses.

Findings – Results reveal that extension of rewards to and maintaining a two-way communication with clients of a performing arts venue positively influence their satisfaction with, trust in, and commitment to the performing arts venue. Personalization of services impacts commitment only. However, the effect of preferential treatment on the three relationship dimensions is not statistically significant. Additionally, analysis shows that satisfied customers are more likely to trust the performing arts venue, although clients' satisfaction with and trust in the performing arts venue do not influence their commitment to the venue.

Originality/value – Research into the ways to strengthen customer relationships in the performing arts is still scarce. The current research aims at investigating the impact of several marketing tactics on customer relationship measured in terms of satisfaction, trust, and commitment and shows how performing arts venues can strengthen their bonds with customers.

Keywords Commitment, Satisfaction, Trust, Performing arts, Customer relationship, Marketing tactics

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Difficult times loom over performing arts organizations. With the current economic climate, people spend less money, in general, and reduce their budget for culture and leisure, in particular. These financial challenges trigger performing arts organizations to not only expand but also maintain their customer bases. Research shows that 15 percent of the customers in the performing arts sector, mainly subscribers, accounted for 50 percent of ticket-sales income, whereas 50 percent of casual or one-off supporters contributed 15 percent to ticket-sales income (Tomlinson and Roberts, 2006).

Confronted with stiff competition within the performing arts sector and with other entertainment markets (Hume *et al.*, 2007), performing arts organizations must forge long-term relationships with their clientele for organizational viability (Rentschler *et al.*, 2002). A critical challenge for researchers is to understand how managerially controllable variables could foster a solid relationship between performing arts organizations and their clients. Notably, research into the ways to strengthen customer



relationships in the performing arts is still scarce (Segarra-Moliner *et al.*, 2013; Hume *et al.*, 2007). The current research aims at investigating the impact of several marketing tactics on customer relationship measured in terms of satisfaction, trust, and commitment. These three, Garbarino and Johnson (1999) claimed, play different roles in predicting future intentions in the theatre industry.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Relationship marketing

Marketing approaches in the performing arts sector could either be transactional or relational. While transactional marketing is characterized by a focus on single ticket purchase and a low emphasis on audience service, relationship marketing is primarily concerned with audience retention and a high emphasis on audience service (Rentschler *et al.*, 2002). Increased retention, through subscriptions, is profitable for the performing arts sector currently battling financial problems.

As a relationship does not exist unless customers feel that it does, the customers' view will be the focus of this research. The intangible nature of the performing arts service makes it difficult for customers to evaluate an offer prior to purchase (Berry, 1995), hence building long-term relationships with customers is pivotal in maintaining their attachment to an organization (Caceres and Paparoidamis, 2007). Relationship marketing, an important concept within marketing theory, is hinged on the premise that relationships are built over time and through frequent and high quality communication. From such a relationship, customers derive both tangible and intangible benefits (either economic, physical, or strategic). Moreover, the relationship also prompts beliefs of equity and instigates customers to realize the superior value of the relationship and the relationship partner (Anderson *et al.*, 1994; Morgan *et al.*, 2000).

Grönroos (1994) views relationship marketing as an attempt to “establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is achieved by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises” (p. 6). According to Odekerken-Schröder *et al.* (2003), relationship marketing research is only adequately possible with the knowledge of the meaning of its core variable of interest. In line with the existing conceptualization of relationship marketing, in this research, the concept is defined as one or more exchanges between a customer and a performing arts organization that are perceived by a customer as being interrelated to potential past and future exchanges with the performing arts organization.

Although relationship marketing is associated with several concepts, most studies focussed on only a few of them. The three concepts commonly associated with relationship marketing are satisfaction, trust, and commitment, which are deemed critical drivers of customer relationship and customer loyalty (Ball *et al.*, 2006; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Pan *et al.*, 2012; Pritchard *et al.*, 1999; Rauyruen and Miller, 2007; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). The current study, therefore, focusses on these three, which are discussed in the next section.

Satisfaction. Despite variations in the conceptualization of satisfaction, researchers agree that it is both a cognitive evaluation and an emotional reaction. Satisfaction could either be transaction-specific or general (overall). Transaction-specific satisfaction is an immediate post-purchase evaluation comprising an affective reaction to the most recent experience with the concerned object (Oliver, 1993). Such satisfaction is expected in the performing arts context, specifically in the “post-consumption” of a performance

following a single encounter with the venue and its employees (Jones and Suh, 2000). On the contrary, overall satisfaction is an aggregation of all transaction-specific satisfaction with an organization (Veloutsou *et al.*, 2005).

