

Why apple? The z generation's preferences and choices of communication device in light of apple products

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Abstract: Communication is a defining part of our lives. Since humanity's existence, we communicate depending on our cognitive and progress level. The people of the prehistoric era told stories around campfires, then drew on the cave walls what they wanted to share with others. During the last millenia the means of communication become very different yet the need, the message and the amount of it has not decreased. Our research focuses on the basic issue of how the individual with the need to communicate in some way builds his own subjective system of evaluation and choses the tool he would prefer from the options available. Our basis for primary research is the increasingly popular Apple brand and products as well as the difference between impulsive and conscious purchase based on consumer behaviour. We also treat the so called Z generation and their brand chosing preferences.

Keywords: consumer brand selection, Z generation, communications, system of preferences

1. Background literature

Within the processing of scientific literature we gave high attention to the analisation of consumer behaviour.

The modern approach of marketing suggests that the consumer is in the center of attention, more specifically the individual moving in the foreground while racionality getting in the background.

Representatives of consumer behaviour science tend to give sociological and psychological methods and results more stress since the scientific field itself is interdisciplinary.

For **Z generation** it's important and indispensable to keep in touch with friends and acquaintance. Beside maintaining personal connections they use the devices of internet and virtual world easily. The gadgets of digital era, like cell phones, became an organic part of their lives. On the other hand their emotional intelligence develops much slower, which means prolonged childlike behaviour and mishandling certain situations [1].

Changes of consumer is worthy to observe. To define **consumer behaviour** the knowing of „homo empathicus” – the empathising consumer - is essential, according to Töröcsik-Varsányi (1988). For the empathising consumers the pleasure gained by consuming or owning the service or product is in focus, not functionality. This raises the question whether the consumers we observe are similar [2].

Jobber (2002) defined the following **5 basic questions related to purchase**: Who, What, How, When, Where [3]. These questions suggest that we have to know the consumer in order affect them successfully. But to know them we need to identify the different types of **purchase decisions**. The four basic types are: impulsive, problem solving, routine and simplified purchase [4].

To extend our research we divide **consumption** to two types: reasonable (or functional) and unreasonable (or symbolic.) In case of functional consumption the purchase is rational, reasonable and logical while under symbolic purchase we mean a decision based on emotions. Further on, symbolic or emotional consumption can be divided into self-calming or expressive; the former aiming at ourselves and the latter to our environment [5].

With a view of this, when studying the **trends affecting purchase** we would like to highlight the growing importance of innovation and the unlimited shopping opportunities for any generation induced by globalization.

The triangle of convenience, price – or rather an affordable price – and time plays a key role in the evolution of trends since consumers use at least one of them as their own evaluation viewpoint during a purchase [5] [6].

Above emotions and **trends situations** can also influence the buyer. Jobber (2002) differentiates five of these: social environment, physical environment, mood of consumer, time and the nature of purchase. These are all impacts on the outcome of our purchase, which is presented by the following model.

Engel-Blackwell-Miniard's five-step model helps us to define the exact phases the consumer walks through until the actual purchase. The model's five steps are [4] [7].

1. Realising the problem
2. Seeking information
3. Evaluating alternatives
4. Choose (purchase)
5. Post-purchase experiences

2. Methodology

Following the secondary research we executed quantitative calculations which contained non-representative, arbitrary sample. The data collection took place between March and May of 2017 using a pretested, standardised query by internet questioning. The final questionnaire was prepared by trial questioning of 50 people which led to recompose a few questions to make them more straightforward.

The data was processed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 15 by statistical methods which will be detailed at the given sections.

Quantitative research provides numerical data applicable and evaluatable by the help of statistical methods. The primary aim of qualitative research is to reveal, within that is to understand problems [8].

Our survey research was done with the help of Google survey maker and analyser. Our questionnaire included 33 questions. The first part referred to brand selection, the second inquired about specific shopping criterias, the third and last part was about choosing preferences and demographic. The survey was based on several authors book in order to be get the best results [9] [10].

We had a pilot sampled with 50 people. The following data was concluded:

Sampling points: nation-wide

Sampling method: random

Method of data gathering: internet survey

Time of data gathering: March-April, 2017

Target group: Z generation

Filled questionnaire: 339

3. Results

The result of quantitative research has given visible correlations in case of the Z generation. The questionnaire that supports our results was filled by 339 people.

The primary quantitative research's questions were divided to four different areas, the results are given below:

3.1. Brand choosing

98,8% of the respondents were in possession of a smartphone. Most of these users had one device (86,3%), But there were some with 2 or even more.

Concerning the brand of these devices, most answers were given to „Other”(31,3%) most likely because the list of answers was too short, although as predicted, Apple has a strong presence (29,8%). Samsung made the top though a bit fell back from where it was expected, while Huawei and Sony were not the respondents „favourite” ones. The overall conclusion is that Apple is the most chosen since the Other category covers several brands on the market.

