SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR OF GENERATION Y: A COMPARISON OF CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

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Abstract

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Study of Generation Y shopping behaviour was conducted in Czech Republic and Slovakia. The main aim was to describe the whole decision making process of this generational cohort. In this paper, only selected features are presented, especially early phases of decision making. For the purposes of the study, people with the year of birth between 1980 and 2000 served as a population. Data were collected by online and written questionnaire during autumn and winter 2014/2015. The sample of 380 respondents was conducted by non-probability sampling technique, more specifically judgemental sampling. Results suggest that Generation Y individuals prefer online environment to search for information before purchase. The four most used channels in both countries are the same and all online (e.g. web search engine or retailer's website). These young people mainly rely on themselves when they look for some personal recommendations, so own experience was the most important source. The choice of a particular shop is influenced by the quality of goods offered, but also by the price level which should be below the competitors. Wide assortment which enables to choose an appropriate product is also preferred. According to these results segmentation in both countries was conducted. Particular segments in both countries differ, but we can also find some common attributes.

Keywords: decision making process, factors influencing choice of store, information sources, online shopping, shopping behaviour, segmentation

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The main aim of this article is (1) to describe early phases of decision making process of Generation Y and (2) to find some differences between Czech Republic and Slovakia. Earlier phases of decision making process include problem definition and searching information based on which decision can be made. In this paper three points of interest are presented as follows (1) sources of information about supply of goods and services, (2) personal sources of information about supply of goods and services, i.e. sources of recommendations and (3) parameters important when choosing the right shopping place. Also other issues were included in the research, but they are not the concern of this article.

The research was conducted in both countries during autumn and winter 2014. Almost 380 respondents were interviewed, 218 from Czech Republic and 182 from Slovakia. Only Generation Y individuals born between 1980 and 2000 served as a population.

Generation Y is a specific cohort of people whose behaviour can have similar features. A cohort is usually defined by particular boundaries, i.e. years of birth or age. Generation Y, also called the Millennials, includes people born between years 1977–2000 (Noble, Haytko, Phillips, 2009). Other authors shorten this interval to years 1980–1994 (Bednall, Valos, Adam, McLeod, 2012).

Generation Y has lifestyle completely different from previous generations, generally possess a great purchase power and is able to spend money quickly (Parment, 2013; Pentecost, Andrews, 2010; Mandhlazi *et al.*, 2013). Therefore it is very important to have information how Generation Y individuals behave and decide when they want to buy some goods or services. This cohort is crucially important for marketers nowadays (Sox, Kline and Crews, 2014).

Communication with Generation Y should be more visual containing videos and images (Carr and Ly, 2009). They in general do not like to read long and monotonous texts and on the other hand prefer reading on electronic platforms. The reason is that Generation Y is able to pay attention for a shorter time and they easily tend to get bored (Jain and Pant, 2012). New media, as well as new technologies, are necessary communication channels for them and are always present in their lives. Therefore it is easy to stay up-to-date and have current information. Generation Y individuals, according to the Innovation Adoption Lifecycle Theory, often belong to innovators or early adopters (Mangold and Smith, 2012).

It can be predicted that also information sources used before making purchase can be more online than offline. Consumer reviews belong to the very important online source for this generational cohort. Generation Y individuals not only use online reviews, but they also share their own experience and attitudes online (Mangold and Smith, 2012).

According to Mediaguru, 2015 and OMG, 2011, personal sources of information are important too. Recommendations of family and friends are the most used offline source (Bergh and Behrer, 2011).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Problem and Objective Definition

Shopping behaviour of Generation Y is according to many sources (e.g. Mangold and Smith, 2012) influenced by the changing environment they face every day. Their attention has shifted to online media and mass media are not taken as a frequent source of information. They stay almost constantly online what can influence not only their lifestyle, but also their shopping behaviour. Knowing the specifics of this generational cohort seems to be inevitable for marketers so they can make right decisions in planning strategies.

The main aim of the research conducted in Czech Republic and Slovakia was to describe and compare specifics of shopping behaviour of Generation Y in two countries mentioned above. In this paper only partial results of the whole research are presented, so the objectives of this article can be fulfilled. The main objectives are (1) to specify sources of information used before purchase, (2) to identify the main personal sources of information and (3) to identify the most important attributes when choosing the right shopping place.

