MARKET LEADERSHIP IN BULGARIA TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR

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Abstract: This research paper is dedicated to market leadership in telecommunication sector in Bulgaria with a scope on mobile data. A theoretical framework about market leadership and its specifics in the field of telecommunications have been drawn. In order to determine the overall performance of the organizations involved in this economics sector a methodological framework has been established. On that basis, analysis has been done and some key conclusions about the role of mobile data in maintaining market leadership have been drawn.

Keywords: telecommunication, services, providers, mobile data, market leadership.

ITHEA Keywords: K.6.1 Management of Computing and Information Systems - Project and People Management

Introduction

Modern business reality is based on the uncertainty of the organization’s environment, and this necessitates a frequent change of strategy, structure, leadership, change of policies and practices related to motivation of its employees, brand management, changes in production and product supply and services. The communication strategy of the organization as well as the communication channels are redefined by the rapid development of information and communication technologies. This leads to the vital part of internet and the substitution of the broadband connection by Wi-Fi or mobile data.

In correspondence, the telecommunication operators have offered large amount of data and high speed mobile internet to satisfy their customers. This vast environment pushes the companies to provide the next generation of services from 3G to 4 and 5G to retain market share. The current regulations, especially in the EU, allow customers to switch between providers easily, which makes customer’s satisfaction a priority to the mobile service providers. It is obvious that mobile data would be the key factor for keeping market share and leadership role, which makes it a very good field for research and a main purpose for this paper.

The main goals are:

— To make a theoretical review of market leadership;
— To examine the key factors for market leadership in telecommunications;
To establish methodology for research mobile data providing as a factor for market leadership in telecommunication sector;

To conduct the research and analyze obtained data;

To make some key conclusions.

I. Market Leadership

In contemporary business conditions characterized by extreme volatility, uncertainty, dynamism, and intense competition the question of market leadership has been a subject of great interest to organizations and researchers alike. Nowadays, market leadership is perhaps the most critical challenge in today’s business environment. It is the ability of a company to dominate and shape its business system. Market leadership has long been recognized as sought-after source of business power and profitability.

Definitions of market leadership have been an active area of debates and research among economists and marketing scholars. This section presents some of the frequently cited definitions and other schemes that are used to identify market leadership.

Market leadership can be defined as the position of a company with the largest market share or highest profitability margin in a particular market. Market leader dominates the market by influencing the customer loyalty towards its quality, distribution, pricing, etc.

Market leadership or leading market companies is defined as those with the highest market share in particular industry. These companies are able to create competitive advantages that can be translated into performance advantages over their competitors. The competitive advantages associated with market leadership could be explained theoretically as emerging from positive network externalities, first mover advantages and superior resources and capabilities [Asimakopoulos, Whalley, 2017].

Market leaders have a commanding market share and attract superior customer value for their product or services. Commanding market share is achieved through competitive advantages and by delivering differentiated benefits to customer [Dariush Rafinejad, 2007].

Market leadership is the process of identifying and creating attractive, profitable market opportunities and developing the market plan that will lead the company to capture a dominant and profitable share of the market [Adrian Ryans et al, 2000].

The concept of market leadership is multidimensional. Three dimensions are identified that characterize market leadership: dominant position in the market; global reach and innovativeness in products/processes [Malerba et al, 2017].
In the majority of industries, there is one firm that is generally recognized to be the market leader. It typically has the largest market share and, by virtue of its pricing, advertising intensity, distribution coverage, technological advance and rate of new product introductions, it determines the nature, pace and bases of competition. It is this dominance that typically provides the benchmark for other companies in the industry. However, it needs to be emphasized that market leadership, although often associated with size, is in reality a more complex concept and should instead be seen in terms of an organization’s ability to determine the nature and bases of competition within the market.

In the conditions of new digital economy consumer behavior has fundamentally changed, almost all products and services have a crucial digital component and many old business models are threatened. As executives and marketing professionals seek to develop new ways of being market leader, they must quickly focus on developing fresh customer insight and establishing digital channel leadership that will allow them to transform customer experience, open new markets and reduce organizational complexity.

There are three categories of market leaders:

1) Customer insight leaders – companies that optimize data analysis, transform it into something useful and create measurable value.
2) Digital channel leaders – companies that use new methods of creating value through customer interactions and new products, services and business models in an always-on digital world.
3) New era leaders – companies that incorporate the best practices of each [Carolyn Heller Baird and Cristene Gonzalez-Wertz, 2011].

