Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Management

Diploma Thesis

Customer Behavior

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CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Bc. Tereza Pavelková

Economics and Management
Economics and Management

Thesis title

Customer Behaviour

Objectives of thesis

The aim is to evaluate and explain changes in customer behaviour in an unnamed car rental company, considering pandemic situation COVID-19, comparing years 2018 (pre-pandemic) with 2020.

Methodology

The diploma thesis is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical part.

The theoretical part is mainly focused on theoretical background on the given topic. Data are collected from specialized publications and online resources.

In the practical part, mainly a time-series will be used. During years 2018 and 2020 there was a periodical observation, gathering surveys and their evaluation. Quantitative data were collected from a questionnaire survey and outputs will be shown and interpreted in graphs and tables.

Additionally, internal company materials may also be used. Results obtained in regions CZ/SK will be compared with larger monitored European states.

The proposed extent of the thesis

approx 60-80 pages

Keywords

Customer Behavior, CRM, COVID-19, car rental industry, survey

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Recommended information sources

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Prague on 30. 11. 2022

Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis titled "Customer Behavior" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the diploma thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any other person.

In Prague on 30th November 2022 _____

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In Prague on 30th November 2022 _____

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor Ing. Richard Selby, Ph.D. for his advice and Operation Director of unnamed Rent a Car company for help. I would like to thank all the professors as well.

Customer Behavior

Abstract

The topic of this diploma thesis is Customer Behavior. Comparison and analysis of before and during the COVID-19 situation at a large international car rental company whose business success is primarily in service and is deeply focusing on Customer Behavior. The aim of this diploma thesis is to give short explanation of differences between words "Consumer" and "Customer" that are very often confused and mixed. Then there is short explanation of covid pandemic, its origin and impact on the businesses. There will be an explanation and demonstration such as graphs, charts, etc. how this pandemic situation affected Customer Behavior. Especially in the travel industry and rent a car industry.

For evaluating this pandemic situation and changes of Customer Behavior there is an analysis of client's satisfaction used called net promoter score. This evaluation process helps many companies to get to know Customer's feelings and experience with some certain service. Questions of the used query are part of everyday life, but people often do not know what is done with them further. The diploma thesis is showing the process of elaboration these queries. The observation was done in an application of unnamed rental car company. The diploma thesis deals with the practical monitoring of theoretical concepts such as customer relationship management (CRM) and costumer behavior. The thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part focuses on information about costumers in general and its basics such as definition, importance, types etc.. Henceforward there is explanation of Customer Relationship Management and Customer Behavior itself and impact of the pandemic COVID-19 on travel industry, especially car rental industry. The practical part introduces several outputs from application designed to measure customer feedback and behavior. This outputs are in charts, which monitor the differences of results in year 2018 and the first year of COVID-19 a year 2020. The charts further show how customer behaved before pandemic situation and during pandemic situation. Charts are monitoring the performance of operations in the smallest countries of corporate Europe. One region represented by the Czech Republic and Slovakia and on the other hand Belgium and Luxembourg.

Keywords: Customer Behavior, CRM, COVID-19, car rental industry, survey

Chování zákazníka

Abstrakt

Tématem diplomové práce je Chování zákazníků. Je zde provedeno srovnání a analýza situace před a během pandemie COVID-19 ve velké mezinárodní autopůjčovně, jejíž obchodní úspěch je především v servisu a vysoce se zaměřuje na chování zákazníků. Cílem diplomové práce je stručně vysvětlit rozdíly mezi termíny „spotřebitel" a „zákazník", které jsou velmi často matoucí a často zaměněné. Následně je zde krátce vysvětlena pandemická situace, její vznik a dopad na podniky. Jak tato pandemická situace ovlivnila chování zákazníků bude vysvětleno a ukázáno pomocí tabulek a grafů. Bude zde vysvětlen dopad zejména na cestovní ruch a to především v sféře autopůjčoven.

Pro vyhodnocování této pandemické situace a změn chování zákazníků, je použita analýza spokojenosti klienta tzv. Net Promoter Score. Tento proces hodnocení pomáhá mnoha společnostem odhalit pocity a zkušenosti zákazníků s určitou službou. Otázky použitého dotazníku jsou součástí každodenního života, ale lidé často nevědí, jak se s nimi dále nakládá. Pozorování změn chování zákazníků bylo provedeno v aplikaci jedné nejmenované autopůjčovny. Diplomová práce se zabývá praktickým sledováním teoretických pojmů jako je CRM a chování zákazníků. Práce je rozdělena do dvou částí. Teoretická část je zaměřena na definice a informace o zákaznících obecně, je zde vysvětlen a popsán význam, typy zákazníků atd… Následně je zde vysvětlen pojem CRM a samotné chování zákazníků a dopad pandemie COVID-19 na cestovní ruch, zejména autopůjčovny. Praktická část pak přestavuje několik výstupů z aplikace určené k měření zpětné vazby a chování zákazníků. Tyto výstupy jsou znázorněny v grafech, které sledují změny výsledků v roce 2018 a v prvním roce pandemie COVID-19 v roce 2020. Grafy dále ukazují, jak se zákazník choval před pandemickou situací a během pandemické situace. Grafy sledují změny chování v nejmenších zemích Evropy. Jedním regionem je Česká republika a Slovenska a druhým je Belgie a Lucembursko.

Klíčová slova: Chování zákazníka, CRM, COVID-19, autopůjčovna, průzkum

Table of content

List of pictures

List of tables

List of graphs

1 Introduction

Customer Behavior during years is still changing. One of the biggest impacts on Customer Behavior definitely had unexpected pandemic situation due to COVID-19. Nobody expected what this disease will cause and what impacts it would have include. Lot of industries were hugely impacted in negative way. The impact was especially on the economy of the whole world.

Customers are the most important part of every business. It is not important in what industry does this business is or what kind of products and services it sells. Without a customer there would not be any sales. Customers are also a critical and most important factor in terms of creating and developing marketing strategy. The term Customer Behavior itself is understood as every actions that customers are taking regarding purchasing goods and services. The company should know all possible factors that are influencing their customers, only then the business can be successful. It is important to realize that Customer Behavior it is not just the act of buying something but it is about the whole situation before even going to the market, the whole process of decision making. However, customer behavior it is not only about behavior of customers itself, is it also about customer's needs and satisfaction during fulfilling these needs. Here comes into place the term Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Furthermore, an application InMoment that measures the customer feedback properly and allows the company to collect, analyze and evaluate data about customers. It also measures the loyalty of customers and then the company can assume, how the customer behavior is affected by company's service. One of the methods to measure the loyalty of customers is called Net promoter score.

The diploma thesis describes the changes in customer behavior and customer satisfaction during the first year of pandemic situation, year 2020.

2 Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

This thesis introduces the problem of current pandemic situation and its impacts on the whole world. The aim of the diploma thesis is explanation the main features of Customer Behavior and its changes during pandemic situation COVID-19. There is visual explanation how customers reacted before and during COVID-19 on the employees of the company. There will be description of their behavior in certain moments when renting a car.

2.2 Methodology

The diploma thesis is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical part. In the theoretical part are collected data from publications and other online sources. There are used methods such as synthesis, extraction of information, induction and deduction is used as well. There is used analysis of net promoter score application and explanation of terms such as customer relationship management and costumer behavior. In the practical part is used a basic statistical method such as average. Hereafter there is used analysis such as time series analysis. There is also used quantitative research where the information is gathered from existing and potential customers using sampling methods and sending out surveys. During the year 2018 here was an observation, comparison and evaluation of surveys as well as in the year of 2019. Then outputs of are shown in charts . Results were measured in regions CZ/SK and were compared with bigger monitored European states.

3 Customer vs. Consumer

First of all let's make it clear between two terms "Customer" and "Consumer. These two terms are very often easily changed with one another. In some cases customer and consumer may indicate the same section of people. However, it is very important to properly explain main differences between these two terms that are so widely used in every field (Sivakumar, 2021).

The customer basically refers to the person who buys products or services from the store or the company, while consumer is the person who uses these products or services. The customer and the consumer become the same person when someone buys goods and services for personal use.

Because it is customer who spends money and purchases products or goods or services, the main focus in the business world is on the customer. On the other hand, because consumer actually uses specific products, he can determine the authenticity of marketing practices. The importance of the consumer is therefore emphasized in many consumer surveys and report that the business world is doing (Sivakumar, 2021).

On the picture below, there are shown basic differences between Customer and Consumer.

	Customer	Consumer
Meaning	The buyer of goods or services is known as the Customer.	The user of goods or services is known as a Consumer.
Purpose	Resale or Consumption	Consumption only; No resell
Payment	Yes; Price is paid by the customer	Not necessary; Price may or may not be paid by the consumer
Type	Individual or Organisation	Individual or group of people

Figure 1: Differences between Consumer and Customer (https://www.feedough.com/customer-vs-consumer-difference/)

3.1.1 Definition of Consumer

Consumers can be individuals or group of people who purchase and use goods and services exclusively for personal use. Their intention is not to use those goods or services for manufacturing or resale. Simply said, consumers are the end-users in the sales distribution chain. After this definition we can say that every person that participates in the economy is consumer of some certain product. For example when the person buy a groceries for family, a person who pays a hairdresser to cut their hair, a parent who buys their child new shoes where the parent is customer but the child is consumer, an individual purchasing a new TV for themselves, in this case the individual is both the customer and consumer at the same time (Vedantu, 2020). While customer may or may not consume the product, good or service he or she purchased, consumer actually uses the product. This statement about consumers make them great factor for businesses to judge the genuineness and usefulness of their actual products. (Sivakumar, 2021)

As it was already mentioned above, consumers are important for businesses in variety ways that are shown and explained below:

1. **Agreeable Consumers**
   - These types of consumers do not like confrontation and usually are trying to get along. They do not put their interests above the society and they are trying to make no waves so at the end everyone is on the same page.

2. **Commercial Consumers**
   - Commercial consumers are very important group for businesses. Their main advantage is buying a lot of good just because they can afford it. These consumers are used to negotiate about the price with the seller, other types of consumers cannot do so. They can have special needs regarding to their purchases so they can directly affect what an end-user can afford to pay for services, products and goods.

3. **Conscientious Consumers**

   - These consumers are usually the first ones who tris new products. However, their decisions are not impulsive and they think over each decision to make sure, if it is the right one for them. They are likely not regretting their decision made. These types of consumers are willing to pay little bit more for certain product.

4. **Discount Consumers**

   - We can agree that the name of this group says it all about these consumers. They always look for discounts of all types. Therefore, if they find some shop where they can find a great deal, they stick to this shop. Social media are great advertisements for this group of consumers.

5. **Personal Consumers**

   - These consumers are intend to purchase products for themselves, family or their household. These products can include everything from bathroom towels, kitchen towels to a gardening tools, new bicycle and even new toys for children. Shortly everything that is for personal use.

6. **Extroverted Consumers**

   - Extroverted consumers are energetic and very social in every aspect of their lives. Since these consumers have higher needs then normal ones, they are more likely to prefer brands that their main products are unique.

7. **Impulsive Consumers**

   - This group of consumers is one of the most difficult to dealt with. Most of their decision are made on a whim, they do not have particular goods or services on mind and therefore they are hard to predict. On the ither hand, most of purchases of the world are made by this group of consumers. Even when it comes to bigger and more expensive items such as houses or cars. These consumers usually do not use logical thinking

when it comes to purchasing products or services, they are convinced by their emotions. That is what marketers have to take into consideration.

8. **Loyal Consumers**
   - This is usually one of the smallest group of people, however they are very significant. They mostly will continue with business with one company, because they are loyal to the certain product or service. They are most likely to spread the word about that certain company among their family, friends and other people, so it becomes as a big advantage to have such consumers. The key how to keep this group of consumers is usually having a loyalty program that offers discounts.

9. **Open consumers**
   - One of the most easiest people to market are "open" consumers. These consumers are usually those that prefer creativity and uniqueness, they have strong sense of being original and uncommon. This group of consumers is perfect for businesses that have one kind of product or service on the market, because they are most likely to step up and try this product.

3.2 Definition of Customer

"A customer is usually an individual, business or organization who buy products or services after paying the monetary price for the same" (Vedantu, 2020).

