Types of Digital Consumers: Peculiarities in the Context of Online Sales Promotion

The paper presents the determination of types of digital consumers in Lithuania and Georgia and their response to the techniques of online sales promotion. Firstly, readers are introduced with the theoretical classification of digital consumers and online sales promotion techniques. Then, the methodological principles of the research identifying Lithuanian and Georgian types of digital consumer and their response to the techniques of the online sales promotion are defined. The results of the research are presented; the comparative analysis of both countries based on the main findings are introduced.

**Keywords:** digital consumer types, online sales promotion, online sales promotion techniques.

**JEL Classification:** M31.

**Introduction**

Spread of the Internet has changed the entire path of human kind and affected everything related. D. Rayan (2014) explained that “Internet is like a watering hole for humans. We come for easy, inexpensive, and quick access to digital information, connections, and entertainment, and in turn it transforms individuals, businesses, economies, and societies.” Moreover, Internet is being accepted as the core of business capability and it is being greatly included into the marketing activities (Norzalita, Norjaya, 2004). Possibility of transferring business activities into the digital environment has
pushed the field of science to the edge since old-school approaches for the cer-
tain field-related activities were no longer valid. In this context, every aspect of mar-
keting field has been influenced and many advantages or disadvantages of this impact have been detected (Paul, 1996). For this reason, marketing technologies also evol-
v and partly transformed into the digital type, including promotional techniques and advertisement campaigns.

In times like this, where social network phenomenon can gather millions of peo-
ple in one social area via different types of digital portals, promoting business or its production in some new ways became one of the major fields. Consequently, various different types of online promotional tech-
niques have been created and proposed by market researchers. Though speed of the development of the digital communication sector is at such high level that in real life promotional campaigns need to be adapt-
ted and transformed rapidly and regularly. Thus, aim of the marketing has become to constantly provide new, innovated promotional techniques and campaigns.

Noticeable difference has been noticed in the online marketing activities between developing and developed markets (Bandyopadhyay, 2001). Therefore, Lithuania and Georgia, being classified as emerging markets, tend to have necessity of special attitude. The differences between the customers in both countries are also evident: economic, cultural, social, technological and even political environments make influence on customer behavior and their response to marketing activities. According to changes in the online marketing, particularly in the field of online sales promotion, in both countries, customers’ cognition in the context of their online shopping behavior when attending specific promotional proposals has a special signi-
ficance.

Despite the body of literature analyzed, the scientific discussion in the area of shopping behavior of the digital consumer in the context of sales promotion is still scarce. Latter insights lead to the consider-
ation of scientific problem formulated by the question: What are the types of digital consumers in Lithuania and Georgia and how they respond to various techniques of online sales promotion? To solve the pro-
blem of the research, the aim of the paper was formulated to identify types of Lithu-
anian and Georgian digital consumers and their respond to the techniques of online sales promotion. The subject of the article was characterization of types of Lithuanian and Georgian digital consumers in the context of the techniques of online sales promotion.

The research methods used in the article include logical analysis, generalization, interpretation of scientific literature, and questionnaire survey as a primary data collection method. To assess data obtained through the empirical research, the methods of descriptive statistics were used.

**Theoretical Aspects of the Research**

Due to a special nature of the concept of digital consumer, characterization and ty-
polology of digital consumer differ from au-
thor to author. One of the most thorough market research has been performed by the Booz-Allen & Hamilton (Abuladze, Todua, 2011). The study refers to the identi-
fication of potential consumers in the digital world, taking into consideration the following options: time spent in the Internet; time spent on various web-pages and
different social networks; aim of being online. Based on the research results, R. Abuladze and N. Todua (2011) give their perspectives regarding the characterization of digital consumers and provide their perception of the categories of consumers (Table 1), which have been identified in the digital environment.

The further research identifying types of Lithuanian and Georgian digital consumers and their response to the techniques of the online sales promotion is based on the classification by Booz-Allen & Hamilton (Abuladze, Todua, 2011).

Techniques of the online sales promotion have been analyzed by vast number of scientists: R. Mullin, J. Cummins (2008), D. Rayan, (2014), J. Strauss, R. Frost (2014), K. Wertime, I. Ferwick (2008) and others. They suggest various types of techniques of sales promotions that are being widely used in the online and offline field:

Discounts. The main representation of the price promotion is arguably the most common technique of sales promotion regardless the environment, would it be for the online or offline campaigns. A lot of scholars (Kotler, Armstrong, 2008; Mullin, Cummins, 2008; Baker, 2000) in the field of marketing argue about the efficiency of price promotion and discounts. Nevertheless, A. Kumar (2016) presented the research revealing that the price promotion was an efficient promotional technique; for the price sensitive products, discounts have been proven to have a great effect on the product choice. Moreover, price promotion can go even further and prove itself to be efficient when increasing positive attitude and evaluation toward the product and brand (Huang et al., 2014).

