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**METHODS OF WEB TRAFFIC ACQUISITION USING  
CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR**

Master's Thesis

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I declare I have written the master's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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## **ABSTRACT**

A business can succeed by knowing its potential customers and predicting their buying behavior. With growing selection of online stores, the customer finds it hard to choose between all the websites. What can distinct and set a website apart is its ability to make the consumer enjoy the buying experience. This consumer satisfaction can come from the website predicting the consumer needs and catering towards them. When a business manages to predict such needs is when it gains much traffic and great conversion rate.

This thesis investigates the connection between acquisition of online traffic and visitors' behavior on a website. The quest of the research was to determine which traffic acquisition methods are the most effective, with not only bringing traffic, but also bringing the correct traffic that will later on interact with the website and convert.

The research done based on experiment with the website [www.MyLoveTips.com](http://www.MyLoveTips.com) during the period of July 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> 2015. Three website monitoring services were the source of research data gathering and monitoring. These services are Google Analytics, JetPack by wordpress.com and Google AdSense.

Results of this research show significant differences between organic and paid methods of traffic acquisition. Organic method is much more affordable for a new business and brings better results than the paid methods. However, when a business is short on time, the other options to use for traffic acquisition are micro gigs and professional service company, which are paid services. Both methods can be profitable by utilize on website traffic and redirecting the traffic towards conversion.

The results of the research leave the business owner with the decision of choosing between time and money, so the acquisition chosen accordingly.

# INTRODUCTION

Understanding customer behavior has always been a very important and significant aspect of business growth. Customers are at the heart of any success of a business. Knowing how to acquire those customers and forecasting future actions of such customers, will allow a business to shine in comparison to the competition. Forecasting future customer value requires knowledge of factors, which form and shape the customer behavior. These forms of customer behavior happen prior to transaction with your business, during and after the transaction. All of these paint a clear picture, which is necessary for a business stakeholder and especially a starting business venture.

There is many different ways for a business to acquire customers. It is necessary for each business to determine which way and method of acquiring customers is most suitable for each business. Moreover, there are differences between old school customer acquisition methods and new traffic acquisition for an online business. Such differences and distinctions, are measured and needed to be agreed upon, when dealing in the online business market.

In addition, each traffic acquisition method may affect the source from which the visitors come from and the way they behave when on the website. Knowledge of the aspects mentioned above and their interrelationships will improve financial results and ultimately make the business more successful.

Based on the importance of the relationship between customer behavior, customer acquisition and success of an online business, the aim of this research paper is:

**To determine which traffic acquisition methods are most effective in achieving desirable customer behavior and high engagement levels for an online business.**

The similarities and differences of each of the traffic acquisition methods are the key to understand, the value of the visitors. Another key is which actions to take in order to monetize on customer and convert a visit to equity.

This thesis investigated the presence of online business and the ability of such website to acquire traffic to itself or direct the traffic to somewhere else. After acquiring

traffic, the website has options to monetize on such traffic by selling a product or by the referral and affiliate options.

In order to achieve the aim, the following research tasks set by the author for each sub-chapter:

- Provide definition of online business, consumer typology and characteristics
- Present theoretical framework for human behavior and identify online customer behaviors.
- Review existing literature on online business indicators and their relation with customer satisfaction.
- Analyze past trends and research, about what features, an online shop should have.
- Construct and analyze a case study involving a website, and examine effects of various traffic acquisition methods.

In addition, for further research of the research topic, the sub research questions of this thesis are:

**Sub-Question 1:** What are the main methods of web traffic acquisitions?

**Sub-Question 2:** Which possible behaviors of customer exist?

**Sub-question 3:** What is the relationship between traffic acquisitions and on-website customer behaviors?

These sub questions will allow more structured view towards each of the factors that are important to be achieve the aim and answer on the research topic.

Current research consists of three chapters. The first chapter “Theory background for the online business”, consists of three sections. First section reviews the basics of e-commerce and online businesses, as well as previous research on the field of customer behavior. The awareness of which makes it possible to go even deeper towards the researched topic. To reach the objectives and answer the research topic, there was a need for sufficient theoretical background to fall upon in basic assumption and to add on with

this research. Second section provides an overview of customer acquisition methods that are currently available for an online business. Such methods will be important to know when deciding on which methods will be used for the analysis with the research. The last section of the first chapter introduces an overview of the concept conversion and all the ways a website can convert regular daily visitors into profitable equity customers.

The second chapter “Research Rationale“, presents a framework needed for the empirical analysis. As a result, the most appropriate methodology will be decided upon and shortly described. The first and second chapters provide the necessary background for the implementation of the research in chapter three.

In chapter three, “Results”, there are three sections. Each of the sections brings forward the results of the research in regards to each of the three sub-questions respectively.

This research based upon several online magazines and research articles in the field of e-commerce and consumer behavior. Among the foundation background, referenced works, are: Palmer & Griffith (1998), Chaffey (2007), Kalakota & Whinston (1997). In addition, there are also modern sources such as: Kapre (2014), Peters (2014) and Hillman (2015). Using these resources will give a full view from previously done research on the topic of customer acquisition and customer behavior. As well as show, which data is missing in the field, and can add to, already existing researches. The mentioned above works are as revealed by the research done in this area before. These resources and other research, discussed in more detail further in this paper.

The value of this study stems from the fact, that there is not many practical studies such as this, done in the field of Customer acquisition and conversion. This study gives a more practical set actions and results, which can be followed in the future. These actions can be used for managerial references and advice, to online business owners and aspiring websites. The current works in the field are focused on the macro view of the topic and there aren't many case studies. That is why this research can be a very valuable addition.

# **1. THEORY BACKGROUND FOR THE ONLINE BUSINESS**

In this chapter, there would be three sections. First section explains the basics of e-commerce and online businesses, features of the online shop, as well as previous research on the field of customer behavior from a psychologic point of view. Second section gives an overview of customer acquisition methods that are currently available for an online business. The third section of the chapter gives an overview of the concept conversion and all the ways a website can convert regular daily visitors towards profitable customers. The main purpose of this chapter to straighten the line and explain the nature of online functions and possibilities to enhance an online business, which is necessary basic knowledge that is essential for the research.

## **1.1. The 21<sup>st</sup> century online business**

“The Internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow”. – This is the famous quote of well-known American inventor, and one of the wealthiest business figures, Bill Gates, who co-founded Microsoft. However, what exactly is the Internet? The official definition given by Oxford English dictionary (web edition, 2015) is “A global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols.” This definition is very similar to others, given by many researchers and authors, but the idea is always the same - the Internet is the infrastructure and the channel, and everything goes through it. The Internet is a tool used to do everything from learning how to cook to having a conversation with someone on the other side of the world.

## 1.2. E – Commerce

After a rocky start and resistance at the 1990's, online shopping and the use of online marketing, became inseparable parts of the selling and buying experience of the trade industry. (Palmer & Griffith 1998); (Simicevic 2011).

Nowadays Electronic Shops and websites use the Internet, as a mean to reach a broader audience and get their product recognition in areas all around the world. On the other hand, consumers are no longer obliged to buy and look for products in their physical proximity but rather have a wider range of options online. (Cheng, Sheen & Lou, 2006), (Ruiz-Mafé, Sanz-Blas & Aldas-Manzano, 2009).