While transaction-specific satisfaction is likely to fluctuate from one visit to another, overall satisfaction reflects the average and is, therefore, more stable and a better predictor of future customer loyalty and the success of a business institution (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Johnson *et al.*, 2001; Nam *et al.*, 2011, Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). This research subscribes to Hennig-Thurau *et al.*'s (2002) definition of customer satisfaction as the customer's overall affective reaction to the perceived difference between performance appraisal and expectations.

Trust. Trust is essential for businesses' effort to forge long-term relationships with their customers (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Rousseau *et al.*, 1998), as products, services, and businesses that are trusted have the leverage to foster customers' favorable attitude toward them and trigger customers to spread positive word-of-mouth about purchased products and patronized services (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). This study uses Hosmer's (1995) definition of trust as "the reliance by one person, group, or firm upon a voluntarily accepted duty on the part of another person, group, or firm to recognize and protect the rights and interests of all others engaged in a joint endeavour or economic exchange" (p. 393).

A prominent notion in this definition is the inseparability of reliance with expectations that one's decision to rely on another is hinged on expectations regarding the intentions and possible actions of the other (e.g. acceptance of duty to safeguard the welfare of the partner in the transaction). Singh and Sirdeshmukh (2000) argue that trust is not only specific to a particular exchange episode but also to the whole relationship.

Commitment. Successful long-term relationships emerged from commitment (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Commitment, according to Morgan and Hunt (1994), refers to a belief among exchange partners that an "ongoing relationship with each another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it" (p. 23).

The three components assume different roles in maintaining and developing a relationship (Aurier and N'Goala, 2010). Commitment is related to the maintenance of a relationship, which is supported by the development of trust. Both commitment and trust, nonetheless, are enhanced by people's satisfaction with their relationships with other parties (Segarra-Moliner *et al.*, 2013). Previous studies have confirmed the interrelationship among these three dimensions in various contexts (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Segarra-Moliner *et al.*, 2013):

- H1. A higher level of customer satisfaction with the performing arts organization leads to a higher level of commitment to that organization.
- H2. A higher level of customer satisfaction with the performing arts organization leads to a higher level of trust in that organization.

Trust reduces the costs of searching for information about alternatives (Kramer, 1999) and is grounded on acting in a trustful manner and keeping promises. Therefore, it is assumed that trust positively influences a long-term commitment to the organization. Hence:

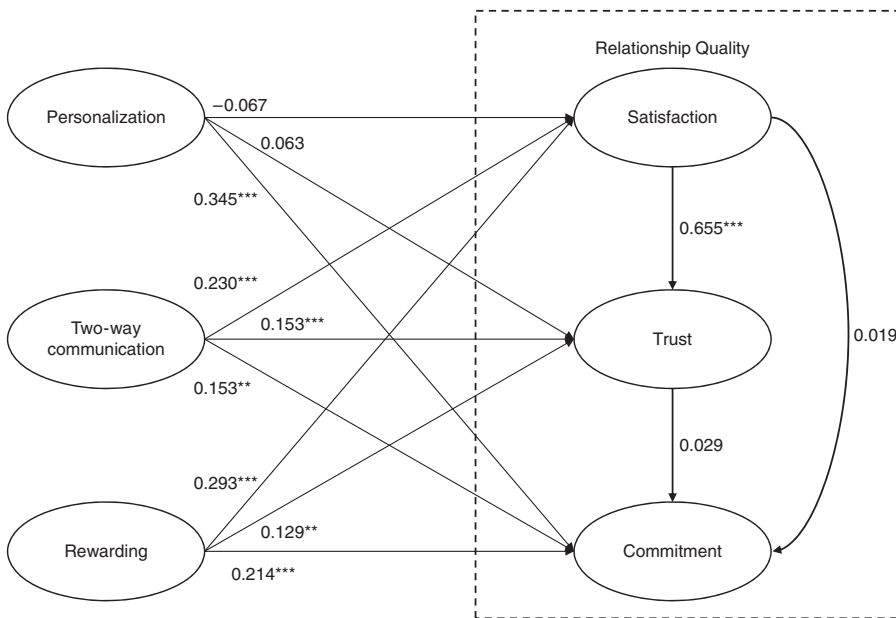
- H3. A higher level of customer trust in the performing arts organization leads to a higher level of commitment to that organization.

