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Consumer behaviour regarding branded and non-branded goods on the mobile phone market: impact of experience, price and loyalty

Abstract
This article deals with the consumer behaviour in view of branded and generic (non-branded) goods on the mobile phone market in the Czech Republic. The methodology of this article employs the theory of planned behaviour to investigate how three selected factors - experience, price sensitivity and loyalty influence consumer behaviour on the mobile phone market. The author used a survey of 350 consumers conducted in 2018 to determine the importance of the abovementioned factors for consumer behaviour and loyalty on the mobile phone market.
Most of the respondents (59%) own mobile phones of the brands Samsung (20%), Huawei (16%), Xiaomi (12%) and Apple (11%). In terms of brand ownership, the most loyal are the owners of Apple (91%) and Samsung (84%) mobile phones. The respondents who own unspecified brands are ready to switch to another brand in case of lower prices.
The empirical evidence of the research suggests that the previous experience with the brand is a critical factor influencing consumer behaviour on the mobile phone market: 64% of all the respondents, regardless of whether they prefer branded or non-branded goods, stated that they are willing to pay more for the brand they have had a good experience with. However, the consumers who prefer branded mobile are more loyal. Answering the question «I am loyal to brands of mobile phones I have had a very good previous experience with», 96% of the respondents who prefer branded mobile phones gave a positive answer in comparison with 63% of the respondents who prefer non-branded mobile phones. The conducted t-test proved statistical differences in responses for male and female respondents and both groups of consumers at the confidence level of 0.005.
It has been concluded that the companies operating on the mobile phone market should primarily focus on customers' positive experience with their products which positively effects customer loyalty to the brand.
Keywords: Consumer Behaviour; Loyalty; Experience; Price Sensitivity; Theory of Planned Behaviour; Mobile Phone
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Вплив досвіду, ціни та лояльності на поведінку споживачів стосовно брендових і небрендових товарів на ринку мобільних телефонів
Анотація
Статтю присвячено вивченню поведінки споживачів з огляду на їх ставлення до брендових і небрендових товарів на ринку мобільних телефонів у Чеській Республіці. В основу дослідження було покладено теорію запланованої поведінки. Обрана методологія дала змогу авторці статті дослідити три релевантні фактори, а саме: фактор досвіду споживачів, фактор цінової чутливості споживачів і фактор лояльності споживачів на ринку мобільних телефонів у Чеській Республіці. В основу дослідження було покладено опитування 350 споживачів, яке було проведено у 2018 році. Отримані емпіричні дані вказують на те, що критичним фактором, що впливає на поведінку споживача, є попередній досвід використання споживачем мобільного пристрою окремо взятого бренду на ринку мобільних телефонів у Чеській Республіці. Проведений t-тест засвідчив наявність відмінностей у відповідях респондентів-чоловіків та респондентів-жінок за статистичним показником рівня довіри, який дорівнює 0,0005.
Ключові слова: поведінка споживачів; лояльність; досвід; цінова чутливість; теорія запланованої поведінки; мобільний телефон.

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Влияние опыта, цены и лояльности на поведение потребителей относительно брендовых и небрендовых товаров на рынке мобильных телефонов
Аннотация
Статья посвящена изучению поведения потребителей ввиду их отношения к брендовым и небрендовым товарам на рынке мобильных телефонов в Чешской Республике. В основу данного исследования легла теория запланированного поведения. Выбранная методология позволила автору статьи исследовать три релевантных фактора, а именно: фактор опыта потребителей, фактор ценовой чувствительности потребителей и фактор лояльности потребителей на рынке мобильных телефонов в Чешской Республике. Данное исследование основано на опросе 350-ти потребителей, проведенном в 2018 году. Полученные эмпирические данные указывают на то, что критическим фактором, влияющим на поведение потребителя, является предыдущий опыт использования потребителем мобильного устройства отдельно взятого бренда на рынке мобильных телефонов в Чешской Республике. Проведенный t-тест показал наличие различий в ответах респондентов-мужчин и респондентов-женщин по статистическим показателям уровня доверия, равным 0,0005.
Ключевые слова: поведение потребителей; лояльность; опыт; ценовая чувствительность; теория запланированного поведения; мобильный телефон.

1. Introduction

Knowledge of consumer behaviour, loyalty, and preferences are considered to befundamental factors of business success. Therefore, understanding these aspects and revealing factors that impact consumer behaviour, brand loyalty and preference is necessary to determine the right target segment. There are plenty of different branded and non-branded goods and services in all categories on the world markets. Nevertheless, with the growing private labels share (Statista, 2018a), the competition between branded and non-branded products is growing rapidly. It is clear that customers who prefer branded goods and customers who prefer non-branded goods will have different preferences, and different factors may affect their consumer behaviour and purchasing loyalty.