The Internet is still a relatively new concept in today's commerce. Consequently, many businesses and costumers still encounter barriers and have difficulty plugging in. These difficulties come from not understanding all the pros, cons and aspects surrounding the online world. (Davis 1989); (Cunningham, Geriach, Harper & Young, 2005).

Chaffey (2007, p. xiii) defined the term Electronic commerce in the following way. "Refer to all types of electronic transactions between organizations or other services. These e-commerce transactions are either buy-side e-commerce or sell-side e-commerce". This emphasizes the importance two sides of the transaction hold, and the way the transaction is influencing the sides of the consumer and owner.

Kalakota & Whinston (1997, p.3) looked at E-commerce as not only the use of the Internet for buying or selling products and services; He analyzed a number of aspects of the e-commerce such as:

- Communication perspective
- Business process perspective
- Service perspective
- Online perspective

Understanding the effect and perspective of the receiving side, helps understand the way a consumer, should be approached and acquired. Understanding customer perception helps plan and project the impact a website will have on the customer as well as anticipate actions the potential customer will perform on the website. Customer experience makes the difference between intended and other outcomes.

Based on the previous definitions, one can observe that electronic commerce is a transaction between two entities: online business and the consumer/client. The E-shop offers a buyer an option to purchase physical or electronic or service in exchange for payment. Information flow between the two entities is going both ways and can be seen through the content the e-shop offers and the information the client gives with its loyalty programs and filling out forms.

The two most common e-commerce types are (Fraumeni & The American Economic Association, 2001, pp 318-322):

- B2B (Business-to-Business) – is transactions between companies via online tools
- B2C (Business-to-Consumer) – is transactions from a business to a client via online tools.

B2C e-commerce can be as the frame of the e-retailer or the e-shop. There a consumer can virtually shop for required products and services. Classic B2C example is Amazon, which is the largest online retailer in the world. (Alexa, 2014).

Next, the research is focusing in depth on B2C, which is, the sources of customer acquisition that lead to the most positive results and most optimal online traffic conversion.

### **1.3. The Customer**

Nowadays, when people need something, first thing they do is reach out to the Internet. No matter whether it is a physical product or a bit of information, the web has become our key resource to solving almost any need. With quick and precise search and a few minutes to spare, one can find almost anything on the Web. Internet infrastructure and effective search instruments make E-Commerce the most advanced commerce type yet from the very beginning of trade. (Singh, 2002).

The bond between the consumer and the supplier is a very fragile relationship. This is because the competition online is so stiff, there is almost no need for a consumer to make an effort because all the suppliers are fighting for consumer attention. Just like with basic human nature, when given the opportunity of a selection from a major variety, a person will lose focus and most likely take some of the options for granted. (Bellman & Park, 1980). Such a behavioral pattern can be observed from the way a consumer acts towards different suppliers and e-stores. The consumer will always choose to look for better options. Meaning, the concept of loyalty becomes much more elusive. It is much harder now to keep the interest of the consumer due to nonstop competition, and eye-catching marketing from competitors. (Goodman & Remaud, 2015).

Even when connecting with a consumer and receiving the first purchase of an individual, there is no guarantee for a second purchase and a recurring relationship. Because the online transaction involves so many little steps, that based on information and subsequent decisions taken by the customer, it makes it even more risky that one of these steps would go wrong. (Rafique, Constantinides & Kapre, 2014).

Consider these steps:

- (1) Problem identification.
- (2) Information search.
- (3) Alternatives evaluation.
- (4) Purchasing decision.
- (5) Post-purchase behavior

During each of these steps, an event can occur that will lead to customer's dissatisfaction. Such missteps include but not limited to: an unfamiliar seller, worry about product quality, return policy, and many other trust related worries. (Jarvenpaa & Tractinsky 1999).

A person's switch to a negative reaction can occur in a blink of an eye. Especially when added to the power, a consumer has. The buying power gives freedom to a consumer to browse and "window shop" until finding the right product or service. Even after receiving a product, the consumer may want to change merchant because of better offer with another merchant or just dissatisfaction with the current one. (Yan & Oppewal, 2006), (Bloemer, Brijs, Swinnen, & Vanhoof, 2002).

Another cause for a raise in product dissatisfaction complains is the result of the consumer protection act. (Mańko, 2013). The introduction of the Modern buyer protection laws re-shuffled all the cards in both online and offline trade. The initial purpose of the act is to encourage fair trade and symmetry of information in a marketplace. As a result, the act helped to prevent some of the cases of false information and fraud towards the consumer. The nature of the consumer protection act has bias in favor of the consumer. Even though the objective of the act is to prevent asymmetry of information, sometimes some customers abuse the protection of the act, by way of finding loopholes and pray on the need of suppliers to reach customer satisfaction. Dishonest customers can sometimes receive free goods based on false testimony that the product had flaws, receiving a money refund but keeping the product. (Peters, 2014); (Consumer Protection Act, 2012).

Research done in the field of online shopping patterns, reveals that additional reason for "why consumer choses a specific supplier" are whether the seller is a brand name or not, prices online compared to offline prices, and comfort of online product search. (Degeratu, Rangaswamy & Wu, 1998).

## 1.4. The Seller

Hammervoll & Toften (2010) touched upon the relationship between buyer and seller. In B2C E-Commerce transactions, it also takes two to tango. The consumer is not the only one that has the power in the relationship. More and more merchants execute their rights to curtail standards and setting restrictions. Hillman (2015) mentioned some of the gains from a refusal to trade. The sellers may use their restriction and refusals in numerous ways and due to different reasons.

Delivery restriction is good case in point. The fact that there is a consumer in Alaska, and he/she is willing to pay, does not mean it is worth the effort of a Chinese supplier. A China- Alaska transaction may involve high shipping costs as well as long delivery time, which may not be suitable for the seller or compatible with the seller's policy. Of course, the opposite can also be true, and a consumer can refuse to receive delivery from a supplier. (Recent Cases 1955), (Chakravarthy & Coughlan, 2012).

Another reason for denial of service by a supplier can be religious or racial bias. Even though these discriminatory reasons are illegal, they are still happening in many aspects of trade. (Abdul-Latif & Abdul-Talib, 2015).

Additional potential reason is Cultural bias. Some sellers have stigmas of a specific country population, and the way its shopping behavior is. Such views lead sellers to avoid dealing with a country and doing business with its citizens. For instance, the prejudice and stigma about Israeli shoppers. When looking at EBay, there is more than a few stores, which offer international delivery, except for delivery to Israel. When asked about the reasons for such an exclusion, some of the Chinese sellers reply that this is due to their previous dealings with the Israeli customers. The sellers observed that the Israeli customers are very well informed and have a low tolerance for inconsistencies. That is why when the received product is not 100% matching the description, an Israeli buyer will not hesitate to complain and ask for refund, whereas a buyer from other country may choose to avoid the hustle. That leads the sellers to believe the Israeli consumers require high maintenance and so they prefer not to deal with this market all together. These and other reasons can influence the

buyer to act in a way that is not typical to usual behavior of sellers, and refuse a client. (Bruning & Saqib, 2013); (Ma, Wang & Hao, 2012).

