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FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR IN EHEALTH USE

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Annotation. It is worth noting that the worldwide healthcare system faces such global problems like increasing costs, rising infectious diseases, consumerism, ageing societies. What is interesting, nowadays society is very responsible regarding the health, hence, self-management is becoming prevalent. Hence, the omnipresent Internet access fosters the transformation from conventional healthcare system to modern one. Moreover, after the comprehensive academic literature examination it appeared that the field of eHealth implementation, especially, what factors can influence the eHealth use, is highly unexplored. It seems a little bit incomprehensible that giving such fundamental practical significance of eHealth use, researches come short in this particular field. Therefore, this article aims to close the academic gap in the field of factors influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use. Hence, the object of the study: factors influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use. The objectives of the study are: firstly, to examine the factors influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use, secondly, to present the benefits of the factors influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use. The methods applied: logical and comparative analysis of literature, academic literature synthesis.

Keywords: factors, eHealth, healthcare system, digitalization.

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide healthcare system faces such global problems like increasing costs, rising infectious diseases, consumerism, ageing societies (Ossebaard & Van Gemert-Pijnen, 2016). What is interesting, the omnipresent Internet access fosters the transformation from conventional healthcare system to modern one (Weaver et al., 2009). Moreover, nowadays society is very responsible regarding the health, hence, self-management is becoming prevalent (Fransen, Schaik, Twickler & Bot, 2011). In this particular case, it is important to note the fact that eHealth widens the opportunities for self-care and active patient participation Ossebaard & Gemert-Pijnen (2016). Additionally, eHealth unites the public interest to have qualitative, affordable and accessible healthcare system (Gaddi, Capello & Manca, 2014). The academic literature agrees on the fact that eHealth influences the costs mitigation, access improvement, faster information exchange, better quality (González, Quesada, Urrutia , Gavidia, 2006). Moreover, the European Commission (2012) states that: “eHealth is also combined with

organisational change in healthcare systems and new skills, in order to improve health of citizens, efficiency and productivity in healthcare delivery, and the economic and social value of health"[1]. Moreover, the authors of McKinsey report released in 2018 underlines that developing the region's digital economy across all sectors would bring significant economic benefits. It is also noted that by closing the digital gap with Northern and Western Europe, CEE can earn up to 200Eur bln. in additional GDB by 2025.

After the comprehensive academic literature examination it appeared that the field of eHealth implementation, especially, what factors can influence the eHealth use, is highly unexplored. It seems a little bit incomprehensible that giving such fundamental practical significance of eHealth use, researches come short in this field. Therefore, this article aims to close the academic gap in the field of factors influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use.

This research study aims to identify what factors influence customer behaviour in eHealth use.

The object of the study: factors influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use

The objectives of the study:

1) to examine the factors influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use
2) to present the benefits of the factors influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use

The methods applied:

1) logical and comparative analysis of literature,
2) academic literature synthesis

FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR IN eHEALTH USE

Technological factors. Majorly technological factors are distinguished in three main categories: service quality, information quality and system quality. Service quality compounds of responsiveness, reliability, security, modern software and hardware to mitigate the information system use (Petter, DeLone & McLean, 2003). Also, empathy of technical support and assurance are significant issues. While the scholars Gorla, Somers, & Wong (2010) state that information quality consists of these constituents: data consistency, accuracy, relevance, completeness. The last factor to describe is system quality. System quality is linked with use

[1] European Commision (2012). *eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020 - Innovative healthcare for the 21st century.* On World Wide Web:https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52012DC0736

easiness, information technology significance, functionality, reliability and portability (Gorla, Somers, & Wong, 2010, Fanta, Pretorius, 2018).

Social factors. Taking into consideration the social factors it was selected four major constructs that have influence in eHealth use and these are: e-readiness, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and social influence. Hence, e-readiness is the people's demand to implement new technologies in order to finish the tasks in daily life and at work (Parasuraman and Colby, 2001). For instance, the Center for International Development at Harvard University (2000) presents such e-readiness definition: "the degree to which a community is prepared to participate in the Networked World. It is gauged by assessing a community's relative advancement in the areas that are most critical for information and communications technologies (ICT) adoption and the most important applications of ICTs. When considered together in the context of a strategic planning dialogue, an assessment based on these elements provides a robust portrayal of a community's Readiness. The value to a community of assessing its Readiness lies in evaluating its unique opportunities and challenges"[2]. Another broad perspective is given by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2006) where e-readiness is taken as the business, governments and consumers to use from the information and communications technologies and benefit from them. Moreover, such authors like Lanvin and Qiang (2004) noted that e-readiness contributes to economic evolution through productivity enhancement in using new technologies in industries.