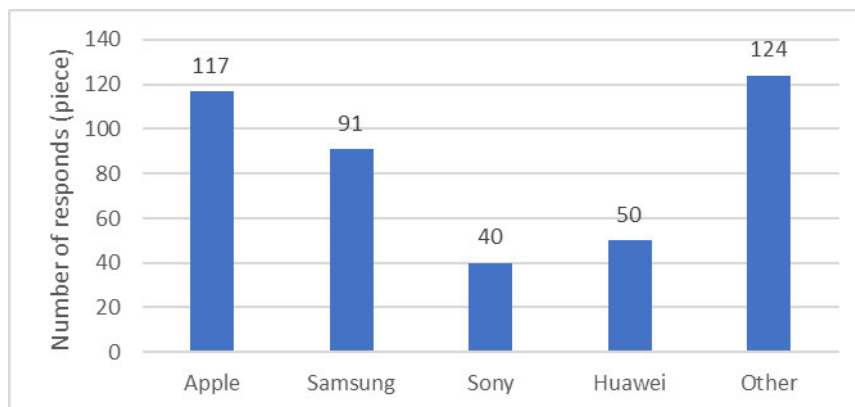


Figure 1.

Share of studied brands (Own research 2017, N=339)

The satisfaction was measured by a 1 to 6 scale where 88,8% of the responders are at least „satisfied” but mostly „very satisfied” or „perfectly satisfied” with their actual devices. Interesting fact is that more than half of the „perfectly satisfied” responses came from Apple users.

Addition to this, that these young adults 54,9% had no Apple device before. The rest of the sample did maybe more than one, but there are some, who had no Apple device before but plans to get one.

3.2. Preferences

Most iPhone users chose it for the quality. This could mean the quality of design, the long lifespan, the services provided respectively. After this comes the operating system, the user friendly interface, knowledge. The least important aspects were the price and colour.

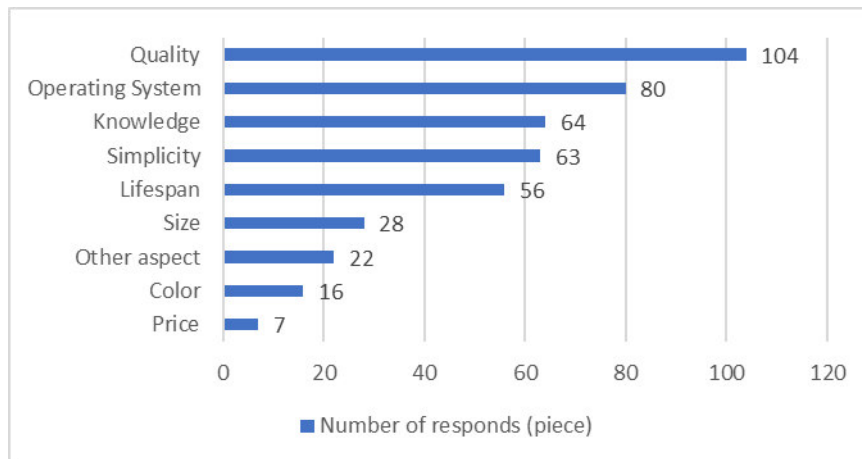


Figure 2.
iPhone buyers' aspects (Own research 2017, N=130)

The question of what the favourite features of their current device are was not only raised for Apple users, and in several cases there are overlaps. The whole sample rate user friendliness the most important (58,7%), but speed (56,3%) and the size and display are also valued high (53,7%). The quality of the battery and camera are secondary when it comes to purchase, yet both are more relevant than waterproofness.

Furthermore, importance of features were also measured on a scale system which obviously identifies 3 clearly critical features: knowledge, quality and lifespan. The precessing of whole sample clearly shows the correlation that not only Apple users seek quality but every smartphone owner. Knowledge aslo stood out when we looked at the whole sample and among Apple users as well. The same goes for lifespan and price they are important, but not crucial aspects. Colour, brand and recommendation by others are the least important ones.

Table 1.
Importance of aspects for smartphone buyers
(Own research 2017, N=339)

Aspects	Average
Price	4,70
Knowledge	5,02
Quality	5,45
Brand	3,65
Colour	3,21
Recommendation	3,46
Trusworthiness	4,63
Lifespan	5,23

As it turned out, most young adults prefer to decide on their own (47,2%) when it comes to purchase, if they need any help, then they ask friends and family, occasionally an expert or anyone „available”.

Our research looked into the judgment of Apple devices. We wanted to find out if consumers actually find them more expensive compared to other brands. Mainly the answer was a clear yes but still many thought that the price is reasonable and some that the price is as good as it is.