On the other hand, price promotion could be offered for a reasonable period of time, mainly for a short time lapse, therefore, time limitation has to be a problem, but "presence of a time limit does not impact directly on perceptions of value or search and purchase behavior" (Devlin et al., 2007).

Coupons and discount cards are the most common and similar ways for consumers to redeem financial discount or rebate when purchasing a product or service. Therefore, coupons that are a well spread technique in the online world proved to be an efficient opportunity to provide cross-promotional activities (Hill et al., 2001). Relatively, in the retail field, coupons can directly and indirectly influence the loyalty toward the retailers themselves (Weirich, Zielke, 2014). Pursuing with discount cards, discount schemes exist offering consumers to sign up for a card and become a member of the scheme in order to obtain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of digital consumers</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The simplifiers</strong></td>
<td>Impatient but lucrative Internet users. They spend couple hours a month online, and account half of all Internet transactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The surfers</strong></td>
<td>Consummate browsers. They spend 32% of time online and browse four times more pages compared to other users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The connectors</strong></td>
<td>New to the Internet and less likely to shop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bargain shoppers</strong></td>
<td>Termed information addicts. They use Internet very frequently, mainly for informational purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: R. Abuladze, N. Todua (2011)
financial discounts (Capizzi, Ferguson, 2005).

*Games and contests* are promotional techniques that aim to create opportunity for the consumer to win different types of benefits. Contests and games require for a customer to submit an entry that will be examined and either selected or not to be the winner (Kotler, Keller, 2012). Logically, attractiveness of a prize or a gift is the driving factor of all these types of promotional activities in the evaluation of the consumers, therefore, a prize or a gift obtained by the consumer have to be a valuable benefit for them (Buil et al., 2013).

*Gifts and bonus commodity* are the product or a service that are offered free, or at a relatively low price, in return for the purchase of one or more products or services (D’Astous, Landerville, 2003). Furthermore, T. Montaner et al. (2011) explain that “gift that fits with the product and using high equity brands is a wise strategy to positively influence purchase intentions.”

*Special status and membership card.* Special status is the title that company puts on customers who desire to enjoy the benefits it allows in exchange to commission of the company charges for its membership. Membership card is almost the same technique that also provides additional benefits to be obtained. Both techniques aim to establish and maintain a loyalty-based relationship.

*Track down* is an additional service provided by the company that enables the opportunity to control and check product movement from the source to the customer.

*Banners* are typically small, often rectangular shapes that are displayed on the websites (Hoffman, Novak, 1996). The main point of such displays is to attract viewers’ attention and by clicking on the banner to transfer browser to the target website. S. Elliott (1996) explained that banners are efficient even if they are not clicked through; their visual influences the attitude of the browser and anyway helps the product or the brand to be promoted.

*Offers of a similar product and complementary goods* are type of a premium promotion that provides opportunity to make a combined offer of similar product or complementary goods for a lesser price than it would be offered in case of a separate sale. According to A. d’Astous and I. Jacob (2002), premium promotion is quite appreciated by consumers and the effect of it increases when value of promotion is mentioned and described.

*Personal email.* Electronic mail is just a method of exchanging messages in the digital form among the Internet users. From the point of view of marketing, emails differ from commercial emails (referred as spam) to permission emails (Tezinde et al., 2002). V. Reimers et al. (2016) explain that personal emails that are based on the permission of the users are far more efficient and influential compared to any other type of emails, because it enables the promoter to deliver a relatively close content based on the permission of the user, therefore, irritations that are usually caused by the spam are excluded.

*Buy now and Special offer* are one of the most common online promotional techniques that are usually a time limited auction type of product offers (Ho et al., 2007). Originally, buy now and special offers were developed and invented by the eBay and are currently being used by every online retailer (Mathews, 2004). Price and type of the production alongside with the seller’s rating and its reputation are the most influential factors for the purchase behavior of buyers (Xu et al., 2010).
Free delivery is an additional service where the buyer of the product is offered the product to be delivered in the certain location for free, it is the additional motivation for the browser to make a purchase especially in the digital world where a product could be ordered from any location of the world.

Methodological Aspects of the Research

The research was initiated to determine groups of digital consumers and their response to the techniques of the online sales promotion. For this aim, a quantitative research method has been used. An online questionnaire survey has been provided for the information gathering; accordingly, a descriptive research has been used to determine relationship among the variables. The depth of the questionnaire was composed of 30 questions, 19 of which were provided as a statement to agree or disagree with. 400 respondents composed the research width: 200 were Lithuanians and another 200 represented Georgians. As 180 Georgian and 170 Lithuanian responses were eligible for the analysis, the rest was not included in the process of analysis. The survey was provided in March 2016. Non-probabilistic random sample was used when the choice of the respondent was based on a personal decision or convenience. Results of the research were evaluated using descriptive statistical method.