2.2 Relationship marketing tactics

The principle of reciprocity is a critical element in research into relationships (De Wulf *et al.*, 2001). Reciprocity is indispensable for the duration and stability of exchange relationships (Larson, 1992), by applying the principle of returning good for good, in relation to what has been received (Bagozzi, 1995). For customer relationship marketing, the relevance of reciprocity is irrefutable (De Wulf *et al.*, 2001; Smith and Barclay, 1997).

Several marketing tactics are considered to stimulate reciprocity, which strengthens the relationship between customers and organizations. Nevertheless, the literature hardly provides guiding principles related to the influence of different marketing tactics on customers' perceptions of the performing arts organization's efforts at fostering customer relationships. Odekerken-Schröder *et al.* (2003) identified four marketing tactics – personalization, two-way communication, preferential treatment, and rewarding – on consumer relationship and retention in a shopping mall context. Systematic research into the impact of this marketing tactic in the performing arts is still scant (Turrini *et al.*, 2011). Figure 1 shows the relationship of these tactics with the dimensions of relationship marketing.

Personalization. Organizations are increasingly offering personalized services, as they are considered better than routine services that do not take customers' needs and preferences into account (Ball *et al.*, 2006). Personalization or one-to-one marketing (Peppers *et al.*, 1999) is regarded an important aspect of relationship marketing (Arora *et al.*, 2008; Ball *et al.*, 2006; Holland and Baker, 2001; Kwon and Kim, 2011; Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003; Zhang, 2011). However, due to its wide usage in the literature, there is much confusion about what “personalization” exactly means. It has been studied in various academic fields, such as economics, management, marketing,



Notes: ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Figure 1. Results of the structural model

information systems, and computer sciences (Kwon and Kim, 2011), resulting in diverging operationalization of the concept (Fan and Poole, 2006).

The current study subscribes to Holland and Baker's (2001) definition of personalization as the final result of understanding and meeting the unique needs of the customer. Basically, personalization takes place when the performing arts organization decides, usually based on previously collected customer data, what marketing mix is suitable for the individual requirements of a customer (Arora *et al.*, 2008; Ball *et al.*, 2006). Service personalization has been found to increase satisfaction and benevolence trust (Ball *et al.*, 2006). Although personalization does not directly influence customer loyalty, the former indirectly impacts the latter through satisfaction and trust (Ball *et al.*, 2006). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H4. The delivery of personalized services positively influences customers' (a) satisfaction with, (b) trust in, and (c) commitment to the performing arts organization.

Two-way communication. Two-way communication, also referred to as transactional communication with both conversational and dialogic elements (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998), is an indispensable ingredient for instigating and maintaining a company-customer relationship (Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003). In service marketing, in particular, two-way communication is an important strategy for increasing companies' bonds with their customers (Holland and Baker, 2001; MacMillan *et al.*, 2005; Saxton *et al.*, 2007).

The link between trust and communication has been well established in previous studies (Ball *et al.*, 2006; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000). Macmillan *et al.*'s (2005) research into the non-profit sector showed that communication impacts trust directly and commitment indirectly through non-material benefits. That same study also reported that two-way communication is crucial in the relationship marketing process. In line with these findings, marketing strategies and tactics in the performing arts pursue three goals: first, providing the audience with more information about the program; second, enabling transactions like online ticket purchase or donations; and finally, fostering a two-way-interaction between the audience and the organization (Saxton *et al.*, 2007, Turrini *et al.*, 2011). Hence:

- H5. Two-way communication between the performing arts organization and its customers positively influences customers' (a) satisfaction with, (b) trust in, and (c) commitment to the performing arts organization.

Preferential treatment. Rewards and preferential treatments are two possible benefits customers can reap from their relationships with companies. Most performing arts organizations are increasingly offering their customers memberships to loyalty programs. Preferential treatment refers to an organization's decision to serve and treat its regular customers better than its non-regular customers (Gwinner *et al.*, 1998; Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003). The emergence of relationship marketing heightened the popularity of preferential treatment of selected customers.

