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What influences customer loyalty with Dutch mobile phone providers

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SUMMARY

The aim of this thesis is to determine what influences customer loyalty with Dutch mobile phone providers. The reason I choose for this subject is that I work at a Vodafone retail shop in Kerkrade. I enjoy working at the retail shop, because I immediately get in contact with the customers. The thing that makes me enthusiastic is that I see the same customers coming back every 1 or 2 years to renew their contract and other loyal customers disappear. Because of this I wanted to conduct a research about the reasons of this phenomenon and learn to understand why these customers stay loyal.

The results of this research may help Vodafone and me in the future. This includes attracting new customers and to keep the current customers loyal. Mobile phone providers could use this information to better understand which attributes influence customer loyalty. Hereby they could adapt their strategy to the more important attributes.

This thesis consists of five chapters, each dealing with different aspects of the master thesis. The first chapter will introduce the subject and an overview of the problem statement, research objectives and sub questions will be given. Chapter two consists of the literature review. Firstly, the basic model of Hafeez and Hasnu with its attributes is introduced and explained in detail. Secondly, the extended model will be given and will be explained in detail. Chapter three is about the methodology that is used. It consists of which kind of research has been used, how the data was collected, which sampling technique has been used and how the questionnaire was designed. Chapter four is about the data analysis. Hereby the results of the analysed data will be presented including the descriptive, statistical and regression data. The data was collected using Qualtrics and SPSS was used to analyse the data by using multiple linear regressions. Chapter five consists of the conclusion, recommendations and limitations of this master thesis.

The aim of this thesis is to determine what influences customer loyalty with Dutch mobile phone providers. Based on the extended model of Hafeez and Hasnu 8 hypotheses were developed and tested.

Only 2 of the 8 hypotheses were not supported. Research revealed that customer satisfaction has the most influence on customer loyalty in the Dutch mobile phone industry. Perceived uniqueness and corporate image were also supported to have influence on customer loyalty. Furthermore, price and perceived quality have influence on customer satisfaction. Hence, price and perceived quality have influence on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. Moreover, research showed that customer satisfaction has a positive influence on corporate image.

Of the extended attributes (convenience of stores, perceived uniqueness, switching barriers), only perceived uniqueness was statistically supported to have influence on customer loyalty.

This master thesis can help mobile phone providers to understand which attributes influence customer loyalty. Hereby the mobile providers can focus on these attributes.

PREFACE

This master thesis is the final deliverable for the Master of Management (International Marketing Strategy) program at the University of Hasselt.

The reason I choose for the subject ‘ what influences customer loyalty with Dutch mobile phone providers ‘ is that I work at a Vodafone retail shop in Kerkrade. I enjoy working at the retail shop, because I immediately get in contact with the customers. My job includes advising customers, consult clients, drawing up and negotiating offers and contracts and handling complaints. The thing that that makes me enthusiastic is that I see the same customers coming back every 1 or 2 years to renew their contract and other loyal customers disappear. Because of this I wanted to do a research about the reasons of this phenomenon and learn to understand why these customers stay loyal.

The results of this research may help Vodafone and me in the future. This includes attracting new customers and to keep the current customers loyal. Mobile phone providers could use this information to better understand which attributes influence customer loyalty. Hereby they could adapt their strategy to the more important attributes.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Alexandra Streukens. Since the beginning of the writing process she helped me with her supervision, support and knowledge. Because of her knowledge of customer loyalty and computer programs, she could always give me remarks and recommendations about what could be improved. Thanks to her, I was able to finish this thesis.

Also, I would like to thank my girlfriend. She supported me since the beginning of the writing process and was always making sure I did my homework. She gave me feedback and a pep talk when it was needed.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to paper

Customer loyalty can be defined as “the behaviour portrayed by consumers through their consistency which is as a result of positive psychological experiences and physical satisfaction from value achieved, with an influence on future behavioural patterns and trends” (Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011). According to Oliver (2014), it determines buying decisions on specific products or services, given the level of contentedness that a consumer associates with when purchasing from a company or brand. Multiple aspects come into play when customers are building on loyalty and firms should be relentless towards achieving high levels of customer loyalty, which has a long-term effect on organizational performance and company value. Some of the most successful organizations globally have a loyal customer base that can be relied on towards goal achievement and sustainability, both in the short run and in the long term (Liu, Guo, & Lee, 2011).

Customer loyalty is a complex concept as different customers have diverse tastes and preferences. This means that for it to be developed, organizations must engage in individual customer oriented approaches with multiple options for customers to choose from (Solomon, Russell-Bennett, & Previte, 2012).

The relationship between customers and an organization is significantly critical if organizational goals are to be achieved, both in the short run and in the long run. According to Oliver (2014) loyal customers are satisfied customers and are more profitable than any other customers. The reason that loyal customers make return purchases is the level of satisfaction gained from the experience. Loyal customers are likely to influence buying decisions exhibited by those close to them in a bid to achieve similar satisfaction levels. In this regard, loyal customers make the best form of advertising through word of mouth referrals (Romaniuk & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013). Loyal customers form the best brand ambassadors and can aid organizations to build their brands. Unlike other promotional strategies, loyal

customers give their genuine views and experiences, which is significantly important for brand promotion and growth. According to Nam, Ekinici, & Whyatt (2011), most revenues generated by organizations come from a small percentage which is between 20% and 30% of all customers. This shows the significance of loyal customers to any organization.

In the era of heightened organizational competition, mobile phone providers in the Netherlands and elsewhere in the world are seeking innovative strategies to attract new customers and retain the existing ones. Gaining market share and maintaining it has been identified as one of the surest ways of countering the ever-rising competitions in different industries and organizations (Liu, Guo, & Lee, 2011). Since the services in the mobile phone subscription industry are extensively similar, maintaining loyal customers is complex due to constant price wars. On the other hand, a loyal customer base is one of the most valuable assets that an organization can have (Schiffman, O'Cass, Paladino, & Carlson, 2013). Competition in the mobile phone services industry is intense with players employing extra measures to appeal to consumers. Service quality in this industry is significantly important to consumers and determines to a large extent of loyalty levels. Different mobile phone providers have their loyal customers who are motivated by diverse and unique aspects associated with each provider. Companies in this industry have found it significantly challenging to increase their market share. Understanding the dynamics of customer loyalty in the industry can help in solving this issue.

1.2 Profile of The Dutch mobile phone industry

The mobile phone industry has considerably similar products in terms voice and message subscriptions, internet and data services, mobile device sales among other products. Given the nature of these products, the manner in which they are presented to customers determines the eventual market share and the number of loyal customers for each mobile phone provider. Additionally, individual organizational strategies determine whether such costumers are retained in the long run or whether they opt to switch to competitors (Overeem, Leijnse, & Uijlenhoet, 2013). The Dutch mobile phone subscription industry has experienced immense growth in the last two decades. The country has kept in touch with current trends in the industry and is at the forefront in acquiring and implementing new innovations in the industry. The industry is technology driven and the Netherlands has been a leader in this front. Customers in the country have a wide range of mobile phone providers to choose from (Kasper, Bloemer, & Driessen, 2010).

In the Dutch market the major players are KPN, Vodafone and T-Mobile.