Another important social factor is social influence. Traditionally, social influence is the degree to which an individual perceive the other persons' opinion whether he/she should adapt and use the new technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Generally, social settings depend on friends, relatives and other sources that have influence in person's behaviour. People are effected by the majority since it is more likely that an individual will take over the same attitude when a great variety of people have it. The scholars Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989) emphasize the importance of social influence for implementation and use of technology. Moreover, the academic literature underscores that social influence has a strong relation with the use of individual's technology (Karahanna and Straub, 1999).

Perceived ease of use also plays an important role in influencing customer behaviour in eHealth use. Perceived ease of use is the term that depicts the degree to which technology is perceived as not so complexed to implement (Rogers, 1962). While the authors Venkatesh et

[2] Center for International Development at Harvard University, (2000). Readiness for the Networked World. A Guide for Developing Countries. On World Wide Web: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/readinessguide/guide.pdf

al. (2003) state that it is linked with the easiness of system use. The academic literature state that perceived ease of use is considerably contributes to the individuals' intention to adopt and use the new technology (Ramayah, Jantan, Noor and Ling, 2003, Guriting and Ndubisi, 2006).

Another important factor in the social factors group that influence customer behaviour in eHealth use is perceived usefulness. The scholar Davis (1993) defined perceived usefulness as the understanding that adopting new technology will upgrade the individual's work performance. Moreover, the author also agreed on the fact that this factor is essential for new technology implementation in the daily individual's life. Such authors like Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon, (2001) stress the fact that perceived usefulness increases productivity, while Jahangir and Begum (2008) agree by stating that it helps to finish the tasks faster.

Behaviour of technology use factors. Attitude towards eHealth is significant element from the behaviour of technology use factors group. Generally, attitude is stated as the mean that a person appreciates the social settings where he/she behaves. According to Hogg and Vaughan, (1998) attitude is a versatile sense or affirmative/unfavourable valuation about a person, object, issue. The importance of attitude towards eHealth is emphasized by Hofstede, Bie, Wijngaarden and Heijmans (2014) who note that for successful users' eHealth implementation positive attitude toward eHealth is the crucial element. Armani et al (2016) presented an empirical study with the contribution of eHealth perception by noting that healthcare specialists demand more information about the eHealth benefits in order to communicate the positive implementation outcomes.

Another crucial factor in behaviour of technology use factors is eHealth literacy. Generally eHealth literacy is described as the use of information and communication technology in order to improve the health Eng (2002). While Norman and Skinner (2006) state that it's the: "ability to seek, find, understand, and appraise health information from electronic sources and apply the knowledge gained to addressing or solving a health problem"[3] . Moreover, it is pointed out that eHealth literacy is the dynamic specification that constantly changes. But mainly eHealth literacy consists of skills that change overtime, and should be assessed and used for healthy choices (Zarcadoolas, Pleasant and Greer, 2006).

Economic factors. The scholars Dávalos, French, Burdick & Simmons (2009) agree on the fact that there is a gap within the economic assessments of the digital tool benefits for health improvement. Of course, there is shortage of long term data, methodology and united guidelines

[3] Norman, C.D., & Skinner, H.A.(2006). eHealth Literacy: Essential Skills for Consumer Health in a Networked World. *Journal of Medicine and Internet Research*. 16;8(2):e9. doi: 10.2196/jmir.8.2.e9.

to enforce such studies. But Dávalos, French, Burdick & Simmons (2009) presented the key economic benefits that stem from eHealth from three perspectives: client, provider and stakeholders.

Table 1. Economic factors

Client	Provider	Other stakeholders
Medical effectiveness	**Healthcare services**	**Increased productivity**
Reduced morbidity Avoided mortality	Reduced length of hospital stay Avoided hospitalisations Avoided hospital readmissions Avoided emergency room visits	Increased productivity of workers (less travel, less illness) Avoided cases of communicable diseases More efficient access to healthcare for special groups (prisoners etc.)
Employment	Avoided laboratory tests	
Increased earnings	Avoided patient transportation to healthcare facilities Avoided physician office/clinic visits	
Healthcare services and others	Avoided referrals	
Increased access to healthcare Increased health knowledge/ability to self-care Faster and accurate diagnosis and treatment Reduced waiting and/or consultation time Increased medication adherence	Reduced length of consultation Increased medication adherence Increased knowledge transfer among practitioners Increased accuracy and faster diagnosis and treatment Increased patient satisfaction	
Decreased travel	Decreased travel and/or home visits for staff	
Increased employment/leisure/classroom time Avoided travel expenditures: transportation, accommodation, and other expenses Decreased risk of job loss: less time away from work for travel	Increased employment time (productivity) Avoided travel expenditures: transportation, accommodation	

Source: Dávalos, French, Burdick & Simmons (2009), p.939.

Hence, the distinction of economic factors through these perspectives serves as a help for future academic studies which aim to identify and evaluate the economic outcomes of the eHealth.