Preferential treatment, nonetheless, has been sometimes criticized for its emphasis on delivering improved and quality service to only a few customers, thereby excluding the majority who happened to be less loyal to the company (Lacey *et al.*, 2007). Results of studies into the impact of preferential treatment, however, remained inconclusive. On the one hand, preferential treatment has been found ineffective in influencing customer commitment, satisfaction, and trust (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002) and in retaining customers (Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003).

On the other hand, Morgan *et al.* (2000), describing preferential treatment as a proactive and extensive relationship marketing strategy, found that giving customers preferential treatment generates relationship commitment, increased purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and positive feedback. Additionally, preferential treatment also increases relational bonds with the loyalty program member and the firm, which reinforces member's loyalty to a company (Dorotic *et al.*, 2011). Due to conflicting research results, the present study included preferential treatment as a marketing tactic in the performing arts context and advances the following hypothesis:

H6. Extending preferential treatment to customers of a performing arts organization positively influences customers' (a) satisfaction with, (b) trust in, and (c) commitment to the performing arts organization.

Rewarding. Another important aspect of relationship marketing is rewarding (Dorotic *et al.*, 2011; MacMillan *et al.*, 2005; Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003). Odekerken-Schröder *et al.* (2003) refer to rewarding as "a consumer's perception of the extent to which a retailer offers tangible benefits such as pricing or gift incentives to its regular customers in return for their loyalty" (p. 180). Results of their research showed that rewarding has a positive effect on customer retention orientation. Additionally, rewarding tactics prompt customers to stay loyal to a company regardless of service enhancement or price promotions of competitors (Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003; Sharp and Sharp, 1997).

Dorotic *et al.* (2011), however, argued that the drivers of loyalty program effectiveness remained inadequately understood, while studies into these drivers hardly offered generalizable conclusions. They also found that loyalty programs are effective in increasing consumer purchase behaviors over time, but their impact differs across markets. Therefore, examining the influence of this variable in the performing arts sector will give valuable insights to this service. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7. Extending rewards to customers of a performing arts organization positively influences customers' (a) satisfaction with, (b) trust in, and (c) commitment to the performing arts organization.

3. Method

3.1 Procedure

A survey was implemented with customers of a performing arts venue in a medium-size Dutch city. On weekdays, seven film features (mostly foreign language, American art house, and Dutch films) are shown every day, while live (pop and rock) concerts are scheduled in the venue during weekends. Occasionally, the venue also holds concerts by internationally renowned artists. The total number of visitors to the venue is pegged at approximately 62,000. With its array of performances, the venue was deemed an appropriate context for the study.

The survey was implemented in two phases to reach as many respondents as possible. In the first phase, an online version of the questionnaire was sent to the performing arts venue's customers by e-mail and through the venue's online social network platforms. A link to the online survey was also included in the venue's newsletter. As experience with the performing arts venue is an important criterion for the selection of survey respondents, a question on whether or not they have visited the performing arts venue for a specific event was asked in the first part of the questionnaire. Those who indicated to have not visited the venue were excluded for this research.

In the second phase, paper-based questionnaires were distributed to the visitors of the performing arts venue in four different occasions to increase the total number of respondents. The data collection in two phases resulted in 252 completed questionnaires, 140 of which were filled online. In total, 153 participants were women (61.2 percent). The mean age of the participants was 42.3 years. The complicated nature of the Dutch educational system prompted the researchers to categorize participants, according to their educational attainment, into two: high and low. Approximately 70 percent of the study's participants are highly educated and 43 percent of the respondents had a membership card of the venue. Presented in Table I is the complete demographic information of the survey respondents.

3.2 Measures

In total, 29 items were used to measure the various constructs of the study. The measurements used were drawn from previous studies and partly adapted to suit to the performing arts context. Items measuring "trust" were based on the scale of Chiou and Droge (2006). "Commitment" was measured with four items by Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2002), while three items were developed, based on existing scales (Keaveney and Parthasarathy, 2001; Oliver, 1997; Yi, 1990), to measure "satisfaction".

One item by Odekerken-Schröder *et al.* (2003) and four items from Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003) were reformulated to measure "personalization", while "preferential treatment" and "rewarding" were measured using the modified scales of Odekerken-Schröder *et al.* (2003). Finally, six items, originally used in a research in an online context (Lui, 2003) were modified to measure "two-way communication".

