

Theoretical Assumptions of Values-Based Communication

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ABSTRACT

Background: The aim of this research is to analyze the theoretical assumptions of values-based communication and to investigate the values-based communication of the Vilnius Book Fair. By incorporating values into communication, it is possible to reach the readers of the message in a more personal way by creating a connection or having an influence on some of their decisions. The topics of health, physical activity and sport are also presented, where the latest scientific and study publications are shared. In this work, the communication of the Vilnius Book Fair was chosen for the analysis of the case of values-based communication.

Methods: The research was carried out using mixed methods: analysis of scientific literature, qualitative analysis of communicative content, and an online survey of Vilnius Book Fair visitors. Qualitative analysis of the communicative content was based on the value classification systems described in the scientific literature.

Results: From the results of the survey and the reviewed communication content, it can be stated that the communication of the Vilnius Book Fair is mainly based on the values of self-direction, which shows that the event presents itself as a place where it is possible to improve. Stimulation is also emphasized – the experience of innovation, this value according to Schwartz's (2006) correlation diagram has a common goal with self-direction, but the value of tradition, which opposes the values of openness to change, remains equally important. The value of tradition is used to create continuity, that is, to show a connection with the visitor and a successful event year after year. Values are linked throughout the communication content – it starts with slogans and continues to the program and press releases.

Conclusion: The summarized results of the research show that the Vilnius Book Fair bases its communication mainly on the value of self-direction (improvement, education). The value of stimulation (innovation) and traditions are also noticeable – the continuity of the event is emphasized. There is a direct connection between the value of conformity and the cultural dimension of femininity – both ideas strive for equality in society, and empathy. The ideas of the Vilnius Book Fair slogans are closely related to further communication – the program of the event and press releases. The opinion of the respondents about the event coincides with the message broadcasted by the Vilnius Book Fair, that is, the respondents first equate the fair with a cultural festival and do not emphasize its commercial side.

Keywords: human values, book fairs, human values in communication.

INTRODUCTION

Values are what people value, beliefs, and ideas that strongly influence their choices (Schwartz, 2006; Vriens, Hofstede, 2000; Kouvila, 2008). By incorporating values into your communication, you can personally reach,

connect with, or influence the recipients of your message. Values-based communication allows not only to attract new customers but also to create a certain image and recognizability for your brand. Such communication is important not only for

sales promotion, but it is also one of the best ways to spread the message about global social, economic, and environmental issues, such as migration, climate change, and social exclusion. When an organization's communication is based on values, the target groups and the recipients of the communication identify with the message and, if the values disseminated by the organization match their values, evaluate such messages more personally. It can be assumed that through values-based communication, organizations not only spread the word about themselves, but also educate the society and gather the community.

In today's world, the sales market is expanding at a rapid rate, resulting in a wide range of products that are similar in appearance and functionality. For this reason, when selling a product or service, it is necessary to stand out from the large supply, that is, to show what values the brand represents. Values-based communication is becoming an increasingly popular choice not only to promote a company (Kotler, 2019) but also to seek a shift in public opinion (Kosteljik, 2020).

In this work, the communication of the Vilnius Book Fair was chosen for the analysis of the case of values-based communication. This event has an exceptional structure: on the one hand, it is a commercial event where visitors can buy publications from Lithuanian publishers. On the other hand, it is like a book festival, full of activities that allow you to get to know the world of books, and meet those who are also interested in it. The topics of health, physical activity and sport are also presented, where the latest scientific and study publications are shared. Values-based communication, especially in the context of book fairs, has not been widely explored. The analysis of the literature performed by the author of this work allows to assume that little research has been done in this field in Lithuania.

The aim of the work was to analyze the theoretical assumptions of values-based communication and to investigate the communication of the Vilnius Book Fair from the value point of view.

METHODS

Participants. In the qualitative content analysis, the content of 17 units was analyzed. 121 participated in the survey. A total of 121 respondents completed the online survey, of whom 111 (92%) were women and 10 (8%) men.