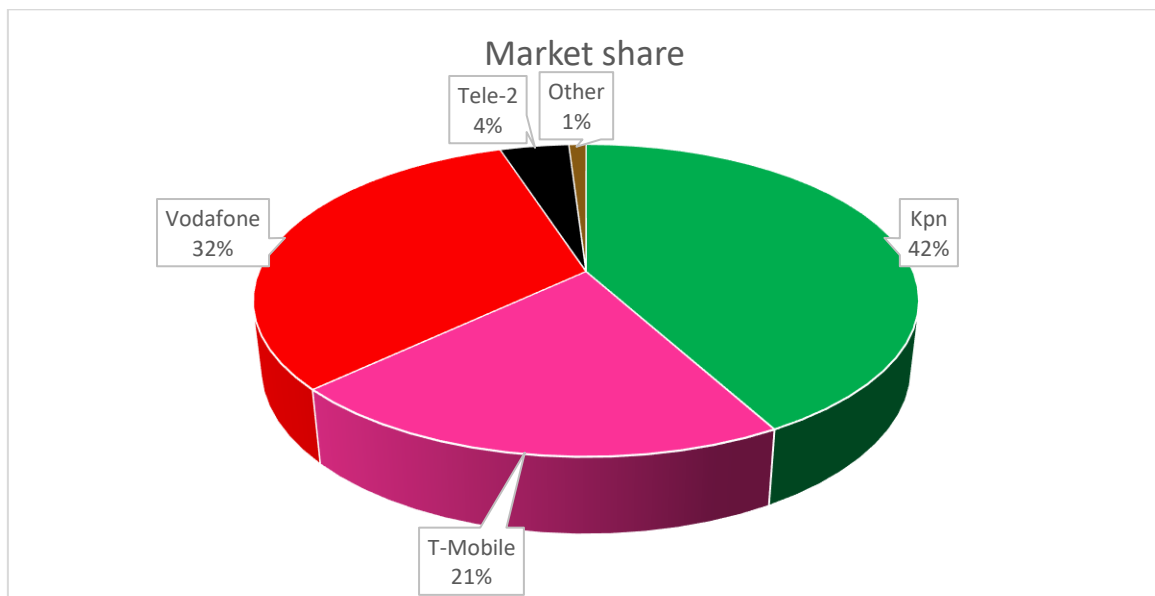


Figure 1.1 Market share of Dutch mobile phone providers

Figure 1.1 shows that KPN is largest market occupant with a market share of approximately 42%. Vodafone follows closely with a market share of 32% and T-Mobile coming in third at 21%. Tele2 which is significantly new in the market has managed to gain a 4% market share in the few years it has been operating in the Netherlands. The rest of the players in the market share less than 1% (Van de Roer, 2017).

With a dynamic industry, these top mobile phone providers experience mixed fortunes with alternating growth and drop in market share periodically. The mobile service industry in most developed countries is deemed to have reached saturation levels and existing companies must employ strategies to maintain achieved levels of growth and market share (Steenbruggen, Tranos, & Nijkamp, 2015).

Individual companies have also embarked on infrastructural development to better serve their markets. Unlike in the past, voice and messaging revenues for many mobile phone providers has dropped significantly. This has been because of innovative internet based communication channels that are cheaper, flexible and more effective. In this regard, major mobile phone providers have shifted to the provision of data related service which has also seen a significant growth.

1.3 Problem statement

Allot of work has already been done to determine customer loyalty in many branches. But to my best knowledge, no research has been done in the past to investigate customer loyalty in the Dutch mobile phone industry.

Hafeez & Hasnu (2010) studied customer satisfaction in the mobile phone industry in Pakistan. They identified important attributes were mobile phone providers should focus on to keep their customers loyal and satisfied.

This study will evaluate these attributes as well as others relevant to the Dutch mobile phone industry. The results of this study will provide an in-depth understanding of customer behaviour with regard to the Dutch mobile phone service industry. These results can enable mobile phone providers to focus on specific attributes that are of significant concern to customers. The results can also be used as grounds for decision making for mobile phone providers towards achieving their goals, growing their customer bases and achieving sustainability in the future.

1.4 Research objectives

The main aim of this master's thesis is to determine what influences customer loyalty with Dutch mobile phone providers. Additionally, the importance of the attributes will be examined in more detail. This study focuses on the private mobile phone consumers in The Netherlands.

To get an answer on central research question, I will build on of the model of Hafeez & Hasnu (2010) which examines determinants of customer loyalty in the mobile phone industry. This model will be explained in detail in chapter 2.3.

1.5 Sub questions

In order to address the central research question of this thesis, I will address the following sub questions.

- What is customer loyalty and why is it important?
- Which attributes influence customer loyalty?

In the following chapter, we provide an overview of the state of art literature concerning customer loyalty. Furthermore, we identify several attributes that influence customer loyalty resulting in a research model which will be explained in chapter 3 and subsequently tested in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will give an overview of the attributes that influence customer loyalty in the mobile phone industry. Each paragraph will explain each attribute individually and more in detail. Finally, several hypotheses will be created and they will be tested in chapter 3.

2.2 Customer loyalty

The issue of customer loyalty has been widely studied by different scholars and researchers in a bid to understand consumer psychology. In this regard, different definitions and explanations of the concept have been put forward to create better understanding and the dynamics that it is associated with. One aspect that has emerged that customer loyalty is dependent on the type of products and industry under consideration. According to Lai, Griffin & Babin (2010), customer loyalty is ‘‘ the behaviour of consumers to choose a specific brand or product due to perceived positive satisfaction, high value and product quality ‘’.

This definition by Lai et al (2010), is the most relevant for the mobile phone services industry as it covers long term issues which consumers consider when exhibiting loyalty to a specific provider. It covers most aspects that are relevant to the industry of mobile phones and the dynamics that determine multiple attributes. Furthermore, it puts into consideration how consumers respond to different stimulus that they consider important when acquiring services and products from a specific provider. In the mobile services industry, the definition is relevant to how consumers behave when different attributes and dynamics in the industry change, hence affecting the immediate and long term decision to stay with the providers or to switch to others that meet their expectations. The study by Lai et al (2010), was based on a Chinese survey with regard to mobile communications companies. The study revealed that consumers in this industry consider satisfaction, perceived value and corporate image most important when making loyalty decisions. It is therefore critical for individual organizations

to focus on these key concepts and incorporate them effectively in their strategies in the bid to acquire huge loyal customer bases (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000).

Customer loyalty can only be achieved if consumers associate a particular brand with positivity with regard to the three aspects. The three aspects are some of the most significant service evaluation attributes that determine customer loyalty. Quality in this regard touches on the products being acquired as well as the way it is delivered in terms of service quality.

These sentiments are also repeated by Cronin et al (2000) where they proposed a model that simultaneously considers satisfaction, value and quality when determining customer loyalty.

In another study by Oliver (1997) customer loyalty is defined as “ A deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching barriers”. This makes it clear that customer loyalty is focused on a positive long term relationship between an organization and its customers (Aydin & Özer, 2005). Organizations are compelled to progressively and aggressively employ strategies that ensure retention and loyalty. Only organizations with effective customer retention programs are likely to survive in the long term. Even as markets continue to grow; they are shared based on individual’s organizational strategies employed. This is the reason why some organizations seem to continue growing in terms of market share when others lose to these rivals.

Aydin and Özer (2005), identify two main broad definitions of customer loyalty, based on different markets and industries. The two broad categories are stochastic loyalty and deterministic loyalty. The stochastic definition of customer loyalty describes the concept as a form of customer behaviour. This is exhibited through behavioural preferences that vary with individual customers or groups of customers. The stochastic approach considers attributes such as purchasing frequency, purchase shares among others. On the other hand, deterministic customer loyalty is considering loyalty as an attitude. This approach disagrees with the behavioural approach and asserts that an analysis of underlying customer attitudes is paramount towards determining loyalty. Consequently, the deterministic approach considers attributes such as consumer preference, willingness to recommend to others, and the intention to buy (Alireza, Ali, & Aram, 2011). Integrating the two approaches, customer loyalty shows

bias towards a specific brand or products at the expense of that provided by rivals. The bias is exhibited in the customer purchase behaviour or response (Aydin & Özer, 2005). This behaviour is exhibited over a prolonged period where the behaviour is regarded as consistent with regard to the choice or decisions made.

2.3 Attributes determining customer loyalty

In the cotemporary organizational context, customer loyalty continues to be emphasized in as one way of achieving sustainability and long term achievement of goals. However, to achieve this, it is important to understand the applicable issues that are closely linked to the concept and which determine its efficiency in different industries and organizations (Deng, Lu, We, & Zhang, 2010). Attributes that determine customer loyalty differ with each industry and organization as each has unique attributes that drive customers to make specific decisions. Making models in these industries are also different and are guided by volatility and dynamics which differ significantly.

According to Hafeez and Hasnu (2010), mature markets tend to have more customer loyalty due as products are significantly standardised and available from all providers. However, loyalty is low in developing markets as consumers are fascinated by new organisations that come with improved products and services. Even with specific attributes that determine customer loyalty there are general parameters and pointers that apply generally for all industries and organizations.