Respondents' demographic information such as gender, age, educational attainment, and venue membership status were also collected. Translation-back-translation method

	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	97	38.5
Female	153	60.7
Did not indicate gender	2	0.8
<i>Age (years old)</i>		
Younger than 26	43	17.1
26-35	42	16.7
36-45	53	21.0
46-55	55	21.8
56-65	42	16.7
Older than 65	17	6.7
<i>Education</i>		
Low	72	28.6
High	180	71.4
<i>Membership</i>		
Movie membership	58	23.0
Concert membership	2	0.8
Movie membership	48	19.0
No membership	142	56.3
Did not indicate	2	0.8
Total	252	100

Table I.
Complete demographic information of the survey respondents

was used to ensure the equivalence of the scales in Dutch. Furthermore, the questionnaire was pre-tested with ten people to ensure that items used to measure the different constructs were intelligible and well-formulated. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale with 5 representing “strongly agree” and 1 “strongly disagree”.

Presented in Table II are the mean and standard deviations values and the reliability scores for the study’s constructs. For a complete overview of the used scales and the means and standard deviation values for all the items, refer to Table AI.

4. Results

4.1 Data Analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM), using AMOS 18.0, was performed to test the different research hypotheses and to determine the extent of fit between the model and the data. The performance of SEM subscribed to the two-step approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), in which the measurement model was tested first prior to testing the structural model. Assessment of model fit was based on the following indices: χ^2 -test, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). For a satisfactory fit, χ^2 -test value should be lower than 5 (Wheaton *et al.*, 1977), CFI and TLI values higher than 0.90 (Bentler, 1990; Bollen, 1989), RMSEA value less than 0.10 (Browne and Cudeck, 1993), and the value of SRMR not exceeding 0.08 (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), using AMOS, resulted in the removal of some items from the model, due to their low loadings on the constructs they were supposed to measure (see Table AI). The internal consistency of the different constructs was eventually assessed by calculating their Cronbach’s α scores using SPSS. Except for “rewarding” with an α value of 0.74, α values for the other constructs were higher than 0.80, signifying good consistency (Nunnally, 1978; Pallant, 2005).

4.2 Test of the measurement model

CFA results show that the measurement model fits satisfactorily with the data considering the values of the various fit indices: χ^2/df (2.34), CFI (0.94), TLI (0.93), RMSEA (0.07), and SRMR (0.05). Taking the complexity of the model into account, the fit was classified as acceptable (Kline, 2005) and, hence, the model was accepted. Additionally, assessment of the measurement model was done on unidimensionality, convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity. It was concluded that the measurement model fits the data well.

4.3 Test of the structural model

The test of the structural model shows that most of the hypothesized paths are significant in the proposed direction. Personalization has a strong influence on

Construct	Mean (SD)
Personalization	3.1 (0.9)
Two-way communication	3.3 (0.8)
Rewarding	3.9 (0.8)
Preferential treatment	3.0 (0.9)
Satisfaction	4.5 (0.7)
Trust	4.1 (0.7)
Commitment	3.2 (1.0)

Table II.
Mean values and
standard deviations
for the final
constructs

commitment, thereby supporting *H4c*. The delivery of a personalized service has no significant effect on satisfaction with and trust in venue, hence, *H4a-b* are not supported, respectively. Strong support is found for the impact of two-way communication on all dependent variables, thus confirming *H5a-c*, respectively. Furthermore, rewarding has a significant effect on satisfaction, trust, and commitment, therefore confirming *H7a-c*, respectively. The effect of preferential treatment on the dependent variables, however, is not significant, therefore *H6a-c* are not supported.

As preferential treatment has no significant effects on relationship quality dimensions, the construct was excluded from the revised model. Revision of the model resulted in a much improved fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.11$; CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.07, SRMR = 0.05). Shown in Figure 1 are the path coefficients with significance levels for the revised structural model.

Contrary to what was expected, the effects of satisfaction and trust on commitment are not significant, thus *H1* and *H2* are not supported, respectively. Nonetheless, satisfaction has a strong impact on customers' trust in performing arts organization and this supports *H2*.

5. Discussion of results and research implications

5.1 Discussion of results

Results of the current study strongly suggest that performing arts organizations should shift their focus from a transaction orientation to a relationship marketing orientation (Rentschler *et al.*, 2002). As the authors claimed, the different marketing tactics could have varying effects on marketing relationship dimensions (trust, satisfaction, and commitment). Results of the present study also show that higher levels of two-way communication and rewarding positively influence customers' satisfaction with, trust in, and commitment to a performing arts venue. The effect of personalization, however, is limited to commitment only.