Any person of a business that purchases some goods or services regularly from a seller can be considered as a customer. Customer is someone who pays to sellers in terms to meet their requirements, wants and needs. As already mentioned above in "Consumer Definition", customer that purchases a certain product can also be a consumers. However, this is not a rule and it is not always the case (Vedantu, 2020).

Here is an example for understanding the difference between customer and consumer: a boyfriend is buying new mobile phone for his girlfriend, in this case the boyfriend is the customer and the girlfriend is the consumer.

In some cases it is possible to compare selling to gambling. In both of businesses the success requires to have knowledges about its clients. (Dooley, 2014).

It is very important to understand what type of game is the customer playing before sitting down and planning some strategy. There is no possibility to put together necessary strategy for market without understanding what the customer wants out of the game (Dooley, 2014).

3.2.1 Types of Customers

There are different ways how to divide types of customers. Below are some examples that I found important as well as interesting ones.

In terms of thinking about customers as a players, there are four types of customers:

1. **Price buyers**
   - These types of customers are only interesting about purchasing goods or services at the lowest price possible. They are less concerned about the value of the product or service, so it is important and smart move to strip away all value-added features in pricing the perfect deal (Dooley, 2014).

2. **Relationship buyers**
   - For this group of customers is very important to have a trust into certain supplier and to have a dependable relationships with them. They are expecting from suppliers to take a good care of them. Relationship buyers expect quality service support, therefore it is important for suppliers to develop an intimate knowledge about the prospect, to focus on decision-making process that are in the best interests of the customer (Dooley, 2014).

3. **Value buyers**
   - Customers that belong to this group really appreciate those suppliers that are able to add a value to their operations "*in terms of increased efficiencies, reduced costs, increased sales and high margins* (Dooley, 2014). By dealing with these customers it is important to focus on discovering values that can differentiate certain business from others (Dooley, 2014).

4. **Poker player buyers**
   - Poker player buyers are usually a mixture of value and relationship customers. They are acting like these two groups because they want to negotiate about the price using method of bluffing. It is very important

for sellers to prepare some tactics how to deal with such customers and be ready to with an appropriate solution (Dooley, 2014).

From different perspective, we can differentiate customers as follows:

1. **Loyal customers**
   - These customers are satisfied and happy with goods and services from one brand, so they are willing to return multiple times for purchases

2. **Trade customers**
   - This group of customers buys products, add a value to those products and resell them, so take make a profit from it.

3. **Final customers**
   - In this case, no profit or reselling plays a role. These customers are purchasing products for their own use.

4. **Discount customers**
   - Only when there is a discount on the certain product or service, customers will purchase such product or service.

5. **Impulsive customers**
   - These customers are really hard to read and predict what they will buy. They usually do not buy specific types of products but buy anything they find excellent and interesting.

6. **Need-Based customers**
   - Need-based customers only purchase products and services that they really need to satisfy their wants and needs.

7. **Wandering customers**
   - These customers are the least valuable because they do not know what do they want to buy for themselves.

3.2.2 Role of Customers

The customer is the most important part of every business. It is not important in what industry does this business is or what kind of products and services it sells. Without a customer there would not be any sales. Customers are also a critical and most important factor in terms of creating and developing marketing strategy. Without good knowledges about customers and their wants, needs and desires it is most likely that business's campaign will not be successful.

Through the life, every customer's wants and needs are changing, there customers can help to drive businesses and improve the quality of the products and services offered by companies. To get to know the customer better, the usage of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is necessary. This tool helps to measure the satisfaction and expectations of customers. Customer Relationship Management and its definition, objectives, importance and other features will be described later in this work (Ahmed, 2020).

3.2.3 Customer Segmentation

First of all there is necessary to understand what is the customer segmentation and why it is important for businesses and companies. Customer segmentation helps businesses and companies to apply their marketing strategy in the right way. In this the process of dividing customers into specific groups based on shared characteristics. It is one the most effective ways how to understand that not all customers have same need and wants or behave towards products and services. Since customers are segmented based on similar criteria, then the marketing for each of the groups can be developed. If the business is able to understand customers better, then it is much easier to target them more effectively and build better and higher loyalty (Qualtrics, 2021). It should also reduce the high risk of selling failure.

The reason why to segment customers is easy. It is such a big difference to offer a product to everyone and anyone versus offering product to specific group of people where the product can address their wants, needs and interests. Marketing departments usually create buyers personas for each customer segment. Groups of customers are usually categorized using psychographic, demographic, shopping behaviors and purchase motivations. Segmentation is really complex process where after creating of buyers

personas, businesses are able to map a customer's journey which involves decision making process and steps before, during and after purchasing (SurveyMonkey, 2021).

3.2.3.1 How to segment customers

There are several ways of how to segment customers. For business it is important to understand all the opportunities that are existing on the market. Therefore there are several questions which marketers need to answer:

- How large is the market opportunity for our product or service?
- How does our brand stack up against the competition?
- Which demographics are most likely to buy our product or service?
- Which advertising campaign will resonate best with our target market?

Next steps are several survey that are used to collect detailed data about customer behaviors and motivations :

- How likely is it that you would recommend this product to a friend or colleague?
- What do you like most about the product?
- What do you like most about competing products on the market?
- What reasons do you have for choosing the product?
- What are the reasons why you might not purchase the product?

These questions are usually used in panel survey. It means that those questions are asked to the same audience several times in a long time period (SurveyMonkey, 2021).

It is necessary to understand who will purchase the product and that is the moment when customer segmentation takes the place. After determining characteristics of people, it is possible to effectively divide them into several subgroups. Once the company segmented customers, marketers can start to target the audience.

3.2.3.2 Customer segmentation models

To divide people into groups according common behaviors, wants and needs, marketers use segmentation models. These models describe ideal audiences that will purchase the company's product or service. *"Customer segmentation types include demographic, geographic, psychographic, technographic, behavioral, needs-based, and values-based approaches."* (SurveyMonkey, 2021).

1. **Geographic segmentation**
   - Geographic segmentation means where the customer lives and works (for B2C) or where the company or business is located (for B2B). The please where customer lives affects customers' needs and wants and also tastes.
   - There are few factors that are commonly used for this segmentation
     o Time zone
     o Climate
     o Geographic location (state, city, region, province,…)
     o Language spoken
     o Population characteristics

2. **Demographic segmentation**
   - Here marketers usually divide people based on their persona and lifestyles:
     o Age
     o Gender
     o Family status
     o Income
     o Education
     o Ethnicity
     o Nationality
     o Household structure

3. **Psychographic segmentation**
   - This element focuses on psychological characteristics of customers, such as:
     - o Personality
     - o Attitude
     - o Opinions
     - o Interests
     - o Values
     - o Lifestyle
   - This segmentation can help the marketers to better understanding on what customers think about certain products and services.

4. **Behavioral segmentation**
   - Behavioral segmentation is about understanding customers behavior towards company's products and services.
   - It helps to understand what customer experiences at the point of purchase-
   - There are four factors that influence costumer behavior:
     - o Purchase behavior - what happens when they make a purchase?
     - o Occasion and timing - which audience will buy via store, mobile app, or website?
     - o Benefits desired - what value proposition or benefits are they hoping to get?
     - o Customer loyalty - how committed are they to your brand or loyalty program?

5. **Technographic segmentation**
   - Since the technologies are still rapidly evolving, they have a big influence on customers behavior.
   - For B2C segmentations, marketers have to take in consideration what devices and apps customers usually use to purchase some product or service. There may be a difference between customers that purchase via mobile phone and customers that purchase instore.

- For B2B segmentation includes what technologies are used by customers, including:
  - CRM software
  - Frequently used apps
  - Emerging technology
  - Etc.…

6. **Needs-Based segmentation**
   - Here marketers can utilize that moment, when customers emotional and practical needs meet.
   - Emotional need that are marketers usually concentrate on:
     - Attributes and product characteristics
     - Functional benefits of products and services
     - Emotional benefits
     - Values met

7. **Value-based segmentation**
   - This segmentation concentrate on values that customers get from the product or service they purchase. This factor has definitely direct impact on the price of the product
   - From this segmentation, marketers can easily compare what prices are customers willing to pay
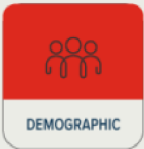
	GEOGRAPHIC	DEMOGRAPHIC	PSYCHOGRAPHICS	BEHAVIOURAL	PERSONA	PREDICTIVE
SIMPLE	Where	Who	Why	What	Who, What, Why, Where	Who and When
WHAT IS IT?	Geographic segmentation divides customers into groups based on their location.	Demographic segmentation divides customers into groups based on census data.	Psychographic segmentation divides customers into groups based on personal interests and motivations.	Behavioural segmentation divides customers into what do - online/offline.	Persona segmentation divides customers into groups based on a blended data. as well as customer goals.	Predictive segmentation uses historical behavioral patterns to predict and influence future customer behaviors.
EXAMPLES	Countries Cities Urban, Suburban, Rural IP Addresses	Age Income Family/Single/Couple Gender Education	Interests Personality Lifestyle Social Status Activities, Interests, Opinions Attitudes	Benefits Sought Occasion Usage Rate Loyalty Buyer Readiness Actions taken e.g. online	Jobs to be done Pain/Gains Demographic data Psychographic data Behavioural data	Usupervised Learning Supervised Learning Reinforcement Learning
WHY USE IT	Dynamic Pricing Ease of use Country/Language differences Localized offers - stores	Easy to use Good for store profiling Ideal for life stages Good to supplement with other data	Uncovers motivations and reasons for product and brand purchases	Ideal for identifying patterns and triggers during buying process. Helps to tailor marketing to different stages	Provides a rich profile of a customer segment. Proves a foundation to test hypothesis and testing to optimize results.	Uncovers hidden buying clusters of customers. Helps with customer discovery.

Figure 2: Examples of customer segmentation (https://www.garyfox.co/customer-segmentation/)

3.2.4 Customer's motivation

Motivation is the driving force of all individuals, which drives them to an action. This force is created a state of stress that exists as a result of an unmet needs. Individuals try consciously and unknowingly reduce this tension by using behaviors that the believe will fill their needs and thus relieve them from the stress they feel. The specific objectives they select and the actions they take, is a result of their thinking and knowledges (Schiffman, 2004).

For marketing orientation knowledge of the motives that initiate and lead to negotiations of customers is definitely essential and very important to know. The core of motivation are those needs, where the satisfaction of those needs is the whole marketing concept and it is based on the satisfaction of those needs. The process of motivation can be seen, among other things, as a specification of activated need in the way of its satisfaction:
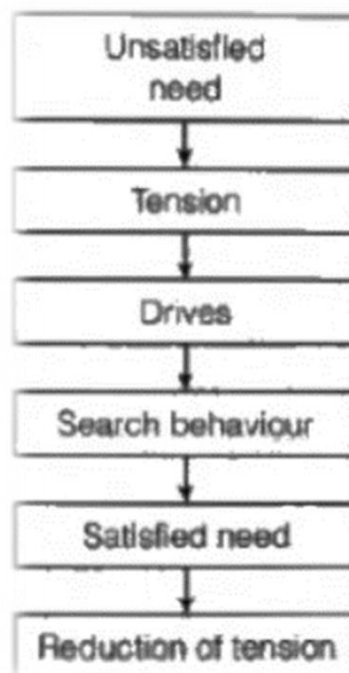
Figure 3: Motivation process (https://indiashines.in/cbse/ncert-solutions-for-class-12-business-studies-chapter-7-directing/)

The initial tensions in the body leads to a certain need. Activated need, in the form of a motive, can manifest itself in various ways. It can change into already specific wish, which represents the specification of satisfaction of the need. All motivations have theirs strength and direction. The strength refers to the degree of felt contradiction, direction is tied to the goal.

3.3 Customer Behavior

Under the term Customer Behavior we can understand every actions that customers are taking regarding purchasing goods and services. The company should know all possible factors that are influencing their customers, only then the business can be successful. It is important to realize that Customer Behavior it is not just the act of buying something but it is about the whole situation before even going to the market, the whole process of decision making (Marketing, 2019).