Hypotheses

For the purposes of this article, some hypotheses were constructed. They were set according to secondary sources, mainly papers presented in the literature review.

H_{01}: The most used information source used before purchase is not significantly different in Czech Republic and Slovakia.

H_{02}: Opinions of family members are the most important offline sources of information for Generation Y regardless of country (based on Mediaguru, 2015 and OMG, 2011).

Data Acquisition

Data were collected by written and online questionnaire. Both methods were used due to problems that had occurred during research. Many of respondents were not helpful probably because of the length of the questionnaire. Therefore also written questioning was scheduled. Research was conducted from October 2014 till January 2015.

Online questionnaire created in Google Docs was spread by social networks and email addresses lists provided by research team members. The written questionnaire was spread in the particular secondary schools in Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The questionnaire comprised a variety of questions, in many of them seven-point scales, e.g. Likert type scale was used where 1 meant the strongest agreement and 7 meant the strongest disagreement. Also other scales were inspired by Likert scale, e.g. 1 meant the highest importance or frequency and 7 the lowest importance or frequency.

Population and Sample

Generation Y individuals, who were born between 1980 and 2000, served as a population for this research. The sample of 380 respondents was conducted by non-probability sampling technique, more specifically judgemental sampling. For more detailed and final structure of respondents see Tab. I.

The share of respondents by gender was unequal in Czech Republic due to problems with gaining enough answers from the respondents. Except of demographic characteristics mentioned in Tab. I., also age was included although Generation Y is usually not internally structured by age categories. Average age was the same in both countries (22 years). When applicable, all the characteristics were used in a description of segments in both countries.

Methods of Analysis

Two main statistical tools were used for analysing data, SPSS 21.0 and Microsoft Excel. Also several methods of statistical analysis were applied, especially analysis of variance (ANOVA), Kruskal

I: *Respondents' Structure by Country, Gender, Education and Social Status*

		Czech Republic		Slovak Republic	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Gender	man	82	37.6%	77	47.5%
	woman	136	62.4%	85	52.5%
Education	primary or apprentice school	67	30.7%	64	39.5%
	high school	85	39.0%	49	30.2%
	university	66	30.3%	49	30.2%
Social status	working student	83	38.1%	42	25.9%
	non-working student	102	46.8%	98	60.5%
	employee	21	9.6%	16	9.9%
	unemployed	3	1.4%	0	0.0%
	businessman	3	1.4%	1	.6%
	maternity leave	6	2.8%	5	3.1%

II: *Information Sources of Czech Generation Y*

Rotated Component Matrix[a]	Component		
	Online sources	Traditional media	Ads & social networks
Price comparison website	.779		
Web search engine	.728		
Retailer's website	.708		
Online reviews	.622		.522
Manufacturer's website	.576		
Catalogues, leaflets, newsletters		.800	
Printed media		.710	
Brick-and-mortar store		.684	
Social networks			.800
Ads		.303	.704
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations

Wallis test, cluster analysis (hierarchical clustering, Euclidean distance measure and Ward's method) and factor analysis (principal component analysis, varimax procedure). Also basic coefficients of association were applied in the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sources of Information

The most frequently used source of information is not the same in both countries, but the differences in the mean value are minimal and not statistically significant[1]. For Czech respondents it is web search engine and for Slovaks retailer's website. The first four sources of information in the list classified by mean value are the same in both countries, only their position differs. The list includes two sources already mentioned above and in addition also online reviews and price comparison websites. In addition all sources are online. It seems obvious that Generation Y individuals in both countries prefer these channels before traditional media. Online sources do not demand so much attention and it can be also paid for a shorter time. This has a parallel with the results of Jain and Pant (2012).

There exists only very low dependence between the frequency of use and country in the parameter manufacturer's website (sig. = 0.045, η = 0.103). Czechs use this less often than Slovak respondents (mean in Czech Republic = 3.7 compared to mean in Slovakia = 3.3). Other sources are used similarly in both countries, because no statistical significance has occurred.