## **1.5. Consumer Buying Behavior**

The topic of consumer buying behavior has been briefly discussed in the “Customer” section above, now discuss consumer-buying behavior in more depth. Even though society may think they are in charge of their own choices, there is subconscious powers and reactions involved. Things are not always, as they seem to appear. Pleasure or satisfaction from a transaction, are not easily achieved. (Iconaru, 2012).

Understanding of psychological aspect of customer buying behavior is a powerful tool. That is why Neuromarketing is an emerging force, focusing on achieving customer satisfaction. It is not easy to achieve, but if a seller can understand the mechanics behind the satisfaction process, then he has the power to influence the process. If an analysis accurse of information gathered about consumer buying behavior, such analysis will lead to new insights. Such insights include the understanding of consumer expectations from the buying process and being prepared for these expectations. (Barkin, 2013).

Previous research, done by economists and scientists in the field of human mind, tried to explain the way our brain works and how people make their decisions. For a long period, the rational choice theory was the primary theory of the subject. By using the logic of the rational choice theory, economists can supposedly predict a person’s behavior. This prediction stipulated under the assumption that people, given the choice, would choose a rational logical act and not an emotional one. In his research, Stanovich (2012, p.1) exhibited belief that people follow logical pattern because their main objective is to maximize utility. Following this opinion, it can be assumed, that the final choice of customer satisfaction is directly linked to whether or not the customer thinks he is maximizing the experience of shopping.

Not all agreed with the rational choice theory, and it was proven lacking in the late 1990s. The flaw with the theory came with the new neoclassical approach, saying that the

human nature is not always rational and behaves in a utilizing way. Cecchi & Bulte (2013, p.1) were supporting the neoclassical approach, stating that the constant state of rational is not tenable.

Following the new advances of the theory, more scientists joined the stream of thought and decided to take additional look into the buying behavior. While views about buying behavior were changing, many researchers did their research simultaneously. Sproles & Kendall (1990) explained that the way a consumer makes buying decisions, strongly connected with the mental state of the consumer at that point. Leading to a resolution that there is not always one result because a variety of possible results can occur. More than a decade later, Niu (2013), brought forward in his research the concept of consumer typology.

Consumer typology is the study of different types of consumer behavior. In this research, suggested to use the act of shopping as a way to indicate the types of consumers that exist. In early research, Holt (1995) mentions four different metaphors of typology for the consumer and his/her consumption. These metaphors are experience, integration, play and classification. Each of these classifications show a different degree of purpose and structure of the actions that the consumer makes when buying. (Kau, Tang & Ghose, 2003)

Another distinction of consumer buying behavior may occur when viewing whether it is an offline or online purchase. Such distinction leads to the division of the consumer into two groups. Past research done on the impact of online/offline mode of buyer behavior suggests that consumers that use the Internet to search for products online are likely to buy the product online and continue to purchase there, rather than consumers who searched for a product offline in brick and mortar stores. (Yuanfeng, Ning-Shen, & Zhaoyang, 2013).

Furthermore, the use of online added to the increase in consumers spending in-store. Search and navigation features are becoming of greater importance and influence on the consumer and his buying behavior. (Sands, Ferraro & Luxton, 2010).

Companies understand more and more clearly that the key to successful e-business is satisfaction and positive emotions of clients. To achieve consumer satisfaction, companies are taking additional measures to insure a positive reaction from clients. The way to reach the positive response and attract the client is through personalization and

customization of the online store. By personalizing the service, the consumer will exhibit more loyalty towards the merchant and his online store (Kotler& Keller 2012, p. 159).

## **1.6. Online store**

When thinking if to move a business to an online platform, a quote by Bill Gates can make all the difference. He said that “If your business is not on the Internet, then your business will be out of business.” The current state of the economy is the toughest it has ever been in terms of competition. The technology is taking over, and people who are lacking in conviction to plug their business to the Internet, lose the plot and fall behind. (O'Guinn, 2015)

There are few ways that a brick and mortar business can convert to the Internet. The most popular are opening a website, a blog or an e-shop. Even though they may seem the same, each of these online channels has its small distinctions. A blog is a more youthful and sometimes amateur tool. An e-shop is just like a real store but on an online platform, with the disadvantages of not being personal. In addition, a website can be a hybrid between the two and have both personal feel and focused business like touches. However, these are all slight differences and it really depends on the designer of the online business channel to choose how these will look like. (Melis, Campo, Breugelmans & Lamey, 2015).

### **1.6.1 Online Shop Design**

The concept of customer satisfaction can have many factors influencing the customer's final choice to buy something or chose not to. Some of the most common decision factors are: whether the website looks reliable, whether the loading and search times are fast, and more. (Britton, 2010).

The website and electronic store platform is the essence of an online shop. Online shop features consist and measured by certain criteria. Throughout the years, many researchers tried to identify the key factors that influence consumer purchase behavior at e-

commerce sites. Each of these studies came up with some conclusions, which were not always compatible with the findings of other studies. The findings defined which most importance in online store are.

The following Table 1 shows different approaches to the key features. Some of these features are common between the researchers. The features, partitioned into groups, based on their function for the client. (Park& Kim, 2003, p.17); (Davidavičienė & Tolvaišas, 2011, p.724).

The comparative analysis table has a combination of features each researcher model and method suggested. In the table, it is evident which key features are controversial between the different models of each previous research. Even though some researches are done in same year (for example Santos, 2003; Park & Kim, 2003), there is still a difference with features each considers as important. For instance, the feature “Help in real time”, that counts by all studies as an important part of the e-shop experience. However, the research by Davidaviciene & Tolvaisas (2011) did not count it as a big factor, which is very surprising considering that this research is the most recent and so it should be more aware of the deferent list of e-shop features.

A further analysis is required to assure which are the most relevant features for the influence of buying behavior and consumer satisfaction.

Examples for such different views of each researcher regarding relevant and irrelevant features can be seen in the comparison table.

**Table 1: Comparison features**

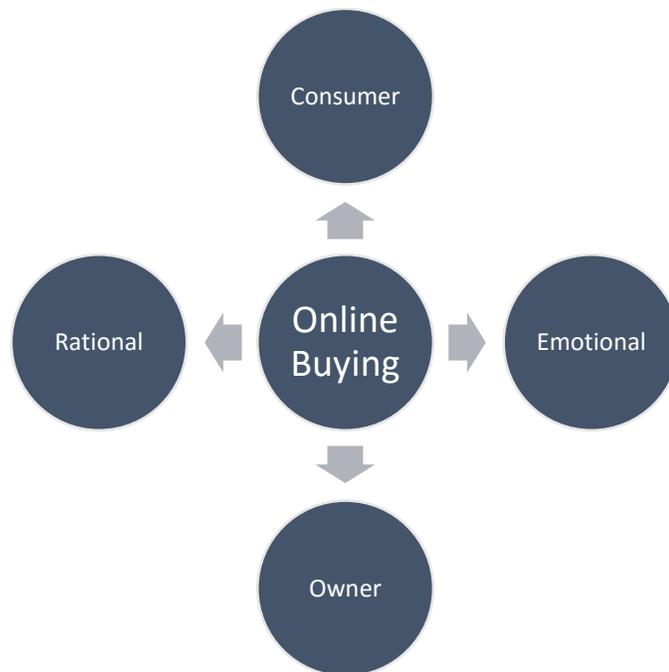
	Model of	Loiacono (2007)	Parasuraman (2007)	Santos (2003)	Mich (2003)	Park & Kim (2003)	Davidavičienė & Tolvaišas (2011)
<b>Navigation</b>	Easy to use	+	+	+	+	+	
	Easy search	+	+	+			
	Navigation	+	+	+	+	+	
	Loading time		+	+	+		
	Language			+	+		
	Update frequently				+		
	Availability			+	+		
	Domain				+		
<b>Customer Service</b>	Loyalty programs						+
	Adequacy of delivery types						+
	Reliability	+		+			
	Ordering						+
	Contact details		+		+		
	FAQ's					+	
	Help (Real time)	+	+	+	+	+	
<b>Product Related</b>	Content	+	+	+	+	+	
	Innovativeness	+			+		
	Variety					+	
<b>Security</b>	Security assurance	+	+	+	+	+	
	Credits, return and payment policies					+	
	Payment process and methods						+
<b>Design</b>	Images	+			+		
	Design	+	+	+	+		