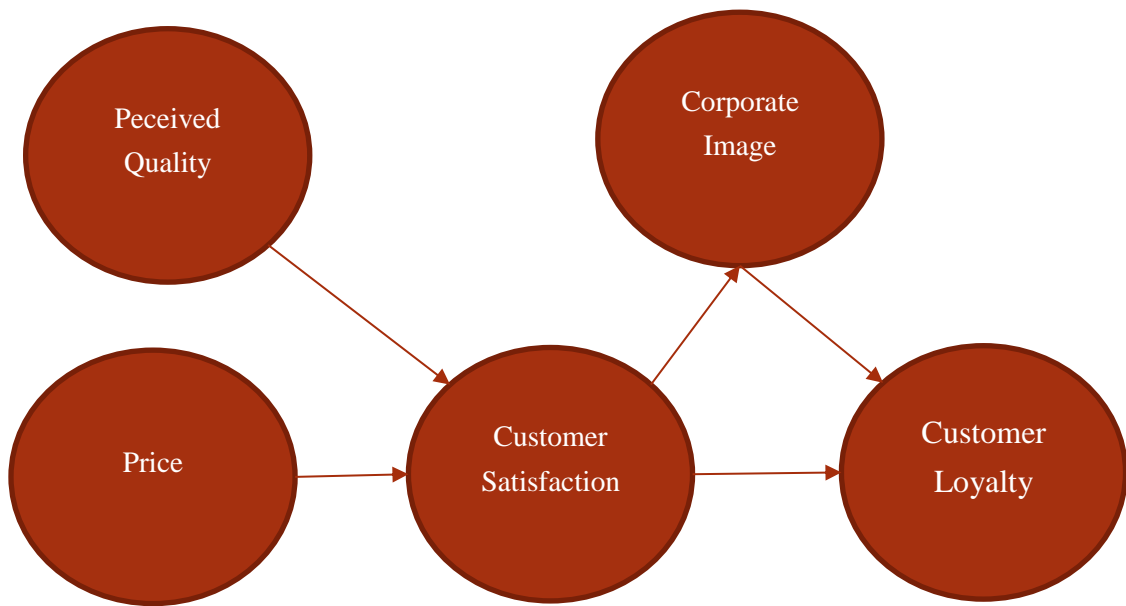


Figure 2.1 Original model of Hafeez and Hasnu

According to the model of Hafeez and Hasnu in figure 2.1, some of the attributes that determine customer loyalty include customer satisfaction, corporate image, price and perceived quality. The degree of determination of consumer loyalty of these attributes is dependent on individual industries. It is up to individual organizations to determine operational dynamics and appropriate timing where these attributes count. This model will be used as the basic model and will be extended with some extra attributes.

The model by Hafeez and Hasnu (2010), links customer loyalty to several attributes which are independent but have respective variables that influence their degree of impact. These independent attributes are a summary of multiple attributes. Furthermore, the model suggests that customer loyalty is mainly determined by customer satisfaction and corporate image. These two aspects have direct influence on customer loyalty and are interrelated as well. Customer satisfaction is the largest and most pronounced component of customer loyalty. According to the model, price and perceived quality are the main components of customer satisfaction. They determine the level of customer satisfaction and effect customer loyalty.

through satisfaction. Customer satisfaction on the other hand determines how costumers perceive an organisation with regard to corporate image.

In summary, the combination of price and perceived quality determine the level of satisfaction. They also effect customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and satisfaction impacts corporate image while the two then determine customer loyalty.

2.3.1 Corporate image

Lai et al (2010) defines corporate image as “the overlay public perception or impression expressed with regard to a particular company or organization”. This is the most important definition, because it addresses the concept compressively with regard to the organization and consumer dynamics. Another definition of corporate image is “ all kinds of impressions that the community makes about a corporation”. Corporate image is a valuable, tangible entity which is hard to imitate and it can help to obtain superior, sustainable financial performance (Martenson, 2007).

Corporate image relates to the behavioural and physical attributes of an organization, which is determined by organizational names, reputation of representatives and products offered. Corporate image is created after an evaluation of multiple characteristic of an organization (Hafeez & Hasnu, 2010). Different customers or potential consumers create the corporate image of different organizations based on the nature of information they can access with regard to the organization. Such information may be from advertisements, word of mouth, news items or any other source of information (Hafeez & Hasnu, 2010). This involves the conduct of organizational representatives who embody organizational core values and principles. Employees, management, and leadership of the organization should conduct themselves in a manner that is positively identifiable with the public. The initial buying decision is one of the first steps towards becoming a loyal customer. In this regard, if the initial purchase is made to a rival organization due to a negative image, then the organization loses out on loyal customer (Lai, Griffin, & Babin, 2010). Hereby an organisation which is associated with a good corporate image is likely to attract more customers than one with a

negative corporate image. This means that a good corporate image attracts customers who are likely to remain as long term customers who show loyalty. A poor corporate image hence translates to low customer loyalty as fewer customers would want to be associated with negativity, or experience poor services associated with the negative (Lai, Griffin, & Babin, 2010) (Nguyen & LeBlanc, 1998).

H1: Corporate image has a positive effect on customer loyalty

2.3.2 Customer satisfaction

According to Oliver (2014), Satisfaction is “ the consumer's fulfilment response”. This definition simply explains the concept in comprehensive way that is applicable in different contexts.

Customer satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that applies across most industries and organizations (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000). It is abroad concept which summarizes consumer perceptions through experiences of interaction with a particular organization. It can be viewed as the overall satisfaction derived from multiple experiences with an organization (Deng, Lu, We, & Zhang, 2010). In this regard, customer satisfaction has a direct relationship to consumer loyalty. High levels of consumer satisfaction are associated with high levels of consumer loyalty towards that brand (Aydin & Özer, 2005). Satisfaction is also determined by consumer perceptions based on how services are delivered to them. In the mobile services subscription context, satisfaction is manly based on quality of calling services, pricing structure and packages, availability of mobile devices with relevant capabilities, complementary value addition services, procedural conveniences, as well as customer support. Customer satisfaction shows how they respond to the level of fulfilment of expectations (Chen, Zhang, Cai, Lan, & Wang).

Dissatisfied customers often show displeasure and consider the next alternative with the aim of improving their level of satisfaction. Such consumers are also likely to influence others

who may also show scepticism or fear of being dissatisfied as well. Customers are expected to remain long term clients when they achieve higher levels of satisfaction from consuming products from a specific organisation (Hafeez & Hasnu, 2010). As a result, low customer satisfaction will lead to few long-term customers, hence low customer loyalty.

Several empirical studies have already shown that customer satisfaction leads to more customer loyalty, hence emphasizing on its importance (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000) (Murali & Yau, 2007). According to Flint, Blocker and Boutin (2011), Satisfaction is regarded to be the most significant function of customer loyalty.

The importance of customer satisfaction is prominent in multiple industries. The concept is important as satisfied customers are usually likely to return and recommend similar products and services to others. Organisations should therefore prioritise customer satisfaction by putting into account their specific concerns and demands (Aydin & Özer, 2005). Moreover, the image of a company is influenced by customer satisfaction. A study by Nguyen and Leblanc (1998) revealed that customers who perceived service quality over several retentions, had a more positive image of the cooperation. Each service moment will have effect on the satisfaction lever and therefore have effect on the corporate image (Nguyen & LeBlanc, 1998). Hence, we expect that customer satisfaction has a positive effect on corporate image and customer loyalty.

H2: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer loyalty

H3: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on corporate image

2.3.3 Price

Dai (2010) defines price as ‘‘ the monetary value assigned to a service or product being sold or acquired by consumers and prefer acquiring products where they can get the highest value for their money ’’. In this regard, consumers will spend money on products based on price and specific value therein. If consumers consider pricing to be fair worth services sought, they are

likely to experience high satisfaction levels and long term loyalty therein (Dai, 2010). For most consumers, it is probably one of the top determiners for purchasing decisions (Lai, Griffin, & Babin, 2010). Thus, it is common to have price wars between rival organizations where premium prices are on offer from time to time as a strategy to attract more customers. Some industries are significantly price sensitive and a slight change in pricing is associated with massive consumer reactions (Kim, Wong, Chang, & Park).