The strategies of market leaders must be comprised of the following objectives: to establish the company’s desired position; to assess the industry structure, market forces and competitors; to develop a plan for achieving the desired position. At the same time market leaders must articulate a strategic direction so all employees are on the same page in helping the company achieve its goals. A good business strategy must sound convincing and inspire people to help the company move into the future [Satih Parniagtong, 2017].

Achieving market leadership requires the companies to practice a repeating cycle of continuous improvement cycle plan: do, act and check (Figure 1).

In the strategy and planning phase, the results of self-assessment are analyzed. The analysis provides the organization with insights into the strengths and weaknesses in its organizational capability.

The process management is critical to achieving market leadership. Three elements of process management can be identified: process design, process management and process improvement.

The self-assessment process identifies and tracks all the important organizational results, and provides feedback on organizational capability and results to the strategy and planning process.
Nowadays, there are three main strategies for market leadership:

1) **Cost and complexity reduction** is the least customer-centric strategy that makes operations more flexible and more accessible to customers. Creating and sustaining leadership in today’s digital economic environment requires companies to make complex processes more responsive to customers and global business conditions. By making complexity reduction, the companies are able to choose the right processes and channel optimization at the start. In this way, the organization becomes simpler, faster, smarter and more flexible.

2) **Innovative market making changes** is the way organizations enter and develop new markets. The strategy focuses on co-creation of value and usage of digital media to engage customers and understand interactions with vendors, government bodies and competitors. This digital media component allows companies to detect and predict changes in market and customer demands and respond accordingly. This collaborative model is used to deliver higher value products and services to new markets faster and with greater flexibility. This approach also enables internal collaboration, making it easier to find information, people and ideas across the company.

3) **Strategic service delivery** strategy implies the activities that improve customer interactions through new channels thus fostering customer dialogue. Strategic service delivery provides the interactive and data-driven means to constantly learn from and share with customers how companies
meet their needs. It also allows the companies to improve customer convenience [Carolyn Heller Baird and Cristene Gonzalez-Wertz, 2011].

The implementation of each strategy depends on certain conditions of the particular market.

On the other hand, in order to be successful the strategy needs to be constantly updated in accordance with changing market conditions. Figure 2 presents multitude factors that must be considered in the development of a companies’ aggregate strategy in order to achieve sustainable market leadership.

The companies have to effectively combine various dimensions of strategy into an integrated process of strategic analysis and action maps the path to market leadership.

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**Figure 2. Aggregate Strategy for Market Leadership (adapted from [Dariush Rafinejad, 2007])**

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It is now widely recognized that one of the main determinants of market leadership is market share. Under most circumstances, companies that have achieved a high share of the markets they serve are considerably more profitable than their smaller-share competitors. Connection between market share and profitability has been recognized by many authors.
Although a position of market leader has undoubted attractions, both in terms of the scope that often exists to influence others and a possibly higher return on investment, leaders have all too often in the past proved to be vulnerable in the face of an attack from a challenger or when faced with the need for a major technological change. If, therefore, a market leader is to remain as the dominant company, it needs to defend its position constantly. In doing this, there are three major areas to which the company needs to pay attention: How to expand the total market; How to protect the company’s current share of the market; How to increase the market share. The ways in which market leaders can do this is presented in Figure 3.

![Market Leadership Diagram]

**Market Leadership**
- **Expand the overall market**
  - Targeting groups that currently are non-users
  - Identifying new users for the product/service
  - Increasing usage rate
- **Guarding the existing market share**
  - Strong market positioning
  - Development of competitive advantages
  - Continuing product and process innovation
  - Strong customer relations
- **Expansion of the current market share**
  - New product/service development
  - Geographic expansion
  - Distribution expansion

Market leadership practices and strategies vary across different economic sectors. Leadership strategies of service businesses are different from that of manufacturing businesses. One of the prominent features of service industry is that the process of evaluation of the company performance is more subjective. Service experiences are the outcomes of interactions between organizations, related systems/processes, service employees and customers.

In service industry, companies can become the market leaders not only because of their service offerings and competitiveness, but by design to become customer centric organizations that is driven to innovate all the time and outperform themselves all the time. In service industry, some of the most
important determinants of market leadership are customer focused determinants – customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention.