By Author based on Davidavičienė&Tolvaišas 2011, Park& Kim 2003.

As we can see from the table above, there are many e-shop features and elements, which may “make or break” a website and can either entice or dissuade a user from purchasing at the e-shop. Even though there is difference in opinion, to which are the most important features, there are still elements that may or may not affect online experience of a particular user.

Based on the theoretical background of consumer buying behavior and building upon choice assumption, the author constructed a figure 2 presented below.

The figure describes the online buying or e-commerce transaction. The figure shows the connections and influences on the online buying behavior. The theory suggests that there is a clear connection between the e-shop features and buying behavior. Additionally, the theoretical background let to suggest that, knowing which need the features are likely to satisfy by existing (Rational or Emotional), will improve user experience of the buyer and customer satisfaction as seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Factors influencing online buying By Author**

In order to entice visitors to come to a website or to purchase in e-shops, the relevant and important features need to be identified, ranked by level of importance, analyzed and refined. All in the quest for high quality online shopping experience.

It is highly important for online business owners and market researchers to understand consumers' search behavior, so they can use this information in designing websites. A better design on websites will cater to the multi-channel consumers' needs and expectations. The cause of a bad website experience may be a difficult domain name or a website that is frequently crashing, which may cause problems for the consumer to reach the specific online business. (Dawes & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013).

## **1.7. Customer Acquisition**

A business with no clients is no business at all. Even if a supplier has the best product available for sale in the market, without customers, his product is not worth much. This claim supported with the supply and demand concept. One of the most fundamental principles of the business world is that, price and quantity of a product, both determined only by product demand. (Warren, 2004). This leads to the realization that a business needs clients to survive. It does not matter whether a business is physical or virtual. Therefore, by understanding the customer needs, we can choose optimal customer acquisition channels and methods.

### **Social media**

The first time social media's power came to the public eye was with Facebook (FB). Suddenly any person from even a small town was able to reach an audience of millions with just one picture or comment. Soon the world followed, and almost every person with access to a computer, opened a FB account. Following FB, other channels became popular, such as Twitter, Google+ and Instagram. Contrary to popular belief, social media was not for leisure activities. Soon followed the establishment of LinkedIn, a professional social network. (Hudson & Hudson 2013)

Nowadays the power of social media is one of the most utilized tools by online businesses. The biggest advantage a business receives with social media is social media presence and accessibility. A trend has formed that a new business establishes a page on

every possible social media channel, so that potential clients can find the business in their most convenient way. Such clients may follow the latest news and activities of the business and thereby stay informed. Another relatively new aspect of online presence is the notion of “content”. With right content, a business can distinguish itself from the competition, build unique image and make the clients more involved and familiar with the business. (Dessart, Veloutsou & Morgan-Thomas, 2015).

Following the establishment of an account in social media and writing quality context, an important choice of an acquisition tool needs to happen. Such tool used to market the business in the social media accounts. The business owner needs to choose how to proceed and which social media approach is the right one for him. The two approaches are Organic or Paid customer acquisition. (Kim & Lennon, 2013).

The organic approach means that the business will continue to promote and market itself, but with upgraded methods and better context writing. The popularity of the posts the business writes and how much audience they will reach shall depend only on the natural word of mouth and amount of “Share”. This is likely more natural and less expensive way of promoting business and acquiring clients, but it is also the hardest one. A business needs aspire constantly attract clients with eye-catching posts and headlines. In addition, this way, a business depends of the “good will” of people. Meaning how much they share the posts, to their network of friends. Most posts online are automatically there to try and catch attention, people exhibit lack of interest and blindness to social media promoting, so they don’t communicate it further on.. These considerations make organic approach so unreliable that they can be hard to control and prove difficult for business owner. (Kulmala, Mesiranta & Tuominen, 2013).

On the other hand, the paid approach is the easiest. As with each paid service, money usually helps achieve results faster. The paid approach involves, among other things, paid ads on the social media channels. Paid ads come to replace organic marketing efforts required to reach out to new clients. The ads offer access to new amounts of potential customers every day. Paid ads offer not only new exposure, but also access to new customer markets that otherwise you would not necessary get. (Barreto, 2013).

The main problem with the organic advertising is its reliance on the current followers of the business. Even if current clients share with their friends, it is still limited to certain circle of friends even if it goes to second or seventh tier acquaintance. To the contrary, paid ads can promote product or service to completely new networks of people, people who are in no way connected to current followers. The decision to who sees which paid ad depends on people's past interests. If a person googled a term previously, then an appropriate ad can be relevant for him. This targeted promotion not only benefits businesses to target only interested clients, but also clients to be exposed to things that interest them. Seeing these benefits of paid promotion, a business owner is tempted to buy such service.

However, another line of thought exists, stating that the acquired social media ads are just a clever marketing scheme. There are more and more stories about companies, which have been paying for overpriced FB ads multiple years with no special success, but once the companies switched to other paid channels they suddenly gained a burst of new business. (Calcalist, 2015).

### **Google AdWords**

Google AdWords is one of the most popular customer acquisition methods with the use of paid ads. What AdWords offer is a pay per click advertising service, in which you only pay when a user clicks on your ad. The benefit of such approach is that while not every web surfer presses the ad, the ones that do not click, are still exposed to the ad in the way of seeing it. By seeing the ad, the sub consciousness part of the brain stores the information, which may lead potential customers to visit your store in the future when a need arises. Just like the paid ads service of FB, AdWords is an excellent way to reach targeted audience. This achieved through a mechanism that displays the ad only in response to a specific keyword search, or based on related interest exhibited by the user.

Most common form of Google AdWords advertising is in the search engine. However, there is another AdWords mechanism, which is widely used and successful. Such mechanism works through placement of AdWords in dedicated space of third party web sites. Third

party web sites display Google ads and in return earn a revenue share from Google. The Google program offering this service to third parties, called AdSense. Selection process as to which businesses gets its ads published in AdSense spaces is much more exclusive. Only the highest paying ads in the AdWords client pool, featured in the ads space. This method, designed to prompt clients to pay more, and make the websites with the AdSense space to be better and more polished for visitors. (Gupta & Mateen, 2014).