There are several types of customers:

a. **Individuals** – these customers are purchasing goods and services for their own purpose, their decision making process is based on their own feelings, emotions and most importantly wants and needs. The purchased good is used only by this customer.

b. **Households** – the purchased good is used by the whole family

c. **Organizations** – there belong goods and services that the firm is consuming (usually office supplies)

Customer Behavior is not about WHO is shopping in the stores, it describes HOW customers are shopping in stores. It reviews factors like for example which products they prefer, how frequently do they shop, how the perceive certain type of shop. Customer Behavior is influenced by three types of factors: social, personal and psychological (Fontanella, 2020).

1. **Personality Traits**
   - Customers' personality is very big influence on the behavior itself. It is very important to realize that the customer is influenced by his background and it is going to affect, how the customer will react in different environments. Some customers can be outgoing and loud, some of them can be the opposite. It is necessary to understand the target audience in this category, because it is vital to understand customer behavior (Fontanella, 2020).

2. **Psychological Responses**
   - Psychology is a very complex and it is very hard to predict psychological responses. Be aware of the fact, that psychological responses can change every day. One day customers will be patient and satisfied and next day they will be stressed and nervous (Fontanella, 2020).

3. **Social Trends**
   - Nowadays we are living in world full of social media. Social trends are external factors that customers are paying attention to. Customers can be influenced by other people they are following on social media and their decision can be based on recommendations of others (Fontanella, 2020).

4. **Situational factor**
   - Companies are trying to make this influencing factor as favorable as possible. Nowadays, companies are trying to be eco-friendly, try to attract customers with its location, colors, layout and even scent. Also there are factors such as moods of customers that can influence customer's decision making.

3.3.1 Decision-making process

Customer Behavior is influenced by many factors as was already mentioned above. There are also several types of Customer Buying Behaviors, this will be explained later on. It is also necessary to understand the decision-making process itself. On the picture below, there are shown five steps of decision-making process and further there are explanations of each of these steps (Decision-Making Process, 2020).

Figure 4: Decision-making process (https://www.lucidchart.com/blog/consumer-decision-making-process)

1. **Problem recognition**
   - First step of decision-making process is recognizing the need for a product or service. Once the customer recognize that he WANT something, it is necessary to gather information to get to know, how they can fulfill this want. Here marketing can influence this stage of the whole process. Marketers of the company can develop a campaign, that would say to the customers, that they can trust this brand and only this brand can solve their problem.

2. **Information search**
   - Customers usually have lot of options, but they also need to rely on internal and external factors. They also need to consider the interactions with the product or service purchased from the certain brand, they need to consider both positive and negative aspects. For companies, the role here is to be able to give to customers all information they want.

Marketers need to plan out the types of content that customers need. They need to present their company as trustworthy source of knowledge. Marketer also should consider the strategy named word of mouth. Customers usually trust each other, so it is good for marketers to gather some reviews from customers.

3. **Alternatives evaluation**
   - This step of decision-making process is already about finding alternatives. Customers at this point already developed their criteria of what they want from a product or service. They start to compare their choice with other product or services against comparable alternatives. These alternatives may represents product or service with a lower prices, additional benefits, availability of the product or service or something totally personal such as scent, color or style.

4. **Purchase decision**
   - This is the step of actual purchase. Customers at this moment gathered all important information and facts, such as feedbacks from previous customers.

5. **Post-purchase decision evaluation**
   - This part of the whole decision-making process describes the reflection and feedback from the customer. However, not even from the customer, but from the seller as well. The seller can ask several questions:

     o Did the purchase meet all needs that customer identified?
     o Is the customer happy with this certain purchase?
     o How can the company continue to engage with customers?

   - When the customer purchase the product or service, it does not mean it is the end for the company. It is important for the company to realize that it is necessary to ensure customers to continue to have positive experience

with the company's product, service and behavior. To keep the customer happy and satisfied with the company, there can be for example several discount coupons offered, or the company can send newsletters to the customer to keep him updated with new products or services.

3.3.2 Customer Buying Behaviors

Buying Behaviors helps businesses to better understand why are customers spending money on certain products and services. Understanding of these buying behaviors helps to better target business' marketing towards customers' specific wants and needs. With perfect knowledge of this tool, the company can create a business model directed towards customers with certain buying behaviors. The right directed business model will help the company to attract more customers, boost customer retention rates and improve revenues (Indeed - 11 Different Types of Customer Buying Behaviors, 2021).

There are 11 types of Customer Buying Behaviors. Understanding each of them is the key to target the right audience. These Customer Buying Behaviors are shown and explained below:

1. **Habitual**
   - This term is describing the act of customers, when they put little research into their purchases. These types of customers often make a fast decision when selecting some goods of services. They usually quickly pick some brand just because it is more familiar or recognizable to them. Other customers choose product based on the price or based on their previous experiences with certain brand.

2. **Complex**
   - This type of behavior usually takes place when a customer is purchasing and expensive product. Customer may take some time with the research before purchasing such a large amount. Customers may read reading

review about the product, they can consult it with their families, friends of even colleagues to get to more about the product and to get to know their opinions on this purchase.

3. **Dissonance-reducing**
   - Customer behaving with this buying behavior usually decide on a product that is easily available and fits their budget and meets most of their needs. They often do not have to many brands to choose from, so they typically just choose product that they need on-hand.

4. **Variety seeking**
   - These types of customers usually want to try a new product. They are most likely to purchase them when they see them in some advertisements. They like to learn how the new product differ from products that are regularly purchased by these types of customers.

5. **Limited decision-making**
   - It sometimes happen that there is only a few brands that customer can choose from. That means, customers have a little variety in the selection and have only few options. Therefore, there comes in the place comparing each of individual products, their features and benefits.

6. **Impulsive**
   - Customer that make impulsive buying decisions usually do not plan the selection of certain product to purchase. Some of them will just buy a product without learning more about its features. They are most likely to make quick decisions based on celebrity slogans, logos or endorsements.

7. Spendthrift

- Customers with this type of buying behavior care about the quality of the product and they do not care that much about the cost. Most of their decisions are based on how they feel about features and benefits of the product. They also care about the relationships they can build with the brand.

8. Average spending

- This is the opposite of the previous type of buying behavior. Customers care about the cost and the money they can save. However, quality is also important for them. It is interesting, that this group of customers are willing to spend over their budget if case they feel it is worth it. It is typical for these buyers that they ask for the price and they tend to compare it with competitors. They need to ensure themselves, they are receiving the most beneficial offer.

9. Frugal spending

- These types of costumers care more about the price of the product than its features, brand reputation or its benefits. For sellers, it is typical to try to appeal those customers by detailing the return on investment that they can earn after purchasing the specific product

10. Analytical

- From its name, it is not hard to predict the typical behavior. Costumers often use data, facts, information and logic when making decisions. They conduct all researches about the product and also possible outcomes they may get after purchasing that specific product.

11. Expressive

- These types of costumers usually mostly care about the protentional relationship and experience they receive from the purchased product or service. They really care about the interaction with the brand, received necessary help and guidance or support when needed.
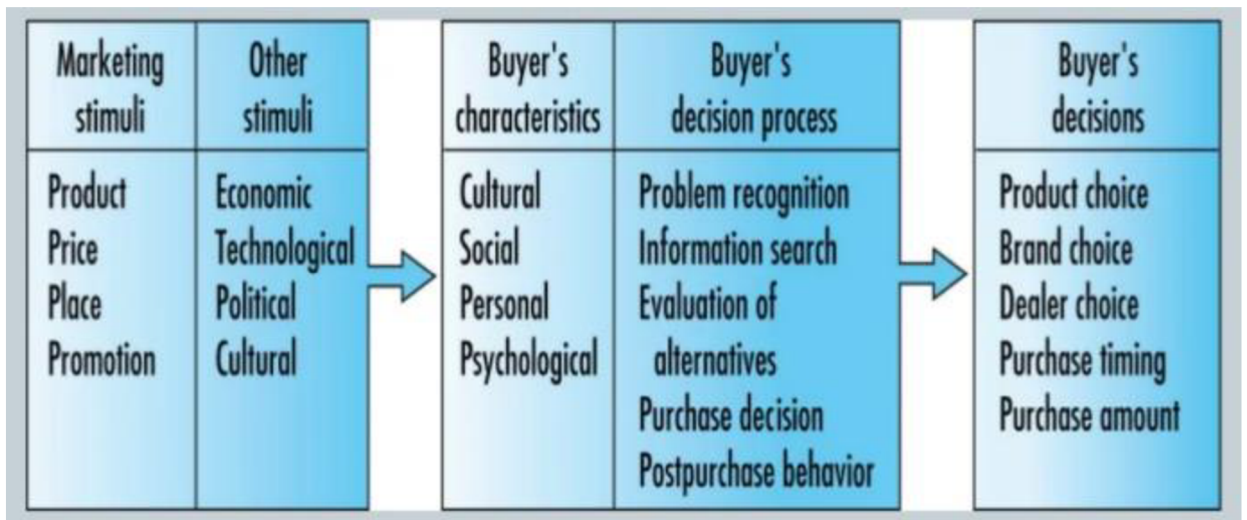

Marketing stimuli	Other stimuli	Buyer's characteristics	Buyer's decision process	Buyer's decisions
Product Price Place Promotion	Economic Technological Political Cultural	Cultural Social Personal Psychological	Problem recognition Information search Evaluation of alternatives Purchase decision Postpurchase behavior	Product choice Brand choice Dealer choice Purchase timing Purchase amount

Figure 5: Model of Customer Buying Behavior (https://www.slideshare.net/HarshArora18/consumer-behavior-models-48468657)

3.3.3 Customer's needs

The product offer has to be understood as a solution to the customer's need, as a offer, which the product brings to the customer. Being able to satisfy a certain need is what motivated customer to purchase. We can simply divide the needs into two categories – tangible and intangible (emotional).

When making a purchase decision, the customer usually tries to satisfy more needs, but often some of them are priorities. Tangible needs are more recognizable and usually create rational reasons to buy it. Intangible needs are not so clear for customers. However, we should not underestimate them. It is about for example the need of recognition, prestige or joy.

Abraham Maslow has developed a well-known theory of the pyramid of needs that puts man up to five consecutive levels. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is based on two basic assumptions:

1. Person is still dissatisfied and his needs depend on what he already has. Only unmet needs can influence human behavior. In other words: the need that is already satisfied, is no longer a motivator for a customer. This constantly represents from sellers a new space to look for other options how to satisfy customer's needs.

2. Customer's needs can be arranged into a hierarchy, where graphic representation is a pyramid. Once one need is satisfied, another appears, usually providing another level of quality of life.

Maslow's pyramid is simply based on the fact that everyone has specific needs that are not fulfilled. Therefore, the customers always feels a certain dissatisfaction with his current situation (Lumen, 2017).
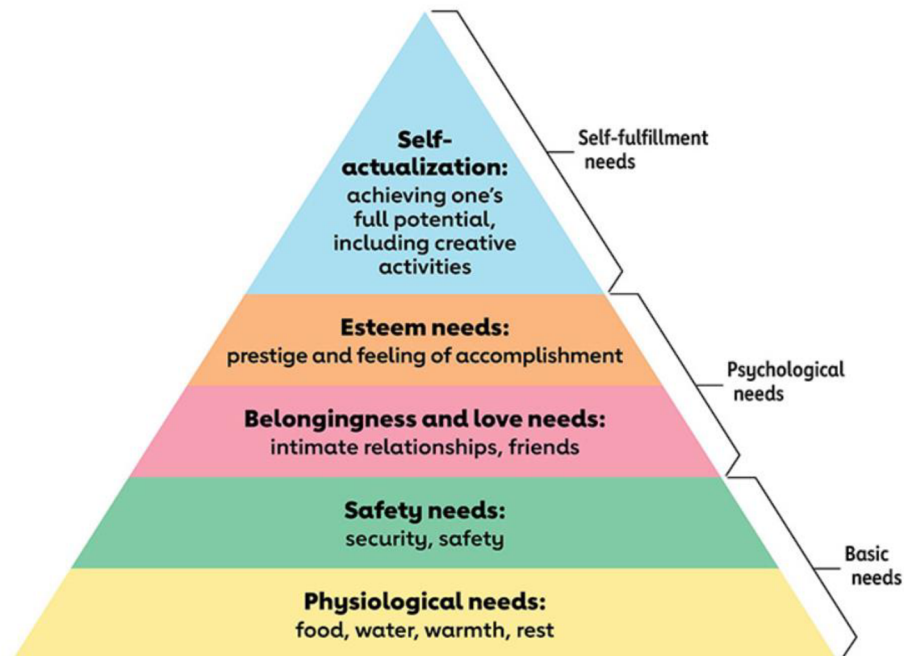

Figure 6: Maslow's Hierarchy (https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html)

Another division of customer's need can be division into four categories. Namely existential, environmental needs, social environment needs, social responses and affiliations and the need of self-creation. The existential needs include primary organic needs such as hunger, thirst, movement, rest, sleep, etc., safety and security needs such as defense, attack sufficient information, kinship needs such as being a part of a whole, sexual needs, the needs for affection. Definition of the environment needs can be as the need to have our own nook or nest, to have an environment where we can apply our ability, an environment that is according to our tase.