We wanted to know how a decrease in the price would affect the willingness to buy. Nearly 40% answered that they would definitely buy iPhone in this case. 33% would at least consider it and only 27,1% declined even considering it.

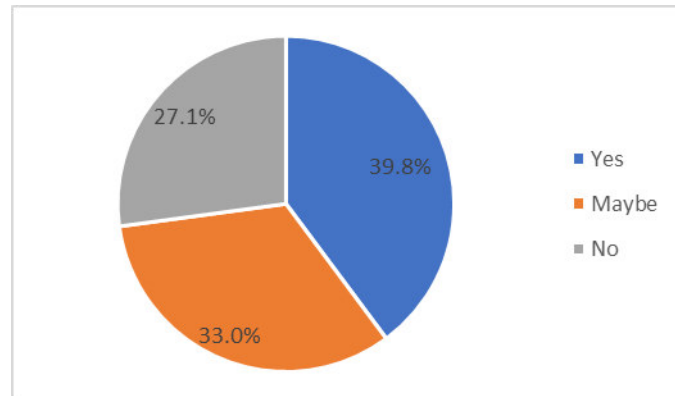


Figure 3.
Willingness to purchase if iPhone would be cheaper (Own research 2017, N=339)

Overall the attitude of young adults toward Apple is positive, the pricing is the only negative aspect, which is weird, because it did not come up as a preference point when choosing a device, so we found a controversy.

To measure brand loyalty we asked if they would buy a more expensive, new model. It turns out that most of those who would are Apple users.

3.3. Criteria of buying

We divided the frequency of purchase to years, and gave 1 as highest and 4 or more years as lowest. This question was independent from brand. The answers were mostly 2 and 3 years, which we connect with service provider's contract and instalment constructions or the obsolescence of the device.

The usual amount consumers spend on smartphones is between 51 and 100 thousand forints, the interval under (0 to 50) and over (101 to 150) shares the same a rate. However, 75,5% of those who spend more than 151 thousand forints for their cell phone are Apple users.

Those who purchase mostly prefer to pay the full price, but close to third of the sample pays in some kind of instalment. Yet nearly half of the sample don't own the money necessary so they have an alternative source. The financial state of the family could explain it as most young adults' family has an 101 to 150 thousand forints income per person (31,6%) or a step lower 51 to 100 thousand forints (25,1%). However more than half (55%) of the families with a higher than 200 thousand forints income per person buys Apple device.

4. Conclusions and suggestions

According to the result we have straight assumptions regarding Apple buyers. Even at the brand choosing it become clear that lots of Apple users filled the questionnaire and made a paralell easily tracable throughout every point of the research.

iPhone users gave a base for the research that defines brand loyalty. Those in favor of Apple products are most likely satisfied with their actual device and their choice is based on the brand's quality, the uniqueness and handiness of the operating system and long lifespan, not the price.

They usually make the choice on their own, so it's based on the individual's system of preferences and personality. Even though most think that the product is overpriced many are willing to pay for it, and more would be if the product's price was slightly lower.

This leads us to a paradox because at the beginning we cleared that the price is not a serious aspect of decision, yet it is, since more people would buy it for a lower price.

The two year bind stipulated by the service provider's contract seems to be the reason behind the changing of device, but it doesn't necessarily mean that consumers will buy a new device whenever it expires. The amount spent on smartphones (51-100 thousand forints) covers the mid-top category cell phones on the market but there are many who buy for higher prices. Those able and willing to pay more than 200 thousand forints for a smartphone are most likely will settle for an Apple product. The reason behind could be the simple fact that this is the usual price of brand new devices but it could be explained with the outlining status symbol among consumers.

Preferring to pay full price instead of instalment raises the question of who or what the source of money is since most of the respondents don't have income of their own. We are assuming that family helps out financially since noone asks for a loan to buy a cell phone. This is verified by the fact that in most families the monthly income per person is between 101 and 150 thousand forints so it seems legit that parents are paying for their kids device. Furthermore, those young adults whose families has an income above 200 thousand forints per person are likely to purchase Apple products.

I assume that financial conciousness is not yet a common ability among Z generation since more than half of the sample buys pretty expensive devices without any individual income and most likely - even if they can afford it - relies on family to cover the costs. In terms of conciousness it would be wise to raise their attention to the value of money and the devices because in today's the market of electronic devices fast and untimely obsolescence is usual, which the consumer could experience as valuelessness that leads to another purchase maybe again on the account of the family.

On the other hand, from the perspective of Apple it's exemplary how they manage and make the brand and the product marketable since it's clear that more people would like to buy an iPhone and many already do. The brand is identified with quality, user friendliness, long lifespan which for most consumers are the main features they seek when looking for a new device.

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