Due to the high profile of Google, as well as its global reach, AdWords is the most widely used service for businesses wishing to reach mass-markets audiences. Major benefit of such paid service is high traffic exposure, but it is costly. (Vizard, 2015).

### **Professional Service providers**

One of the most frequent emails, online business owners receive, are from Professional online service companies. Main operations of such companies focused on supplying online businesses with all they need to succeed in the online space. Professional Service provides offer Search Engine Optimization (SEO) assistance, customer retention and many other services. However, the Professional Services companies may prove costly. Finding a company that offers such service in low prices, can prove extremely opportunistic for an online business. Both Blum (2014) and CityBusiness (2015) discuss how it is not only, about the website content or the initial launch of the website. What is meaningful is the traffic management. A service company can do maintenance and adjustment, to improve the traffic reaction to the website content. (PR, 2015).

### **Micro Jobs**

New trend of modern technology is online outsourcing. In websites such a Fiverr, SEOClerks, Gigbucks, Fourerr and more, one can outsource a service or a job. This type of outsourcing is called “Micro Jobs”. Micro Jobs/micro gigs, can also be defined as a service offered in an online marketplace for low price. Examples of micro jobs can be artistic logo design, jingle creation, SEO, writing a computer program etc. Assistance with web traffic and customer acquisition for an online business can be micro gigs. Just as regular services

for hire, here as well, each gig supplier has his max traffic limit and job conditions. Most of the sellers are amateur people wanting to earn extra cash, but some are freelancing professionals and can offer a good service. (Ermev, 2015).

Even though the sites they are operating under tight quality controls and fraud checks, still some of the sellers fail to deliver accurate representations and good results. This is why a business needs to look for trustworthy service providers. Such search may prove to be a matter of luck, because it is hard to predict who will have a good delivery. Even though most of the micro jobs sites offer similar services, Fiverr is the market leader as regards to online gigs. Attractiveness of such retainer service is primarily cheap prices. Though there are many benefits to this service, if the delivery is not up to quality, one would have to waste time on complaints and money-back claims. (McGowan, 2015).

## **1.8. Customer Conversion**

Makin the potential customers actually buy is obviously one of the key elements of business success. A study, done more than 20 years ago, by Reichheld & Sasser (1990), found, that even a small increase in customers can lead to substantial increase in the bottom line. By way of example, increase of 5% in the customers has the potential to increase profit by 25% to 95%. Newer research continues this line of thought re-evaluate the impact in the online context. Bringing this thought to the case of e-commerce, customer retention and later on loyalty, can lead to major profits for an online business. (CertainSource, 2015).

Indeed a majority of sales people will tell that one of the most important skills in sales is closing the deal. The difference between successful and unsuccessful online businesses is their ability to lead their customers to make actual purchases. Typically, sales organizations manage the sales process, track progress and make sales projections using a method commonly referred to as sales pipeline. (Monat 2011).

The sales pipeline method defined steps of the sale process. Each sales organization has its own version of the steps, but the essence remains the same and summarized by the following steps.

- (1) Initial contact
- (2) Qualification
- (3) Meeting
- (4) Proposal
- (5) Close

In the online world the first three steps can be categorized as the web traffic acquisition steps. Step three, Meeting, is the moment when potential customers enter the website. As famous actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt once said, “Media used to be one way. Everyone else in the world just had to listen. Now the Internet is allowing what used to be a monologue to become a dialogue. I think that’s healthy”. The effect of the dialog comes in to play during the last two steps in the process, namely, the proposal and deal closure. The last two steps are the most critical. They are mandatory in order to convert the visitor into a client. The conversation achieved by making an attractive proposition for a product or a service of some sorts and helping the prospective customer to make right decision (Eardley-Simpson 1974); (Attia & Honeycutt 2012).

### **Traffic monetization**

Other methods of earning profit without actually selling something is traffic monetization. Online traffic monetizing methods, are the most convenient and profitable for an online businesses that do not directly sell products. Meaning that if a website has but much traffic they can sell the traffic and not products. Such online traffic can be in any form such as social media or in the website itself. The traffic refers to a number of followers, number of Likes, Shares or number of website daily visitors. Achieving high web traffic by itself represents significant potentials for a business. Including but not limited to powerful

line of communication with web users, which in turn, translated to a call for action. (Quinton & Khan, 2009); (Constantinides, 2004).

### **Affiliate marketing**

Affiliate marketing is a relatively new form of online business. Even an individual can earn revenue through affiliate marketing. Affiliate marketing is one of the ways to monetize web traffic. Many online businesses do not want to do traffic acquisition themselves, which is why they outsource this task to other companies or individuals. Such companies and individuals who generate web traffic for online businesses, commonly called Affiliates. This form of marketing is an agreement between the Main online business and the Affiliate. (Carvalho & Mazzon, 2015).

The main business wants the affiliate to bring or direct traffic to them and in return offers a monetary reward. Such reward can be in the form of:

- (1) Percentage of the amount the visitors (brought in by the Affiliate) spend on the main online business (Example AliExpress – 8% of final purchase),
- (2) Fixed reward per individual brought (Example Ebates – 5\$ per registered user).

Individuals with strong following on social media or a website with substantial traffic can influence and direct their followers to another business for a profit. Foundation of affiliate marketing is the ability to monetize on the power of persuasion affecting a large group of people. There are two main Affiliate marketing methods. First method involves URL links and redirecting traffic to another business. Second is using Google AdSense Ads.

URL links or mentioning a target business by name both direct traffic to another place. By way of example, a famous personality mentioning in her blog the name of her designer, will cause a huge traffic of visitors and interest to the designer. (Duffy 2005)

Nonetheless, in real world, more common affiliate marketing method is the usage of URL links and encouraging visitors to click on those links. When a visitor clicks on an affiliate link, a tiny file downloaded to the visitor's computer or mobile device. The file stores unique ID of the Affiliate and commonly referred to as web cookie. Web cookie

allow the main online business to credit each purchase transaction to the affiliate who referred the customer to the main online business in the first place. That is how the Affiliate site, from which the purchase originated, now known to the online business. (Dennis, Fenech & Merrilees, 2005); (Manai & Holmlund, 2015).

### **Google ads**

Google ads are the modern, online type of commercials. Google Ads are commercial banners of advertisers published on third party web site for a fee. The concept of Google ads is that one is converting free space on the web site into profit by placing commercial banners in that space and directing people to click on the banners. Upon clicking commercial banner, visitor redirected to the web site of the advertiser.

Google plays key role in the process. That is because Google provides dual service: Google Words to advertisers and Google AdSense to third party web sites. Google Words advertisers pay Google for the commercial banners, while the AdSense subscribers publish the banners on their web sites for a share of advertising fee paid by the advertisers. This form is a sort of affiliate marketing as well, but it is different because it is done through Google, which plays a role of an independent monitoring authority. (Anonymous, 2015).

Commercial model of Google AdWords service is based on a Pay-per-Click concept, where the only way to get paid is if someone clicked on the banner. Key determinant of the advertising fee therefore is the size of audience exposed to the commercial and relevance of the latter for the audience. (PR, 2014), (Google AdSense 2015).

