

The Factors Influencing the Buying Decision of Customers Behaviour

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The topic of the paper is the analysis of the factors influencing the buying decision of consumer behaviour when buying fixed telecommunications connections. Telecommunications is an area that deals with the transmission of information between distant locations. Its development has been exponential in recent decades and today it represents one of the key factors in the formation of society. The objective of this research is to better understand consumers' behaviour toward fixed telecommunications connections in selected European country. The method used for data collection was a structured online questionnaire. Results indicated that 90% of respondents are satisfied with the provider of fixed telecommunications connections. The most important factor in a customer's purchasing decision is the characteristics of the telecommunication connector. The second one is brand. The results of the research could be used for planning further marketing activities and marketing strategies in the telecommunications companies and related industries.

Key words: consumer behaviour, purchase decision, factors, service marketing, telecommunications

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Introduction

The evaluation of marketing concept from mere selling concept to consumer oriented marketing has resulted in buyer behaviour becoming an independent discipline. Consumer Behaviour is the study of how individuals make decision to spend their available resources (time, money and effort) on consumption related aspects. It is the study of when, why, how, where and what people do or do not buy products. It blends elements from psychology, sociology, social psychology, anthropology & economics. It attempts to understand the influencing factors of a customer purchase decision making process, both individually and in groups by understanding his demographics

and behavioural variables, influences on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general (Sethi 2018).

During the process of purchase decision-making, consumer behaviour is affected by various factors. These can be divided into several factor (influence) groups: psychological (motivation, attitude, learning and memory), social (reference groups, family, individual's role and position, status), personal (age and level of a family's life cycle, occupation and financial situation, lifestyle, personality and self-image, values and beliefs), cultural (culture, social class), economic (price – monetary and non-monetary aspect, income, quality), situational factors related to time and place of purchase (physical environment such as store, location, equipment; social environment as salesperson's influence, time associated with seasonal influences, days of the week and previous consumer mood), individual differences and environmental impacts (Habjanič and Ušaj 2003; Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel 2006; Azevedo et al. 2008; Bennett 2011; Prodnik 2011; Kotler and Armstrong 2018; Vukasović 2020). These factors cause consumers to develop product and brand preferences. Although many of these factors cannot be directly controlled by marketers, understanding of their impact is essential as marketing mix strategies can be developed to appeal to the preferences of the target market (Rani 2014).

In telecommunication business, there are several variable there are used in order to attract customer to buy service. The variable are how brand image (Srinuan, Srinuan, and Bohlin 2014; Ashaduzzaman, Ahmed, and Khan 2011), how tariff and promotion from service provider (Karacuka, Catik, and Haucap 2012; Ashaduzzaman, Ahmed, and Khan 2011; Confraria, Ribeiro, and Vasconcelos 2017; Srinuan, Srinuan, and Bohlin 2014). Network is also influence customer behavior while choose service provider. The previous studies define that network also effect customer choice. From the study of Kotler (1997), relation can affect buying behavior. Several service providers have special offering for similarity provider. Qi et al. (2015) and Confraria, Ribeiro, and Vasconcelos (2017) define that relation has influence for buying behavior. Distribution is an activity to facilitate the consumer to get the services delivered. Choosing the right path will make it easier for consumers to obtain existing services (Hidayati, Ginting, and Nasution 2018). The characteristics of the salesperson and the telecommunication company also play a very important part in the buying decision of consumers in the sale of fixed telecommunications connections. Companies should,

therefore, have better knowledge of consumers than in the past.

For the successful realization of a sales transaction it is necessary for the sales person to know a number of different factors that influence the purchase decisions of users or customers. The salespeople are required to possess knowledge of the market environment where the interaction takes place. The knowledge of buyers' buying habits and influencers in the purchasing decisions is also required. In the context of cultural factors, salespeople have to be aware of or be able to identify and respect the customer's core values and norms. In the context of social factors, the salespeople have to primarily recognize the influence of traditional values, reference groups and family in the purchase behaviour. The salesperson has to identify, in the context of the buyer's personal factors, the need based on the buyer's life cycle, the financial situation and the characteristics of the products the buyer is purchasing. Within the psychological factor, however, it is important to identify a motive that encourages the buyer to make a purchasing decision. Price is certainly a factor that shapes the customer's perception of the quality of the service, and the individual needs of the customers also have to be taken into account.