The service profit chain concept contains a set of hypotheses about how service companies can become market leader and can make money. The service profit chain links employee, customer outcomes and financial performance of the company at the unit level in service organizations (Figure 4). The service profit chain hypothesized that market share, profit and growth is directly linked to customer loyalty and satisfaction, the value provided to customer, the productivity and quality of work of the employees, employee loyalty, employee satisfaction and capability.

A general framework of market leadership in service industry is presented at Figure 5.
II. Market Leadership in Telecommunications

Recent years have shown a growing interest in customer loyalty. Actually all industries suffer from voluntary churn – the decision by the customer to switch to another company or service provider. This is particularly true for telecommunication companies. Annual churn rates for telecommunications companies average between 10 and 67 per cent [Hughes, 2007].

Virtual work settings may cause some organizational challenges such as maintaining remote leadership, managing cultural differences, and developing trust relationships among the teams. Suggested other challenges that virtual teams need to deal with such as communication difficulties, decreased cohesion, and high level of conflicts among teams. Added the handling of technological issues such as adaptation and regular use of communication tools as another challenge that faces virtual teams. Those challenges may pose a threat to the performance of any virtual teams. Leaders of support organizations need to overcome the challenges of distributed settings to resolve technical problems and satisfy their customers.

Leaders stimulate followers to be high performers through effective use of motivational and communication skills on individual and group levels. Virtual team leaders may need different leadership characteristics from leaders of traditional teams when setting goals, offering support and guidance, and inspiring team members. Leaders in support environment need to address challenges facing their teams in addition to technical problems reported by their customer, which increases their responsibilities to include satisfying their leaders, subordinates, and external customers [Saafein, Shaykhian 2014].

In [Varblane, 2009] it is mentioned that traditionally there are two approaches to treating customer loyalty. Some researchers have investigated the nature of different levels of loyalty; others have explored the influence of individual factors on loyalty. Both treatments are combined to investigate which specific factors in the telecommunication sector influence the loyalty rate of the various customers segmented by loyalty. The potential for establishing loyalty depends on the object (i.e. product or vendor), on the subject (customer) or on the environment (market, other suppliers, etc.).

Different approaches allow customers to be distinguished as either behaviorally or emotionally loyal. Behaviorally loyal customers act loyal but have no emotional bond with the brand or the supplier, whereas emotionally loyal customers do. These two kinds of loyalty accordingly false or true long-term loyalty. Divide customers into loyal (behavioral) or committed (emotional). Emotional loyalty is much stronger and longer lasting than behavioral loyalty. It is an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship. The relationship is so important for the customer that he or she makes maximum efforts to maintain. Highly bonded customers will buy repeatedly from a provider, to which they are bonded, recommending the provider to others, and strongly defending these choices to others – insisting that they have chosen the “best” product or service.
The impact of satisfaction on loyalty (Figure 6) has been the most popular subject of studies. Several studies have revealed that there exists a direct connection between satisfaction and loyalty: satisfied customers become loyal and dissatisfied customers move to another vendor. The primary objective of creating American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) in 1984 was to explain the development of customer loyalty. In the ACSI model, customer satisfaction has three antecedents:

1. perceived quality;
2. perceived value;
3. customer expectations;

In the European Customer Satisfaction Index model, perceived quality is divided into two elements: “hard ware”, which consists of the quality of the product or service attributes, and “human ware”, which represents the associated customer interactive elements in service, i.e. the personal behavior and atmosphere of the service environment. In both models, increased satisfaction should increase customer loyalty. In the case of low satisfaction, customers have the option to exit (e.g. going to a competitor) or express their complaints.

Almost all customers using telecommunication services have the following options:

- Television, fixed voice service, mobile voice service and Internet to operator X.
- Fixed voice service, mobile voice service and Internet to operator X, but the television is to a cable operator.
- Mobile voice service to an alternate operator (it only offers the service but does not own a network but uses this network of operator X).

- Use only certain services such as TV and the Internet, and mobile service to be provided by operator Y.

- There is a wide variety of preferred operators and services, even users may opt for operators outside the country.

Customer relationship management (CRM) has become one of the leading business strategies in the new millennium. It is difficult to find out a totally approved definition of CRM [Hwang, Jung, Suh, 2004].