It is worth mentioning that most modern societies developed somewhat negative sentiment to intrusive commercials. It is increasingly more challenging therefore to convince visitors to click on the commercial banners. In addition, new findings show that there is a phenomenon called Ad blindness, which proves people try to ignore ads and not even look on the side of the page where usually those ads are. For a user to notice an ad the latter must be sufficiently appealing or the website must have clear and appealing call to action, (Gupta & Mateen, 2014), (Wheaton, 2015).

That is why overall ratio of clicks to the total number of visitors exposed to the ad banner is low. The profits from Google ads are to great extent depend on the amount of traffic on one's web site. (Joint, 2005).

The variety of the optional consumer conversions needs to take to account when planning the profiting actions of an online business. The profit from the conversions is a measuring tool to whether or not a website is succeeding. When the conversion profits cover the costs of the traffic acquisition that is when there is a profitable model for the business.

The mentioned conversions used in the research to see which traffic acquisition source brought the better conversion results.

## **2. RESEARCH RATIONALE**

This chapter lists the research problem and questions, which this study set out to answer. The objectives of this study, driven from three detailed sub questions that support the main research topic. Finally, the research database collection-methods, method of conducting the analysis and descriptive statistics, described.

### **2.3. Research methodology**

The conduct of this research done through monitoring the data collected through the period of research, following but an analysis, discussion and interpretation of the results. Research conducted with real experimentation. In addition, also utilized some literatures of previously done research.

All the data collected was from Primary source. The experiment adjusted through the course of the research period, to create different combinations of situations. Such different situations allowed the shed of light into patterns and results. The data collected in the end of the experiment analyzed using parameters and comparisons.

One of the fixed analyzing parameters used throughout this research is the sessions. The visitors and traffic data in a website research measured through many different indicators. Sessions are the most commonly used parameter by google analytics; google analytics define the term session in the following way. “A session is a group of interactions that take place on your website within a given time frame. For instance a single session can contain multiple screen or page views, events, social interactions, and ecommerce transactions.” Sometimes it may be more intuitive to think about “Sessions” as web sites “visits”. To clarify, sessions are essentially visits made to the website by the users/visitors. The number of sessions and visitors may differ because the number of visitors measured according to IP address. Same visitor can make multiple sessions/visits to the website in a day. On the other hand, due to session timeout a visit can span multiple sessions.

## 2.4. Creation of database

The research database information collected through the website “MyLoveTips.com”, which belongs to the author. This allowed access to all the traffic and information related to the website and research. The collection of the database information done with the use of three different information collection channels. These channels are Google analytics, Jetpack (by wordpress.com) and AdSense (by Google).

First source is Google Analytics. The program groups the data, such as demographics, interests, and more, using three sources:

- Third party DoubleClick cookie – used in web browsing activities only.
- The Android Advertising ID – used in android operated app activity only.
- The iOS Identifier for Advertisers (IDFA) - used in android operated app activity only.

Analytics method may sometimes result in incomplete information, because the collection depends on the presence of these sources or an identifier profile of the user. Therefore, if there is no identifier, the program cannot categorize the user and then the information is incomplete. (Google support 2015).

The second source of information is Jetpack. Jetpack is a build in widget program. Widget programs are tools in the settings of a website that allows the owner to monitor different aspects of the website. Including traffic, clicks, popularity and more.

The third source is AdSense. Like all monetizing platforms, it includes information related to monetizing actions, information about number of visitors and additional helpful statistics.

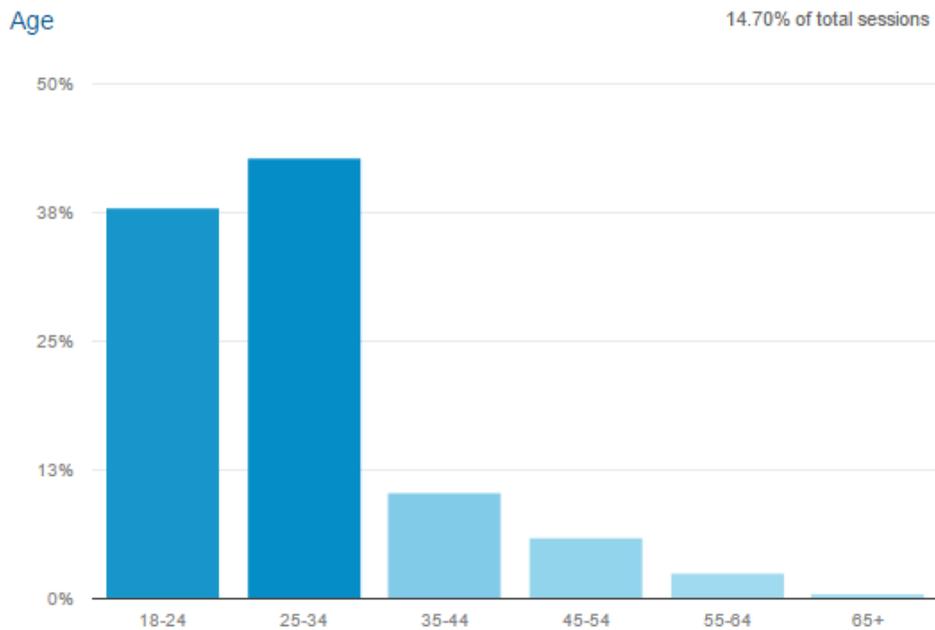
MyLoveTips–Click.Get.Love is an online magazine website. Main content of the magazine are articles on the subject of Fashion, Love, Style and Health. (Illustrations of such articles are a guide to tie selection or conversational tips for a first date.) The domain and website are more than one year old so it had time to grow readers and gain authority and reliability.

In addition, six months ago MyLoveTips went through a makeover to deliver the visitors a more appealing look and structure of content. The target visitors were at the age of 14-70 and mostly women. According to Google Analytics, there was a minimum rate of 300 visitors a month on the website before the start of the research. 70% of the site visitors are new whereas 30% are returning visitors. These figures show that new people exposed to the web site each day. 40% of the visitors keep coming back and read more. People who visited the web site more than once defined as returning visitors. Tools used to generate traffic to the website are the Keyword planner and inclusion of key words in the web site content as well as adding relevant tags to the articles. In additional the author promotes the website through segmented and targeted FB audience groups and chats.

Other good performance indicator is the number of pages per session, which has recently grown from one page to 2.55. This supports the assumption that visitors enjoy style of articles more and want to read additional articles. Number of articles per week published on the site is a measure of content release rate. Web site newsletter delivers an email notification to the registered visitors whenever new article published. Demographic analysis shows that 50% of the readers are from the US, 20% are from Israel, 20% are from Estonia and 10% are from other countries.

The website content is full of different fashion guides, different affiliate programs and ads, which will integrate perfectly with affiliate marketing. Links and banners follow the products reviews on the website. These will compliment perfectly the text perfectly and show the visitors where to buy these products.

During the research period of four months, there were many visitors to the website. Figure 3 presents Descriptive statistics and age demographics overview, number of visitors and number of Sessions during the period. As mentioned before, the Analytics program is not always able to analyze all the visitors due to lack of user IDs. This results in partial look into a sample of 14.7% from the total visitors.