Organisational factors. The academic literature agrees on the fact that organisational environment has the influence on the implementation and use of eHealth technology. The authors Fanta and Pretorius (2018) presented the list of organisational factors and these include: organisational structure, information culture, resources, management support, workflow processes, organisational policy. The organisation structure is described as the coordination of different healthcare groups to work together and seek the organisation's aim (Lluch, 2011). While information culture is the organisation's values, practices, regulations. Resources consist of financial and human resources and information and communication technology. Al-Mamary,

Shamsuddin, & Aziati, (2014) note that management support is also a significant issue to address since the top management encouragement stimulates the use of eHealth and satisfaction. And organisational policy is mainly the method ensuring the strategic sequence through exploiting technology (Cresswell, Majeed, Bates & Sheikh, 2012).

Health belief factors. In academic literature health consciousness is found to be a significant factor for customer behaviour in stimulating the use of eHealth. Jayanti and Burns (1998) presented the definition of eHealth consciousness: "the degree to which health concerns are integrated into a person's daily activities"[4]. Traditionally, health conscious people are responsible for their health goodness and also are always encouraged to improve it through adapting new behaviour (Newsom, McFarland, Kaplan, Huguet and Zani, 2005). The modern attitude of health consciousness is defined by Dutta-Bergman (2004) that is "an indicator for the consumer's intrinsic motivation to maintain good health"[5] as well as "a reflection of his or her responsibility toward health"[5]. The scholar Hong (2009) presented five groups regarding the health consciousness:

1. involvement in health behaviours
2. psychological consideration to individual's health
3. health information searching and usage
4. personal obligation
5. health motivation

Hence, health conscious people prefer a great variety of information sources regarding their health improvement and are also motivated to conduct healthy lifestyle.

The group of health belief factors also consists of health threat. The study of Mou, Shin and Cohen (2016) noted that the use of online health information services is health related behaviour, while health threat is regarded as an important influential factor to this behaviour. It is believed that if there is health threat, there is a higher probability to involve yourself in new healthy behaviour (Kim and Park, 2012). So, if individuals who seek health information regard themselves as those who are likely to suffer from some kind of disease due to the fact of not taking responsibility of their health, there is a greater probability that they adapt and use eHealth in order to improve their ability of self-management (Sun, Wang, Guo and Peng, 2013).

[4] Jayanti, R.K, Burns, A.C.(1998). The antecedents of preventive health care behavior: an empirical study. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 26(1),6–15. doi: 10.1177/0092070398261002.
[5] Dutta-Bergman M.J.(2006). A formative approach to strategic message targeting through soap operas: using selective processing theories. *Journal of Health Communication.* 19(1):11–8. doi: 10.1207/s15327027hc1901_2

CONCLUSIONS

It is worth noting that the worldwide healthcare system faces such global problems like increasing costs, rising infectious diseases, consumerism, ageing societies. But the omnipresent Internet access fosters the transformation from conventional healthcare system to modern one. Hence, after the comprehensive academic literature examination there was presented factors influencing customer behaviour in choosing eHealth with the descriptions. It was chosen to group those factors in these main sectors: technological, social, organizational, economic, health belief, behaviour of technology acceptance. Each factor group was described with it's peculiarities from academic literature and researches.

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VEIKSNIAI, DARANTYS ĮTAKĄ RENKANTIS NAUDOTI E.SVEIKATOS PRIETAISUS IR PASLAUGAS

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Santrauka

Verta paminėti, jog šiais laikais sveikatos apsaugos sistema susiduria su tokiomis globaliomis problemomis kaip: augantys kaštai, infekcinių ligų skaičius, konsumerizmas, senėjanti visuomenė. Kas įdomu, modernios visuomenės ypatybė yra atsakingas individo požiūris į asmeninę sveikatą ir noras imtis asmeninės jos vadybos. Taigi, pastebima sveikatos sistemos transformacija – iš tradicinės į moderniąją. Šio pokyčio ištakas galima sieti su eSveikatos produktais ir paslaugomis. Galima teigti, kad svarbus eSveikatos tikslas yra visuomenės interesas gauti aukštesnę sveikatos apsaugos kokybę, geresnį jos pasiekiamumą. Nepaisant eSveikatos praktinės naudos, atrodo, paradoksalu, kad akademinių ar empirinių tyrimų, kaip realizuoti eSveikatos produktų ir paslaugų aktyvesnį naudojimą, trūksta, todėl šis straipsnis yra skirtas įvertinti veiksnius, darančius įtaką vartotojų elgsenai, renkantis eSveikatos produktus bei paslaugas. Darbe iškeliami du tikslai: 1) išanalizuoti veiksnius, darančius įtaką eSveikatos produktų ir paslaugų naudojimui 2) pristatyti šių veiksnių ypatybes ir naudas. Tikslams pasiekti naudojami šie metodai: 1) Mokslinės literatūros analizė ir palyginimas 2) Mokslinės literatūros sintezė

Raktiniai žodžiai: veiksniai, eSveikata, sveikatos apsaugos sistema, skaitmenizavimas.

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