By designing its marketing strategy, the company shapes the characteristics of the company that play an important role in consumer buying decisions. In today's competitive environment, markets are increasingly saturated with brands and the battle for (possibly loyal) consumers is increasingly fierce. This is particularly noticeable in the telecommunications industry, as its elements are changing even faster than in other industries, which means that the battle for the consumer is even fiercer and, therefore, the processes of developing and adapting to competitors and the market situation need to take place even faster. In this day and age of increasing pressure of information and marketing on consumers, brands are the cornerstones of quality, consistency and trust (Kapferer 2008). The brand is the transmitter of information about the quality, tradition, style, status, manufacturer and origin of the product. According to Konečnik Ruzzier (2011, 159), the function of a company's brand has the following characteristics from the user's point of view: facilitates product recognition from competing products, enables better transparency and access to information on the market, facilitates price comparisons, ensures product quality, ensures better sales services, makes it easier to buy, reduces the sense of risk. In this paper, an important feature of the company is represented also by the characteristics of telecommunication connection as the central entity of the service and its after-sales activities.

During the process of selling and buying, loyalty (among other things) represents an important part. The process of generating loyalty in the sale of fixed telecommunications connections plays the largest role. When making a purchase decision, the buyer concludes a subscription contract for an indefinite period of time, with a very short deadline and consequences for terminating the subscription. User loyalty has been defined by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007, 125) as a conscious decision by the user. But it does continue for a longer period until its benefit is greater than its cost. The users a company most wants are loyal users. As Vida (2010, 235) states, the feeling of belonging and loyalty are important factors. A relationship that keeps together mutual connections is divided into three types of connections – economic or financial connections based on direct benefits arising from the transactions, structural connections based on shared resources, shared infrastructure and coordinated processes, and sociological and psychological connections, which create interpersonal bonds based on satisfaction of social needs and security. To gain a comprehensive knowledge of loyalty-maintaining bonds, we also have to acquire knowledge of the opposing forces that loosen loyalty bonds and create infidelity.

Telecommunication services are changing at an extraordinary rate. Service providers offer their new, renewed, modified and innovative services at every step of the way. A digital agenda is currently in place in the EU as well as in Slovenia. With the rapid modernization of the network, the digital agenda forces contracting entities to change contractual relationships, thereby creating a great dynamic in the sales activities for telecommunication service providers.

The described trends that we are witnessing in the telecommunications sector, analysis of the secondary data from the literature review and the so far published research of the area in question, will serve as a starting point for the survey, by which we will design a conceptual model for determining the correlations between selected factors and their influence on the buying decision of consumers of fixed telecommunications services at personal sale. Izdelek preučevanja je fiksni telekomunikacijski priključek, ki zajema internet, televizijo, telefonijo in mobilni telefon v več kot 15 različnih kombinacijah.

Literature Review

The buying behavior of consumers is the set of actions to get involvement in obtaining some things, its usage, disposing of products and services, including decision practices and handling these

actions (Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard 1986). 'Consumer behavior is a process when people select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires' (Spacil and Teichmannova 2016). Consumer behavior 'includes mental, physical and emotional activities which people do when they want to select, purchase, use or throw away the product or the service that fulfils their needs and demands' (Eshra and Beshir 2017). However, mental, physical and emotional activities are some critical features of consumer's behavior that may involve them in the selection, purchasing and usage of products to fulfil their needs and wants (Wilkie 1994; Priest, Carter, and Stat 2013), as these features may influence their decision like what to buy, why to buy, when to buy, where to buy and how to use a product may be some critical views in their mind. Further, Furaiji Latuszynska, and Wawrzyniak (2012) have submitted their views that consumer buying behavior is a series of steps in which consumers initially recognize their needs, seeking sources to solve these needs, making decision to purchase something to satisfy these needs, analyze available information, set plan and finally try to implement this plan (Rehman et al. 2017).