Participants in the survey were divided into five age categories. 41 (34%) respondents were in the "15–25" age category, 22 (18%) in the "26–35" age group, 23 (19%) in the "36–45" category, 24 (20%) in the "46–55" age group and 11 (9%) were in the "56 and over" age group. Respondents were also divided into three categories of education. 85 (70%) of the respondents fell into the category of higher education. 29 (24%) respondents indicated that they have a secondary education and 7 (6%) respondents stated that they belong to the category of basic education.

The demographic data collected by the survey shows that a significant number of respondents are younger women (15–25 years) with higher education. The portrait of a visitor to the Vilnius Book Fair is similarly defined by a study conducted by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania entitled "Participation in Culture and Satisfaction with Cultural Services", which states that visitors are "women, younger people (15–19) with higher education". Participation in culture and satisfaction with cultural services, 2017, p. 145). In addition, the study emphasizes that the main audience of book fairs is culture lovers and fosterers, which shows that such a community is gathered at the Vilnius Book Fair event.

Limitation of the study. A convenient sample was used in the survey, i.e., the questionnaire was intended for the participants of the Vilnius Book Fair who have visited the event at least 2 times; The questionnaire was completed by members of the Facebook groups on the social platform reading books.

Data source. During the research, the publicly available communication of the Vilnius Book Fair in 2007, 2018, 2019, and 2020 was reviewed – slogans, event programs, and press releases. In 2007, for the first time since the beginning of the event, a slogan was assigned to the Vilnius Book Fair, i.e., a certain value was emphasized. The study also analyzed the communication of book fair events in the last three years (2018, 2019, 2020) when the event officially took place. The following texts were selected for the study: the program of the event; visitor information about the event; and press releases published several months before the fair, several days before the fair, and during the opening of the fair.

Research method. A mixed approach was chosen to conduct the research – to analyze the content of the communication and to survey the

visitors. Content analysis was performed using MaxQda software, which is designed for both qualitative, quantitative, and mixed data analysis. Based on the theoretical material, a questionnaire for the visitors of the Vilnius Book Fair was compiled. The results of the research showed how the visitors of the event imagine the Vilnius Book Fair, what values they associate with it and what they think about the event in general. The design of the anonymous questionnaire consisted of 10 questions related to demographics, reasons for attending the book fair, values, event ratings, and associations of the statements made with the fair.

After selecting a sufficient number of test results, the research model, a research instrument, and a code structure was chosen. The texts were coded for combined access, that is, a list of codes was prepared at the beginning, but some aspects were changed or added during the coding process. Selected data were loaded into MaxQda and a total of five types of codes were entered, three descriptive and two with analytical categories and subcategories, with different code colours assigned to each code. The analytical codes were developed based on the theoretical part – the values of Schwartz (2006) and the cultural dimensions singled out by Hofstede (2011), which are characteristic of Lithuania. The next step was to encode all the uploaded texts – objects, paragraphs, and individual words according to the specified codes. After coding all the collected data, the analysis of the obtained results (in the form of text, tables, figures) was performed, their individual interpretation was presented, and conclusions were formed.

The survey was developed on the Qualtrics platform; it was shared with Facebook reading groups related to books. The obtained results were summarized, individual interpretation was performed, and conclusions were formed.

RESULTS

After the analysis of the slogans of the Vilnius Book Fair, it can be stated that the main idea of the fair always communicates one or more values (see Table 1). The results showed that the slogans of all the years under review emphasize the value of self-direction – creativity, research, and freedom of choice.

From the results, it can be seen that the emphasis on the value of benevolence declined in 2018, which can be attributed to a slogan that emphasized individualism rather than interrelationships. The value of conformity was mostly emphasized in 2007, which can also be related to the slogan of the fair – children’s literature, that is, the theme of the event is very close to the program and focuses on other social strata (children). The mention of traditions in the programs of the book fair remains roughly similar, always trying to emphasize traditional events and activities. The use of the value of universalism has grown since 2007, due to the fact that the number of foreign guest books at the fair has been increasing every year (see Table 2).