Consumers compare the quality of products being offered in a bid to determine which has the best quality and hence the higher value (El-Manstrly, 2016). This is done in comparison with the price, where its justification is evaluated. Based on this, consumer may go for more expensive products as long as they have high quality that meets their expectations. Finally, consumers evaluate price against their expectations (Coelho & Henseler, 2012). Consumers also assign specific prices to expectations which they compare to what is offered by different competitors. Based on the model by Hafeez and Hasnu (2010), price is directly related to customer satisfaction. Keaveney (1995) identified that more than half of consumers switched from companies because of not attractive pricing in a service industry.

Low pricing that delivers high value products has a positive influence on satisfaction and hence loyalty. In this regard, it means that high product pricing has a negative impact on customer satisfaction which in often affects loyalty negatively as well. When customers find that prices in one organisation are exorbitant or unfair to they are likely to shift to the next best options available from rivals.

H4: Price has a negative effect on customer satisfaction

2.3.4 Perceived quality

Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived quality as ‘‘ the consumer’s judgement about the overall excellence or superiority of a service’’ In this context we can conclude that quality is a multifaceted aspect that customers associate with products with regard to the ability of the product to meet specific consumer needs and expectations. In the mobile phone industry, this

includes network quality. When the network quality of a provider doesn't meet up with the expectations, consumers could complain and that leads to less satisfaction (Chen, Zhang, Cai, Lan, & Wang).

The level of quality that consumers associate with a product is directly linked to their satisfaction after consumption of that product. In this regard, consumers will in most cases go for products that are perceived to have high quality for the current market price (Edward & Sahadev, 2011). If products do not meet consumer expectations, they can be said to have low quality and are also associated with lower levels of satisfaction. High perceived quality is associated with higher levels of satisfaction that are likely to result in long term loyal customers (Lai, Griffin, & Babin, 2010).

Every time a customer is seeking to make a purchase, they assign a specific significance to the product or service they intend to acquire. The worthiness of a product or service is dependent on the capability of the product or service to meet preferences beyond consumer expectations. In this regard, perceived quality is a function of eventual customer satisfaction (Hafeez & Hasnu, 2010). Even though perceived quality may vary from one consumer to another, it tends to be significantly similar for consumer in similar categories such as social and age groups.

Several studies have already identified that perceived quality positively influences customer satisfaction. A research in the banking industry by Arashl, Katritciogly and Mehta (2005) already showed that this was the case. Another research in the mobile value-added services by Kuo, Wu and Deng (2009) also showed a positive relationship between quality and customer satisfaction.

Based on the model by Hafeez & Hasnu (2010), perceived quality is a component function of customer satisfaction. This means that customers consider the value of products they acquire with a lot of significance. Thus, high quality guarantees corresponding customer satisfaction. The model also shows that the relationship between perceived quality and customer satisfaction is a positive one with high levels of significance when statistically tested.

H5: Perceived quality had a positive effect on customer satisfaction

2.3.5 Extension of Hafeez and Hasnu model

In addition to these main attributes by Hafeez and Hasnu (2010) affecting customer loyalty, other studies have identified further variables that may determine customer loyalty in different contexts. These attributes include convenience of stores, perceived uniqueness and switching barriers imposed by mobile providers. However, these attributes are not pronounced as those identified by Hafeez and Hasnu (2010).

2.3.6 Convenience of stores

Convenience of stores can be defined as “the ease with which consumers can access desired service and products of choice from outlets in their close vicinity” (Edward & Sahadev, 2011). In this regard, organisations that ensure customers can conveniently access their products are likely to have more employees, who also show long term loyalty (Edward & Sahadev, 2011). Enhanced convenience of stores hence means long term loyal customers. Consumers who cannot conveniently access stores will most likely shift to organisation with closer stores and show low levels of loyalty therein (McMurrian & Matulich, 2016).

Competition in most industries has intensified to the extent that organizations have been compelled to be innovative in their strategies. One aspect that has become apparent is the accessibility of products and services in an affordable and convenient manner. The cotemporary customer is occupied with aspects such as work, family and leisure. In this regard, scheduling to acquire some of the products and services becomes hectic for them (Edward & Sahadev, 2011). In the digital online era, online stores have mushroomed with businesses engaging with their customers online. This has enabled organizations to reach more customers and provide different products and services at the convenience of the customer (McMurrian & Matulich, 2016). In addition to online shopping and deliveries, customers also prefer having multiple outdoor outlets at their disposal. Consumers are particularly sensitive when it comes to support services and their accessibility (Orel & Kara, 2014). Quick and reliable access to support services enables customers to feel appreciated and valuable. If customers feel that acquiring a product is not convenient for them regardless of

quality, they will probably go for the next viable option that is convenient for them (Li & Green, 2011).

In a bid to ensure customer satisfaction is enhanced through convenience, most organizations have full time support systems, some which operate day and night to ensure that every consumer or potential customer is adequately served (Evanschitzky, et al., 2012). For large organizations that have national coverage and huge consumer bases, loyalty levels are likely to be low due to multiple consumers seeking similar services simultaneously. For instance, this has been a challenge for mobile phone service providers who do not have adequate infrastructure to cater for multiple consumers at the same time (Li & Green, 2011).

Moreover, the employees in the stores will be the brand image. If they appear interested in customers, engaged, responsive and competent, the corporate image will tend to get more respect and ultimately loyalty (Aaker, 2004).

The relationship between convenience of store and customer loyalty can be found in the ease with which customers can access products and services when they require them. According to Ligas and Chaudhuri (2012), stores could lead to a greater perception of uniqueness for less experienced shoppers. They can compare products in the store and then are more likely to be satisfied. The effort that consumers put to access such products determines how they rate an organisation. If an alternative is more accessible due to close proximity and convenience of a store, consumers are likely to go for it instead. This means that providers who have multiple retail stores are likely to have higher customer loyalty levels due to the conveniences that such stores facilitate for multiple customers and few store means convenience for fewer people hence low customer loyalty levels.

H6 Convenience of stores has a positive effect on customer loyalty

2.3.7 Perceived uniqueness

Tian, Bearden & Hunter (2001) define perceived uniqueness as ‘‘to which extent the customer considers the product as different from other products in the same category’’. This explains why customers would choose a specific product or service over another despite perceived

similarities, since the products and services in the mobile phone industry are quite similar, but their plans aren't.

Organizations are increasingly using innovative techniques towards producing unique products that adapt to specific consumer needs. Strategies such as mass customization are being used to retain exiting consumers and attract new ones as well. According to Franke and Schreier (2008), perceived uniqueness can also be defined as ‘ ‘ the exceptional value that consumers associate with a specific product provided by a particular organization’ ’.

Customization is hence a trend that organizations can use to make their products unique for individual customers towards enhancing satisfaction levels, which with significant potential in resulting in satisfied customers (Ligas & Chaudhuri, 2012). These strategies in perceived uniqueness act towards improving customer loyalty.

Perceived uniqueness is important to customer loyalty as it is a strategically competitive concept. With multiple mobile phone providers being present in the industry, each of the major service providers has their area of specialization which it is well known for. This has enabled individual providers to concentrate on their core competencies towards delivering value to customers in specific areas. This strategy has also enabled different mobile phone providers to have a market share with partial dominance in one of the multiple areas of service and product provision (Overeem, Leijnse, & Uijlenhoet, 2013). This also gives consumers a wide variety to choose from, given the services that they mostly associate with or match their preferences.

When customers are convinced that organizations consider their preferences and demands by innovatively incorporating them in their products, they are likely to stick with such organizations and show customer loyalty. Organizations have realized that consumer feedback is significantly crucial and should be appropriately utilized towards identifying specific areas that could use innovative products (Nanda, Kuruvilla, & Murty, 2013).

The ability of an organisation to give customers unique products or services means that customers can have products or services availed in a manner that meets their specific needs. Meeting specific customer needs has a direct impact on their loyalty. Organisations that are unable to meet this have unsatisfied costumers, which has a long-term effect on loyalty.

H7: perceived uniqueness has a positive effect on customer loyalty

2.3.8 Switching barriers

Liu et al (2011) defines switching barriers as ‘‘the hindrance or obstacle associated with switching from one brand to another, set by the organisation seeking to retain a consumer’’. Such barriers may include cost implications, psychological efforts, among other issues that customers may identify as inconveniences that come with the shift (Aydin & Özer, 2005) (Shin & Kim, 2008) (Lam, Shankar, Erramilli, & Murthy, 2004). Inconveniencies such as monetary and time implications have a negative impact on customer satisfaction and hence loyalty as well (Lam, Shankar, Erramilli, & Murthy, 2004).