2. Brief Literature Review

Since the 1960s, many authors have dealt with the study of consumer behaviour. Theoretical postulates formulated in the 1960s say that behaviour is a function of salient needs, beliefs, and desires that are relevant to individual behaviour. Consequently, significant needs, wishes or expectations of an individual are considered to be the predominant determinants of personal intentions and actions. Consumer behaviour, in this context, is a psychological process that the consumer goes through in recognising his needs, while looking for ways to satisfy these needs, making purchase decisions, searching for and interpreting information, planning, and implementing plans for purchasing goods or services (Furaiji, Łatuszyńska & Wawrzyniak, 2012) [18]. Most authors agree that any consumer decision-making process has five primary phases: the consumer goes through problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchasing decisions and post-purchase behaviour (Hansen, 2005) [12]. Consumer behaviour is described in many theories, such as the theory of reasonable behaviour or the theory of consumer perception. The author of the present article selected three parameters of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) for her research on the mobile phone market in the Czech Republic.

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The TPB is a very widely endorsed model of behaviour that is used to understand behaviour. This model was introduced 30 years ago and has been used to understand specific behaviour cognitive determinants until these days (Barua, 2013) [5]. Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour was constituted as an extension of the theory of reasoned action. The Ajzen's theory is probably one of the most often used theories that proves that intentions of individuals and groups towards any action are determined by subjective norms, perceived control and attitudes and may lead to the consumers' action. The TPB works with a large number of determinants, which are not strictly prescribed and can be appropriately modified for various research problems (Ajzen, 1991; Lodorfos, Mulvana & Temperley, 2006) [2; 19]. The major factors that impact consumer behaviour are satisfaction, quality, trust, recommendation, expectation, loyalty, price sensitivity and experience (Ali, Leifu & Rehman, 2014; Latif, Islam & Noor, 2014; Geçti & Zengin, 2013; Satvati, Rabie & Rasoli, 2016; Šugrova, Šedik, Kubelakova & Svetlikova, 2017) [3; 17; 11; 22; 26].

Previous customer experience significantly influences recurring purchases, customer loyalty, and switching between brands (Lodorfos, Mulvana & Temperley, 2006) [19]. Customer experience involves experience with the brand (product), purchasing experience, services and consumer experiences (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009) [6]. The customer often decides to purchase the product based on experiences. In scientific literature, it is possible to find a whole range of researches that deal with this phenomenon, among others, for example, Mohammad (2012) [20], Geçti and Zengin (2013) [11], etc. Brand trust can be defined as security and a feeling of safety held by a consumer, wherever, consumer interaction takes place with a concrete brand and is based on commitments and promises of the brand with regard to the consumer in the context of sense and reliability of responsibilities and benefits regarding not only the consumer's but also community welfare (Upamannyu, Bhakar & Gupta, 2015) [27]. Studies dealing with consumer behaviour, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty often address the issue of price sensitivity. Price sensitivity affects not only trust and loyalty but also the frequency of purchases (Kalyanaram & Little, 1994) [15]. Price sensitivity is usually measured by the slope of the demand curve or by the price elasticity of demand (Kaul & Wittink, 1995). It can also be affected by customer experience from previous purchases. Perceived quality affects not only customer loyalty but also brand value. It can be understood as the customer's judgment regarding the characteristics and the excellence of the product or its superiority over others. Aaker (2009) defines the perceived quality as the perception of customers on the quality of a product (service) compared to its competitors and the aim of its design. Customer satisfaction is an important determinant of long-term behaviour. Brand customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are constructed over time through a collection of positive experiences with a particular brand (Latif, Islam & Noor, 2014) [17]. Oliver (1981) defines customer satisfaction as a sum of psychological elements and emotional aspects resulting from the customer's past feeling and experience associated with the consumption of a particular product [21].

The construct of customer loyalty has been discussed by theoreticians and practitioners for decades. Customer loyalty plays an important role in today's highly competitive markets. According to Jackoby and Kyner (1973), customer loyalty can be defined as a response to consumer purchasing behaviour that occurs over a period of time and leads to deliberate decision making among the available brands [14]. Loyal customers tend to make repeated purchases of a specific brand. Loyalty affects customers, especially, when deciding on repeated purchases and switching among different brands (Inman & Zeelenberg, 2002) [13].

3. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the consumer behaviour in view of branded and non-branded goods and to identify the differences in their purchasing behaviour on the mobile phone market in the Czech Republic. Basing on the TPB, the article is focused on the analysis of three parameters, namely previous experience, price sensitivity and customer loyalty. The main aim of the author's research is to find out which of the individual parameters affects customers who prefer branded goods as well as those who prefer non-branded goods when buying a mobile phone. Differences in consumer behaviour when buying a mobile phone will also be addressed with regard to primary demographic variables.

4. Material and methods

The methodology used in this article is based on the TPB and the research of Lodorfos, Mulvana and Temperley (2006) [19]. The author focuses on selected factors the TPB. The key advantage of the TPB is the fact that the researcher can select the most appropriate parameters for the research intention. The author's research focuses on three selected parameters influencing customer buying behaviour - loyalty, previous experience and price sensitivity. These default variables will be analysed in the context of both customer groups (groups preferring branded goods and groups preferring the non-branded goods). The author's research aims to understand the relationship between selected variables which are significant in determining the customer's buying decision. The author obtained primary data for the research by means of a questionnaire survey.

The questionnaire was presented to the respondents as a standardised set of several questions and statements to complete. The questionnaire was utterly anonymous. It included demographic information - the respondents' sex, age, monthly income, the brand name of the owned mobile phone, etc. The respondents were also asked to rate the importance of the brand when buying a mobile phone. A five-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the statements. The individual statements were divided into three groups related to the abovementioned factors, i.e. customer experience, price sensitivity and loyalty (Table 1).

Basic mathematical methods, such as mean and standard deviation, as well as absolute and relative frequency were used for primary data processing. The following statistical methods were used for detail analysis:

- Independent t -test was used to compare responses of: male and female respondents, respondents who prefer branded and respondents who prefer non-branded goods.
- One-way analysis of variance ANOVA was used to test the impact of the average monthly income on the responses measured by the five-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). The differences between the means of the individual income groups will be tested by the test criterion F.

Tab. 1: **Statements for selected factors**

Factor	Statement
Experience	E1: If I had a very good experience with a brand of the mobile phone, I would recommend this brand or this mobile phone to my friends.
	E2: I prefer to purchase a brand of mobile phone that I have previously purchased.
	E3: I am prepared to pay more money for a brand of mobile phone that I have had a very good experience with.
	E4: I am loyal to brands of mobile phones I have had a very good previous experience with.
Price sensitivity	P1: I will buy whichever a mobile phone brand is the cheapest.
	P2: I think, I am a price-sensitive customer.
	P3: I will usually search for the cheapest brand of a mobile phone.
	P4: Price of the mobile phone is not important to me when I purchase a brand of the mobile phone I have had a very good previous experience with.
Loyalty	L1: I always buy the same brand of the mobile phone.
	L2: I would only recommend to my friends a brand of mobile phone that I am loyal to.
	L3: I would change my loyalty if a cheaper alternative to a mobile phone were available.
	L4: I would choose a different brand of my mobile phone to my usual one if I could not find my preferred brand of a mobile phone in the first shop.

Source: Own processing based on TPB and Lodorfos, Mulvana and Temperley (2006)

5. Results

The first question of the questionnaire was a filter question - Do you own a cell phone? All the respondents stated that they own a mobile phone. This fact is not surprising. According to the latest surveys published by the Czech Statistical Office in March 2018, there are 135.2 participants of the mobile telephone network per 100 inhabitants in the Czech Republic (Czech Statistical Office, 2018a) [7]. Altogether, 350 relevant questionnaires were obtained as part of the research, which was included in the final evaluation. The main demographic variables were age, gender, and monthly income. 42% of the respondents were males, and 58% were females. The demographic profile of the respondents is summarised in Figure 1.

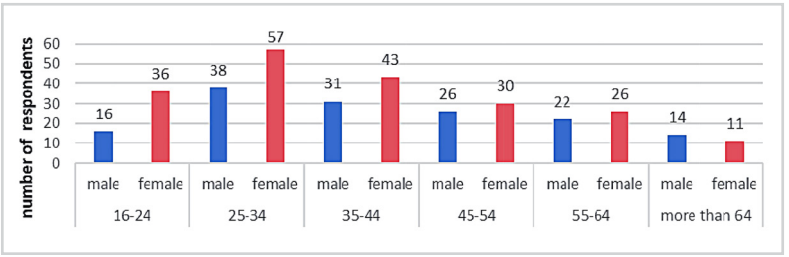

Fig. 1: **Gender and age distribution of respondents**
Source: Compiled by the author

According to statistics by the Czech Statistical Office, the average salary in the Czech Republic is CZK 30,265, and the median of the salary is CZK 25,674 (Czech Statistical Office, 2018b) [8]. The majority of respondents stated that their average monthly income is in the range between CZK 20,001 and CZK 30,000 (Figure 2).