The strong influence of two-way communication on satisfaction, trust, and commitment is in consonance with the results of previous studies (e.g. MacMillan *et al.*, 2005; Saxton *et al.*, 2007). In recent years, non-profit organizations have been primarily resorting to a unidirectional transmission of information to their clients (Turrini *et al.*, 2011). The problem with such a one-way communication traffic is that clients are deprived of the opportunity to be heard by the company whenever the need to voice out something arises, which could negatively affect company-customer relationship. Hence, open and two-way communication between a company and its clients is crucial since it signifies the former's concern about the latter's welfare (Berry, 1995). Results of the present study affirm this assertion as two-way communication has a strong influence on satisfaction, trust, and commitment. Another important tactic that could enhance customer satisfaction, trust, and commitment is the extension of rewards to loyal customers. Previous studies have already noted the pivotal role such a tactic plays in enhancing the three customer relationship dimensions mentioned (Dorotic *et al.*, 2011; Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003).

Contrary to what was expected, however, personalization only enhances customers' commitment but not their trust in and satisfaction with the performing arts venue. Since personalization signifies the company's competence to deliver quality service(s) to its clients, the tactic could be expected to enhance customers' satisfaction, as evidenced by results of a study by Ball *et al.* (2006). The significant impact of the tactic on satisfaction, however, could be attributed to the context of the research – the banking sector – in which the risks are perceived to be higher, and thus personalization is more valued.

Although a ticket for a performing arts venue is a low-risk product, personalization is still relevant for the performing arts sector. Personalization in the performing arts could be realized through a personalized contact in the venue, through a personalized website of the theatre to the customer needs, or personalized e-mail campaigns focussing on customers' interests.

Of the four marketing tactics proposed, only preferential treatment did not have a positive effect on marketing relationship dimensions. A possible explanation for this outcome, according to Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2002), is that customers who did not receive preferential treatment may have felt neglected by the organization. This was also pointed out by several respondents during the pre-test of the survey instrument for the current study. Performing arts organizations, pre-test respondents noted, are expected to treat their customers equally.

In this study, the relationship among the three customer relationship dimensions – satisfaction, trust, and commitment – was also investigated. As expected, satisfied customers of the performing arts venue are highly predisposed to trust that venue. This supports results of previous studies into the impact of satisfaction on trust (e.g. Garbarino and Johnson, 1999).

It is, nonetheless, surprising that the expected positive effects of satisfaction and trust on commitment are not statistically supported, challenging the commonly held view of commitment as a natural outcome of a satisfying relationship and one entrenched in trust. However, the absence of a causal relationship between satisfaction and commitment in the context of a performing arts organization could probably be attributed to its nature and functions. It is imaginable for clients of a specific performing arts organization or venue to be satisfied with its many aspects (e.g. professionalism of personnel, service quality, and ambiance of the location), although such satisfaction, regardless of degree, would hardly translate into clients' conviction to exclusively patronize the offerings of the venue.

If commitment implies sticking to one party despite the attractive offers of its competitors, then securing clients' commitment to a performing arts venue could be a formidable pursuit. For instance, if a performing arts venue has nothing enticing on its program list at a particular moment, it is likely that clients, no matter how satisfied they were with a venue during their previous attendance and regardless of their high trust in that venue, would still visit an alternative venue with a more appealing show or performance.

5.2 Practical and theoretical implications of study's results

An important implication of the study's results is that performing arts organizations that aim at establishing a stronger relationship with their clients should continuously explore the potential of engaging in a two-way communication with clients, extending rewards to those who are loyal, and personalizing their services in enhancing customers satisfaction, trust, and commitment. In an environment where individuals are increasingly connected with less costs and effort, primarily due to the ubiquity of online social networking platforms, performing arts organizations have no excuse not to establish a more open, interactive communication with their clients.

The contributions of the study results to theory are also not negligible. Although several studies have already looked into the effects of various marketing tactics on marketing relationship, for instance in retail (Gwinner *et al.*, 1998; Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003) or traditional service sectors such as banking and travel organizations (Ball *et al.*, 2006; Patterson, 2007), similar studies in the performing arts sectors are

almost non-existent. Performing arts organizations, as an experiential service sector, significantly differ from traditional service organizations and retail companies since in the former products are less tangible and durable and that service consumption occurs in real time (Hume *et al.*, 2007).