Customers find it difficult to switch to rival products due to identity issues that are associated with mobile phone services. Individual organizations may also put barriers that discourage customers from switching to competitor networks, which may be accompanied by extra costs that customers may find it difficult to incur (Lam, Shankar, Erramilli, & Murthy, 2004). In addition to this, switching is usually associated with time and psychological efforts that most customers may opt to avoid. By switching to a new mobile phone provider, it also may come with new inconveniences such as new knowledge that may take time learn. Further to this, mobile numbers may be tied to some contractual obligations that may hinder the migration process (Deng, Lu, We, & Zhang, 2010).

Lock in strategies may include moves such as contractual commitments, loyalty programs, services bundling among others. Lock-in strategies are meant to tempt subscribers to remain with the provider. If subscribers were to leave the provider, they would have to forfeit certain benefits, which also form part of switching costs (Liu, Guo, & Lee, 2011). Switching cost are the cost that are needed when switching. This includes money, time and psychological cost (Dick & Basu, 1994)

Continued barriers have the effect of eliminating price sensitivity for most consumers. Consumers end up becoming loyal as their tendency to stay becomes high. Price sensitivity is also decreased because of attributes such as quality and certainty which equates to brand

loyalty in the long run. In this regard, switching barriers can have an impact on the link between customer loyalty with a specific brand and their intention to switch or move to another provider (Aydin & Özer, 2005).

The positive effect of switching barriers on repurchase intention has already been confirmed by many studies (Jones, Mothersbaugh, & Beatty, 2000) (Tsai, Huang, Jaw, & Chen, 2006) (Colgate & Lang, 2001). This has also been confirmed by studies that have been conducted in the Korean mobile services market. These studies proved that switching barriers lead to customer retention and to higher customer loyalty (Kim & Yoon, 2004) (Kim, Park, & Jeong, 2004).

H8: Switching barriers have a positive effect on customer loyalty

2.4 Conceptual model

Based on the multiple attributes that determine customer loyalty, the conceptual model can be formulated from these attributes. The level of applicability of each attribute is dependent on individual customer preferences and intention especially at the point of purchase.

However, some attributes are more important when compared to others and apply in most brand scenarios. Satisfaction seems to matter for most customers in most industries. Some of the attributes are interrelated and influence each other as well. The components that determine loyalty can be regarded as the independent variables that vary with each industry and with individual customers. Every arrow is expected to be a causal relationship and next to that they will be positive or negative. Figure 2.2 shows the conceptual model.

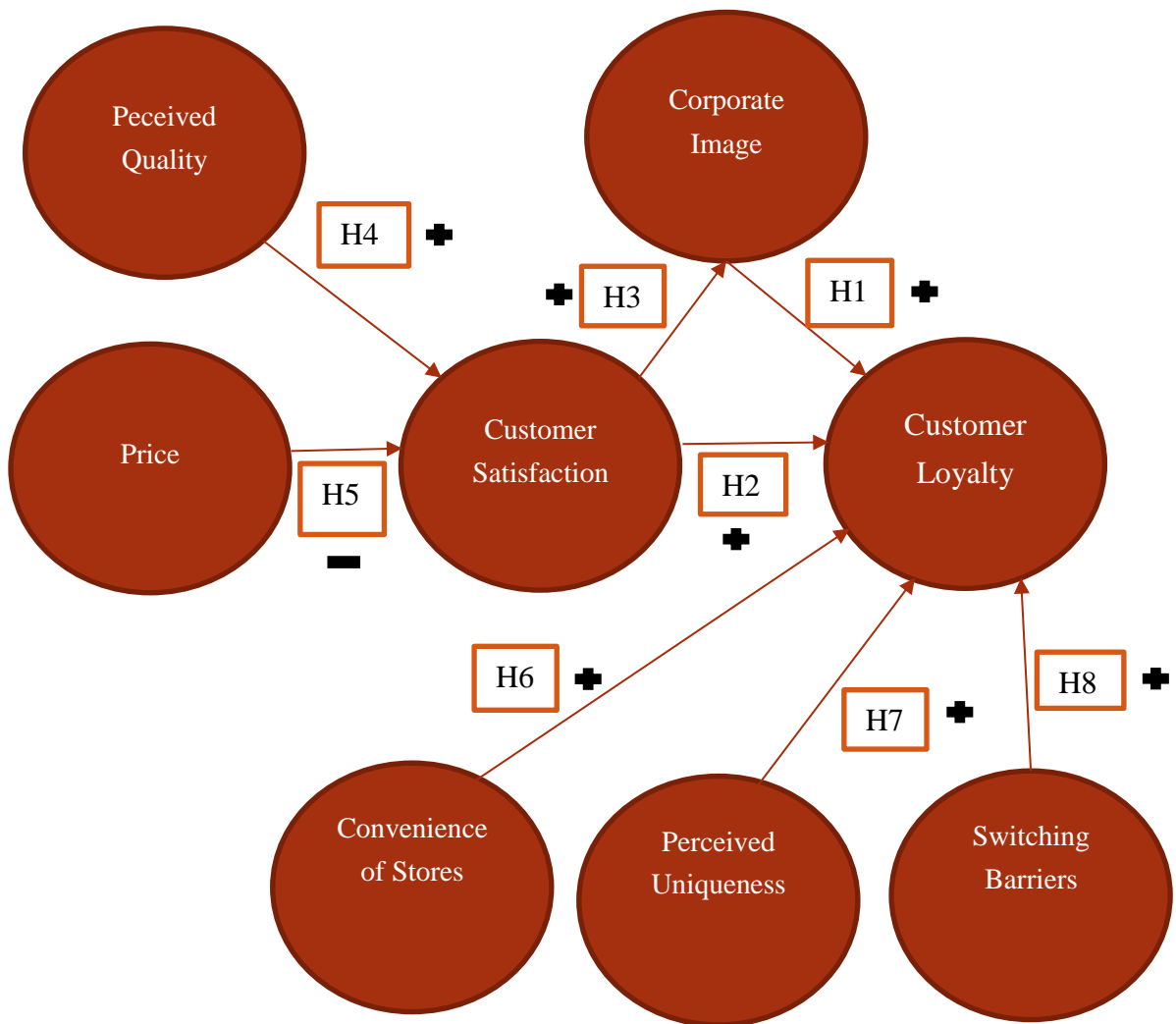


Figure 2.2 Conceptual model

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will explain in detail how the overall research is conducted for this master thesis. Furthermore, this chapter will give an overview of the hypotheses and explain the research measurements, the attributes and scales that were used to analyse the data.

3.2 Quantitative research

In this master thesis, a quantitative approach was used. Quantitative research are researcher's techniques that seek to quantify data and, typically, apply some form of measurements and statistical data (Malhora, Briks, & Wills, 2012).

Quantitative research is also called hypotheses testing research. Hereby the hypotheses that have been created can be tested. This then will make it clear of if the independent variables have any effect on the dependent variable, the hypotheses can then be accepted or rejected (Malhora, Briks, & Wills, 2012).

3.3 Data collection

In this master thesis, I have chosen for a quantitative research by conducting a survey. The survey is a deductive approach. The survey data can be collected from a large population since almost everyone in the Netherlands has a contract with a mobile phone provider.

The data was collected between 21 April 2017 and 10 May 2017. Qualtrics has been used to carry out the survey.

To get in touch with the population in an economical way, the questionnaire has been spread out by a link on Facebook and LinkedIn. Furthermore, several Vodafone customers have

personally been approached to fill in the questionnaire at the Vodafone shop in Kerkrade in the Netherlands.

3.4 Sampling technique

The sampling technique that has been used for this research is the Non-probability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling relies on the personal judgement of the researcher rather than on chance to select sample elements (Malhora, Briks, & Wills, 2012). Furthermore, convenience sampling technique has been used. This technique attempts to obtain a sample of convenient elements. Hereby it is simple to get a large amount of data without many costs. (Malhora, Briks, & Wills, 2012).

A total of 191 questionnaires were filled in and a total of 48 questionnaires were excluded, since they were not filled in completely or they didn't have a mobile phone subscription. A total of 153 responses was used for the data analysis.