Into the needs of social environment belong for example the need to belong to a certain groups, to have a certain social role and have some prestige, recognition and status.

In the last category of needs, which is called as a need of self-creation, states in the first place dominance, equivalence, superiority, submissiveness, the ability to be useful to someone, self-improvement, emotional and aesthetic needs. Among these needs also belong

values and ideals such as being oneself, being original, good, educated, etc., the need of manipulations, experimentations, risk, need for curiosity.

We can define customer's needs as factors that are influencing customers and triggering them to purchase product or service. It is important to understand customer's reasons in decision making and after that we are able to identify customer's needs. First step to be able to identify customer's need is to know, who the right customers are, to know the target audience (Patel, 2022).

Identification of customer's need is a process of determining of what and how customer wants from the product or service to perform. Customer's needs reflect the customers' perception of the product. Customer's needs identifications has to major goals:

    a. To keep the certain product focus on satisfying customer's needs
    b. To identify also latent needs and not just the explicit needs

With these goals on mind, there is only one goal more, to precisely find out what customer wants. To find perfectly customer's need, here is four steps method for identifying customer's needs (Simpson-Wolf, 2020):

1. **Gathering Raw Data**
   - Logically, the first step of the whole process of identifying customer's needs, must be gathering data about and from customers. Without customer's inputs, it would be impossible to start with this process. It is important for the company to try to learn as much as possible about the customer.
   - There are three possible way how to gather data and information about customers:

     o **Interviews** – this is understood as one-on-one meetings, interview's length is usually about 1 – 2 hours and usually take place at customer's environment, because they feel more comfortable in place they know.

- o **Focus groups** – by this term, we understand something similar like interviews, but expanded with 8 to 12 customers. Also the length here is longer, approximately about 2 hours. The discussion here is led by an interviewer.

- o **Observations** – observing someone struggling with a problem is the easiest way to get basic information about certain issue. Observation can mean that someone is watching a customer in his natural environment or they can work side-by-side with the customer and gain the main problem from their perspective.

- All these three options are perfect ways to get important and necessary information from the customer. Another way of collecting data are surveys. However, survey are very limited, they usually have limited space for data and it is very hard to put specific questions about a need that has not been thought of yet. On the other hand, surveys are cheap and usually easy to make and that is the reason why they are so popular and common.

- For most of the companies, it is much better and effective to invest those earned money from surveys into interviews and focus groups. Conducting and evaluating these interview and focus groups is crucial for companies. Here are some tips how to lead an effective interview:
  - o Using visual stimuli
  - o Preparing questions, but do not be afraid to depart if necessary
  - o Let the customer demonstrate the product
  - o Watch for non-verbal information

2. Interpreting Data

- After some interviews, it is necessary to collect all information and transform them into something that company can work with. Below is process with helpful suggestions how to do so:
    - Use positive phrasing
    - Avoid the words must and should
    - Express the needs as an attribute of the product

3. Organizing needs

- Once the data are collected and interpreted, we can organize them. In this step of the process, needs should be categorized by similarity or priorities. *"In the 1980's Professor Noriaki Kano developed a categorization system called the Kano Method, which helps to organize needs. The essence of the Kano Method is the five Qualities that product features can have."* (Simpson-Wolf, 2020).

    - **Attractive quality** – when these qualities are fulfilled, it leads to customer's satisfaction, on the other hand, if these qualities are not met, it does not cause the dissatisfaction of the customer.

    - **One-dimensional quality** – this is the opposite of previous example, when these qualities are not met, it leads to dissatisfaction.

    - **Must-be quality** – these types of qualities are assumed to be met. If not, it causes dissatisfaction.

    - **Indifferent quality** – these qualities are either bad or good and they do not decrease or increase the customer's satisfaction.

o **Reverse quality** – by these types of qualities it depends on the customer if their fulfillment will cause satisfaction of dissatisfaction.
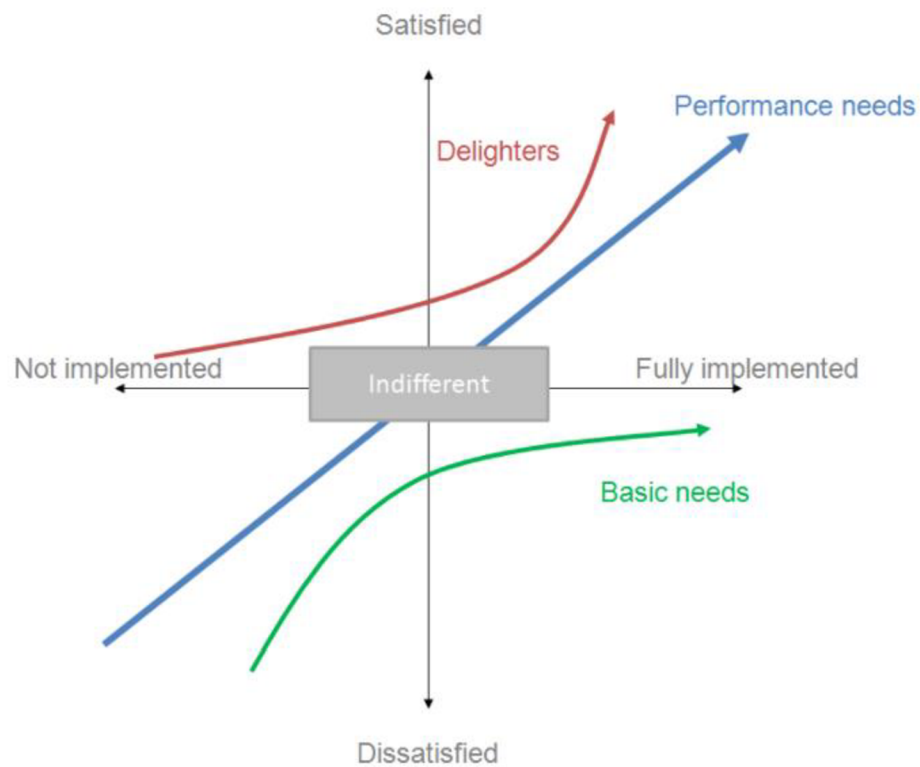
- These five qualities represent the customer's wants and needs that product can meet. This is also explanation why surveys cannot identify all customer's needs. Dissatisfaction of the customer can be based on current situation, feeling, setup or problem.

4. Reflect on the Process

- This is the final step of the process of identifying customer's needs. In this steps, the company should reflect on the previous work. Considering the possible statements and studying interpretations comes to the place. Evaluate if all customer were interviewed, if any of the customers require any follow-up interviews, if there should be more or less interviews, etc.

All these techniques are very important for companies, because only that way, company can understand and learn the customer's needs and wants. Fulfilling customer's need is the key of every business. When the company is able to fulfill customer's needs, then it is easier to build a relationship with customer.

For achieving a successful relationship with each customer, it is important for companies to follow the Customer Relationship Management (CRM). What is CRM, what are its features and main steps, is explained in the next chapter.

3.4 Customer Relationship management

Customer Relationship management is very important key to all companies and organizations. Over the past few years it appears to be a key factor to success for an organization because customer should be the number one. Nowadays when the market is full of competitors, it is very important for ever business to try to stand out with the perfect Customer Relationship. The basic use of CRM is to understand the factors that affect customer remembrance and primarily loyalty in order to build long – term relationships with customers. Creating loyal and satisfied customers, building a long-lasting and full-fledged relationship with them, covers their entire lifecycle.

Figure 8: Customer Relationship Management (https://ebusinessinstitute.com/glossary/crm-customer-relationship-management/)

CRM helps to measure the customer loyalty. To measure the customer loyalty, the company need to know what affects their behavior. For this purpose, there was made so called Customer Relationship Management that covers all processes of customer communication, co-ordination, alignment, and management. The goal of the Customer Relationship Management is to satisfy all customers, build long-term relationships with them and to acquire new ones (Salesforce, 2020).

"CRM is the largest and fastest-growing enterprise application software category, and worldwide spending on CRM is expected to reach USD $114.4 billion by the year 2027" (Salesforce, 2020). For marketers CRM is very important because it gives them clear overview of company's customers. This tools can show customer's previous history with the certain company, it can show the status of their orders and many other important information. It is also possible to gather data about their social media activity, what do they share about the company or its competitors. With these information, marketers can build optimal campaigns and better understand the pipeline of sales (Salesforce, 2020).

To have a successful and effective Customer Relationship Management it is good to for example try to adapt company's CRM strategy to fit in the business's specific needs. That means it is good step from the company to focus on different departments and team members and how they interact with customers. Another example how to make an effective CRM is creating sample clients profiles to help identify ideal customers. This example can help professionals from marketing to better understand the type of customers that are interested in purchasing products of services from their brand. Other very crucial example is making sure that everyone within the company understands well the CRM vision. It is important to make sure, that given vision of CRM is well-known across all departments of the company. All departments should understand the company's procedures because customers are more likely to come back only if they experience the same level of service as they are used to from previous experiences.

3.4.1 Steps in the CRM process

Below are six main steps that are describing the Customer Relationship Management (Indeed - 11 Different Types of Customer Buying Behaviors, 2021):
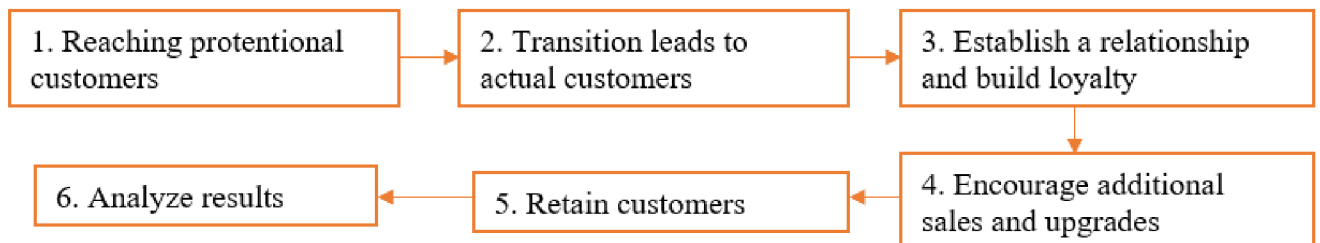

Figure 9: CRM process main steps (source: author)

1. **Reaching potential customers:**
   - Creating successful CRM definitely depends on connecting with potential customers. This is the first step of the whole CRM process. Connecting with customers is possible by using traditional or digital marketing campaigns. Marketers usually focus their attention on target groups. It is necessary for a company to create brand image first. Only then it is possible to create a relationship with costumers.

2. **Transition leads to actual customers:**
   - It is an integral part of a CRM system and process to set up a strategy to contact and engage potential customers. Teams of sales usually access customer data to determine which of these customers are more likely to transform to purchasing and paying customers. It is usually based on their interactions with certain brand and their habits. This step of the whole process is crucial in terms of making relationships with new customers.

3. **Establish a relationship and build loyalty:**
   - One of the most important key in maintaining a relationship with the customer is to keep the brand relevant through personalized correspondence. It is possible for a company to build a positive relationship by ensuring them that they can have their needs resolved fast. Many businesses focus their CRM efforts on sustaining customer trust, it is because a loyalty is a sign of positive relationship between company and its customers.

4. **Encourage additional sales and upgrades:**
   - After a trust with a customer is built, company can use their habits to offer more services and products. It is possible then for the company to offer personalized recommendations and offers through many communication's ways. This way should encourage customers to purchase other services or products of the company that can be upgraded.