![Diagram of CRM processes](image)

**Figure 7. Example of figures placing, signing, and formatting**

It can be described as 'Managerial efforts to manage business interactions with customers by combining business processes and technologies that seek to understand a company’s, i.e. structuring and managing the relationships with customers. CRM covers all the processes related to customer acquisition, customer cultivation, and customer retention (Figure 7). Even though we put aside the existing studies, which assert that it costs more to acquire new customers than to retain the existing
customers, we can imagine that customer cultivation and retention are more important than customer acquisition because lack of information on new customers makes it difficult to select target customers and this will cause inefficient marketing efforts.

Customer value has been studied under the name of LTV, Customer Lifetime Value, Customer Equity, and Customer Profitability. The previous researches contain several definitions of LTV.

The concept of situation dependency that applies features specific to mobile computing is one approach in improving the acceptance of mobile services. It takes advantage of the strong relationship between a user and his mobile terminal, which makes it easy to identify the user by knowing the technical address of the mobile terminal. Furthermore, it is possible to determine the position of the user by locating the mobile terminal. While location-dependent services only focus on the position of a user, the concept of situation dependency goes even further by determining the whole context in which a user accesses a service. It can offer, therefore, information that suits the user’s actual demand [Figge, 2004].

Situation dependency may be conceived as a three-dimensional space, with user identity, access position, and access time as its axes. This space describes the set of possible service access situations. The actual usage of a service by a specific user can then be seen as one point in that space. To accomplish situation dependency, it is necessary to determine the three components—identity, position, and time—in order to locate the user’s access point in the situation space.

To realize situation-dependent services, four process steps are running sequentially:

- the service invocation by the user,
- the situation determination to provide the three situation components,
- the context computation that generates further information, and
- finally, the service presentation at the mobile terminal of the user in the shape of the adapted service.

The situation process starts with a user accessing a service through a client application on a mobile terminal. The application is based on a certain mobile application environment, e.g., the WAP or the short message service (SMS). Depending on this environment, the request is transmitted through a different set of protocols, bearers, and gateways. Finally, it arrives as a service invocation on an Internet application server in the shape of a protocol request. The request usually contains a reference that enables the application server to obtain more information about the user.

Very important for mobile network operators, for instance, is always to have access to the current position of their subscribers for technical reasons. If this information were not safe with the operators, subscribers would lose their trust and terminate their economic relationship with the mobile network.
operator. For the sake of their own business, the mobile network operator has to guarantee the safety of the network data. The same mechanism should be applicable in the case of the situation provider and the user can allow the situation provider to access his/her personal profiles.

From the last few years, it has been witnessed that transformational and charismatic leadership are very important aspects of leadership that are highly associated with individual as well as organizational performance. Effectiveness of leadership measures the ability of leaders to provoke the followers towards the collective goals.

Actually, scholars have described transformational leadership by taking motivational effect regarding the followers, which should lead to a greater number of attracted customers and a higher market share.

Early research of transformational leadership was about the features of the leaders and their relationship with the followers. Further research on the behaviors of transformational leaders proposes that transformational leadership is intervened by the leader's activities the aptitude to create a common vision, to coherent clear and expressive goals, to permit employees, and dependable behavior [Ahmad, Abbas, Latif, Rasheed, 2014].

The main components of transformational leadership are Idealized Influence, Individual Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation and Inspirational Motivation.

Here, we have to ask one question, all these factors stimulating employees influence the market share. In our opinion, things are also related to increasing the employability of the employees will lead to the expansion of the market share in different sizes (Figure 8).

A core responsibility for organizational leaders is to direct followers towards achieving organizational purposes by articulating the organization’s mission, vision, strategy, and goals. Leaders at all levels are responsible for the dissemination of strategic organizational goals, as well as for convincing their constituents to effectively implement those goals. Indicated that transformational leaders form relationships with followers that may make it easier for them to disseminate and implement strategic goals. It is explored how transformational and transactional leadership styles, communication style, and goal articulation were related to the dissemination of strategic goals across several organizational levels in a large complex telecommunications company [Bersona, Avoliob, 2004].

