Factors Motivating Customers from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia to Shop Online – a Comparative Analysis

Summary

The popularity of online shopping continues to grow, hence the identification of motivators for online shopping plays an important role in explaining market decisions and developing marketing strategies. The article aim is to identify factors motivating for online shopping and to determine if there are statistically significant differences regarding motivators depending on the country of origin of e-clients. The study is based on the results of survey conducted by the CAWI technique on a sample of 1,713 people making online purchases in three European countries: Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.

Key words: consumer behavior, online shopping motives, shopping online.

JEL codes: D12, M31

Introduction

Intensive development of computer and communication technologies contributes to the dynamic growth of e-commerce and determines customers’ market behavior (Lemańska-Majdzik, Smoląg 2016). The role of shopping using the internet as a convenient way of buying things supported by wide-spread access to internet banking is growing (Mącik 2013, pp. 8-9; Maciejewski 2016, p. 220). Although this is a relatively new method of consumption it is becoming accepted by an expanding number of customers (Ma, Ma 2012).

Online shopping is broadly defined in literature as the activity of customers encompassing online search for suppliers and products, looking for information about a product, selection of payment options, communication with other customers and sellers as well as buying of products and services (Cai, Cude 2016, p. 339).

Along with the rapid growth of e-commerce there is a rising number of online transactions which means that the quality of e-services and customer satisfaction are becoming an increasingly significant research problem (Wang, Zhi, Li, p. 177). According to Tkaczyk (2010) despite the rise of research concerning this field there is still not much that is known about the manner in which decisions are made by customers within the virtual environment (online).

The aim of the article is the identification of factors motivating people to shop being one of the elements of consumer decisions concerning the purchase of goods and services through the internet as well as the determination of differences between the behaviors of
customers within this area with consideration to their country of origin. The empirical basis of the article consists of the results of a diagnostic survey conducted using the CAWI technique on 1,713 adults shopping online from three European countries: Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.

Increased popularity of purchases made online

Chen et al. (2016) show that for individual buyers the internet is a convenient method of shopping that offers them benefits such as saving time and effort, lower transport costs, less lengthy process of searching for information crucial for making a purchase, lack of lines, greater enjoyment from shopping, the ability to compare prices with greater precision, easier ways of finding sources of information about a product as well as the ability to design products and services by customers according to their needs and preferences. Generally, online shopping allows customers access to various goods and services anywhere in the world and at any time. It is advantageous to the customer because of convenience, time saving as well as the ability to find information about a given product (Nwaizugbo, Ifeanyichukwu 2016).

E-commerce in Poland is rapidly growing and the number of supporters of buying goods and services through the internet is constantly increasing (Raport E-commerce 2012). In 2016 nearly 70% of people aged 16 to 74 regularly used the internet with the greatest percentage of regular users recorded among students (98.6%), inhabitants of large cities (79.2%) and people with higher levels of education (96.6%) (GUS 2016, p. 10). In 2016 almost 42% of Poles, nearly 12 million people between the ages of 16 and 74, shopped online (within the last 12 months) (GUS 2016, p. 10). Between the years 2012 and 2016 the percentage of people ordering or buying things online has systematically risen. The greatest share of online buyers was recorded among people with higher levels of education (73.9%) (GUS 2016, p. 126). When it comes to Europe there are visible differences in regard to the popularity of shopping on the Internet in individual countries. In 2015 this form of shopping was most often used by inhabitants of Great Britain (81%) with Poles losing ground by 44 percentage points. In comparison to the EU average the number of people in Poland who shop online was lower by 16%. The percentage of people shopping through the internet in Lithuania and Latvia was respectively 43% and 38% (GUS 2016, p. 129).

Factors motivating consumers to shop online – literature review

The identification of factors motivating people to shop online is one of the key dimensions of consumer behaviors considered in planning marketing. The customer’s motivation plays a significant role in explaining market decisions (Azizi, Shariffar 2011). From the perspective of the seller it is important to determine the purchasing motivation of consumers to devise appropriate marketing strategy.

Motives for utilizing the internet to shop can be divided into functional and non-functional (Solomon 2008, p. 141, cited in: Tkaczyk 2010). Functional motives are connected with
solving problems, purchasing the right product quickly and efficiently as well as achieving an aim with minimal cost. Non-functional motives, on the other hand, concern the search for entertainment, fun, interactions and enjoyment related to shopping. For a long time it has been believed that through their use of the internet for shopping consumers are mainly driven by functional motives. However, work conducted by Parsons (2002, cited in Tkaczyk 2010) proved that internet consumers give increasingly more weight to the non-functional motives such as interactivity, entertainment, the ability to communicate with people similar to them, deals, escape from everyday life, pursuit of new trends and the feeling of freedom.