3.5 Questionnaire design

The design of the questionnaire began with the model (figure 2.1) of Hafeez and Hasnu (2010). Hereby the attributes of the model were taken and put in the beginning of the questionnaire. All items are measured using validated scales, which will be explained in detail in paragraph 3.6. All the attributes are subdivided in the questionnaire. For each attribute scales were adapted from different papers to measure the attributes. In the beginning an extra question was added to filter unusable data. The question was "Do you have a subscription with a Dutch mobile phone company?" If the answer on this question was "Yes" they could proceed to the next question. If the answer was "No", they would be directed to the end of the questionnaire. With the next question (i.e. "Which provider do you have?") the questionnaire adjusted the remaining questions to the provider chosen. Hereby the questionnaire showed the provider that was chosen in each question (e.g. if Vodafone was

chosen, the respondent got questions like ‘‘Vodafone is stable ‘’ and ‘‘Vodafone is reliable ‘’).

After the original attributes of the model of Hafeez and Hasnu were tested, an extra question came up (i.e. ‘‘ Does your mobile phone provider have retail stores’’?) If the respondents answered ‘‘ No’’ the next attribute (i.e. Convenience of stores) couldn’t be measured by this respondent and these questions were skipped.

All the questions were measured by using a 7-point Liker scale. The answers were divided in 7 points between ‘‘ Totally disagree ‘’ and ‘‘Totally agree ‘’. At the end, demographic data was collected by asking questions about gender, age and education.

Finally, the questionnaire was translated in Dutch, because of the population target of this research. A copy of the Dutch questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

3.6 Research measurements

In this master thesis, the 7 independent variables and the dependent variable were measured and will be further explained in the next sections.

3.6.1 Customer loyalty

Customer loyalty was measured by using 5 items as mentioned by Aydin & Özer (2005) in their research. Scale which was used to measure customer loyalty is mentioned in Table 3.1.

Attribute	Author	Scale used
Customer Loyalty	Aydin & Özer (2005)	Under current circumstances, I would choose again for my current provider
		If I would get a new contract, I would prefer this provider
		I recommend this provider to people
		I encourage friends who plan buying a mobile plan
		Even if there are other cheaper possibilities, I would stay loyal to my provider

Table 3.1 Scale used to measure customer loyalty

3.6.2 Corporate image

Corporate image was measured by using 5 items as mentioned by Bayol et al. (2000) in their research. Since 2 questions of the 5 items consisted of more elements, I divided these items so they can separately be measured. E.g. original: “ My provider is innovative and forward looking. Adjusted: (1) My provider is innovative and (2) My provider is forward looking. Scale which was used to measure corporate image is mentioned in Table 3.2.

Attribute	Author	Scale used
Corporate Image	Bayol et al. (2000)	My provider is trusted
		My provider is stable
		My provider is organized
		My provider has a social contribution for the society
		My provider is concerned about its customers
		My provider is innovative
		My provider is forward looking

Table 3.2 Scale used to measure corporate image

3.6.3 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction was measured by using 3 items as mentioned by Cronin et al. (2000) in their research. Scale which was used to measure customer satisfaction is mentioned in Table 3.3.

Attribute	Author	Scale used
Customer Satisfaction	Cronin et al. (2000)	My choice to purchase this provider was a wise one
		I think that I did the right thing when I made a contract with this provider
		My provider is exactly what is needed for this service

Table 3.3 Scale used to measure customer satisfaction

3.6.4 Price

Price was measured by using 3 items as mentioned by Johnson et al. (2001) in their research.

Scale which was used to measure price is mentioned in Table 3.4.

Attribute	Author	Scale used
Price	Johnson et al. (2001)	I am satisfied with the value for money
		I think that the price I pay now, is better than the competitors
		My provider meets my expectations for the price I pay

Table 3.4 Scale used to measure price

3.6.5 Perceived quality

Perceived quality was measured by using 5 items as mentioned by Bayol et al. (2000) in their research. Since 2 questions of the 5 items consisted of more items, I divided these items so they can separately be measured. E.g. original: “ I am satisfied about the customer service of my provider and the personal advice I get. Adjusted: (1) I am satisfied about the customer service of my provider and (2) I am satisfied about the personal advice I get from my provider. Scale which was used to measure perceived quality is mentioned in Table 3.5.

Attribute	Author	Scale used
Perceived quality	Bayol et al. (2000)	I am satisfied about the overall quality I receive from my provider
		I am satisfied about the technical quality of my network
		I am satisfied about the customer service of my provider
		I am satisfied about the personal advice I get from my provider
		I am satisfied about the quality of the services I use from my provider
		I am satisfied about the range of services my provider offers
		I am satisfied about the range of products my provider offers
		I am satisfied about the reliability of the products and services of my provider
		I am satisfied about the accuracy of the products and services of my provider
		I am satisfied about the clarity of information provided by my provider
		I am satisfied about the transparency of information provided by my provider

Table 3.5 Scale used to measure perceived quality

3.6.6 Convenience of stores

Convenience of stores was measured by using 4 items as mentioned by Anderson & Srinivasan (2003) in their research. Hereby 1 additional question was added to get a better insight in this attribute. Scale which was used to measure convenience of stores is mentioned in Table 3.6.

Attribute	Author	Scale used
Convenience of stores	Anderson et al. (2003)	I want the convenience that retails stores offer
		I enjoy the accessibility of product of retail shopping
		I am interested in taking advantage of the ease of retail shopping
		I would like to shop nearby my house
		I enjoy the physical evidence

Table 3.6 Scale used to measure convenience of stores

3.6.7 Perceived uniqueness

Perceived uniqueness was measured by using 3 items as mentioned by Franke & Schreier (2008) in their research. Scale which was used to measure perceived uniqueness is mentioned in Table 3.7.

Attribute	Author	Scale used
Perceived uniqueness	Franke & Schreier (2008)	My Provider is highly unique
		My provider is one of a kind
		My provider is really special

Table 3.7 Scale used to measure perceived uniqueness

3.6.8 Switching barriers

Switching barriers was measured by using 2 items as mentioned by Kim et al. (2004) in their research. Hereby 1 additional question was added to get a better insight in this attribute. Scale which was used to measure switching barriers is mentioned in Table 3.8.

Attribute	Author	Scale used
Switching barriers	Kim et al. (2004)	It cost me money if I switch from provider
		It is easy to switch from providers
		It cost me effort to switch from providers

Table 3.8 Scale used to measure switching barriers

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will give an overview of the data analysis. The results of the analysed data will be presented including the descriptive, statistical and regression data.

4.2 Number of respondents

A total of 191 questionnaires were started. 14 of these questionnaires were incomplete and 24 were rejected, because they couldn't provide reliable data. 153 questionnaires remained valid and were used in the final analyses. Table 4.1 shows the summary of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire started	191	100%
Questionnaire incomplete	14	8%
Questionnaire completed	177	92%
Rejected, because answer "No" in Q1	24	12%
Total of questionnaires considered for data	153	80%

Table 4.1 Summary of the questionnaire

4.3 Descriptive analyses

The final sample was 153 for the final analysis. The following subchapters will give an overview of the distribution of the demographics of the sample population, the distribution of the providers and the distribution if their provider has retail stores.

4.3.1 Gender

Table 4.2 shows the gender distribution of the respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	98	64%
Female	55	36%
Total	153	100%

Table 4.2 Gender distribution

4.3.2 Age

Table 4.3 shows the age distribution the respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 -	1	1%
18 to 24	54	35%
25 to 35	76	50%
36 to 45	11	7%
45 to 55	8	5%
55 +	3	2%
Total	153	100%

Table 4.3 Age distribution

4.3.3 Education

Table 4.4 shows the education distribution the respondents.

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Lower education	10	6%
Secondary education	53	35%
Higher education	65	42%
Academic education	21	14%
Other	4	3%
Total	153	100%

Table 4.4 Education distribution

4.3.4 Provider

Table 4.5 shows the distribution of the respondent's current provider.

Provider	Frequency	Percentage
Kpn	36	22%
Vodafone	50	31%
T-Mobile	36	22%
Tele-2	12	8%
Telfort	12	8%
Hollandsnieuwe	5	3%
Ben	3	2%
Ziggo	2	1%
Other	5	3%
Total	153	100%

Table 4.5 Provider distribution

4.3.5 Retail stores

Table 4.6 shows if the respondent's provider has retail stores.