Transformational leadership theorists have argued that transformational leadership is more proactive and ultimately more effective than transactional, corrective, or avoidant leadership in terms of motivating followers to achieve higher performance. This pattern of results has been supported in a number of studies over the last decade. It has been argued that transformational leaders are more capable of sensing their environment and then forming and disseminating strategic goals that capture the attention and interest of their followers. Followers of transformational leaders have been shown to exhibit higher
levels of commitment to their organizational mission, a willingness to work harder, greater levels of trust in their leader, and higher levels of cohesion. All of these effects of transformational leadership would be expected to create better conditions for understanding and disseminating strategic visions, missions, and goals and their acceptance by followers.

While top leaders may have a key role in setting and implementing strategic organizational goals, leaders at subsequent levels must also articulate and disseminate organizational goals. Although senior executives can use strategic organizational goals to help begin aligning and integrating internal operations, there must also be alignment created at subsequent organizational levels in terms of how leaders and followers perceive and deliver those strategic goals.

In [Bersona, Avollob, 2004] they classify leaders according to the strategy. The prospector strategy is the more dynamic orientation. It is described as involving a broad product market domain that undergoes periodic redefinition, where such firms are characterized by a rapid response to changes in the market, more risk taking, while seeking out new opportunities. The defender strategy highlights maintaining a secure niche in one’s market and seeking stability within markets that are expected to remain stable. Defenders are overly concerned with internal efficiency and work to produce reliable, high-quality products for their customers. Analyzers are considered midway between prospectors and defenders. Organizations that rely on the analyzer strategy maintain stability but also try to identify
potential new developments, but take a less risky approach than prospectors. Finally, because the reactor strategy is usually not regarded as a strategic approach, it was dropped from further consideration in this study.

III. Methodology

According to a previous research [Otsetova, A., Kolev, D., Dimcheva, G., Georgiev, G., 2018] mobile data service will play a pivot role in telecommunications and would be a vital part for sustaining market leadership role, thus making it a priority for researchers and management in the respected field. The main methodology for observation and key indicators analysis is empirical data research by questionnaire. This is done by descriptive statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, and more precisely descriptive methods, are most commonly used to collect and evaluate primary and/or subjective information - opinions, preferences, assessments, attitudes, and so on. Besides qualitative, they also allow the evaluation of quantitative information that is appropriate for subsequent statistical and mathematical processing and analysis. Usually, it is done by a sample of respondents, which is the current case in this research paper.

In the analysis of the obtained data, frequency distributions are used. These are the simplest and most common way to aggregate data in an array. The most commonly used frequency distributions are one-dimensional and two-dimensional distributions.

One-dimensional distributions are the most elementary groups in processing information for market research. The main parameters are the frequencies and shares of the studied signs. The frequencies describe the absolute distributions of the cases under the different meanings of the studied characteristics. The relative shares represent them in relative value, most often in percentages [Banchev, P., 2012]. For the purpose of this study, appraisals in relative value and ranks are applied to assess the significance of each individual factor. The current ranks used are so called “Likert scales” as you can see below.

Two-dimensional distributions represent the distribution of the values of each case by two variables simultaneously. The main task of the two-dimensional distributions is to prove the existence of any relationship between the two variables or to determine the type and direction of the cause-and-effect relationship. Most often, the basic variable of these distributions is the so-called passport characteristics determined by different groups like gender, age, education, etc.

The questions in the current research are divided into several groups by their purpose. In the first group, are the questions that make it possible to divide the respondents. They are placed at the beginning or end of the questionnaire, but they can also be in the main part of it as long as the logic is
not broken. Basic dichotomous questions and interval scales are used [Banchev, P., 2012]. In this case, the selected questions are about gender, age and education.

The second group of questions contains ones about users’ purposes and frequency of mobile data usage. This is to determine the importance of mobile data for customers and to give proper evaluation to telecoms.

The third group is the most important one. It is to evaluate the most important factors for consumers about mobile data. Here are included such questions as:

- To note which are the most important characteristics of a mobile data, it aims to determine the key factors;
- To give example of additional services to be included – aiming for a possible recommendations to telecoms;
- A 10-degree Likert scale to evaluate customers’ experience with their current mobile data supplier (see Table 1);

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<thead>
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<th>Value</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Bad</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bad</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>10</td>
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Table 1. Customers’ evaluation scale
To state which is the most important characteristic of their current mobile data – this question aims to further quantify and determine key factors for the aforementioned Likert scale evaluation;

To refer what kind of mobile services they use – aims to find the specific limitations of the current mobile services used by customers and to get a more broader perspective about their satisfaction evaluation;

Finally, is the question about telecommunication operator used by customers – aiming to find which telecom has a greater evaluation by customers, thus holding the leading position on the market.