5. **Retain customers:**
   - One of the key reasons of this whole process is the vision of higher return of investment (ROI). ROI could get higher when the company is selling products or services to already existing customers. Why is it so? ROI is getting higher because the company does not have to pay the same fees as during obtaining new customers.

6. **Analyze results:**
   - Final step of CRM process is generating data from software tools, survey and other data that company collected from already existing and loyal customers. Analyzing and evaluating these data allow the company to optimize existing CRM protocols and plans and visions and future improvements.

3.5 Covid-19 and its beginning

At the end of the year 2019 in China there was a series of pneumonias of unknown origin. First cases were officially announced in one of the most populated city of China Wu-Chan. These cases were of unknown origin with and unknown way of treatment. This disease spread really quickly around the whole China and other cases were announced in many other countries. Firstly in Asia and Australia and then this virus was revealed in Europe, Afrika and America. World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic situation on 30. of January (ústav, 2021).

3.5.1 Symptoms of COVID-19

The course of COVID-19 infection is influenced by two factors, namely the size of infection dose and the immunity of an individual. If the person is exposed by high infectious dose or the dose is repeated or it is long-term, the infection is very presumable. The dose may also affect the course of the disease and the length of incubation period. The most common symptoms for this disease are fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, muscle and joint pain, loss of taste, smell and sometimes also diarrhea and vomiting can appear. Patients infected by COVID-19 suffer from a severe course thrombosis and cardiomyopathy or acute kidney disease. According to the date, it is approximately $10-50\%$ of people reported with asymptomatic disease. These patients can find out if they have this disease only by testing. They are also considered as the worst types of virus vectors (CZSO, 2021).

3.5.2 Impact on traveling industry

Huge amount of lockdowns that were made during pandemic situation definitely negatively affected tourism and the aviation industry all over the world. However, it was unexpectedly slightly positive impact on our domestic travel market. Longer tourist trips within Czech Republic mediated by a travel agency or office even increased by 22% in the year of 2020. The crisis has affected cross-border tourism around the world. The beginning of 2021 was even worse than in the year 2020, when the pandemic broke out. At that time, the number of tourist travels decreased by 73% compared to 2019 (CZSO, 2021).

In the Czech Republic, tourism became one of the most affected sectors of the economy in 2020 due to this pandemic situation. Its shares in the country's gross domestic product fell to 1,48%, which is 84,3 billion crowns in financial terms (CZSO, 2021).

Here are some of the main impacts on travel industry (OSN, 2020):

1. Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in the world. It is third in a row in terms of exports (after fuels and chemicals) and in 2017 its share in global trade was 7%.

2. After ten years of growth, the number of foreign tourists in 2019 reached 1.5 billion. The number of domestic tourists reached 9 billion.

3. Globally, tourism supports 10% of jobs and provides a livelihood for millions of people in both developing and developed economies. In Europe, it supports 27 million jobs and millions of private companies. In some so-called small island developing states, tourism accounts for up to 80% of exports. It also has a significant share in developed countries (Germany 3.9%, France 7.4% or Spain 11.8%).

COVID-19 also has huge impact on economies and living:

1. In 2020, the number of foreign tourists decreased by 58% to 78%. Up to 100 million jobs were at risk. Small businesses in particular those which provide 80% of global tourism are the most vulnerable ones.

2. Tourist spendings fell by $910 billion to $1.2 trillion in year 2020.

3. Massive impact on domestic and international tourism affected global GDP by 1.5% to 2.8%.

4. The most vulnerable were women and young people, that made up the bulk of the industry.

5. The impacts affect all countries. The most vulnerable were those countries that were depended the most on tourism. Foreign direct investment flows fell by 40% in the year 2020.

And what can be done to restart the whole economic situation of travel industry? Here are five priorities what should be done to bring travel industry back to normal.

1. Mitigate the socio-economics impact on people's livelihoods, in particular on women's employment and economic security.
2. Strengthen competitiveness and resilience.
3. Promote innovation and digitization of tourism.
4. Strengthen sustainability and green growth to kick-start resilient, competitive, resource-efficient and low-carbon tourism.
5. Coordination and partnership for the transformation of the sector to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.5.3   Impact on a car rental industry

In addition to the impact of COVID-19 on the economies of states, private companies, retailers, gastronomy and our wallets as well, pandemic situation had extremely negative impact on seemingly fearless companies such as car rentals. With the huge number of infected people and the number of new anti-coronavirus measures, the mileage and the need to rent a car and go abroad decreased. Despite lot of lockdowns during pandemic situation and transportation by air was completely stopped, the need of renting a car still was there on the domestic market.

Therefore, on Friday May 22, one of the largest car rental companies in the world declared bankruptcy. The impact of COVID-19 on travel and various ways of transport has been so dramatic that companies have reduced revenues to a minimum and reservations of rented cars have been canceled for the future. Two thirds of their profits came from renting cars at airports.

According to experts, one of the solutions to the company's recovery was the sale of part of their vehicle fleet. The vehicle fleet in USA represented 568,000 vehicles and 12,400 franchises over the world. One third of it are operated at airports. In Czech republic the rent a car company had 900 vehicles before COVID-19, during pandemic situation, the vehicle fleet had to be reduced to 150 vehicles. It is decrease by 82,5% (CZSO, 2021). The whole COVID-19 situation brought completely new opportunities (such as online meetings for example) and especially requirements from customers.

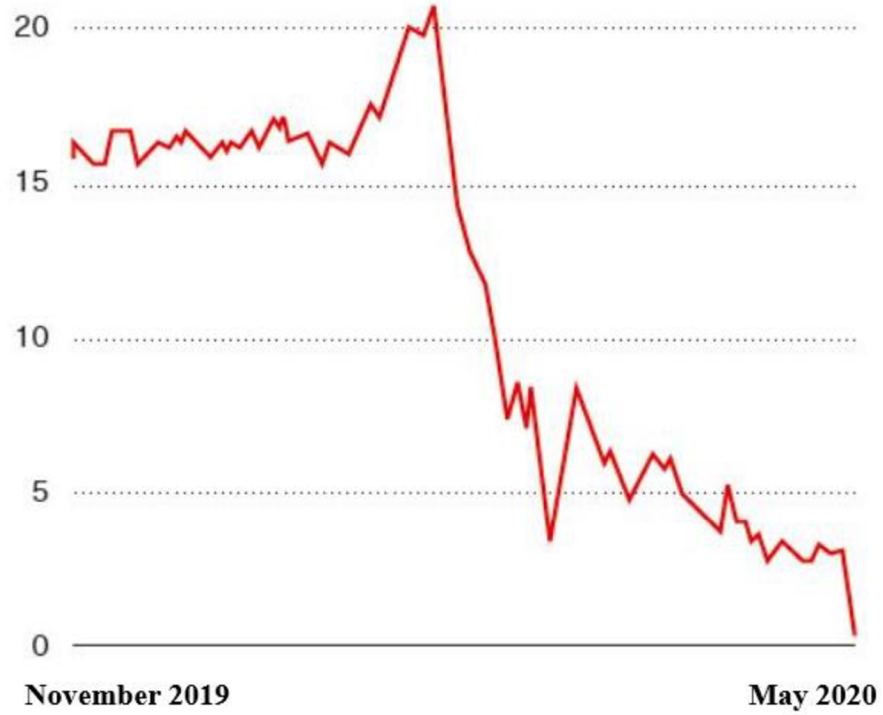*Figure 10:* Stock Development of one of the largest car rental company in the world
(https://www.nyse.com/quote/XNGS:HTZ/QUOTE)

47

4 Practical part

In the practical part there is used analysis as times series. There are also gathered information from existing customers using sampling methods and sending them surveys. During years 2018 and 2020 there was a periodical observation, gathering surveys and their evaluation. To be able to evaluate such data, there is necessity of knowing the Net Promoter Score technique and its features that will be shortly described below.

Hereafter there are used charts to show how did the customer behavior change through pandemic situation in rental car industry in one of the biggest company in the world. Data are collected from two different sized regions Czech, Slovak and Belux. There are shown also some important parts of the survey itself. It was interesting what all the application InMoment used for data collection can show. For example, how are its outputs processed by the company and what is important for the company. There are some examples of these important information that were acquired from the surveys. Results were measured in regions CZ/SK and were compared with bigger monitored European states. Each year all necessary data were collected, analyzed and evaluated in graphs.

There are many companies that are dealing with evaluation of Customer Feedback Management and there are also several application that can be used for analyzing these data. In this work, there is used application names InMoment.

InMoment provides services such as Experience Hub. It is a system which summarize data from InMoment sources and allows certain company to work with these data. It allows also to manage with them. Other very important service is Voice of Costumer (VoC). Voice of Costumer is set of tools which can provide feedbacks from customers (Wikipedia, 2018).

4.1 Net Promoter Score

Customer's loyalty is a basic concept in the relationship marketing paradigm. Traditionally, customer's loyalty is defined as customer's commitment to stick with a company and its products or services, with a brand or organization. Company's interests are to keep the customer despite competitors or new opportunities that may influence customer's leave. Net promoter score (NPS) is a tool by which companies are able to measure customer loyalty very quickly. NPS measures customer's willingness to recommend certain brand, company, product or service in the future. This measurement tool is used by many companies and organizations. It works as a key indicator of customer's loyalty and satisfaction.

There are several software and tools which are helping companies to measure NPS. For example Qualaroo, SMG, Survicate, Qualtrcis and many others.

Unnamed rent a cat company is using application called InMoment. This application allows the company to follow customer feedback every day and also provides necessary report to help the company to improve its services. The NPS value is counted as a difference between % Supporters and % Critics. The final score is easily measured in time within each sector. This measurement also allows the company to better analyze the needs and wants of each their customers and captures dissatisfaction of customers.

The NPS is based on a scale of a number of questions. On each of these question, the customer has to respond with a score 0 – 10, where 0 means that the customer is totally dissatisfied and totally disagree and 10 means extremely satisfied and extremely agree.

The main goal of NPS is long-term monitoring of customer satisfaction. If the customers provides feedback to the company with numbers 9 or 10, these customers are considered as promoter. This means that these customers are loyal and will likely recommend to use this rent a car company. Customers that give the company feedback with number 7 or 8 are considered as passives. And the rest, those who rates 0 – 6 are considered as detractors. These detractors will most probably leave the company for good and most probably will not recommend it to others.

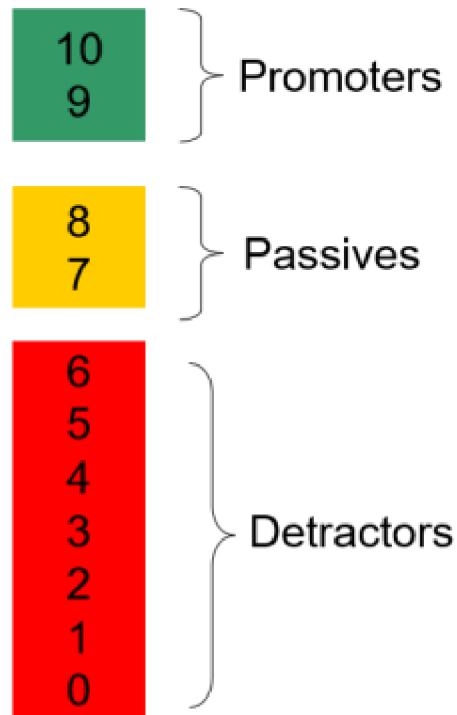Those ratings mentioned above are shown in the picture below:

Figure 11: Net promoter score scale (source: author)

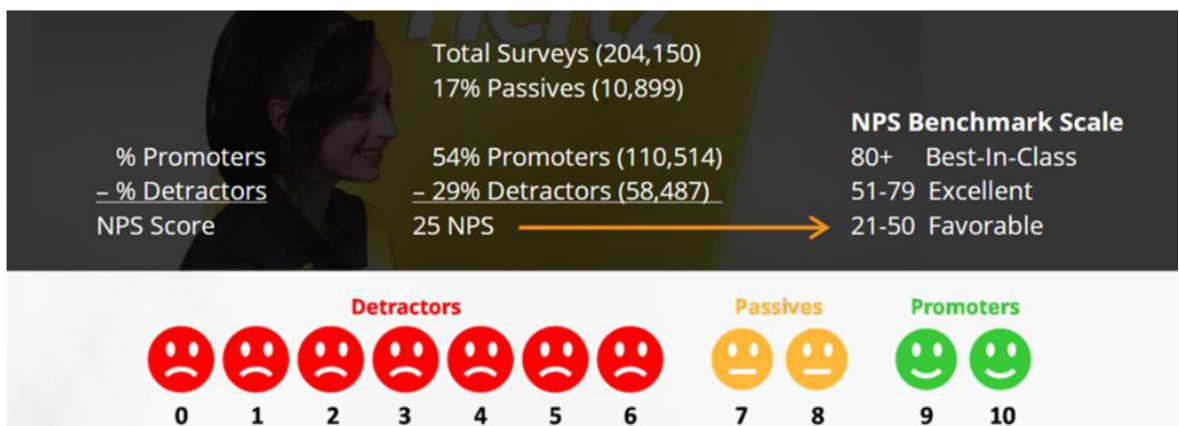The final score of NPS is the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors.