To gather the opinions of the visitors to the Vilnius Book Fair about the event, two control questions were asked. To find out the view of the Vilnius Book Fair, it was necessary to have people who had visited the book fair for the first time, therefore the first control question was related to the number of visits to the event. Almost half (54; 45%) of the respondents stated that they had visited Vilnius Book Fair 2–3 times. The other two parts were distributed similarly – 32 (26%) of the respondents stated that they had participated in the fair 4–5 times, and 35 (29%) of the respondents stated that they had visited book fairs 6 times or more (see Table 2).

71.1% of the visitors to the Vilnius Book Fair state that they participate in the fair due to the organized

Table 1. Frequency of Schwartz values in slogans

Schwartz values/year	Hedonism	Conformity	Achievement	Self-Direction	Stimulation	Tradition	Universalism
2007 year	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
2018 year	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
2019 year	-	-	1	1	1	1	-
2020 year	1	-	-	1	1	-	-

Table 2. Communication of Vilnius Book Fair programs according to Schwartz's (2006) values

Schwartz values/year	Benevolence (frequency %)	Conformity (frequency %)	Self-Direction (frequency %)	Stimulation (frequency %)	Tradition (frequency %)	Universalism (frequency %)
2007 year	11,67%	10,75%	48,5%	6%	19,17%	3,92%
2018 year	2,83%	6,17%	64,67%	5,92%	12,08%	8,33%
2019 year	8,75%	5,42%	44,75%	13,17%	16,75%	11,17%
2020 year	10,08%	7,83%	41,5%	21,75%	11,58%	9,67%

events – meetings with writers, discussions, and concerts. Also, more than half of the respondents (65.3%) visit the fair for the opportunity to purchase books. 25 respondents state that they visit Vilnius Book Fair for the opportunity to meet friends who love literature and to meet new people, and 18 add that visiting Vilnius Book Fair is related to work, volunteering, school excursions, or free access as a journalist. One of the exclusive answers was that the respondent visits the Vilnius Book Fair to relax in a special atmosphere and celebrate his birthday. Such answers can be associated with the values communicated at the Vilnius Book Fair – various events are related to self-direction (creative workshops), stimulation (new experiences), benevolence (communication), hedonism (pleasure), but in addition to these distinguished values is the purchase of books. This shows that, although, the fair is trying to present itself as a book festival, trade is taking place, and commerce is becoming part of the event (see Table 2).

The values named by the respondents were tabulated and compared with the Schwartz and Hofstede value classifications (see Table 3). It can be seen from the table that in the opinion of the respondents, the main value is associated with the Vilnius Book Fair is culture (30 times). This shows that the fair is imagined as a cultural event, but the commercial side is also unforgettable - the opportunity to buy books. It is worth noting that one of the respondents stated that the fair was previously associated with cultural value, but now with commerce. This shows that the communication goal of the Vilnius Book Fair to present itself as a cultural festival is related to the respondents' attitude towards it.

Another frequently mentioned value (28 times) – communication, community, communion – can be attributed to the benevolence singled out by Schwartz (2006) and the femininity of Hofstede (2011). 25 mentions named cognition/inspiration/

improvement, which is associated with self-direction and individualism (personal growth). Respondents also mentioned tolerance/empathy (10), which is related to conformity/universality and femininity. It can be seen from the table below that in the eyes of the respondents, the Vilnius Book Fair has a successful communication – the same values of Schwartz (2006) and the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (2011) are mentioned. The value of self-direction mentioned in the communication content is mentioned as one of the main values associated with the Vilnius Book Fair. It is important to note that respondents did not single out the value of achievement, which was often used in press releases to highlight the importance and popularity of the book fair (see Table 3).

The results of the survey of Vilnius Book Fair visitors showed that the majority of respondents (81.8%) associate the event with a cultural festival, but at the same time 79 respondents state that they visit the book fair due to the possibility to buy a book. This shows that communication-based on the values of the Vilnius Book Fair is effective – press releases emphasize the growth of the event and thus create the image of a non-commercial book festival in the eyes of the respondents. In other words, respondents give priority to cultural values when talking about the fair, rather than claiming that the fair is commerce. Attention is drawn to the fact that the values broadcast in the Vilnius Book Fair are directly related to the values mentioned by the respondents – culture, communication (benevolence), cognition (self-direction, stimulation, individualism), as well as traditions, hedonism, tolerance (conformity, universality, femininity) (see Table 3).