**Figure 2: Age Demographics - Overall Sessions (Source Analytics)**

In addition, gender analysis shows that majority of the web site visitors are female. This comes to no surprise, as the main target audience of the web site is female readers. The keywords used on the web site including “Shopping”, “Online shopping”, “Cloths”. These keywords initially directed at female users. User age analysis shows that there appears to be two popular groups of visitors on the site: age groups of 18-24 and 25-34. Both of these groups span the ages of 18-34, which is a perfect representation of the web site targeting young shopper who is not afraid to shop online.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, the results of the research discussed in detail and figures illustrating the data presented. The section divided into four main parts. The division of the sections appears in the form of the three sub questions results, following by the research conclusions.

The author set a main research question, followed by three sub questions to better analyze the received information of the conducted research.

**Sub question 1:** What are the main methods of web traffic acquisitions?

**Sub question 2:** Which possible behaviors of customer exist?

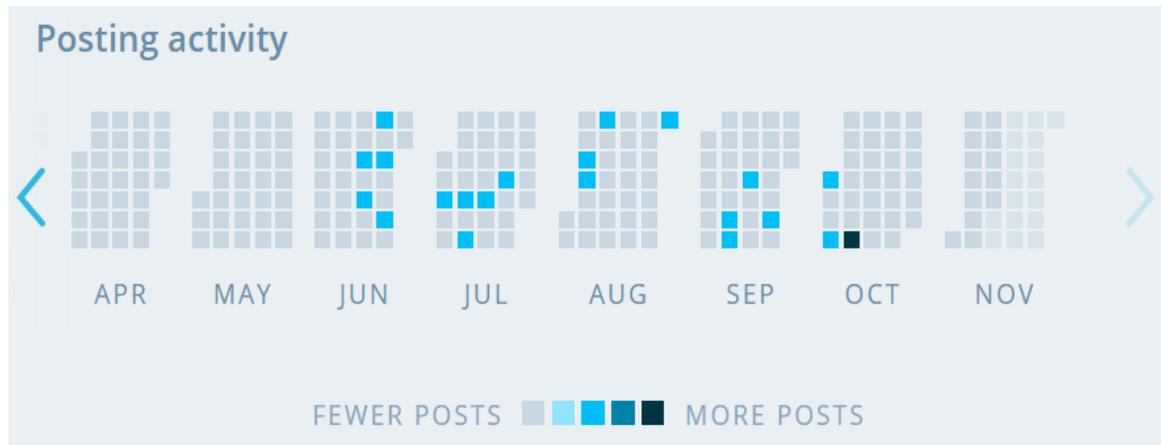
**Sub question 3:** What is the relationship between traffic acquisitions and on website customer behaviors?

#### **3.1.1 Acquisitions results**

To acquire online web traffic for the website MyLoveTips.com, there was a need to choose between the four possible methods for traffic acquisition. The question, “what are those methods?”, was previously researched, answered and decided upon in the preparation pre-research stage. The four methods are; social media (Organic/Paid), Google AdWords, Professional Service providers and Micro Gigs. Due to the fact that Google and their contributing services like AdWords has been a popular topic and been researched many times in the past, as well as the big costs associated with the use of google services, the author has decided to implement the other three traffic acquisition methods. For the purpose of this study, MyLoveTips has acquired traffic through social media, professional service providers and micro gigs.

The pre-stage of acquiring traffic, was the writing of the content. Content used to promote the website and bring traffic to it. As can be seen from the posting activity diagram below, the rate of the content publication was diverse, just like many other websites. There

was no constant timing of publishing. Allowing the analyzing of the influences of the posts on other website aspects later on. The posts were the starting point of each related action taken by the author, therefore stipulated that each action that followed directly correlated to the post publishing.



**Figure 3: Post Publishing Activity (Source Wordpress.com)**

After the stage of the context writing, each of the acquisition channels was used in the researched period between July 1<sup>st</sup> until October 31<sup>st</sup>. Most of the traffic acquisition paid services used towards the end of September. Because there was both times when there was no acquisition method in play, and there was, allowed a view of infused/less-infused traffic periods of the website.

The overall traffic gained in the four months of the research was 21,512 sessions. The distribution of the 21,512 sessions over the four months of research is seen in the below figure. Except for some outlier surges, there is clearly more traffic from the start of October, proving in fact that the acquisition methods and services worked and brought forward more visits.



**Figure 4: Sessions Traffic spread MyLoveTips (Source Analytics)**

When dividing the total sessions to different mediums and channels we can see four different kinds. Although this analysis of sources does not offer a view of the acquisition service itself (ex: micro gigs), such division offers a look into the nature of the traffic in the website MyLoveTips. The acquisitions sources are:

- (1) Organic Search: Visitors who come, after searching at search engines (Google.com etc.)
- (2) Paid Search: Visitors who come from an AdWords ad or other paid search ad.
- (3) Direct: Visitors who come without a traceable referral source, (typing URL into their address bar or using a bookmark on their browser)
- (4) Referral: Visitors who come to the website from another website by clicking on a link
- (5) Social: Visitors who come to the website from a social network

MyLoveTips.com figures show that more than 60% of the traffic comes from organic search. Organic search is the most used and associated method in comparison with both professional service company and freelancing at micro gigs.

	21,512 % of Total: 100.00% (21,512)	21,512 % of Total: 100.00% (21,512)
1. Organic Search	12,982	60.35%
2. Social	4,259	19.80%
3. Direct	3,090	14.36%
4. Referral	1,181	5.49%

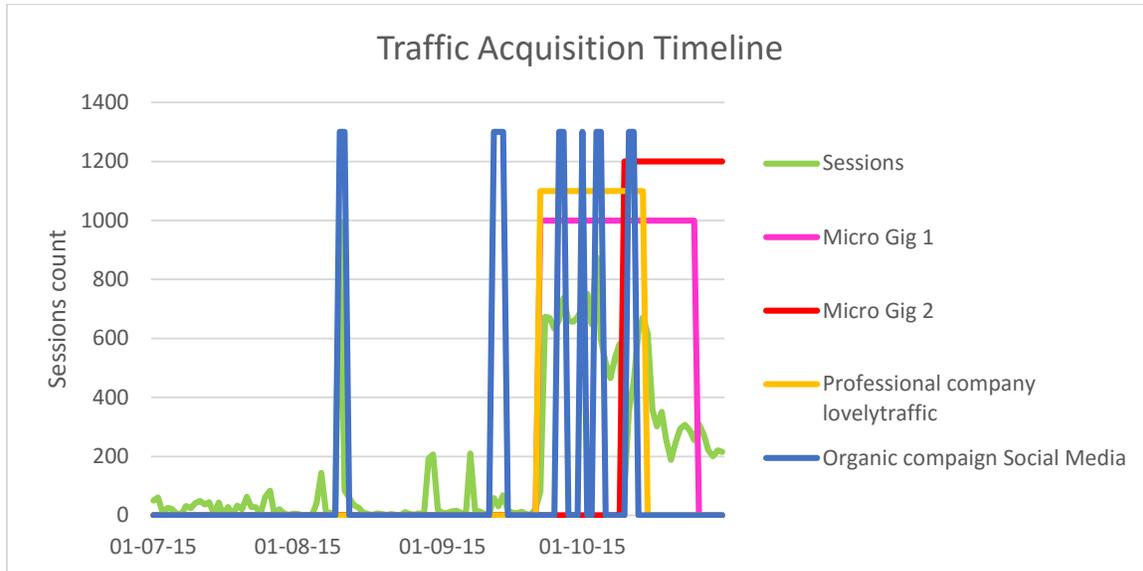
**Figure 5: Traffic channels source analysis by sessions percentage (Source Analytics)**