Follow-up factor analysis confirmed that respondents evaluated sources linked with online environment very similarly. Factor analysis of Czech respondents' answers (KMO measure = 0.688,

1   Seven-point scale was used in the questionnaire, where 1 = very often and 7 = never.

III: *Information Sources of Slovak Generation Y*

Rotated Component Matrix[a,b]	Component			
	Traditional media	**Straight to the source**	**Web services**	**Reviews & Ads**
Catalogues, leaflets, newsletters	**.764**			
Brick-and-mortar store	**.733**			
Printed media	**.653**			
Manufacturer's website		**.860**		
Retailer's website		**.820**		
Price comparison website			**.835**	
Web search engine			**.803**	
Social networks				**.865**
Ads	.473			**.545**
Online reviews		.331	.393	**.497**
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				

a. State = Slovak Republic
b. Rotation converged in 5 iterations

IV: *Information Sources of Generation Y by Country*

Test Statistics[a,b]							
	Superior/ teacher	**Shop assistant**	**Family members**	**Friends**	**Colleagues/ co-workers**	**Own experience**	**Online references**
Chi-Square	.165	.573	.749	.000	.211	.059	.094
df	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.685	.449	.387	.991	.646	.808	.759

a. Kruskal Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: State

sig. = 0.000) has brought 3 new factors as follows (1) online sources, (2) traditional media and (3) ads&social networks (see Tab. II). Online sources were preferred and used more frequently than others.

Results were similar in Slovakia, but with different number of new final factors (KMO measure = 0.637, sig. = 0.000). Web services and direct sources like manufacturers' and retailers' websites were used more frequently than traditional media or reviews & ads. For the results of factor analysis see Tab. III.

Importance of Personal Recommendations

The most appreciated recommendation comes from Generation Y itself. Own experience is the most important when they choose a product or a service (Czech Republic = 82%, Slovakia = 91%). Friends have, in both countries, higher impact on the opinion and attitude of Generation Y than family members. The share of those who are influenced by their friends is in Czech Republic approximately 74%, while around 57% of Generation Y individuals are influenced by their family members.

The opinions in Slovakia are very similar. Friends influence 69% and family members 52% of Generation Y cohort. Bergh and Behrer (2011) said that the recommendations from family and friends are the most used offline source. Our results

suggest that Czech and Slovak Generation Y highly prefer friends instead of family members. These results can be applicable for both countries, because the dependence of evaluating a specific source of recommendation as important on the country does not exist. All significance levels were above value 0.05 (see Tab. IV).

Important Attributes of the Shopping Place

Slovak Generation Y individuals perceive the importance of attributes offered in the questionnaire as higher than Czechs. The average evaluation of all offered attributes was 2.6 while in Czech Republic it was 2.9.

Generation Y perceives in general as the most important (1) quality of products, (2) lower prices, (3) wide product selection and (4) possibility of easy exchanges and returns. These attributes are very often not compatible. The conflict between high quality and low price is the best example. From the results we can see that Generation Y individuals would like to have both. According to research studies conducted in Czech Republic (UZEI, 2014), Czech customers choose the right shopping place mainly according to good accessibility, width of assortment, sales and favourable prices. We can see the difference in the behaviour of Generation Y cohort. Different parameters can appear if only online shops are considered. According to APEK

(2014), customers really appreciate complex information about products available on online shop including photo gallery. This issue was not included in the research so it can be inspiration for further studies.

Some statistically significant differences can be found between countries (see Tab. V). The strongest difference has occurred in the attribute knowledgeable salespeople (sig. = 0.000, η = 0.208). Also other dependencies have been observed as follows (1) store atmosphere (sig. = 0.000, η = 0.186), (2) easy access into and out of the store (sig. = 0.001, η = 0.163), (3) quality of products (sig. = 0.004, η = 0.148), (4) product selection (sig. = 0.042, η = 0.105) and (5) easy exchanges and returns (sig. = 0.045, η = 0.103). Slovaks accentuate the importance more than Czech members of Generation Y all of the attributes mentioned above, i.e. consider them as

more important. The strongest weight is given in this country to the quality of products, lower prices and width of product selection. On the other hand Czechs perceive importance of knowledgeable salespeople and immediate availability of products in stock as the lowest of all attributes.

These attributes can be, with the usage of factor analysis, divided into several new factors (equally three) which do not have the same content in both countries. As seen in Tab. VI, Czech respondents have evaluated similarly different attributes than Slovaks. It can be because of the higher importance attributed to variables in Slovakia, where respondents used more the left side of the scale[2]. Factor analysis was conducted mainly because of the future usage in defining segments of Generation Y in both countries which is discussed later in the paper.