From the results of the survey and the reviewed communication content, it can be stated that the communication of the Vilnius Book Fair is mainly based on the values of self-direction, which shows that the event presents itself as a place where

Table 3. Respondents' values are associated with the Vilnius Book Fair

Nr.	Value	Response rate	Schwartz value equivalent	Hofstede cultural dimension equivalent
1.	Culture	30		
2.	Communication / Community / Communion	28	Benevolence	Femininity
3.	Cognition / Inspiration / Improvement	25	Self-direction	Individualism
4.	Education	23	Self-direction	Individualism
5.	Knowledge	20	Self-direction	Individualism
6.	Tolerance / empathy	10	Conformity/universalism	Femininity
7.	Relaxation / Inner peace	9	Hedonism	Restraint
8.	Innovation	8	Stimulation	Long term orientation

it is possible to improve. Stimulation is also emphasized – the experience of innovation, this value according to Schwartz's (2006) correlation diagram has a common goal with self-direction, but the value of tradition, which opposes the values of openness to change, remains equally important. The value of tradition is used to create continuity, that is, to show a connection with the visitor and a successful event year after year. Values are linked throughout the communication content – it starts with slogans and continues to the program, and press releases. The survey showed that the values associated by the respondents also coincide with the values broadcast by the fair (self-direction). It was observed that no values were found in the communication content that would show any power; the importance of the fair as an event in communication is presented through the value of achievements (see Table 3).

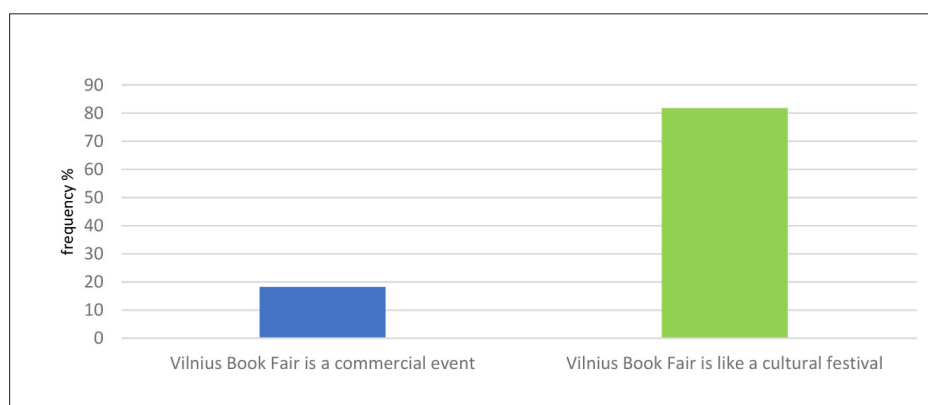
The vast majority of 99 (81.8%) respondents answered that the Vilnius Book Fair is equivalent to a cultural festival, the other part of the respondents (22; 18.2%) named the Vilnius Book Fair as a commercial event (see Figure 1). According to the

visitors of the fair who participated in the survey, it can be stated that the Vilnius Book Fair is more associated with culture and non-commercial purposes but does not completely abandon commercial activities (selling books, tickets).

DISCUSSION

The content of communication at the Vilnius Book Fair was reviewed – slogans, programs, and press releases showed that the fair bases its communication on values. As mentioned earlier, such communication reaches the target audience more personally (Dennison, 2020; Bernhardt, 2004; Dixon, 2017; Rokeach, 1973; Hofstede, 2011) and helps to bring book lovers together into one community (Moeran, 2011; Godelier, 2004). As mentioned in the Reading Promotion Program, “the number of visitors to the Book Fair has been growing steadily since 2010 – from 59,000 in 2010, to 67,000 in 2018” (Regarding the approval of the Reading Promotion Program for 2019–2024 and the Action Plan for the Reading Promotion Program for 2019–2021, No. IV-746 / V-834, 2018 of 19 October 2018). This increase

Figure 1. A statement associated with the Vilnius Book Fair



in visitors demonstrates the success of the event in communicating value and building community. Moeran (2011) also summarizes the book fairs as becoming a gathering place for a myriad of diverse people who differ in their geographical, social, and cultural aspects, but in such an environment everyone becomes one community.