Firms need to understand the factors influencing consumers' behaviour not only to retain existing customers but to attract new ones, as well as to gain a competitive advantage in the market place. Understanding consumers' needs and wants enables firms to determine what to produce and how to serve their customers better than competitors. The modern marketing concept expects firms to place customers at the centre of their organisation and to create value for customers to satisfy their expectations. By doing so these firms increase the likelihood that they will become market leaders. Therefore, the success of firms is associated with understanding and developing insights into the factors influencing consumers' behavior (Gunay and Baker 2011).

By identifying and understanding the factors that influence their customers, brands have the opportunity to develop a strategy, a marketing message (Unique Value Proposition) and advertising campaigns more efficient and more in line with the needs and ways of thinking of their target consumers, a real asset to better meet the needs of its customers and increase sales (Rani 2014).

Consumer behavior refers to the selection, purchase and consumption of goods and services for the satisfaction of their wants. There are different processes involved in the consumer behavior. Initially the consumer tries to find what commodities he would like to consume, then he selects only those commodities that promise

greater utility. After selecting the commodities, the consumer makes an estimate of the available money which he can spend. Lastly, the consumer analyzes the prevailing prices of commodities and takes the decision about the commodities he should consume (Rani 2014).

Jegan and Sudalaiyandi (2012) conducted a research study on Consumer Behaviour towards mobile phone services in Kovilpatti, Thoothukudi district on 100 mobile users and concluded that the factors that influence the consumers to buy a particular mobile phone operator is called Call tariffs followed by network coverage and brand image (Sethi 2018).

Nair (2013) in a study conducted across over 15000 mobile users in 14 markets worldwide and found that over 50% of the average mobile web user now uses the mobile as means of going online. The study also reveals that the users get updates from their mobile devices, it had provided them with better options and even they made their purchases using their mobile devices (Sethi 2018).

Wu and Ye (2013) opined that mobile technology services have gradually influenced consumer shopping behavior and e-commerce pattern. For this he conducted a study to understand the impulsive purchase intent of consumers on mobile commerce platforms on 322 customers of iTunes. The result indicates that a high level of impulsivity reduces the effect of enjoyment on irresistible urge to buy. The data also shows that emotional conflict, positive buying emotion, mood management, cognitive deliberation, disregard the future and unplanned buying are important to impulsivity formation and thus relevant within the context of impulse buying intention (Sethi 2018).

Agyeman (2013) conducted a research on 375 customers that conclude the staff and students of the institution to find out whether the social class, gender, and sub cultural factors influence the purchase of a mobile phone. The study revealed that the maximum respondents use the mobile phones with multi functions. The residential area has the minimum influence on the purchase decision of the consumers where as income is an important factor as higher the income higher will be the spending level. In respect to sub cultural factors, religion and language are not an important factor to effect the purchase decision where as work side colleagues, peers and friends have influence on the purchase decision of the consumer (Sethi 2018).

Telecom operators use a lot of media space to advertise services and current benefits. They consolidate their visibility and strengthen the brand at various social events. They have a large number of sale points, both permanent and occasional, to bring them closer to the

end users. Telephone sales and door-to-door personal sales are also important sales channels. The key elements of a sales transaction are the seller and the buyer. The largest and decisive share of sales interaction is therefore based on the seller and the buyer. An important argument on the seller's performance side is the coordinated marketing communication of the company with the services and the relevant competencies of the sellers. Within the framework of a successful seller who will realize the sales interaction with the buyer, it is necessary to develop various skills. These skills can be identified as communication skills, analytical skills, ability to use modern technology, interpersonal skills, decision-making ability, technological knowledge and creativity (Vukasović and Junc 2014). Regarding the guidelines for dealing with successful salespeople and their development, it should be pointed out that it is important to start with the selection of staff for salespeople, where it is necessary to pursue an appropriate profile according to the goal of sales development and sales content. Salesman development and training is a time consuming and expensive process. Because of this, it is also very important to plan behaviours and guide salespeople by motivating and rewarding them.