V: *Importance of Store Attributes by Country*

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Lower prices than competitors	Between Groups	3.973	1	3.973	2.708	.101
	Within Groups	554.498	378	1.467		
	Total	558.471	379			
Convenience to home	Between Groups	1.751	1	1.751	.788	.375
	Within Groups	840.154	378	2.223		
	Total	841.905	379			
Knowledgeable salespeople	Between Groups	53.288	1	53.288	17.046	**.000**
	Within Groups	1181.709	378	3.126		
	Total	1234.997	379			
Well-known brands	Between Groups	.410	1	.410	.167	.683
	Within Groups	928.987	378	2.458		
	Total	929.397	379			
Store atmosphere	Between Groups	29.355	1	29.355	13.497	**.000**
	Within Groups	822.129	378	2.175		
	Total	851.484	379			
Product selection	Between Groups	6.988	1	6.988	4.182	**.042**
	Within Groups	631.633	378	1.671		
	Total	638.621	379			
Quality of products	Between Groups	12.846	1	12.846	8.427	**.004**
	Within Groups	576.193	378	1.524		
	Total	589.039	379			
Easy access into and out of the store	Between Groups	31.867	1	31.867	10.352	**.001**
	Within Groups	1163.659	378	3.078		
	Total	1195.526	379			
Products always in stock,	Between Groups	.401	1	.401	.134	.714
	Within Groups	1129.757	378	2.989		
	Total	1130.158	379			
Easy exchanges and returns	Between Groups	10.003	1	10.003	4.052	**.045**
	Within Groups	933.079	378	2.468		
	Total	943.082	379			

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2   Seven-point scale was used in the questionnaire, where 1 = very important and 7 = not important.

VI: *Results of Factor Analysis (Importance of Store Attributes by Country)*

Rotated Component Matrix[a,b]				Rotated Component Matrix[a,b]			
Component				**Component**			
	product	**convenience**	**information & good feeling**		**good feeling**	**availability**	**selection**
Lower prices than competitors	.773			Quality of products	.769		
Product selection	.771			Easy exchanges and returns	.759		
Quality of products	.683		.374	Store atmosphere	.596		
Easy access into and out of the store		.793		Well-known brands		.756	
Products always in stock,		.709		Easy access into and out of the store		.697	
Easy exchanges and returns	.373	.680		Products always in stock,		.687	
Knowledgeable salespeople			.691	Knowledgeable salespeople	.362	.545	−.397
Well-known brands			.659	Convenience to home			.760
Store atmosphere		.343	.615	Lower prices than competitors	.487		.561
Convenience to home	.400		.521	Product selection	.327		.509
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			

a. State = Czech Republic
b. Rotation converged in 5 iterations

a. State = Slovak Republic
b. Rotation converged in 5 iterations

Results of Hypotheses Testing

The most used information source is not the same in both countries. In Czech Republic web search engine has reached the best average evaluation (mean = 2.8, in Slovakia mean = 2.9) while in Slovakia retailers' website (mean = 2.7, in Czech Republic mean = 2.9). Nevertheless, we can accept hypothesis H_{01}, because these differences are not statistically significant. ANOVA testing has showed by the parameter web search engine the significance 0.140 and in retailers' website 0.966. When we look on the first four sources, they are the same in both countries, but with different position in the ranking.

Family members are in general the third most used source of recommendation about products or services (57% in Czech Republic and 52% in Slovakia). These preferences are not significantly different in those countries according to the results of Kruskal Wallis test (sig. = 0.387). So we can reject hypothesis H_{02}.

Segmentation of Generation Y in Czech Republic

Segmentation within the Generation Y is rare. Other segmentation studies were not found in the literature. More often generational cohorts are compared to each other to identify the differences among them. In this article segmentation in both countries was conducted according to three parameters mentioned in the previous paragraphs. The aim was to find some differences in one generational cohort between two countries. Detailed description of segments is based on variables included in the questionnaire. Most of them are not discussed in previous paragraphs because of the length of the paper.