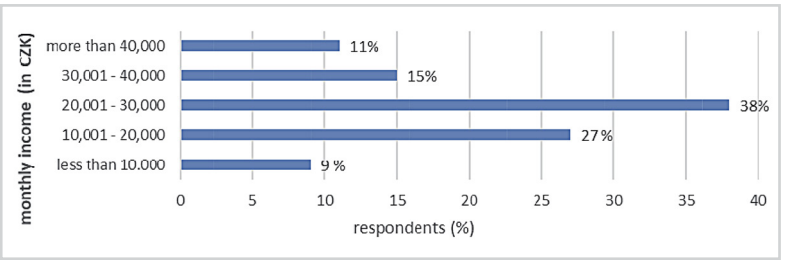

Fig. 2: **Monthly income distribution of respondents**
Source: Author's research

Most of the respondents (59%) own mobile phones of the brands Samsung (20%), Huawei (16%), Xiaomi (12%) and Apple (11%) (Figure 3). Compared to the research published by Statista.com, the number of respondents using Xiaomi mobile phones is slightly different (9% in Statista's research, 12% in the author's research). The brands Nokia and Lenovo are represented a little bit more on the Czech market in comparison to the world market. The brand OPPO was reported by only 2% of the respondents, whereas it was 7.1% worldwide (Statista, 2018b). The author conducted an independent t -test to compare the responses of both female and male respondents. The two-sample t -test showed a statistically significant difference in male and female responses in terms of two questions. Specifically, the question «If I have a good previous experience, I would recommend this brand to my friend» showed a statistically significant difference in male and female responses at the confidence level $\alpha = 0.005$. The results for males are 3.12 for the mean and 0.821 for the standard deviation. The results for females are 3.56 for the mean and 0.992 for the standard deviation. The results of the t -test are $t\,(350) = -2.97$, $p = 0.005$. The second question «I would change my loyalty if a cheaper alternative to a mobile phone were available» showed a statistically significant difference at a confidence level $\alpha = 0.005$. with the average of 2.91 and the standard deviation being 0.741 for males, and

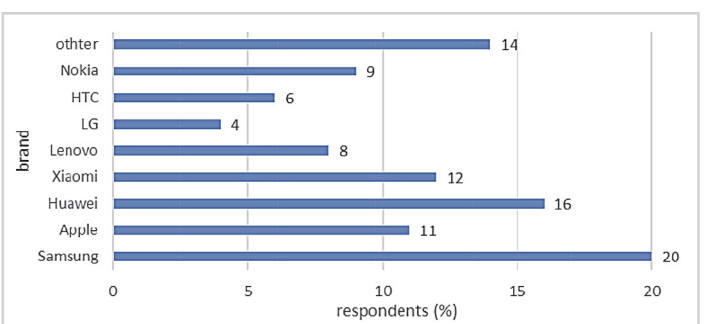

Fig. 3: **Brand of the mobile phone**
Source: Author's research

For women, the average of 3.48 and the standard deviation being 0.972 for females. The results of the t -test are as follows: $t\,(350) = -2.87$, $p = 0.005$. In terms of brand ownership, the most loyal are the owners of Apple mobile phones (91%) and Samsung mobile phones (84%). The most vulnerable to switch to another brand in the case of lower prices are the respondents who own other unspecified brands of mobile phones (the group «Other») (94%). The analysis of the responds for all the statements separately for consumers who prefer both branded and non-branded mobile phones are summarised in Table 2.

As can be seen from the t -test results shown in the table above, statistically significant differences were detected with

Tab. 2: **Results of the author's research**

	Consumers preferring branded mobile phones		Consumers preferring non-branded mobile phones			
Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	t (350)	p
E1	1.891	1.281	2.582	1.111	-2.67	0.012
E2	2.008	0.889	2.591	1.089	-3.08	0.0029
E3	1.998	0.819	2.675	1.118	-3.71	0.0001
E4	2.243	0.892	2.59	1.045	-2.82	0.0054
P1	2.092	0.648	3.345	1.321	-6.789	0.00001
P2	2.789	0.986	3.789	1.0123	-3.49	0.00001
P3	1.089	0.697	2.976	1.0294	-4.567	0.00045
P4	2.459	1.0123	3.0297	1.0564	2.789	0.0079
L1	2.798	1.0009	3.1124	0.897	-2.897	0.00769
L2	2.897	1.0009	3.1178	0.789	-3.248	0.00113
L3	2.123	0.897	3.579	0.998	-4.832	0.00011
L4	3.001	1.111	3.752	0.978	-3.23	0.00212

Source: Compiled by the author

regard to all the tested statements. Based on the author's research, it is possible to state that consumers who prefer branded mobile phones seem to be more loyal than the respondents who prefer non-branded mobile phones. Answering the question «I am loyal to brands of mobile phones I have had a very good previous experience with», the respondents show statistically significant differences. 96% of the respondents who prefer branded mobile phones and 63% of the respondents who prefer non-branded mobile phones responded positively to the question.