Materials and Methods

METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE

For the purpose of quantitative research, we were collected primary data employing a structured questionnaire. Using the deductive method, we were, on the basis of theoretical definitions by different authors and previous research, created a questionnaire, which was included demographic factors and the perception of awareness of the factors influencing the buying decision of customers of fixed telecommunications connections. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a smaller sample of customers through a pilot survey.

The survey was carried out by distributing questionnaires via e-mail. The distribution of the questionnaires was initiated according to the snowball principle in all Slovenian regions. The questionnaires have been distributed via electronic mail (personal contacts) and social media (Facebook – a public profile, Instagram, etc.). It took place over a period of 22 February to 1 March 2020. The target population of the survey were the population of Slovenian citizens over 18 years of age who already use fixed telecommunication links, want to use them or want to change their provider. Analyses were conducted with statistical program 1ka.



FIGURE 1 Structure of Respondents by Gender

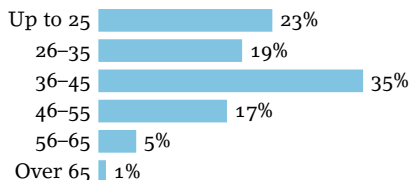


FIGURE 2 Structure of Respondents by Age

In carrying out the research we were take into account the ethical criteria listed in the ESOMAR codes (ICC/ESOMAR 2016). The ethical behaviour of practitioners is summarized according to Kavčič (2011), whereas the responsibility and ethical behaviour of researchers has been studied by Malnar (2011). The questionnaire was viewed by 134 people, and 82 people proceeded to answer. Of the latter, 77 were only partially completed and were thus excluded from the survey. 75 respondents completed it accordingly. The total sample of the analysed surveys, hence, consisted of 75 respondents.

45% of respondents included in the survey represented the female population. The male population was 55% (figure 1).

Respondents were placed in several age groups. In the first age group up to 25 years the survey was adequately filled by 23% of respondents, in the second age group from 26–35 years the survey was adequately filled by 19% of respondents, in the third age group 36–45 years the survey was adequately filled by 35% of respondents, in the fourth age group 17% of respondents answered the survey appropriately in the group of 46–55 years, 5% of respondents answered the questionnaire in the fifth age group of 56–65 years and 1% of respondents in the sixth age group over 65 years (figure 2).

In order to cover the Slovenian territory, we also asked the respondents about the statistical region of their fixed telecommunications connection. The starting point of the statistical regions was formulated in the context of the directory of the Republic of Slovenia. In the survey of adequately filled questionnaires, 32% of respondents from the statistical region 1 Ljubljana 32% from the statistical region 2 Maribor-Murska Sobota 12% of respondents from the statistical region 3 Celje-Trbovlje 32% of respondents from the statistical region 4 Kranj 3% of respondents from the statistical region regions 5 Nova

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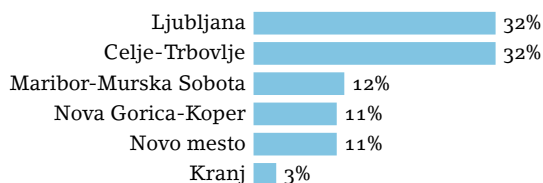


FIGURE 3 Region Fixed Telecommunications Connection

Gorica-Koper 11% of respondents and from the statistical region 1 Novo mesto 11% of respondents (figure 3).

Results and Discussion

The results of the consumer habits of fixed telecommunications connections in a purchase-decision-making process follow.

The survey included the representation of telecommunications service providers (table 1) and the services they use within the fixed telecommunication connection (table 2) in the Republic of Slovenia.