The first segment can be named as "onliners". It concludes 43% of men. Average age is the highest in this group (23 years). Also the share of high school students (nearly 49%) and non-working students is the highest. Surprisingly, online references as blogs, discussions and reviews are important for almost 97% of them. It can be supposed that they like to read experience of others and consider it as the lead of their decisions. They rely also on friends' recommendations. This result differs strongly from other two segments. Own experience (the most important for other two segments) seems important for nearly 87% of this group what is still higher percentage than in other two segments. More than two thirds also accepts recommendations from friends. The evaluation of all variables, except of own experience, is significantly different among three clusters (see Tab. VII).

The first segment attaches very high importance to online sources of information. This also differs from other segments significantly and the strength of dependence is high (sig. = 0.000, η = 0.324).

VII: *Significance of Differences among Three Clusters (Sources of Recommendation)*

Test Statistics[a,b]	Superior/ teacher	Shop assistant	Family members	Friends	Colleagues/ co-workers	Own experience	Online references
Chi-Square	7.648	160.272	69.525	19.297	9.760	4.261	148.271
df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	**.022**	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	**.008**	.119	**.000**

a. Kruskal Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: Ward Method

The differences among segments in the frequency of usage of information sources are statistically significant also in the factor ads&social networks, but the strength is much lower (sig. = 0.028, η = 0.181).

The most important attributes before store selection for the first segment are (1) lower prices, (2) convenience to home and (3) knowledgeable salesperson. When we compare answers of all three segments, only in the first factor a difference exists (sig. = 0.000, η = 0.368). The first segment has evaluated the first factor (lower prices, product selection and quality of products) by mean value 2.6, so perceives it as important. All segments consider themselves to be excellent shoppers, but sometimes overloaded by the width of supply.

Online shopping seems to be no problem for all segments, but some significant differences exist among them (sig. = 0.001, η = 0.260). The first segment feels online shopping as completely non-problematic (mean = 2.0). The best and suitable shopping place is also found without any problems (mean = 2.2).

Online shopping is also faster than shopping in the brick-and-mortar shops and the first cluster means this the most (mean = 3.1), significant differences among clusters exist (sig. = 0.003, η = 0.230).

The attitudes to retailers and brands are very similar in all three segments, because the differences in mean values of evaluated statements are not statistically significant. Generation Y individuals prefer well-known shops when they shop online. In general, they have several favourite shops where they make their purchases and prefer already verified shops. On the other hand the intention to impress people around is not well perceived. Generation Y does not accentuate brands as synonyms of prestige and success.

The share of women is the highest in the second segment among all three segments (almost 69%). We can call them "traditionalists". Average age is the lowest (21 years) what harmonizes with the prevailing education level (primary or apprentice school, almost 42%). More than one half consists of non-working students. Family members (86%), friends (84%) and own experience (82%) are three most important personal sources of information, i.e. sources of recommendations. Lower prices and convenience to home are the most important attributes. The mean value of the first factor (lower prices, product selection and quality of products) is 2.9.

Online shopping is not perceived as problematic, but the average value is the highest (mean = 2.8). This segment as the only one is completely indifferent between online shopping and shopping in the brick-and-mortar shops with regard to the speed of purchase (mean = 4.0), but they can easily choose the suitable shopping place (mean = 2.6). The name or brand of the retailer is more unimportant for them (mean = 4.5) in contrast to other segments (sig. = 0.037, η = 0.174).

Third segment ("workers") concludes almost 45% of men. Average age is 22 and university and high school students have the share about 78%. More than one half (52%) is both students and employees. Surprisingly, all members of this group feel help from salespeople as really important. Own experience and online references seem very important too (70% and 56%). The most important attribute of the store does not differ from other clusters (lower prices). But other attributes in the ranking have lower evaluation in average. Knowledgeable salespeople are perceived as quite essential, i.e. second most important (mean = 2.4). The first factor based on factor analysis (lower prices, product selection and quality of products) was evaluated with the mean 2.5.

Online shopping is perceived as not problematic (mean = 2.4). This cluster can also find the best suitable shopping place, but it is the highest problem for it among all three clusters (mean = 2.8).

Segmentation of Generation Y in Slovakia

The first segment is divided by gender almost equally. It can be characterized by the epithet "they rely on themselves". Average age (mean = 22) corresponds with the prevailing share of high school students (39%), but also other education levels are well represented. More than one half of them do not work, but almost 30% has a job.

Own experience become inevitable for all three clusters as the source of recommendation about products and services. Only in this parameter no significant difference among clusters has existed (sig. = 0.118).