A standardized questionnaire was composed to determine the main types of digital consumers: “The simplifiers”; “The surfers”; “Bargain shoppers” and “The connectors” that were originally constructed as a result of the research performed by Booz-Allen & Hamilton (Abuladze, Todua, 2011). To achieve this goal, respondents have been asked to apply themselves to the one of the mentioned groups. For this reason, respondents had four optioned answers relating to the initial type of digital consumers.

To identify the response of the respondents toward various techniques of online sales promotion, 19 questions were prepared. In order to find which of them are specific (relevant) to a different type of digital consumers in both countries, every online sales promotion technique was “converted” into a specific situation or example directly associated with an online buying behavior. The questionnaire used the questions-statements, answers to which have been evaluated using the Likert scale. Respondents were asked to evaluate every question-statement in range from 1 to 5 by expressing their agreement or disagreement, respectively. On the basis of evaluations reported by the respondents, an arithmetic average (mean score) was calculated for the every question-statement. Since every question-statement described a particular, single technique of the online sales promotion, and conclusion was made that questions-statements with the highest acquired numeric values (3.5 and above) were treated as relevant for the specific types of digital consumers, and the statements with low numeric values (2.5 and below) were treated as an irrelevant for the specific types of digital consumers, as for the statement with acquired numbers, 2.5–3.5 have been found as neutral (nor agreement, nor disagreement).

Results

The research enabled to reveal types of digital consumers both in Georgian and
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Lithuanian digital world; and survey data that has been gathered allowed to compare Lithuanian and Georgian consumers. It is possible to determine whether they respond similarly to the particular promotion techniques or not. Also, types of consumers in the digital world could be determined and compared.

Accordingly, 26.66% of Lithuanians have confirmed that they spend couple hours per month on the Internet, but it is one of the main sources for them buying goods; 16.66% declared that approximately every third time of being online serves for purchase reasons, but mainly time spent online aims to make comparison between products; while 43.33% admit that they mainly use Internet for the information gathering; lastly, 13.33% acknowledges themselves as new to Internet and do not use it for purchasing.

On the other hand, 41.53% of Georgians declare that they spend couple hours per month, but Internet is one of the main sources for them buying goods; 13.84% answered that approximately every third time of being online serves for purchase reasons, but it mainly aims to compare products; 33.84% admit they mainly use Internet for information gathering; finally, 10.76% acknowledge themselves as new to Internet and do not use it for purchasing.

Based on the data, it is possible to determine types of consumers in the digital world. Types of Georgian and Lithuanian consumers are constituted in Figure 1.

Accordingly, data presented in Table 2 describe the attitude toward the techniques of the online sales promotion by each type of digital consumer group.

As a result of analysis, the following attitude of different types of digital consumers toward certain techniques of the online sales promotion has been revealed:

- Discounts were found to be attractive for the Lithuanian simplifiers group (3.7), while Georgian simplifiers neither accepted nor refused the same technique. Both Georgian (3.8) and Lithuanian (4.2) surfers have found discounts to be attractive as a beneficial factor for making sales decision. Discounts have been declined by Georgian (1.7) and Lithuanian (1.5) connectors,

![Fig. 1. Types of digital consumers in Georgia and Lithuania, %](image-url)
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Techniques of the online sales promotion</th>
<th>Types of digital consumers</th>
<th>Simplifiers</th>
<th>Surfers</th>
<th>Connectors</th>
<th>Bargain shoppers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GEO</td>
<td>LTU</td>
<td>GEO</td>
<td>LTU</td>
<td>GEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounts</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupons, Discount cards</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games and Contests</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts, Bonus commodity</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special status, Membership card</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track down</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar product offers, Complementary goods</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal email</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy now, Special offer</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free delivery</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

while Georgian bargain shoppers neither agreed nor disagreed about its influence on the shopping decision; nevertheless, Lithuanian bargain shoppers (3.6) were found to be slightly more enthusiastic toward the discount proposals.

- Coupons and discount cards, as a group of promotional offer, have been declined by Georgian simplifiers (2.4) and Lithuanian connectors (2.2), while neither acceptance nor refusal have been found among Lithuanian simplifiers, Lithuanian surfers, Georgian connectors, and Lithuanian and Georgian bargain shoppers. Nevertheless, this group of offers has been found to be attractive to Georgian surfers (3.8).

- Games and Contests have been also revealed to have average or lower than average attractiveness meaning that Georgian (1.5) and Lithuanian simplifiers (2.2), also Lithuanian connectors (2.2) would rather disagree with the idea that this promotional technique somehow attracts them, furthermore, rest of the types, regardless national belonging, show only neutral attitude toward the named promotional offers.