These differences, the authors claim, suffice to challenge the notion within traditional service marketing, that repeat purchase inclinations could be solely attributed to value, service quality, and customer satisfaction. These differences also substantiate the proposition that the effects of various marketing tactics on marketing relationship may vary across different sectors.

6. Limitations and future research directions

Just like most empirical studies, the current study has not been spared from several research-related issues. An important issue pertains to data collection. The study was based on a sample of 252 clients of one performing arts organization only. The organization for this research represents a venue with different kinds of performing art disciplines. Therefore, the results are not limited to a specific kind of performing arts alone. However, the generalizability of the findings would be stronger if more clients from other performing arts organizations would be included.

Furthermore, in this study, overall satisfaction was measured. In future research, it would be interesting to differentiate the various aspects of satisfaction in the context of performing arts organization and to measure their impact on loyalty or commitment. Such a focus merits academic attention since there are various aspects or dimensions of a performing arts organization that could be subjected to customer evaluation. It would be interesting to see if, for example, satisfaction with a particular performance or show has a higher influence on loyalty than the hospitality of a performing arts organization.

Finally, as only four different relationship marketing tactics were studied here, it would be worthwhile to explore the impact of other tactics on customer relationships in the future. Interesting variables, for instance, would be product category involvement in the arts (Odekerken-Schröder *et al.*, 2003), as well as other aspects of loyalty programs (Dorotic *et al.*, 2011).

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Table A1.
Means, standard deviations, and reliability of the scales

Measurement item	Mean (SD)	α	Variance explained	Factor loading
<i>Satisfaction</i>				
On the whole, I am satisfied with my experience with XX	4.45 (0.75)	0.93	0.48	0.94
Overall, my negative experience outweighs my positive experience with XX	4.46 (0.82)			0.86
In general, I am happy with XX	4.45 (0.76)			0.90
<i>Trust</i>				
XX is honest	4.23 (0.79)	0.92	0.40	0.93
XX is reliable	4.24 (0.79)			0.93
XX is responsible	4.07 (0.87)			0.82
XX understands her consumers ^a	3.93 (0.96)			
XX is always professional ^a	3.77 (1.04)			
XX acts with good intentions	4.39 (0.82)			0.75
<i>Commitment</i>				
I feel committed to XX	3.39 (1.05)	0.94	0.70	0.77
My commitment to XX is important to me	3.11 (1.12)			0.96
My commitment to XX is something I care about	3.02 (1.14)			0.93
My relationship with XX deserves my effort to maintain	3.14 (1.21)			0.94
<i>Personalization</i>				
I would appreciate it if I could store my preferences at XX and XX offers me extra services of information based on my preferences ^a	3.57 (1.03)	0.89	0.41	
I would appreciate it if XX would give me personal attention in their communication outings (for example about their offerings and mentioning my name)	2.67 (1.08)			0.78
I would appreciate it if XX takes time to get to know me as their customer	2.88 (1.10)			0.91
I would appreciate it if XX would give me suggestions about the offerings based on my previous purchases at XX	3.05 (1.18)			0.69
I would appreciate it if XX makes effort to discover what I like and makes suggestions ^a	3.11 (1.22)			

(continued)

Measurement item	Mean (SD)	α	Variance explained	Factor loading
<i>Two-way communication</i>				
XX is effective in gathering visitors' feedback	3.32 (0.92)	0.92	0.58	0.82
XX facilitates two-way communication between the visitors and XX	3.44 (0.96)			0.74
It is difficult to offer feedback to XX	3.39 (0.96)			0.89
XX makes me feel it wants to listen to its visitors	3.27 (0.88)			0.82
XX encourages their visitors to give feedback ^a	2.96 (0.93)			
XX gives visitors the opportunity to talk back (to them)	3.39 (0.89)			0.89
<i>Preferential treatment</i>				
XX makes greater efforts for their members than for non-members ^a	2.93 (1.00)	0.88	0.65	0.92
XX offers better service to members than to non-members	3.07 (0.92)			0.74
XX does more for members than for non-members	3.05 (0.95)			
<i>Rewarding</i>				
XX rewards their members for their patronage (for example, discounts at tickets)	3.79 (0.98)	0.74	0.31	0.76
XX offers discounts to their members for their patronage	3.94 (0.85)			0.78
Note: ^a Items were not used in the measurement or structural models				

Table AI.