Provider has retail stores	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	126	82%
No	27	18%
Total	153	100%

Table 4.6 Retail stores distribution

4.4 Statistical data

The following tables will give an overview of the data. Table 4.7 is an overview of the descriptive data and tables 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 an overview of the regression of the data. In Table 4.7, you can also see the correlation between 2 variables. E.g. 1 is Loyalty and 2 is Image. The correlation between them is 0,65.

4.4.1 Descriptive statistics

	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Customer Loyalty	4,94	1,39	1	,65	,756	,59	,52	,07	,49	,26
2	Corporate Image	5,21	1,03	,65	1	,64	,46	,66	,18	,49	,29
3	Satisfaction	5,35	1,27	,76	,64	1	,70	,58	,06	,37	,19
4	Price	5,22	1,32	,59	,46	,70	1	,60	,09	,43	,34
5	Perceived quality	5,34	0,97	,52	,66	,58	,60	1	,05	,57	,27
6	Convenience of retail stores	5,38	1,09	,07	,184	,06	,09	,05	1	,32	,39
7	Perceived uniqueness	4,44	1,51	,49	,49	,37	,43	,57	,32	1	,51
8	Switching barriers	4,78	1,07	,26	,289	,19	,34	,27	,39	,51	1

Table 4.7 Descriptive statistic

4.4.2 Regression data

In order to assess which attributes, have influence on the customer loyalty, a multiple regression has been used. A multiple regression model is similar to the simple regression model. Only in this case, we use more than one independent variable to explain variance in the dependent variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). We will use a significance of 5%.

In this case, 2 multiple regressions and 1 simple regression has been conducted, with each a different dependent variable.

1 Regression customer loyalty

Customer loyalty = F (Corporate image, Customer satisfaction, Convenience of stores, Perceived uniqueness, Switching barriers)

	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients β	T-value	P-value	H	Supported
			β	Std. error					
		Constant	-,111	,518		-,214	,831		
	Customer Loyalty	Corporate image	,224	,097	,171	2,324	,022	H1	Yes
		Customer satisfaction	,660	,076	,603	8,656	,000	H2	Yes
		Convenience of stores	-,083	,073	-,068	- 1,144	,255	H6	No
		Perceived uniqueness	,190	,062	,201	3,066	,003	H7	Yes
		Switching barriers	,007	,078	,005	,083	,934	H8	No
Adjusted R²	,649								
ANOVA F - value	46,868								
ANOVA p - value	0,00								

Table 4.8 Regression data customer loyalty

Table 4.8 shows the data of the first regression, where customer loyalty is the dependent variable. Corporate image has a positive effect on customer loyalty. A unitary change in corporate image results in a change of 0.224 units in customer loyalty. The effect of corporate image was

found statistically significant ($p < 0,05$). This means, how better the corporate image is, how higher customer loyalty get and therefore H1 is supported.

Customer satisfaction also has a positive effect on customer loyalty. A unitary change in customer satisfaction results in a change of 0,660 units in customer loyalty. The effect of customer satisfaction was found statistically significant ($p < 0,05$). This means the more customer satisfaction increases; the more customer loyalty increases and therefore also H2 is supported.

Convenience of stores has no effect on customer loyalty. In this regard the relationship is statistically insignificant ($p < 0,05$) Therefore, H6 is not supported.

Perceived uniqueness has a positive effect on customer loyalty. A unitary change in perceived uniqueness results in a change of 0,190 units in customer loyalty. The effect of perceived uniqueness was found statistically significant ($p < 0,05$). Therefore, H7 is also supported.

Switching barriers has no effect on customer loyalty ($p > 0,05$). In this regard the relationship is statistically insignificant ($p < 0,05$) Therefore, H8 is not supported.

Based on the value of adjusted R^2 which is 0.649 (65%) shows that the data used in the regression model significantly falls in the equation, which shows a high level of relationship between the variables.

Furthermore, customer satisfaction is the most important variable in this regression. It has approximately three times more influence on customer loyalty than corporate image and perceived uniqueness.

Regression customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction = F (Perceived quality, Price)

	Dependent	Independent	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients β	T-value	P-value	H	Supported
			β	Std. error					
		Constant	,851	,396		2,148	,033		
	Customer satisfaction	Perceived quality	,321	,091	,247	3,537	,001	H4	Yes
		Price	,533	,067	,556	7,957	,000	H5	Yes
Adjusted R²						0,530			
ANOVA F - value						86,739			
ANOVA p - value						0,00			

Table 4.9 Regression data customer satisfaction

Table 4.9 shows the data of the second regression, where customer satisfaction is the dependent variable. Perceived quality has a positive effect on customer loyalty. A unitary change in perceived quality results in a change of 0,321 units in customer satisfaction. The effect of perceived quality was found statistically significant ($p < 0,05$). Therefore, H4 is supported.

Price has a negative effect on customer satisfaction. A unitary change in price results in a change of 0,533 units in customer satisfaction. The effect of price was found statistically significant ($p < 0,05$). Therefore, H5 is also supported.

The adjusted R² value for the relationships between customer satisfaction, perceived quality and price is 0.53(53%). This shows an average good fit with more than half of the data falling within the regression model; which shows an average relationship between the variables.

Furthermore, price has a higher relationship with a unitary change resulting in a 0.533 change when compared to a 0.321 change caused by perceived quality.

Regression corporate image

Corporate image = F (customer satisfaction)

	Dependent	Independent	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients β	T-value	P-value	H	Supported
			β	Std. error					
		Constant	2,400	,280		8,657	,033		
	Corporate image	Customer satisfaction	,524	,051	,642	10,296	,000	H3	Yes
Adjusted R²						0,409			
ANOVA F - value						106,004			
ANOVA p - value						0,00			

Table 4.10 Regression data corporate image

Table 410 shows the data of the last regression, where corporate image is the dependent variable. Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on corporate image. A unitary change in customer satisfaction results in a change of 0,524 units in corporate image. The effect of customer satisfaction was found statistically significant ($p < 0,05$). Therefore, H3 is supported.

With regard to the relationship between corporate image and customer satisfaction the adjusted R² is 0.409(40%) which means that the data is not a good fit as only 40% of the data fits into regression model. The relationship between the two is therefore minimal.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this master thesis is to investigate what influences customer loyalty with Dutch mobile phone providers. Hereby the original model of Hafeez and Hasnu was selected and extended with other attributes that could have effect on customer loyalty.

Only 2 of the 8 hypotheses were not supported. Research revealed that customer satisfaction and corporate image have a positive influence on customer loyalty, but customer satisfaction has the highest significance with regard to customer loyalty.

The second regression showed that price and perceived quality have influence on customer satisfaction. This means that price and perceived quality have influence on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction.

Of the extended attributes (convenience of stores, perceived uniqueness, switching barriers), only perceived uniqueness was statistically supported to have effect on customer loyalty.

Moreover, research showed that customer satisfaction has a positive influence on corporate image.

Looking at the original model, every link that was created was statistically supported, this means that the original model is good way to start a new research.

This master thesis can help mobile phone providers to understand which attributes influence customer loyalty. Hereby the mobile phone providers can focus on these attributes.

5.2 Recommendations

This master thesis is important to mobile phone providers as it provides insights on crucial aspects that customers consider when buying their services. In this regard, individual providers can evaluate their current status and can start with appropriate changes.

Determining what is important to customers is important for providers as they can strategize and align their activities in a manner that positively impacts on customer loyalty. It can help in identifying internal gaps, exploiting markets and industry niches for further growth and to compete with the competition.

Customer satisfaction emerged as a superior attribute with regard to customer loyalty in the industry. In order to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction, individual providers should regularly carry out market research towards determining which attributes consumers deem important to them when seeking mobile services, since the mobile phone services industry is dynamic.

Based on the analysis some variables seem to have no relationship or significance to customer loyalty in the Dutch mobile phone industry. In this regard, mobile phone providers should not be overly concerned about these attributes. For instance, convenience of stores does not show any relationship to customer loyalty. This means that individual organizations should give this aspect least priority when investing in towards enhancing customer loyalty.