The selection of respondents very often is a limited process. Most researches mainly use students who are not always a suitable category on which to draw conclusions. For this reason as respondents in the present study are attracted people with different social status and from different age groups. They are selected in three main ways:

 Completion of questionnaire cards by random persons located near the points of sale;
 Filing of questionnaire cards by persons selected electronically via social media and e-mail;
 Completion of questionnaires from students from the University of Telecommunication and Post - Sofia.

The first group is people who are close to the point of sale related to the selected category. Telecommunication services and more over mobile data can most often be purchased in specific telecom operator’s stores. It is for this reason that we are looking for and selecting respondents who are located near such commercial sites in major cities in Bulgaria. Respondents were randomly selected because this research does not seek to identify any specific intentions of users before and after purchase, but rather to observe and analyze general tendencies.

The second group is electronically selected respondents by applying the "snowball" method, i.e., each person is asked to forward questionnaires to others from his / her social environment. The main channels chosen for this are the social network - Facebook and e-mail. The questionnaire form is also done online by Google analytics, which makes it easy to be spread.

The third group are students from the University of Telecommunication and Post - Sofia. The completion of the questionnaires is part of the seminars on marketing and after filling in the questionnaire, the questions used in the questionnaires are discussed. In this case, the selected students are good focus group because they have professional interest in field of telecommunication and should be aware of the future tendencies and leadership strategies for the market.

The social status of the respondents (profession, education), age and gender are not taken into account because they are not key factor for the research. The main goal is to make general conclusions about the importance of mobile data for telecoms and their market strategy, which makes one-dimensional
distributions the best suitable way of research. However, it is possible for further studies of the authors to take into account the aforementioned characteristics.

IV. Analysis

To confirm that the research has a good outreach and the selected respondents are from various backgrounds, brief information about their social status and mobile services preferences would be given. The research has been done from July to September 2018 among 194 respondents, 57% male and 43% female. The age distribution is mainly in two big groups – 50% between 19 and 30 years old and 34% between 31 and 40 years old. It is very good age groups, because they are the main customers of mobile services and mobile data in particular.

On the one hand, young people under the age of 18 are could also be considered as users of mobile data, but usually they do not pay or select the service as it is done by their parents. On the other hand, the people above the age of 51 are generally not using new technologies such as smart phones and mobile internet access. Thus, making the aforementioned two groups irrelevant to the research.

According to the education status – 52% have university degree and 44% have graduated from secondary school, which means that the participants have enough knowledge to provide adequate information for the survey. Moreover, 98.7% of all have stated they use mobile data, which is the key observation factor in the research.
The distribution of customers between the three major telecommunication services providers in Bulgaria is also at similar level – 32.7% Vivacom users, 36.5% Mtel (A1) and 28.9% Telenor users. It is important to note that these are their common names known to the public; the legal names of the three organizations are different. Firstly, Mobiltel or in short Mtel was the name of the first private telecommunication operator in Bulgaria which was recently acquired by the Austrian company – A1. This is the reason why in the research we use the name “Mtel (A1)”. Next, is the second telecommunication service provider – “Telenor Bulgaria” or just “Telenor”, which is the assessor of “Kosmo Bulgaira Mobile” or “Globul” acquired in 2013 by the Norwegian “Telenor Group” and renamed to its current name. For the purposes of the research it will be used Telenor. Finally, the former government owned company – “Bulgarian Telecommunications Company” which was acquired in 2004 by “Viva ventures holding” and commonly known as “Vivacom” and this name will be used for our further research.

In conclusion, the social status of the respondents, their usage of mobile data and telecommunication service preference is very good for the purposes of this research. However, for the further analysis social status of respondents as mentioned in the methodology won’t be used.

The competitive redistribution of the market shares between the mobile operators in each country has been enhanced by the possibility of number portability from the network of one mobile operator to another, without any additional cost, which provides opportunity for the customers to choose between quality, coverage and price.

In recent years, the role of mobile internet has been steadily growing and it has become a service of vital importance to consumers. Almost every new mobile device now requires the activation of mobile data bundle triggered by the technical capabilities of the mobile devices and the diversity of services offered by mobile operators.