Figure 12: NPS Calculation (source: author)

4.2 Data collection

It is not a secret and surprise that customers are company's core business. All companies need some feedback from their customers, so they can work on their marketing programs and what to do better and how improve their services to impact the Customer Behavior in the right way and in their benefit. The only way how to find out about customer's feelings is to ask them via survey. This rent a car company is used survey based on InMoment platform. Surveys are send to customers via email invitation after returning the car. In this email, there is a link where customers are answering survey questions.

Here are some examples of those questions:

Step 4.

Please rate your Hertz rental experience based on your satisfaction on each of the following items:

	Not At All Satisfied 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely Satisfied 10
Helpfulness of the staff	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	⊙
Felt like a valued customer	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Value for the money	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Speed of service	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ease of returning your vehicle	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ease of picking up your vehicle	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Back | Next

Step 5.

Was your vehicle ready for you upon arrival?

○ Yes
○ No

Were you greeted with a smile by the employees you met?

○ Yes
○ No

Did your final bill match what you expected to pay?

○ Yes
○ No

Back | Next

Step 6.

What was the primary purpose of your rental?

○ Business
○ Leisure
○ Both Business and Leisure
○ Insurance Replacement/Loaner
○ Other
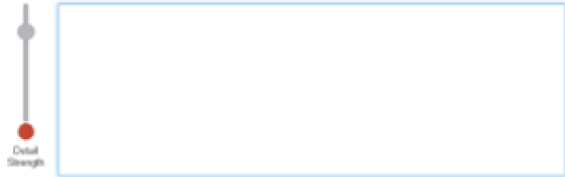
Back | Next

Step 7.

Do you have any additional comments about your experience?

Back   Next

Step 8.

Do you want to recognise a particular staff member / employee?

Back   Next

Figure 13: Example of survey questions (source: InMoment)

4.3 Survey evaluation

Surveys results and data collection are made by using and retrieving information from the internet and are processed by the application InMoment. Reports that are shown in the practical part are used as reports as a customer feedback by which we can observe the changes in customer behavior. Certain reports are designed for each level of management.

Since each customer finishes the survey, reports are immediately accessible on websites. InMoment reports are easy-to-read, use and most importantly easy to understand.

Surveys are daily analyzed and evaluated by certain management level, depending on their responsibility in the company. The main steps of how the company analyzes these surveys can be seen in the graph below.

1. Location level – at this level shifts are planned, car transport and auditing is arranged, preparation of rental agreements, daily logistics at the offices and elimination of queues.
2. Country level – at this level it is important to correctly „lead" offices at different locations, pushing to low performing locations, coordinate the best practices between each location among the certain region, setting up the proposals business planning.
3. HQ level – there are the most important steps of the whole company such as investment decisions and marketing investments
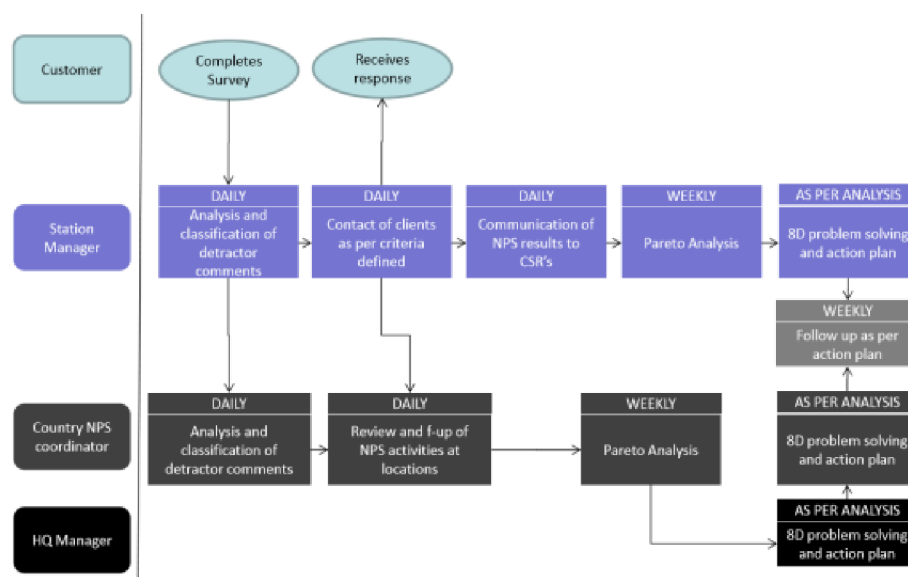
Figure 14: Graph of main work steps (source: author)

54

4.3.1 Measurement Questions

There is a big surprise during completing diploma thesis, someone would say, that the evaluating of customer behavior and consecutive customer satisfaction is not an arithmetic mean of all the questions. The important question, that can tell the company a lot about the whole process of purchasing their service – renting a car, is the answer to one single question "how likely would you recommend…?". Other questions that are listed below provide us the possible change of Customer Behavior, customer's feelings during renting a car and help provided from employees of the company.

Thanks to below described questions can company find out, how to improve its processes.

1. **Mechanical condition of the vehicle** – this aspect is absolutely logic, when customer make a reservation for a car, he is expecting some kind of quality of it. Especially in larger car rental companies, cars should highly equipped to satisfy customer's wants and needs.

2. **Cleanliness of the vehicle** – it was always very necessary to keep all the vehicles in great conditions. When the COVID-19 came, the cleanliness became one of the most important service when cleaning the car. All vehicles were cleaned by special cleaning company and they used disinfections to perfectly prepare the car for next customer.

3. **Make & Model** – again, absolutely logic aspect of renting a car, when a client is making a reservation for a exact type of car, he expects that this exact car will be prepared for him. However, when the pandemic situation came, it was little bit hard to keep this rule, because as it was already mentioned above, the company had to sell a part of its fleet of vehicles.

4. **Speed of service** – when it comes to speed of service, in general, it is very important for the company to make right shifts planning on operation and fleet. If this not happen, clients are waiting in queues. Again, with COVID-19, there

were less and less clients, which is in this aspect good things, because employees can focus on them and the speed of service is much better then with hundreds of clients.

5. **Helpfulness of the stuff** – all customers want to be listened. He usually does not know what he can purchase at the counter, so it is very important to have staff, that are able to help and explain all the features that customer can purchase and all features about the rental agreement. During pandemic situations this was also much easier to be perfect at due to less number of clients. Staff have much more time to communicate with the client and take care about him properly.

6. **Felt like a valued customer** – this question tells how does the client feel at the counter, if he will be loyal and if he is willing to come again. It is important for employees at the counter not to make the customer feel like paying puppets. With less clients during coronavirus pandemic, it was very achievable to have great responses at this aspect.

7. **Value for the money** – this question is only the result of what does client expect to get from the company if he pays certain amount of money.

8. **Ease of pick up** – at the moment of COVID-19, it was not so hard to please the client with fast and easy service. The clientele of this rent a car company are usually people from business that are in hurry for some business meeting. Thanks to COVID-19, the rating increased a bit.

9. **Ease of returning** – this process should be easier all the time. There is expected, that returning the car will not be complicated.

4.3.2 Company Actions

Since there were many new regulations due to COVID-19 and many new restrictions, all companies had to deal with it. All companies were trying to protect its employees and prevent the spread of this pandemic disease.

It was necessary to keep the distance at least 1 meter from each other, to avoid crowds and close contact. Wearing a mask was mandatory and last but not least, there were very strict hygienic regulations.

The rent a car company also had to deal with all regulations. The company had to adapt and come up with brand new working procedures.

1. Preparing and cleaning the cars
   - There were special procedure how to clean the interior of each of the cars, there were used special kind of disinfection
2. For VIP clients (also called GOLD clients) cars had to be sealed with special sticker that proved to customers that the car was cleaned and nobody were inside after that. This should lead to build a stronger relationship with these customers and keep them loyal to the company.
3. Following the distance regulations, there were introduced contactless rentals where the customer received via special application and e-invoice. Thanks to this new feature, customers did not have to get in close contact with employees of the company and they felt much more comfortable and save, which was the goal of the company.
4. Another great feature regarding keeping the distance was introducing of contactless delivery/collection of the car. In this case customer could leave the car documents inside of the car and just leave.
5. In the offices, there were installed plexiglasses to avoid close contact between employee and the customer.

All of these procedures had to be made due to pandemic situation and new regulations that came along with it. There were completely new claims from customers such as safety, isolation, cleanliness, psychical well-being in very tight stress period.

4.4 Collected Data

For my research I worked with data from InMoment application with access of behalf rent-a-car company. In the tables below, there are collected data that I gathered from application reporting during the year 2018, date of survey 1. 1. 2018 – 31. 12. 2018 and a year 2020, date of survey 1. 1. 2020 – 31. 12. 2020. From all available EU countries in the system I took the data from two the smallest comparable European operation within rent a car corporation.

On below table where is number of total survey count for each region CZ/SK and Belux during watched period.

Year	Number of surveys (Graph Survey Numbers)	
	2018	2020
CZ/SK region	1423	496
BELUX region	7336	2133

Table 1: Survey count during years 2018 and 2020 in different regions (source: author)

Next tables show NPS score results for regions CZ/SK and BENELUX in the year 2018. There are clearly visible results of customer's evaluations of each of the company's services.

2018	NPS score (Vehicle Experience Drivers)			
	Overall Satisfaction with Vehicle	Mechanical Condition of Vehicle	Cleanliness of the Vehicle	Make & Mode
CZ/SK region	54,8	73,4	78,5	51,1
BELUX region	42,7	57,8	54,0	39,3

Table 2: NPS score – Vehicle Experience Drivers 2018 (source: author)

2018	NPS score (Service Experience Drivers)		
	Speed of Service	Helpfulness of the staff	Felt like a Valued Customer
CZ/SK region	52,5	52,6	34,0
BELUX region	52,6	55,6	35,1

Table 3: NPS score – Service Experience Drivers 2018 (source: author)

2018	NPS score (Easy of renting/returning the vehicle)	
	Ease of pick up	Ease of Returning Your Vehicle
CZ/SK region	56,5	58,7
BELUX region	53,0	56,1

Table 4: NPS score – Easy of renting/returning the vehicle 2018 (source: author)

On the next tables, there are shown same results as in the previous ones, however these data are gathered during the year 2020 as a first full year of COVID-19.

2020	NPS score (Vehicle Experience Drivers)			
	Overall Satisfaction with Vehicle	Mechanical Condition of Vehicle	Cleanliness of the Vehicle	Make & Mode
CZ/SK region	56,8	81,4	78,4	48,8
BELUX region	51,6	71,8	62,1	45,9

Table 5: NPS score – Vehicle Experience Drivers 2020 (source: author)

2020	NPS score (Service Experience Drivers)		
	Speed of Service	Helpfulness of the staff	Felt like a Valued Customer
CZ/SK region	69,5	66,9	63,8
BELUX region	62,8	66,0	45,9

Table 6: NPS score – Service Experience Drivers 2020 (source: author)

2020	NPS score (Easy of renting/returning the vehicle)	
	Ease of pick up	Ease of Returning Your Vehicle
CZ/SK region	66,9	62,0
BELUX region	61,2	64,7

Table 7: NPS score – Easy of renting/returning the vehicle 2020 (source: author)

4.5 My surveys results

After collection of survey and data from the application named InMoment, it is possible to evaluate and make some overviews and reports from these date collected. In following lines and chapters, there are some chart that are showing the results and comparisons between the two crucial years.