Research method

The following research questions were posed within this work: 1) which factors motivate customers from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia to shop online?; 2) are there statistically significant differences in regard to online shopping motivators related to the respondent’s country of origin?

The article made use of material obtained as a result of the implementation of a project that was international in scope and whose purpose was to determine the differences in the behavior of consumers, taking into account the country of their residence, while making purchases online. This research project entailed a completion of a diagnostic survey conducted using the computer assisted web interview (CAWI) method among inhabitants of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. The study was carried out in December of 2016 and January of 2017. According to the assumption, the selection of the sample was random, but the detailed methods of selecting the respondents were dependent on the organizational capabilities of the team members representing individual countries.

The research sample consisted of 1,713 people of whom 36% were Polish, 32.6% were Latvian and 31.4% were Lithuanian (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1713</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: authors own research.

1 The composition of the research team from the Białystok University of Technology: Urszula Ryciuk - research coordinator, Urszula Widelska, Rollnik-Ewa Sadowska Urszula Kobylinska Marta Jarocka, Ewa Glińska, Ewelina Tomaszewska. The project was attended by representatives of Kaunas College from Kaunas in Lithuania and Rezekne University of Applied Science from Rezekne in Latvia.
In the respondents’ age structure, there were clearly differences in individual countries covered by the study. In Lithuania, the percentage of people aged 25 and over reached 57%. The rest of the sample consisted of people between 18 and 24 years of age. In Latvia, in the structure of the research sample, the vast majority (around 74%) were people over 25 years of age. In Poland, on the other hand, persons representing the age category 18-24 were dominant. They constituted 65.5% of all respondents. The detailed age structure of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Structure of research sample by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>18-24 years old</th>
<th>25 and over years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>respondents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>42,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>25,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>67,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: as in Table 1.

Nearly all questionnaire inquiries were based on the five-step Likert scale therefore the statistical analysis utilized median (Me) and dominant values (Mo) and the answer to the research question regarding the identification of statistically significant differences was sought using the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test, the most popular alternative to the ANOVA variance analysis. The test can be used to compare three or more samples, is based on dominances and can be applied when the considered variable is, at least, on an ordinal scale (Stanisz 2006, p. 386; Jóźwiak, Podgórski 2009). Additionally, the result analysis made use of the U Mann-Whitney test which is the non-parametric equivalent of the t test for independent samples which, in turn, can be utilized to test differences between two independent groups (Bedyńska, Cypryjańska 2013).

Analysis of research results

In order to identify factors motivating e-customers to shop online we performed an analysis of answers to the question formulated as statements to which the respondents had to reply by selecting answers on the Likert scale according to which 5 indicated that a given person strongly agrees that a particular factor motivates him to shop online while a 1 demonstrated that he strongly disagrees.

The factors are grouped into four categories motivators tending to online shopping: (1) lower prices, (2) functional attributes of an online store, (3) the convenience of online shopping and (4) shopping online as a form of leisure time spending.
The first three groups can be qualified as motivating factors for shopping with a functional character, and the fourth group can be treated as a non-functional factor. The structure of the assessment of statements is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**

**Factors motivating customers to shop online taking into account their country of origin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors motivating customers to shop online</th>
<th>Median (Me) and dominant values (Mo)</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
<th>Latvia</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower prices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Lower prices than in traditional stores</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional attributes of an online store</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. More information about product</td>
<td>Me 3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Possibilities to find special products</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bigger assortment</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Loyalty programs</td>
<td>Me 3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 2,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Possibilities of delivery</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Possibilities of payment</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The ability to return goods</td>
<td>Me 3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The convenience of online shopping</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Availability whole day</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Place (you can organize everything at home or work)</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Possibilities to compare (price, product)</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Quick shopping time</td>
<td>Me 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping online as a form of leisure time spending</strong></td>
<td>Me 2,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo 2,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>2,0</td>
<td>2,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: as in Table 1.
Results of conducted research show that the factors motivating people to shop online include: prices lower than in traditional stores, possibilities to find special products, bigger assortment, availability whole day, place understood that you can organize everything at home or work without moving to traditional stores, and possibilities to compare prices of product. These are elements from the category of functional motivators. The lowest rating in all three groups of respondents was attained by a non-functional motivating factor of treating shopping online as a way of spending free time.

Respondents from Poland assessed the influence of nearly all factors impacting decisions connected to making purchases online decidedly higher than participants from Lithuania and Latvia. Statistically significant differences were observed in regard to thirteen isolated online shopping motivators (the Kruskal-Wallis test result was significant in all cases) as well as in relation to four categories of motivators (Table 4).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of factors motivating customers to shop online taking into account their country of origin</th>
<th>Average rank</th>
<th>Results of Kruskal-Wallis test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower prices</td>
<td>715.3</td>
<td>782.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional attributes of an online store</td>
<td>616.3</td>
<td>707.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The convenience of shopping online</td>
<td>680.9</td>
<td>652.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping online as a form of leisure time spending</td>
<td>665.0</td>
<td>856.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: as in Table 1.