The respondents from higher income groups seem to be more loyal to brands. Statistically significant differences between groups were proved by a one-way analysis of the ANOVA variance. The one-way analysis of variance between-groups was conducted to test the effect of the average monthly income on responses measured by the five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The respondents were divided into groups according to their monthly income:

Group 1: up to CZK 10,000;
Group 2: CZK 10,001 - 20,000;
Group 3: CZK 20,001 - 30,000;
Group 4: CZK 30,001 - 40,000;
Group 5: over CZK 40,000.

There were statistically significant differences between Groups 2 and 4 at the 5% confidence level for the question «I am loyal to brands of mobile phones I have had a very good previous experience with» - $F(4.231) = 2.594$. $p = 0.039$. Further, there were statistically significant differences for the question: «I would change my loyalty if a cheaper alternative of a mobile phone were available» - $F(5.123) = 3.46$. $p = 0.003$ for Groups 1 and 5. These statistically significant differences indicate that loyalty and willingness to buy cheaper goods differ with income. Consumers with higher income are more likely to agree that they are loyal to brands with which they have a very good experience and are less willing to buy cheaper mobile phones. In terms of age, the older age groups, i.e., the 55-64 age group and especially those over the age of 64, appear to be more price-sensitive. The least price-sensitive group of customers on the mobile phone market is the group of 35-44 year olds. If compared with the research conducted by Lodford, Mulvan and Temperley (2006) [19], price sensitivity on the mobile phone market in the Czech Republic is different from, for example, the category of pharmaceutical products studied by these authors. The owners of unspecified brands of mobile phones (group «Other») seem to be the most willing to change their loyalty when purchasing a cheaper product. Only 8% of those who own either a Samsung or an Apple positively responded to the question «I would change my loyalty if a cheaper alternative to a mobile phone were available.» 94% of those who own an Apple and 92% of those who own a Samsung claimed that they are loyal customers.

61% of all the respondents confirmed that the brand is a critical factor impacting their purchasing decisions. Only 34% of the respondents in the Lodford, Mulvana and Temperley (2006) research confirmed that the brand is an essential factor affecting their purchasing decisions of pharmaceutical products. Therefore, the mobile phone market seems to be more brand-oriented than the pharmaceutical market. In both cases (pharmaceutical products and mobile phones), customers who prefer branded goods believe that experience is important in terms of their buying decision. 64% of all the respondents, regardless of whether they prefer branded or non-branded goods, stated that they are willing to pay more for the brand they have had a good experience with than for another brand. 81% of the respondents who prefer branded goods confirmed this fact. The author's research, similarly to the studies by Zeithaml (1988) [28] or Anderson (1996) [4] has shown that with the growing experience of the brand, the price sensitivity of the customer decreases. Another important factor for consumer decision-making on the mobile phone market is the previous experience, as stated in Ewing's car industry research (Ewing, 2000) [10]. The author's research has also confirmed that «non-branded» customers are much more price-sensitive than those who prefer branded goods. For example, this fact was confirmed by Sivakumary's research of food products (Sivakumary, 1995).

6. Conclusions

The findings of the author's research have revealed that the key factor determining the purchase of a product on the mobile phone market is the consumer's previous experience with the brand. Consumers who have a good experience with a particular brand are less sensitive and are willing to pay a higher price for such a brand than for another brand. Such consumers are willing to recommend this product to their friends and consider themselves as loyal customers of the preferred brand. Customers who consider themselves to be non-branded customers are more price-sensitive and are looking for the cheapest products on the mobile phone market. Unlike the Lodford, Mulvan and Temperley (2006) research, income is an important factor impacting decision-making on the mobile phone market. The respondents with higher income are less price sensitive than those with lower monthly income. Companies operating on the mobile phone market should primarily focus on customers' positive experience with their products. This experience is impacted by the quality of the product and the services provided, and positively affect customer loyalty to the brand. A number of authors, for example Zeithaml (1988) [28] emphasize the importance of service quality. This article focuses only on the three selected factors that impact the purchasing behaviour of customers. Therefore, further research will focus on other factors affecting purchasing decisions and their interaction.

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