The analyzed slogans of the Vilnius Book Fair showed that the main idea of the event in 2007 was a successful practice that continues to this day and thus creates the value of tradition. The values discussed in the slogans showed that each main idea broadcasts a certain idea, usually related to self-improvement and exploration. The use of values in messages is also recommended by Kosteljik (2020). The author argues that in this way it is possible to influence society, for example, to create a certain image of a company. It has been observed that the goals of not all communicated values are similar, that is, the reader may experience an internal conflict between, for example, the values of tradition, conservatism, and universality when attempting to accept the message being disseminated. In addition, the cultural dimensions singled out by Hofstede (2011) were noted: individualism, femininity, long-term orientation, and restraint. The analysis showed that the communication of the Vilnius Book Fair is based on values, but the accents were not always correct.

The analysis of Vilnius Book Fair programs showed that both the cultural dimensions mentioned in Hofstede's (2011) and Schwartz's (2006) values in the slogans of the fair are repeated evenly in the event programs, which shows equal communication on two channels. Such continuity of values in communication creates public loyalty to the brand, demonstrates the uniqueness of the product, and who the organization represents (Kotler, 2019). The core value is self-direction, linked to the freedom to create and research, and the value of stimulation is the pursuit of innovation. In its communication, the Vilnius Book Fair also emphasizes other values that are important to a wide audience, such as the conformity, which shows that representatives of different ages and social strata can find activities at the event. The cultural dimensions mentioned in Hofstede (2011) – femininity, restraint, individualism – were also observed.

The analyzed press releases also showed that most often the Vilnius Book Fair bases its communication on the values of self-direction – it is coded 52 times. The other two most frequently emphasized values – stimulation and achievement – were coded 42 times.

According to Schwartz (2006), the goals of these core values are close, so the reader will readily accept the message. Other values are mentioned in the article – goodwill (special attention in 2019), traditions, similarities, and achievements. The least emphasized value was hedonism – the pleasure of living – which was coded in 8 segments and only in the 2020 press releases. The research showed that the cultural dimension of conformity and femininity are directly related – their goal is equality in society and empathy. These ideas were most often mentioned together in the 2007 communication content. This connection shows that the press releases issued by the event are directly related to the program and the slogan, but do not change from year to year, distinguishing the same values, such as the self-direction and stimulation mentioned above, that are found in most of the communicative content. Press releases also try to highlight the growth of the book fair, which has become a cultural festival and is no longer a commercial event. So, the event can be classified as both a commercial and a cultural type, this fair is characterized by a myriad of different entertainments, is visitor-oriented and becomes like a cultural festival (Goldblatt, 2001; Godelier, 2004).

Respondents associate Vilnius Book Fair with celebration (1), leisure (3), and tradition (3). Such named values show that the respondents equate the image of the fair with a celebration, a festival (Moeran, 2011). The values of respect (5) and love (8) are also distinguished, which show a close, respectful connection with books and writers. It is also stated that the fair achieves inner peace, which can be associated with the inner harmony mentioned by Rokeach (1973), and Schwartz's (2006) values – tradition, conformity, hedonism – are also evident. A total of 300 values were mentioned by the respondents, which showed that the fair is associated with a myriad of cultural and spiritual values, which are visible not only in the eyes of the respondents but also in the communication of the Vilnius Book Fair. This shows that the communication of the event purposefully creates its image through values. This means that the values of the broadcast message match the reader and the transmitted message is accepted (Kosteljik, 2020)

CONCLUSIONS

The summarized results of the research showed that the Vilnius Book Fair bases its communication mainly on the value of self-direction (improvement,

education). The value of stimulation (innovation) and traditions are also noticeable – the continuity of the event is emphasized. There is a direct connection between the value of conformity and the cultural dimension of femininity – both ideas strive for equality in society, and empathy. The ideas of the Vilnius Book Fair slogans are closely

related to further communication – the program of the event and press releases. The opinion of the respondents about the event coincides with the message broadcast by the Vilnius Book Fair, that is, the respondents first equate the fair with a cultural festival and do not emphasize its commercial side.

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