First of all it is important to mention and graphically show the number of surveys collected through the year 2018 and year 2020. With these numbers we can imagine, how the situation was in 2018 and how the situation was developing when COVID-19 came into our lives.

Graph shows us the numbers of survey count in the year before pandemic situation 2018 (grey roller). Red roller shows number of surveys in the first year of COVID-19, year 2020. These surveys were taken in two different regions, in small European region CZ/SK and second smallest region Belux. We can see that the number of surveys are vary, however those regions were chosen just because to see, how the customers are rating all services in two different regions with different sizes. Final comparison feedbacks are surprisingly similar. There are clearly visible drastical changes in number of surveys collected from customers. We can see here the huge impact of COVID-19 on the car rental industry and dramatical depreciation of renting a cars.
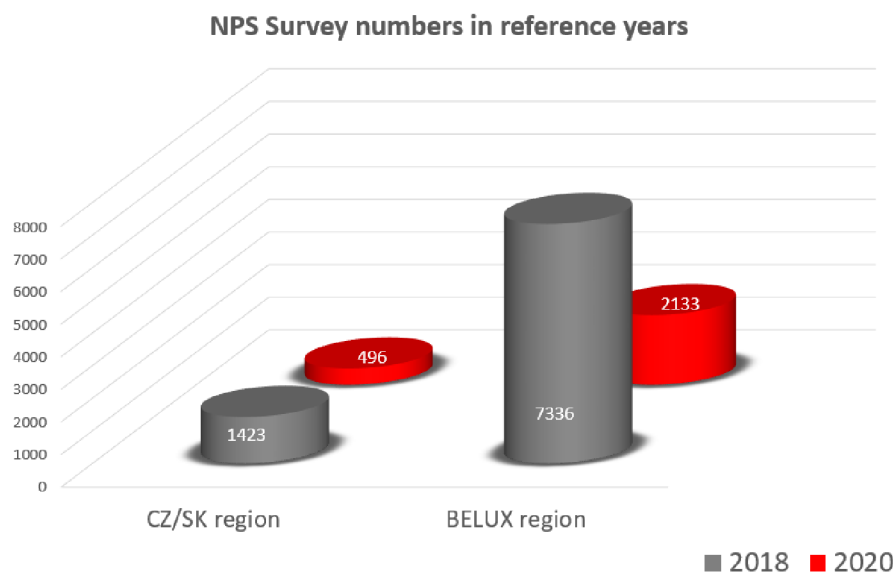
Graph 1: NPS Survey numbers in reference years 2018/2020 (source: author)

Even though there were traveling restrictions among the whole Europe, we can see that some transactions in the year 2020 were made. However the decreased amount of both of the numbers are really huge. In the year 2018 there were 1423 surveys collected in the region CZ/SK, in the year 2020, there were only 496 surveys collected in the same region. There was decrease by 65% in transactions made in the region CZ/SK in the year 2020.

For the region BELUX there were 7336 surveys collected in the year 2018 and in the year 2020, there were 2133 surveys. It is decrease by 70% of transactions made in this region.

In this case, the COVID-19 really had negative impact on the rent a car company.

Most of the transactions were made by so-called Preferred Customers. These customers are members of special offers and special program of the company. Thanks to this program, these customers are allowed to use special seasonal offers and especially for special service at the counters. These customers are very important for the company, because they are renting very often and frequently and the company wants to keep their loyalty to them.

In following analysis of surveys collected, the company looks for customer behavior responses. Answers at those surveys allow the company to set short-term, medium-term and long-term action plans.

- **Short-term** plans focuses predominantly on operational staffs. There are ways how to change the way the operators work and how to make the whole rental process easier for the customer.

- **Medium-term** plans are for example changes in vehicle fleet composition or changes in facilities.

- **Long-term** plans are mainly about technology changes and new complementary products such as electromobility or car sharing options.

4.5.1 Vehicle Experience Drivers

One of the most important roles in evaluation of results get from survey is played by Vehicle Experience Driver. The company can obtain more detailed information form the customer about the renting process, what did he like or did not like or what he would like to change for the next time.

Next two charts show the level of so-called Vehicle experience Drivers. There are indicators for information about the rented vehicle. Each of the indicators has a different color scale. Again, these two charts show the comparison of these indicators from year 2018 and the year 2020 in regions CZ/SK and BELUX.

Comparison of Vehicle Experience Drivers CZSK/BELUX in 2018

	CZ/SK	BELUX
Make & Model	51,1	39,3
Cleanliness of the Vehicle	78,5	54,0
Mechanical Condition of Vehicle	73,4	57,8
Overall Satisfaction with Vehicle	54,8	42,7
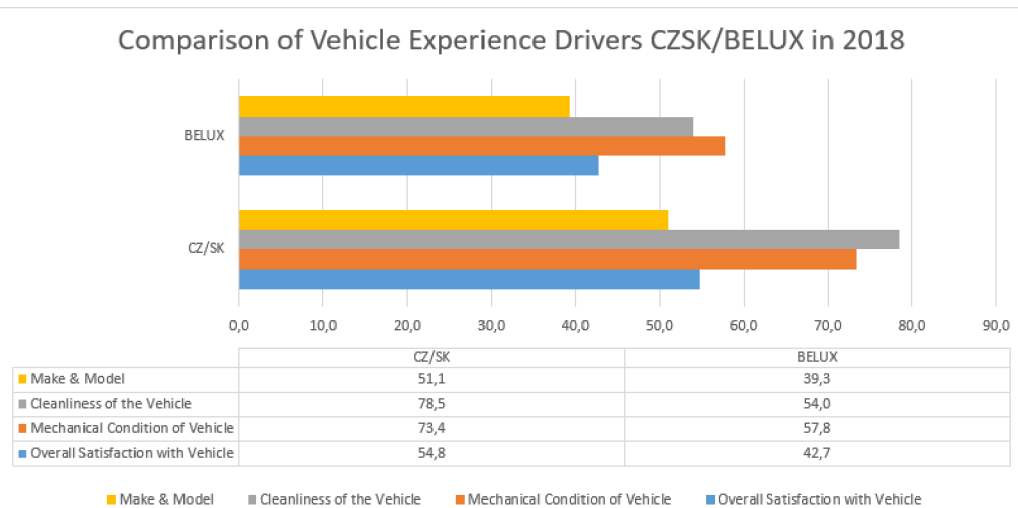
Graph 2: Comparison of Vehicle Experience Drivers CZSK/BELUX in 2018 (source: author)

Comparison of Vehicle Experience Drivers CZSK/BELUX in 2020

	CZ/SK	BELUX
Make & Model	48,8	45,9
Cleanliness of the Vehicle	78,4	62,1
Mechanical Condition of Vehicle	81,4	71,8
Overall Satisfaction with Vehicle	56,8	51,6
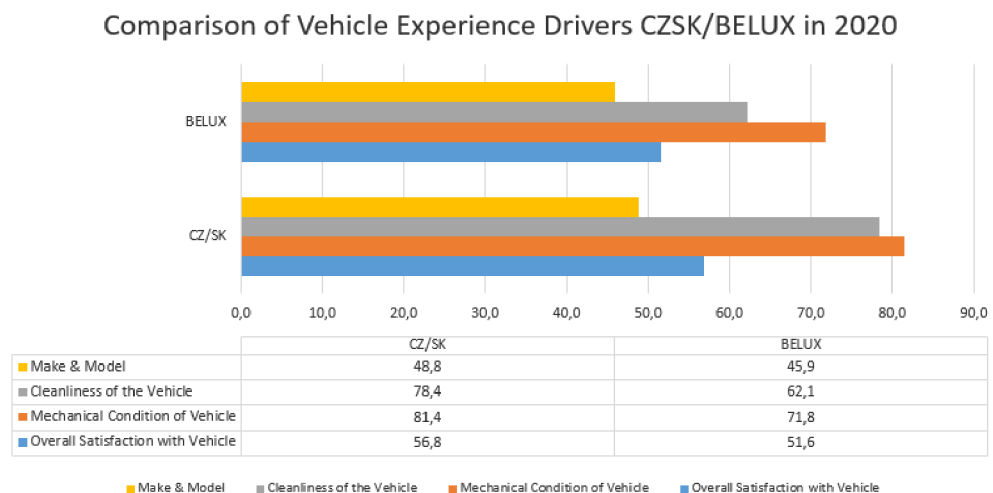
Graph 3: Comparison of Vehicle Experience Drivers CZSK/BELUX in 2020 (source: author)

It is clear from these charts, that for region CZSK there are no huge differences at these indicators. There is slight decrease in the year 2020 in a feedback to "Make & Model" in comparison to year 2018. It is because the vehicle fleet had to be reduced and lot of cars were sold, therefore the scale of vehicles in year 2020 was not so rich as in 2018. Customers did not have much choices to choose from.

In the region BELUX, there are bigger differences in percentages between the year 2018 and 2020. The big difference is in "Cleanliness of the Vehicle" indicator and "Mechanical Condition of the Vehicle". This can be explained pretty easy. Since there were not so many vehicles in the fleet, it was easier for employees to take care of the cars more and focus more on details in cleaning and repairing some damages. It was much easier to go through feedback from customers and focus more on their wants and needs and expectations about the car and fulfill them properly.

4.5.2 Service Experience Drivers

On a global scale, it is much more interesting to have comparisons of performance between regions. But for companies, it is much more important to observe each of the drivers individually. Only then it is possible to find out where are the weaknesses of the company and its customer services and where the company has to work on.

Following charts are divided by regions and each of the drivers has its own color shade. At the first look, it is clear that there are huge differences of ratings between years 2018 and 2020. In the year 2018, the worst position for both regions CZSK and BELUX had "Felt like a valued customer". This driver is a highly-watched indicator in the customer service. This driver summarizes all the experience drives together and tells how does the client feel in company's hands. How was the customer behavior affected during the whole renting process. It says that the customer probably felt lack of added value and lack of humanity service. Humanity service is very important for the company because it is the only way were the customer and employee are in touch with each other and only this way the employee can convince the customer to be loyal to this company and convince his customer behavior for next time and convince him to come back again. On the other hand the indicator called Helpfulness of the Staff has pretty good rating in the year 2018 for both regions. It can be assumed, that the professionalism of company's employees and the quality was successful.

Comparison of Service Experience Drivers CZSK/BELUX in 2018

	CZ/SK	BELUX
Felt like a Valued Customer	34,0	35,1
Helpfulness of the Staff	52,6	55,6
Speed of Service	52,5	52,6
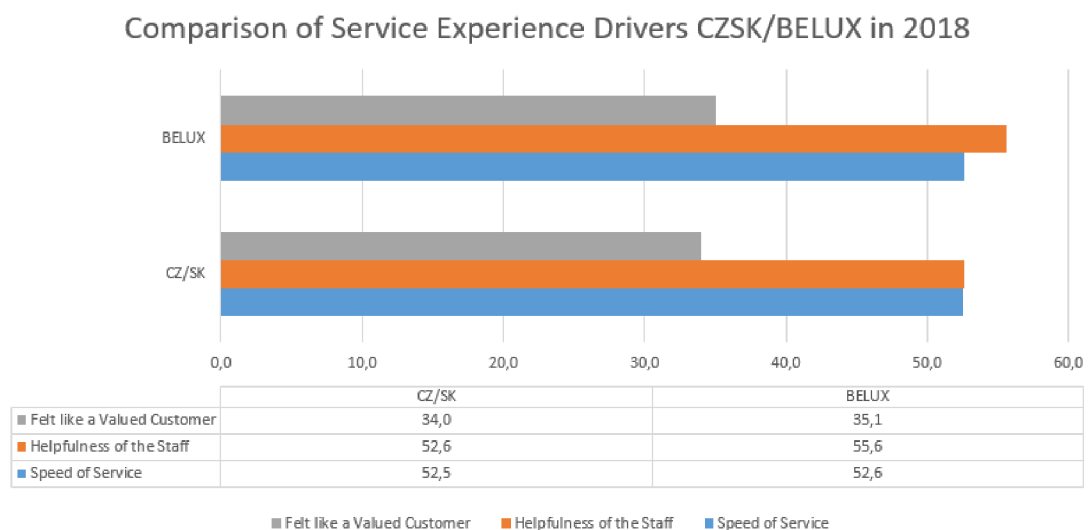
Graph 4: Comparison of Service Experience Drivers CZSK/BELUX in 2018 (source: author)

In the year 2020, we can clearly see the huge growth in ratings for all selected Service Experience Drivers as shown below in the chart.