- Gifts and Bonus commodity have been positively perceived by Georgian surfers (3.6), though Lithuanian bargain shoppers (2.3) would rather show negative attitude. Meanwhile, rest of the groups, Georgian and Lithuanian simplifiers, Lithuanian surfers, Georgian and Lithuanian connectors, and Georgian bargain shoppers show overall a neutral attitude toward bonus commodity offers or gifts proposals.

- Special status and membership card as a promotional techniques have been declined by Georgian simplifiers (2.5)
and Lithuanian connectors (2.0), while rest of the groups of digital consumer would neither agree nor disagree with the statement that special status or membership card encourage them to make shopping decision differing from the Lithuanian surfers (3.6) that express a rather positive attitude toward the mentioned techniques.

- **Track down** has a surprisingly high positive effect on Georgian simplifiers (4.0) and Lithuanian surfers (3.7), while Lithuanian simplifiers, Georgian surfers, and Georgian and Lithuanian bargain shoppers have presented an undecided outlook. Nevertheless, Georgian (2.0) and Lithuanian (1.8) connectors declined the named technique with a great negative attitude.

- **Banners** have been found to be accepted by Lithuanian bargain shoppers (3.6), while it has been greatly declined by Lithuanian connectors (1.5). For the rest of the groups of digital consumers, visual advertisements have constituted an undecided point of view.

- **Similar product offers and complementary goods** in most of the scenarios have been identified to have an undecided attractiveness except for Georgian connectors (2.4) who would rather show negative perspectives toward similar product offers or proposals of complementary goods.

- **Personal emails** have been also identified as a disliked technique, meaning that Georgian (1.8) and Lithuanian (1.8) simplifiers as well as Lithuanian bargain shoppers (2.1) detest the option, while rest of the types would neither accept nor refuse this type of preposition.

- **Buy now and special offer** have been found to be accepted by Lithuanian surfers (3.6), while Lithuanian bargain shoppers (2.3) rather dislike the technique. Lastly, Georgian and Lithuanian simplifiers, Georgian surfers and Georgian connectors and bargain shoppers, all of them were found to have an unformed outlook toward the technique.

- **Free delivery** has shown a surprisingly high positive attitude from Georgian (3.6) and Lithuanian (4.0) simplifiers, and Georgian (3.8) and Lithuanian (3.9) surfers. Georgian bargain shoppers and Lithuanian connectors stated an undecided outlook, though Georgian connectors (2.3) have been negatively approached to the free delivery option.

### Conclusions

As a result of the research, it was possible to determine types of Lithuanian and Georgian digital consumers and identify their responsiveness to the certain techniques of the online sales promotion. Accordingly, the following conclusions have been made:

1. Types of Georgian consumers have been revealed to be: the simplifiers (41 %); bargain shoppers (34 %); the surfers (14 %); the connectors (11 %);
2. Lithuanian consumers have been grouped into the following manner: bargain shoppers (43 %); the simplifiers (27 %); the surfers (17 %); the connectors (13 %);
3. Georgian simplifiers show acceptance toward the following online sales promotion tools: track down and free delivery. For the comparison, Lithuanian simplifiers show a great acceptance of
the following promotional techniques: discounts and free delivery. On the general basis, in both scenarios, simplifiers show interest in the free delivery option;

4. Georgian surfers have been identified to be attracted by discounts, coupons, leaflets discount cards, gifts, bonus commodity proposals, and free delivery proposals. As for the Lithuanian surfers, it has been identified that this group of digital consumers tend to be allured by discounts, gifts, special status or membership offers, track down option, buy now and special offers, and free delivery proposal;

5. The connectors as a digital consumer group has no experience in browsing Internet and are characterized to be as new to the Internet. Therefore, it is logical that neither Georgian nor Lithuanian connectors have not shown any sympathy toward any promotional offer;

6. As a result of analysis, Georgian bargain shoppers have not shown any attraction toward any named promotional prepositions, while Lithuanian bargain shoppers were identified to be attracted by discounts and various banners techniques;

7. Among all Georgian digital consumers, the surfers proved to be the most positively responsive to the proposed online sales promotion offers, though surfers also proved to compose only 14% of the Georgian consumers;

8. Similarly to the Georgian digital consumers’ world, Lithuanian surfers are responsible for being most responsive to the offered online sales promotion options. Share of the digital world of the Lithuanian surfers is similarly small to the Georgian.

Reference


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Atsižvelgiant į spartų skaitmenizacijos progresą ir kintančių vartotojų poreikius bei elgėsos reaguojant į skirtingas marketingo paskatas, straipsnyje analizuojama Lietuvos ir Gruzijos – dviejų skirtingų kultūrų, ekonomijų, gamtinės kultūros, socialinės ir technologinės, socialinės pagrindų turinčių valstybių – skaitmeninių vartotojų elgėsos reaguojant į skirtingas pardavimo skatinimo formas internete.