When investing in customer retention strategies, it is important to put more focus on attributes such as customer satisfaction which is mainly affected by price and perceived quality.

Perceived uniqueness and corporate image should also be considered as well. Based on the orientation of individual organizations, the focus should be on finding a working combination or blend of attributes that yields the highest customer loyalty.

This research can help future researchers that want to investigate the mobile phone industry. They can use this master thesis as a starting point to extent their research. Further research in this field is required to determine the extent of effect associated with individual attributes with regard to customer loyalty. Moreover, they should also focus on different types or segments of customers who have varying consumption patterns and they should also incorporate data

from multiple countries for an in-depth analysis. Furthermore, further research into the relationships should also be carried out in order to determine why attributes such as switching barriers and convenience of stores do not have a significant impact, yet they have shown significance in other countries.

5.3 Limitations

During the writing of this master thesis there were several limitations and constraints. These limitations had mostly influence on the questionnaire. The first limitation was time. The data collection was collected in a small period and therefore many potential respondents didn't get reached. Time had also influence in which period the respondent answered the questionnaire. If the respondent had an argument with their provider in the period they answered the questionnaire, they would have given negative answers and vice versa.

Secondly there were financial limitations. Many respondents are not willing to take time for a free questionnaire. If I had promised a gift for their response, I may have had more respondents.

Moreover, the questionnaire was sent by Facebook and LinkedIn. Therefore, most of the respondents were residents of Limburg. This was an area limitation and it could be that people in other provinces think otherwise than residents in the south of the Netherlands.

Next to these limitations, other limitations might also have influenced the results. Influencing effect of independent variables on loyalty were measured by randomly respondents. These respondents had a mobile subscription, but most of the respondents had a Vodafone contract. If I had more respondents of another provider, the results would have been different.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Copy of the questionnaire

Thesis

In het kader van mijn masterproef aan de Universiteit Hasselt verricht ik onderzoek naar de factoren die invloed hebben op customer loyalty in de mobiele Telecombranche. Het invullen van deze vragenlijst duurt ca 10 minuten.

Ik wil u alvast hartelijk bedanken voor deelname aan dit onderzoek.

De informatie die u geeft, is confidentieel en zal enkel voor statistische doeleinden worden gebruikt.

Q1 Heeft u een mobiel abonnement bij een Nederlandse telefoonmaatschappij?

- Ja (1)
- Nee (2)

Voorwaarde: Nee is geselecteerd. Ga naar: Einde enquête.

Q2 Welke mobiele provider heeft u?

- Kpn (1)
- Vodafone (2)
- T-mobile (3)
- Tele 2 (5)
- Telfort (6)
- Andere provider (4)
- Ben (8)
- Ziggo (9)
- Andere provider (10)

Q3 Geef bij de volgende stellingen weer in hoeverre u het eens bent over
 \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}

	Helemaal niet mee eens (1)	Niet mee eens (2)	Enigszins mee oneens (3)	Noch eens noch oneens (4)	Enigszins mee eens (5)	Mee eens (6)	Helemaal mee eens (7)
Onder de huidige omstandigheden, zou ik weer opnieuw kiezen voor mijn huidige provider (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Als ik een nieuwe abonnement wil afsluiten, dan gaat mijn voorkeur naar mijn huidige provider (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik raad mensen aan te kiezen voor mijn huidige provider (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik moedig vrienden aan te kiezen voor mijn huidige provider (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ook al zijn er goedkopere alternatieven, ik zou toch opnieuw kiezen voor de mijn huidige provider (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 Geef bij de volgende stellingen weer in hoeverre u het eens bent over het imago van
 \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}. "\${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}
 is ... "

	Helemaal niet mee eens (1)	Niet mee eens (2)	Enigszins mee oneens (3)	Noch eens noch oneens (4)	Enigszins mee eens (5)	Mee eens (6)	Helemaal mee eens (7)
Betrouwbaar (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stabiel (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ze dragen enorm bij bij de samenleving (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Draagt bij aan de samenleving (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zorgzaam (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovatief (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vooruitstrevend (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 Geef bij de volgende stellingen weer in hoeverre u het eens bent over uw tevredenheid over $\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$

	Helemaal niet eens (1)	Niet me eens (2)	Enigszins me eens (3)	Noch eens noch eens (4)	Enigszins me eens (5)	Me eens (6)	Helemaal me eens (7)
Mijn keuze voor $\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ was een slimme (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik denk dat ik een goede beslissing heb gemaakt, toen ik een contract ben aangegaan met $\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mijn provider bied me precies aan wat ik nodig heb (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 Geef bij de volgende stellingen weer in hoeverre u het eens bent over de prijs van $\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$

	Helemaal niet eens (1)	Niet me eens (2)	Enigszins me eens (3)	Noch eens noch eens (4)	enigszins me eens (5)	Me eens (6)	Helemaal me eens (7)
Ik ben tevreden over de prijs/kwaliteit verhouding (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vind de prijs die ik nu betaal beter dan bij andere providers (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
$\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ voldoet aan mijn verwachtingen voor de prijs die ik betaal (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 Geef bij de volgende stellingen weer in hoeverre u het eens bent over de kwaliteit van \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}"Ik ben tevreden over... "

	Helemaal niet me eens (1)	Nie t me e eens (2)	Enigz ins me een s (3)	Noch eens noch oneen s (4)	Enigz ins me eens (5)	Me e eens (6)	Helemaal me eens (7)
de overal kwaliteit dat ik krijg van \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedC hoices} (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben tevreden over de netwerkkdekking van mijn provider (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben tevreden over de klantenservice en de persoonlijke advies dat ik krijg van mijn provider (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Klik om te schrijven Stelling 11 (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben tevreden over de kwaliteit van de diensten dat ik gebruik van mijn provider (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
het aanbod van de diensten van \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedC hoices} (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
het aanbod van producten van \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedC hoices} (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
de betrouwbaarheid van de producten van \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedC hoices} (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
de nauwkeurigheid van de producten van \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedC hoices} (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
de helderheid van informatie dat ik krijg van \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedC hoices} (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
de transparantie van informatie dat ik krijg van \${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedC hoices} (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8 Heeft uw provider een retailshop?

- Ja (1)
- Nee (2)

Display This Question:

Als Heeft uw provider een retailshop? Ja is geselecteerd

Q9 Geef bij de volgende stellingen weer in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen over de retail shops van $\${q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}$

	Helemaal niet mee eens (1)	Niet mee eens (2)	Enigzins mee oneens (3)	Noch eens noch oneens (4)	Enigzins mee eens (5)	Mee eens (6)	Helemaal mee eens (7)
Ik wil het gemak dat retailshops aanbieden (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik geniet van de ter plekke beschikbaarheid van de producten in mijn providers retailshop (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik geniet van het gemak van mijn providers retailshops (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik wil in de buurt van mijn huis winkelen (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik geniet van het fysieke bewijs (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 Geef bij de volgende stellingen aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen over de uniekheid van $\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$

	Helemaal niet eens (1)	Niet me eens (2)	Enigszins me eens (3)	Noch eens noch oneens (4)	Enigszins me eens (5)	Me eens (6)	Helemaal me eens (7)
$\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ is hoogst uniek (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Er is maar een als $\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
$\{q://QID25/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ is heel speciaal (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met volgende stellingen over een eventuele overstap naar een andere provider

	Helemaal niet mee eens (1)	Niet mee eens (2)	Enigszins mee oneens (3)	Noch eens noch oneens (4)	Enigszins mee eens (5)	Mee eens (6)	Helemaal mee eens (7)
Het kost me geld als ik overstap van providers (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Het is makkelijk om over te stappen van providers (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Het kost me moeite om over te stappen (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12 Geslacht

- Man (1)
- Vrouw (2)

Q13 Leeftijd

- 18 - (1)
- 18 t/ 24 (2)
- 25 t/m 35 (3)
- 36 t/ 45 (4)
- 46 t/m 55 (5)
- 55 + (6)

Q14 Wat is uw hoogst afgeronde opleidingsniveau?

- Lager onderwijs (1)
- Middelbaar onderwijs (2)
- Hoger beroeps onderwijs (3)
- Universitair onderwijs (4)
- Anders (5)

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Richting: **Master of Management-International Marketing Strategy**
Jaar: **2017**

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