The results of the survey show that the envisaged options that were given to the respondents are appropriate and show a high level of representation in the Slovenian territory both by telecommunication service providers and by the structure of services within the fixed telecommunication connection.

Within the framework of the research, we also set up 2 hypotheses, which we have tested in the empirical part:

H1 *Over 60% respondents are satisfied with the services of the fixed line provider.*

H2 *The brand of telecommunication company is the most important factor in the purchase decision of telecommunication connections.*

For verification hypothesis 1, we checked whether they were sat-

TABLE 1 Telecommunications Provider

Answer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Telekom Slovenije	31	41	45	45
A1	8	11	12	57
T2	17	23	25	81
Telemach	12	16	17	99
Another provider	1	1	1	100
Total	69	92	100	

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) frequency, (2) percent, (3) valid percent, (4) cumulative percent. Average 2.2, standard deviation 1.2.

TABLE 2 Services on a Fixed Telecommunications Connection

Answer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Package of servis (Internet + tv + phone + mobile phone)	22	29	31	31
Triple play (Internet + tv + phone)	21	28	30	61
Triple play (Internet + tv + mobile phone)	9	12	13	74
Duo (Internet + phone)	1	1	1	76
Duo (Internet + tv)	12	16	17	93
Internet	2	3	3	96
tv	2	3	3	99
Other	1	1	1	100
Total	70	93	100	

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) frequency, (2) percent, (3) valid percent, (4) cumulative percent. Average 2.7, standard deviation 1.8.

TABLE 3 Satisfaction with the Fixed Telecommunication Service Provider

Answer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I'm satisfied	61	81	90	90
I am not satisfied	7	9	10	100
Total	68	91	100	

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) frequency, (2) percent, (3) valid percent, (4) cumulative percent. Average 1.1, standard deviation 0.3.

isified with the telecommunications service provider (table 3). 90% of respondents are satisfied with the telecommunications service provider. However, 10% of providers are not satisfied with the service provider. The hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

A very important segment of our research was the one, where we tried to determine the key factors influencing the buying decision of consumer behaviour when buying fixed telecommunications connections. Based on the acquired evaluation the average evaluation of the individual factor were calculated and then sorted out the evaluations from the most to the least important factor of the decision-making purchasing process of fixed telecommunications connections (table 4).

The most important factor in the purchase decision or replacement of a telecommunications provider is the characteristics of the telecommunication connection. 63% of the respondents identified themselves as a factor in the characteristics of the telecommunication connection. The factor for the telecommunications company brand was second with 14%. Based on the presented results the hypothesis 2 was rejected.

TABLE 4 Factors of Purchase Decision

Answer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Personal characteristics of the salesperson	3	4	4	4
Salesperson's sales skills	1	1	1	6
Salesperson's technological knowledge	6	8	9	14
Brand of the telecommunications company	10	13	14	29
Features of the telecommunic. connection	44	59	63	91
After-sales activities of a telecommunic. company	6	8	9	100
Total	70	93	100	

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) frequency, (2) percent, (3) valid percent, (4) cumulative percent. Average 4.6, standard deviation 1.1.

Conclusion

In the times of congested market, the companies are increasingly more aware of the importance of familiarity with the characteristics of consumers, their motives for the purchase of certain product and their standpoints on traded objects. Companies pay more attention to market and consumer researches, which are one of the more important factors that determine the success on the market. Paper presents the key factors influencing the buying decision of consumer behaviour when buying fixed telecommunications connections in selected European country. Based on the presented results the most important factor in the purchase decision or replacement of a telecommunications provider is the characteristics of the telecommunication connection. However, it is advisable to apply the findings regarding the very dominant factor to other factors. The results will help the developers of marketing strategies working in telecommunications companies and related industries to implement the new findings. About future research, It would make sense to explore the characteristics within the key factors of purchasing decisions of buyers of fixed telecommunications connections both in Slovenia and possibly more widely, in comparable European Union countries and on a larger sample of the population.

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