Online references like blogs or reviews (100%), own experience (96%) and friends' recommendations (64%) are the most preferred channels to get some information about supply for the first cluster. Family members were not mentioned much; only one third consider this source of information as important.

Online reviews, retailers' websites, price comparison websites and web search engines are the most used sources of information before purchasing a product or a service. Unexpectedly, the usage of social networks to look for information about supply was evaluated with the lowest frequency.

The importance of store attributes did not differ among segments. Only one exception has existed, well-known brands were evaluated significantly different by the clusters (sig. = 0.002, η = 0.280). The first cluster inclines to perceive the presence of well-known brands as important. Quality, lower prices and wide product selection are the most important attributes when they decide about the place of purchase. These results are valid for all the clusters.

In the attitudes to retailers, brands and shopping itself no significant differences among clusters have appeared. In general, Generation Y individuals have no problems with online shopping, but also prefer well-known shops when they shop online. They also verify shops in general. On the other hand, suitable shopping place is found very easily by Generation Y. They also have several favourite shops where they make purchases, but at the same time they consider themselves to be innovators in relation to brands. Brands or expensive items do not represent social status for them and no reason to admire others when they own these products or properties.

"Traditionalists" as second cluster has unequal share of men (36%) and women (64%). The highest average age (mean = 23) agrees the highest share of university students (47%). Surprisingly, only 18% of them are working students (the lowest share of all three segments) and the share of non-working students is the highest (64%).

Friends (100%), family members (98%) and own experience (96%) are the most favoured sources of recommendation for this cluster. Information about supply is also usually sought on retailers' websites and with the help of web search engines. This segment, more than other two, emphasizes the importance of traditional media like catalogues and leaflets. On the other hand, printed media are not used frequently.

The importance of well-known brands presence is the lowest in this segment, but still around the middle of the scale used in the questionnaire.

Third group exhibits a small predominance of men (54%). We can name it as "onliners". The highest share of primary or apprentice school students (62%) and non-working students (66%) corresponds with the average age which is the lowest of all three segments (mean = 20). The preferences of personal sources are split more than in previous segments. Own experience was evaluated as the most important by 80% of people, then surprisingly shop assistants' recommendations follow (60%) and friends (46%). Retailers' websites and web search engines are the most used sources of information about product supply. In the factor reviews & ads, significant difference among three clusters exists (sig. = 0.027, η = 0.211). In the third cluster, the frequency of usage of attributes hidden under the factor reviews & ads (social networks, online reviews and ads) is much higher than in other two clusters.

Managerial Implications

Due to the prevailing preference of online sources of information used before purchase, the main communication channel to the Generation Y should also be online. Marketers should focus on the quality of information on the websites of the companies. The position in web search engines (especially Seznam.cz in Czech Republic and Google in both countries) is essential for engaging the attention of Generation Y individuals. The importance of traditional reference groups is still remained, with the higher influence of friends than family members. However, own experience is perceived as the most important, so the ability to keep customer satisfied is essential. Loyalty programmes offers can help with this. It is no surprise that the overall quality of products offered in the store, lower prices and wide offer of merchandise were evaluated as the most important attributes in store selection. Retailers that keep this in mind can be attractive for Generation Y with follow-up success in the market. It would be interesting to compare the attitudes of Generation Y with the overall attitudes in both countries and look for some common features or differences.

CONCLUSION

Sources of information used before the purchase decisions are not the same in both countries, but evaluations of almost all attributes do not depend on the country. In the first four positions in the ranking, only online sources appeared. It is obvious, that this generational cohort strongly prefers online environment to look for information no matter in which country they live in.

The most used personal source of information, i.e. recommendation is own previous experience. Friends and family are not used as the primary source. Friends have also higher share of importance for Generation Y individuals in both countries when we compare it to family members' recommendations. Generation Y individuals decide about the right shopping place mainly according to the quality of products offered. They consider also the price level, which should be lower than by competitors. Also other attribute connected to product was mentioned as important, the width of assortment. They want to feel free when they choose and also have a greater choice. Online shopping enables to offer to the customers also free exchanges and returns of the products. This attribute was therefore also highly evaluated (as important). It is curious that more than half of attributes included in the research

in this question were evaluated as more important for Slovaks than for Czechs (according to mean value of evaluation, only results statistically significant were analysed).