Survey’s participants have the option of choosing more than one answer to this question.

From the survey conducted, it is evident that the main reason for "mobile internet" service usage is its convenience (52 participants). The next two positions are taken by the participants with more than one answer, when again the first place is for "Greater convenience".

Within this market situation, telecommunications operators should reconsider their marketing strategies. In practice, the fast and unlimited internet access, even via your mobile device, results in increased quality of the services offered and the greater preference of the consumers for mobile over broadband internet. In addition, a few years ago customers were highly price-sensitive, but things are far different today (See Figure 10).
Figure 10. According to you, what is the most important thing in regard to the provision of mobile internet

The survey participants are allowed to provide more than one answer on this question as well. A strong impression makes the users' preferences towards "Connection Speed" (128) and "Network coverage" (93), which occupy the first two positions compared to price factors. This is due to the fact that consumers are becoming more and more demanding for the quality of the services they use, which in turn requires operators to strengthen their network and connectivity capabilities in order to dominate the mobile data market.

The participants' choice for these features being most significant is not accidental, which is also apparent from the question "What is the most important feature of the mobile internet you use" and the top answers being again “speed” and network coverage”. With no less significance are “the next two characteristics which take respectively third and fourth place for the consumers, i.e. the "price-quality ratio (41) and „prepaid packages and data (30)" (See Figure 11).

The dynamic technological development also brings changes to people's needs. Until a few years ago, the use of mobile internet was considered a luxury, modern and less preferred service. Unlike now, when it is an integral part of people’s lives. This is evident from the results of the next question, "How often do you use mobile internet?". As can be seen from the figure consumers use this service on a daily basis, for both business and personal purposes.
Figure 11. What is the most important feature of the mobile internet you use

Figure 12. How often do you use mobile internet

Top answer to the question "What kind of mobile services are you currently using?" is "Package for unlimited voice calls and data usage in Bulgaria" (42.3%), followed by "Package with limited access in Bulgaria and abroad" (20.1%) and "Package for unlimited voice calls and data usage in Bulgaria and abroad (roaming)" (12.4%). There are still customers who use more than one package: "Package for unlimited voice calls and data usage in Bulgaria, Package with unlimited access for Bulgaria and abroad (roaming)" (9.3 %) and" Prepaid service (voucher), Package with limited access for Bulgaria and abroad (roaming)" (5.0%).
Among all types of used mobile services, "Prepaid service (voucher)" (6.2%) and "Prepaid package for voice and data consumption" (4.1%) stand on the latest positions. (Figure 13).

Top answer to the question „What additional services would you like to get besides mobile internet?” is „Unlimited high speed data volume” (74.5%) followed by „Free update of my mobile device” (12.7%), „Higher data volume in roaming” (7.6%) and „Additional minutes added to free voice service” (5.2%).

Finally, is the question about telecommunication operator used by customers – aiming to find which telecom has a greater evaluation by customers, thus holding the leading position on the market (Figure 14).

On this question, the survey participants should indicate an evaluation that ranges from 1 to 10 Likert scale. As shown in the figure, high scores prevail, with 56 of all participants rated with 8. In a saturated telecommunications market, each mobile operator strives to keep its clients and to make them loyal. One way to do this is to provide quality services and they managed to succeed in achieving it, which is evident from the high evaluation they receive from their customers.

![Figure 13. What kind of mobile services are you currently using](image-url)
Figure 14. How do you rate the mobile internet you are currently using

Conclusion

In the context of an information society, consumer needs and expectations are constantly rising, and they are a major driving force for the development of the telecommunications market. Increasing competition, constant technological changes and high customer demands are part of the challenges telecommunication operators face.

These challenges encourage companies to focus more on the customers, putting accent on retention, and building long-term relationships. Apparently, Bulgarian telecommunication operators had successfully established relationships with their customers due to the higher evaluation they receive on the Likert scale. However, the possibility of having different type of services provided by two or more of the telecoms for one customer should not be excluded. This is a gap in customers’ loyalty and should be taken into consideration by the telecoms.

Organizations are constantly seeking new approaches to developing new and / or improving existing services. As evident from the research, mobile data is a key factor for telecommunication service providers in Bulgaria. It has become an important competitive advantage, leading not only to the survival of the organization, but also to the increase in its market share, to the attraction on new clients, increase on consumer satisfaction, to turning them into a market leader.

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