The statistical analysis was further supported by comparisons between pairs of results obtained from the three countries using the U Mann-Whitney test. The completed research shows that it is not possible to discount the hypothesis declaring a lack of differences between respondents from Poland and Latvia in regard to two motivational factors: loyalty programs offered by internet stores (Zu=-0.63; p=0.53) and treating online shopping as a way of spending free time (Zu=-1.21; p=0.22). In relation to the remaining motivators statistically significant differences were recorded (p<0.001).

The results of the comparison of motivating factors chosen by respondents from Lithuania and Latvia suggest that the variable characterizing the respondent’s country of origin does not differentiate in a significantly statistical way the selection of as many as eight motivating factors including: 24-hour availability (Zu=-0.33; p=0.40), the ability to gain more information about a product (Zu=-0.54; p=0.59), the ability to shop at work or at home (Zu=-0.99; p=0.32), the ability to compare product prices (Zu=-0.89; p=0.37), various methods of product delivery (Zu=-0.91; p=0.36), the ability to choose payment methods (Zu=-0.12; p=0.90),
speed of getting shopping done (Zu=-1.77; p=0.07) as well as the ability to return the product (Zu=-1.00; p=0.31). In relation to the remaining motivators statistically significant differences were recorded (p>0.001).

However, when it comes to respondents from Lithuania and Poland than, in light of the results of the Mann-Whitney test, it can be ascertained that the variable of country of origin does in a significant statistical way differentiate the selection of all motivating factors included in the questionnaire (p>0.001). It can be therefore concluded that the greatest differences in online shopping motivating factors occur between customers from Poland and Lithuania. Lesser differences appear between customers from Lithuania and Latvia and the smallest variance is between respondents from Poland and Latvia.

**Conclusions**

The results of surveys presented within this article confirmed the existence of several key factors motivating internet users to shop online. These mainly include factors connected to the convenience of shopping and the functionality of internet stores. However the division into four factors is based only on theoretical review. In the future statistical analysis including Confirmatory Factor Analyzes should be done – in assumption of model identification.

Similar results were obtained as part of the project realized by Gemius (2017) carried out in 2016 on a sample of internet users from all over Poland. It has been shown that the strongest factor encouraging people to shop online is 24-hour access, the ease of purchasing products, comfort as well as lower prices and the ability to save time in comparison to shopping in traditional stores.

The conducted research also shows that there exist statistically significant differences in online shopping motivating factors of respondents from the three considered countries: Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. In comparison to participants from Lithuania and Latvia respondents from Poland decidedly higher assessed the influence of nearly all factors on decisions connected to shopping online.

The analysis includes one of the non-functional motivators. Although the factor referring to purchases as a popular form of spending free time was rated in all three groups of respondents the lowest, the analysis of non-functional motivators can be an interesting aspect of future research.

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Czynniki motywujące klientów z Polski, Litwy i Łotwy do robienia
zakupów w Internecie – analiza porównawcza

Streszczenie

Popularność zakupów w Internecie stale rośnie – stąd też ustalenie motywato-
rów robienia zakupów internetowych odgrywa ważną rolę w wyjaśnianiu decyzji
rynkowych i rozwijaniu strategii marketingowych. Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja czynników motywujących do robienia zakupów w Internecie oraz ustalenie, czy występują statystycznie istotne różnice dotyczące motywatorów w zależności od kraju pochodzenia e-klientów. Analiza opiera się na wynikach badania przeprowadzonego techniką CAWI na próbie 1,713 osób dokonujących zakupów online w trzech krajach europejskich: Polsce, Litwie i Łotwie.

Słowa kluczowe: zachowanie konsumentów, motywy do robienia zakupów w Internecie, zakupy online.

Kody JEL: D12, M31

Факторы, мотивирующие клиентов из Польши, Литвы и Латвии к покупкам онлайн – сопоставительный анализ

Резюме

Все растет популярность онлайн-покупок, и потому выявление мотивов совершения покупок онлайн играет важную роль в выяснении рыночных решений и развитии маркетинговых стратегий. Цель статьи – выявить факторы, мотивирующие к онлайн-покупкам, и определить, существуют ли статистически существенные отличия, касающиеся мотивов, в зависимости от страны происхождения э-клиентов. Изучение основывается на результатах опроса, проведенного по методу CAWI на выборке 1.713 лиц, осуществляющих покупки онлайн, в трех европейских странах: в Польше, Литве и Латвии.

Ключевые слова: поведение потребителей, мотивы совершения покупок онлайн, онлайн-покупки.

Коды JEL: D12, M31

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FACTORS MOTivant CUSTOMERS FROM POLAND, LITHUANIA AND LATVIA...

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