In Czech Republic three segments were identified according to the attitude of respondents to importance of specific store attributes, sources of information they use for searching information and sources of personal recommendations. These segments were named after the characteristic features as follows (1) onliners, (2) traditionalists and (3) workers. Segments have some common characteristics which do not differ. They like to shop in well-known shops and also have several favourite ones. Brands like symbols of prestige or success are not accentuated by them. So the intention of impressing others by owning expensive properties or goods is not well perceived.

Onliners are more women and have the highest average age. They mostly do not work and still study, mainly high schools. The most used and preferred information channels are online like online blogs, reviews and discussions. Together with the fact that they rely also on own experience and friends who can give recommendations it is obvious that they like to verify information and to have more than one opinion to the product before they really buy it. Most used sources of information about the supply are also online, e.g. price comparison websites, search engines or websites of retailers and manufacturers. Online shopping is perceived as causing no problems. Lower prices can, above all other attributes, influence the decision about the most suitable shopping place the most in this group. The great number of shopping possibilities is not confusing; this cluster can always find the best acceptable option.

Women are more than two thirds of traditionalists. They mostly do not work, because the highest share of them studies primary or apprentice schools. Traditional attitude can be found in the most used personal source of information, i.e. recommendation which are family members, then friends and as the third own experience. The most frequently used source of information about supply is the brick-and-mortar store. They review the price level of the store the most when they decide where to make purchase. Also convenience to home is important. The interesting finding is that this cluster supposes the speed of shopping online and in traditional channels as the same.

The share of both genders is the most balanced in the cluster of workers. They are working students who attend university or high school. Help of knowledgeable salespeople is the most preferred source of recommendation. They also accentuate own experience and online references, i.e. personal sources of recommendation. Sometimes they feel lost in the environment of huge shopping possibilities. Maybe therefore, except of lower prices, the salespeople are well evaluated.

The number of segments in Slovakia was also set to three. The same attributes were used to divide respondents as in Czech Republic. The clusters are as follows (1) they rely on themselves, (2) traditionalists and (3) onliners. Segments do not differ as much as in Czech Republic, i.e. they have more common characteristics. Own experience as the most important personal source of information is the common feature of all three groups. The decision about the place of purchase is very influenced by the quality of assortment, lower prices and wide product selection in general, i.e. for all clusters. They do not have any problems with online shopping, but prefer well-known shops more and verify shops before purchase more. In relation to brands they feel like innovators, but in relation to retailers they have several favourite shopping places.

The first segment members rely more than others on themselves, but also online references and friends are used to get some information or personal opinions of others. The search of certain products is made mostly online using typical online channels like online reviews, websites of retailers, price comparison websites etc. The usage of social networks seems to be minimal. The presence of well-known brands is expected.

The second group is called traditionalists. Mostly women with the highest average age among other clusters and university students who use mainly friends and family as the traditional sources of personal recommendation belong to this group. This segment use to search information about supply on websites of retailers and by search engines, but accentuates strongly also the role of traditional media like catalogues or leaflets.

Onliners include a little more men, mostly primary or apprentice school students who do not work. They prefer to decide according to own experience, but also the help of salespeople (surprisingly) and friends is welcomed. The frequency of usage of new media like social networks is much higher than in other segments. They also search online review and look on advertisements more. Websites of retailers and web search engines are the basic sources of information about supply.

Research results presented in this paper of course have some limits. The first problematic part is unequal share of men and women, especially in the sample in Czech Republic. The samples do not perfectly match the Generation Y population in both countries. This limit can only be taken into account in some further surveys. The second limit comes from the similarity of Czechs and Slovaks. Maybe if any other country from European Union was included, the results could vary more and the final segmentations can differ more too. On the other hand, it is very hard to obtain data from foreign markets, so problems with the structure of the sample could then appear. The next limit that can be

identified is related to the length of the questionnaire. It was long regarding to the objective of the survey, i.e. to describe all the stages of decision making process. This could be the reason of unequal share by gender in the sample in Czech Republic.

It seems to be useful to include other generational cohorts to the further survey. The problem can only appear in Generation Z because of legal constraints of questioning so young people. Research results are probably applicable only in the conditions of Czech Republic and Slovakia. In regard to overall applicability also in other countries, much wider sample ought to be provided.

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