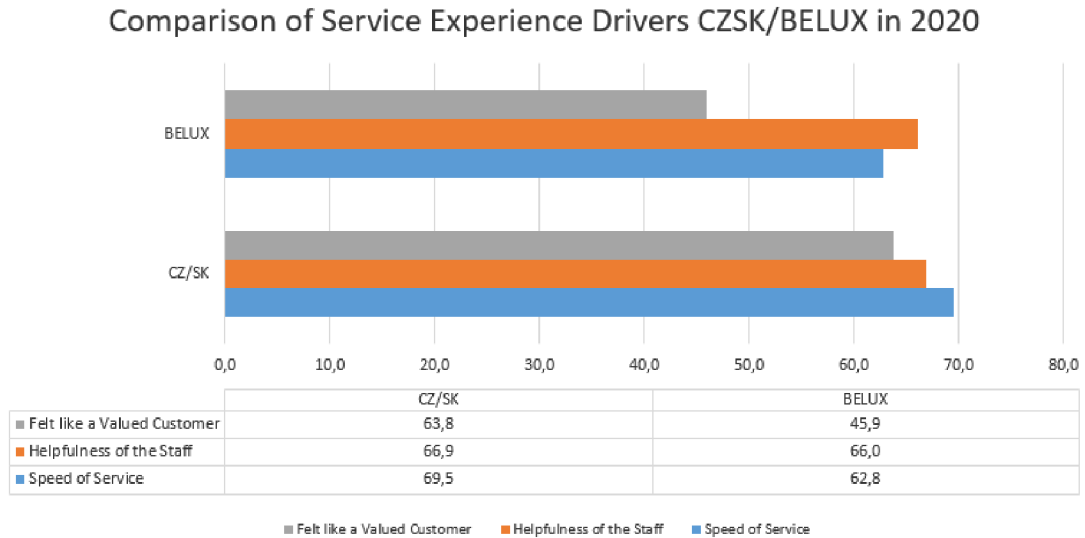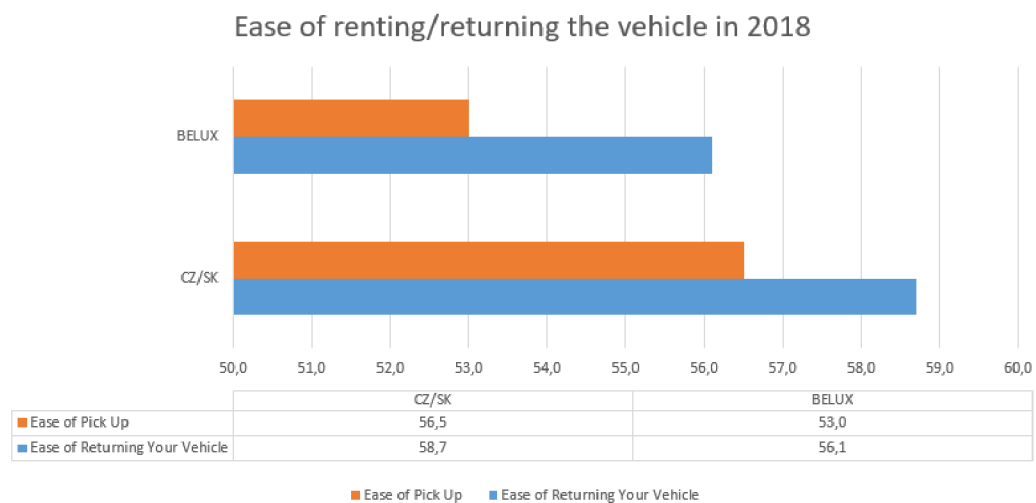## Comparison of Service Experience Drivers CZSK/BELUX in 2020

	CZ/SK	BELUX
▪ Felt like a Valued Customer	63,8	45,9
▪ Helpfulness of the Staff	66,9	66,0
▪ Speed of Service	69,5	62,8

▪ Felt like a Valued Customer   ▪ Helpfulness of the Staff   ▪ Speed of Service

Graph 5: Comparison of Service Experience Drivers CZSK/BELUX in 2020 (source: author)

On the first sight we can clearly see that all indicators are relatively highly rated. Even though, COVID-19 has definitely negatively impacted the whole rent a car industry in terms of number of transactions, turnovers, employment and returns, it positively impacted the customer behavior. We can see that the most important indicator "Felt like a valued customer" has pretty high rating in the region of CZSK, for the region BENELUX there is increase as well in comparison with the year 2018. This is such a great outcome for the company because it says that the customer do not feel just like paying puppet and it is more likely for the customer to come back to this company.

Indicator "Helpfulness of the staff" has also high rating. Here we can assume, that the customer behavior was positively impacted by company's employees and that employees had enough time to focus on explaining everything to the client, to show him properly the rental agreement and make him feel like he can trust the company, the brand and that the client really evaluate the customer service. Since the company does not have many clients, it is much easier for employees at the counter to pay more attention to all customers and spend more time with each of the customers. It is also much easier to work faster but more efficiently. This is shown in the rating results of indicator "Speed of Service".

According to all these indicators selected from the surveys and its evaluation, we can say, that despite negative impact of COVID-19 on financial and economics spheres of car rental industry, it has slightly positive impact on customer behavior. Customer's needs and expectations were fulfilled successfully, their ratings were pretty high, which means, that they are more likely to return back to this company, which is the main goal of the company.

The next charts shows results that affect company's organization, facility, workflow for clients and technology as well.

Ease of renting/returning the vehicle in 2018

	CZ/SK	BELUX
■ Ease of Pick Up	56,5	53,0
■ Ease of Returning Your Vehicle	58,7	56,1

■ Ease of Pick Up ■ Ease of Returning Your Vehicle

Graph 6: Ease of renting/returning the vehicle in 2018 (source: author)

Ease of renting/returning the vehicle in 2020

	CZ/SK	BELUX
■ Ease of Pick Up	66,90	61,20
■ Ease of Returning Your Vehicle	62,00	64,70

■ Ease of Pick Up ■ Ease of Returning Your Vehicle
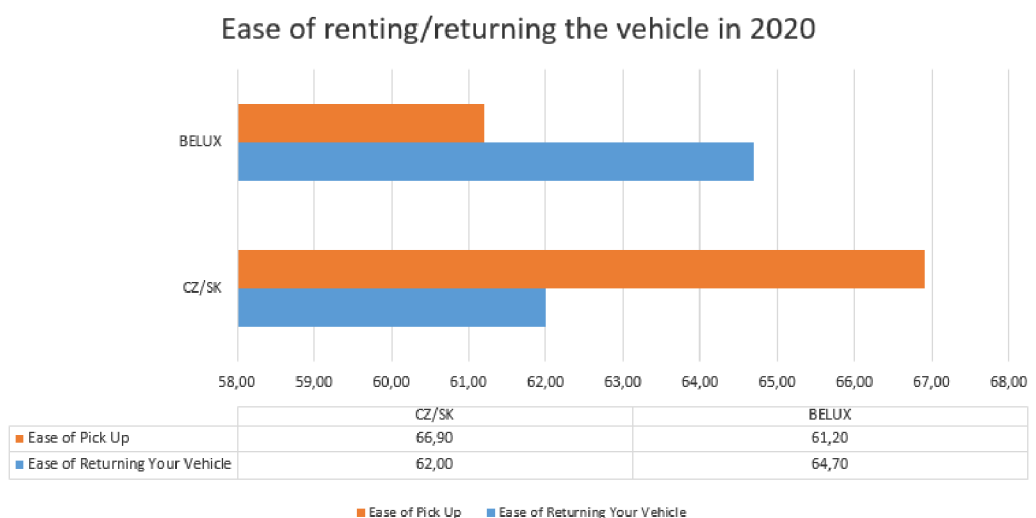
Graph 7: Ease of renting/returning the vehicle in 2020 (source: author)

Ease of return is the easiest part of the whole renting process and in both year is rated pretty high. Interesting thing is, that "Ease of pick-up" is more complex process and in the year 2018 has therefore lower rating than in the year 2020 where this rating is even higher than the rating of "Ease of return".

This is related to previous Service Experience Drivers such as "Speed of Service" and "Helpfulness of the staff". Less clients means for employees that they can speed up the service but the efficiency does not decrease, conversely, the efficiency is high and therefore customers are satisfied, there needs and expectations are fulfilled and the customer behavior is positively affected.

5 Conclusion

The topic of the diploma thesis was Customer Behavior. The aim of the diploma thesis was to give short explanation of differences between words "Consumer" and "Customer" that are very often confusing and mixed. Then there is shortly explained the pandemic situation, its origin and impact on the businesses. There will be explanation and demonstration such as graphs, charts, etc. how this pandemic situation affected Customer Behavior. Especially in the travel industry and rent a car industry. For evaluating this pandemic situation and changes of Customer Behavior there were used analysis of client's satisfaction called net promoter score. This evaluation process helps many companies to get to know Customer's feelings and experience with some certain service.

In theoretical part there was focus on information about costumers in general and its basics such as definition, importance, types etc. Henceforward there was an explanation of Customer Relationship Management and Customer Behavior itself and impact of the pandemic COVID-19 on travel industry, especially car rental industry. There is said how important for companies is to understand properly the Customer behavior, customer's needs and segmentation as well.

In the practical part there was used application InMoment that measures and evaluates customer's satisfaction, also called Customer Feedback Management. One of the methods used for measuring the satisfaction is called net promoter score. The application InMoment collected data during two years 2018 and 2020 and evaluated them. Furthermore there are shown basic steps how the data are collected. As was shown in all charts, all components of NPS rating were well managed before pandemic situation. During evaluating surveys, it was clear that smaller regions, CZ/SK, can work better with the customers that the bigger one (BELUX).

The results show us that before pandemic situation, it was harder for the company to keep the customers satisfied, to fulfill their needs and expectations and that the customer behavior was not so positively affected by the company's service and its employees service. Despite negative impacts of COVID-19 on the whole traveling industry and especially car rental industry in terms of its economic situation, on the customer behavior, it has slightly positive impact.

In all charts given is clearly see the huge growth in ratings for all selected Service Experience Drivers as shown below in the chart. The main reason of this is, the decrease of

clients and vehicles in the fleet as well. Company had to reduce its vehicle fleet and sell lot of cars. Due to this huge step, which was not obviously positive for the company, employees at counters did not have to spend lot of time on taking care of such huge number of vehicles and huge number of customers. During the first year of pandemic situation, there were still some customers renting cars and employees could give them 100% of their time. In charts from year 2020, we can see that the indicator "Helpfulness of the staff" has high rating. Here we can assume, that the customer behavior was positively impacted by company's employees and that employees had enough time to focus on explaining everything to the client, to show him properly the rental agreement and make him feel like he can trust the company, the brand and that the client really evaluate the customer service. Indicator "Felt like a valued customer" was as well highly rated in the year 2020 in comparison with year 2018. This indicator is a highly-watched indicator in the customer service. This driver summarizes all the experience drives together and tells how does the client feel in company's hands. How was the customer behavior affected during the whole renting process. It says that the customer probably felt lack of added value and lack of humanity service. Humanity service is very important for the company because it is the only way were the customer and employee are in touch with each other and only this way the employee can convince the customer to be loyal to this company and convince his customer behavior for next time and convince him to come back again.

We can say that the customer behavior during COVID-19 was positively impacted due to decreased vehicle fleet and less clientele in the company. There was much more time for each of the clients in comparison to the year 2018 and employees could maximally focus on their customer and affect their customer behavior for the next transaction. The rent a car company provided maximum of the security in rented vehicles, they kept very strict hygienic procedures. Clients were very satisfied by these steps and they felt safe. Friendly and human approach from the company side led to strengthen customer's trust in company's services and therefore tracked NPS rapidly increased. Since customer has great experience with fulfilling his needs, it is more probable, that he will come back and his behavior will be affected from previous experience with the company.

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