However, both Referral and Social channel can be assigned to the organic method of author in Social media. The only difference between the two is that social is the traffic from posts and referral can be also from social media but in a more targeted way. For instance Social is a post in FB and Referral is a link sent in a private message or conversation in FB. However, referral can also be from other websites such as other blogs that direct and refer to the website. The periods of the traffic acquisition methods were the following:

- (1) Micro Gig 1 – Freelancing Fiverr (Paid) 22.09 – 25.10
- (2) Micro Gig 2 – Freelancing Fiverr (Paid) 10.10 – 31.10
- (3) Professional Service Company (Paid) 22.09 – 14.10

Each of the services supplied a minimum of 80 visitors per day according to agreement.

The following figure shows during these periods. “Sessions” series illustrate the traffic. Other series represent traffic acquisition activities during the same period.



**Figure 6: Traffic Acquisition Timeline (By Author from Analytics, WordPress & AdSense)**

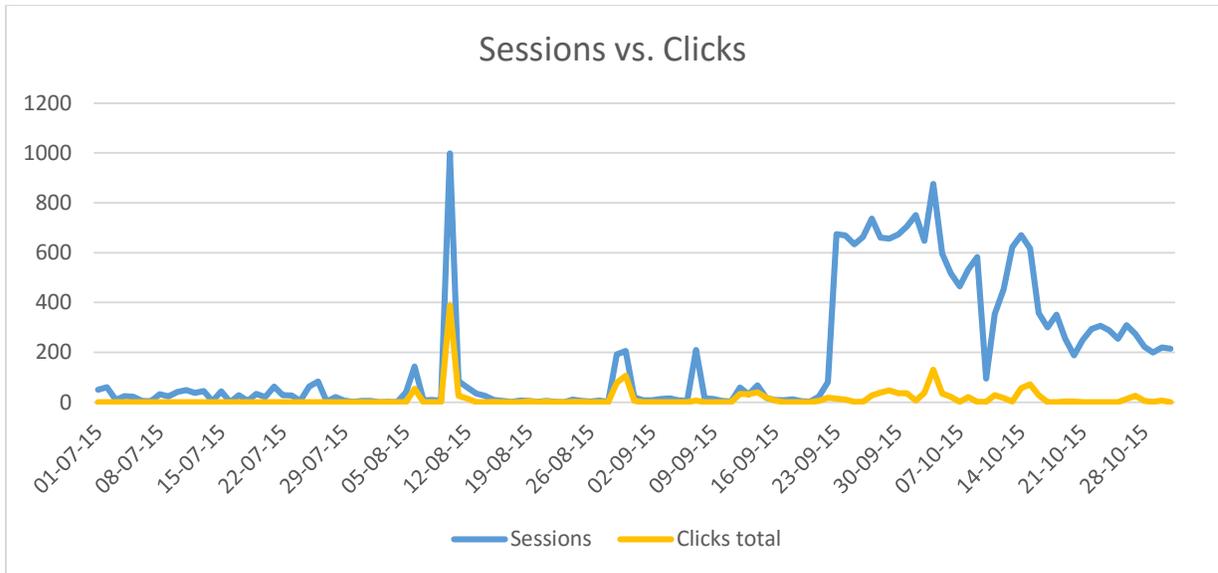
There is direct correlation between each of the traffic services and surges in number of sessions. In the case of during the time when both Micro gig 1 and Lovelytraffic activities were active, the number sessions was between 600 and 800 a day, clearly proving that both activities performed achieved their goal.

### 3.1.2. Visitors Behavior results

Previously, author defined that the visitors that count as consumers are the ones that make a conversion in the form of clicks. Clicks are the ultimate showcase of whether a visitor behaves as a client or not. That is because clicks generate profit. Clicks can be either

on AdSense advertising banners or on the web site links as described above, leading to affiliate programs such as AliExpress, Amazon and Soufeel.

Note total number of clicks achieved in the four months period. This number is 1595 clicks, which represents all visitors who became customers during the period. The Figure 7 below compares number of the clicks with the number of sessions per day over time.

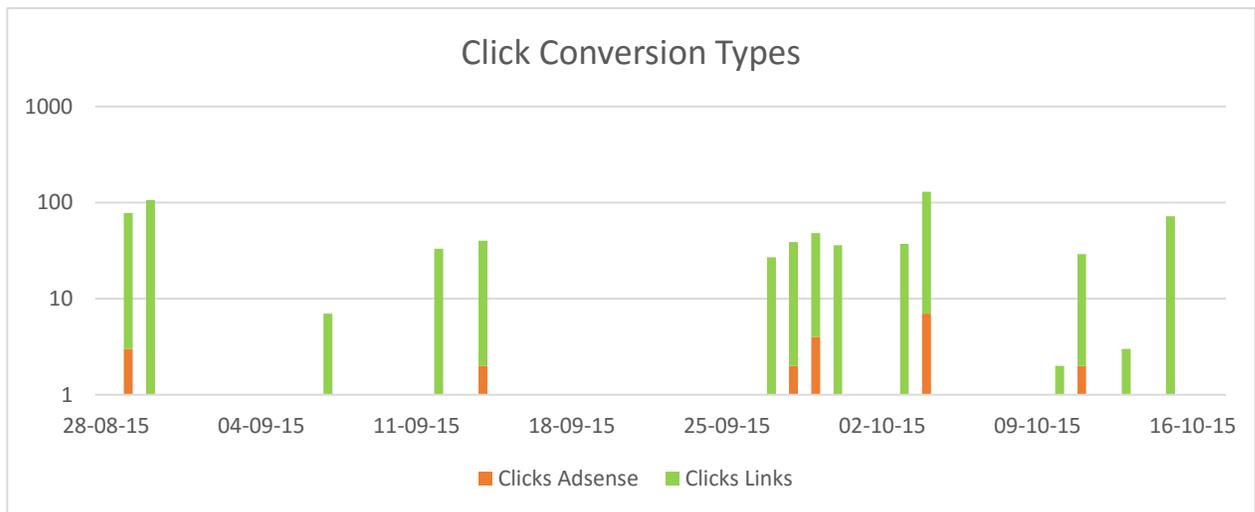


**Figure 7: Total Sessions vs. Total Clicks (By Author from Analytics, WordPress & AdSense)**

In addition, there a division inside the click parameter. For better understanding, we need to look at the types of the clicks, which translate to the types of conversation the website MyLoveTips has. As exhibited in the figure 8.

Figure 8 shows that the most popular type of conversion from a visitor to customer was the URL link clicks. Compared with the AdSense, the interaction of visitors with the URL links was much more dominant.

The four months data illustrated the decisions of visitors to interact, as each click type is another kind of choice for the visitor. The URL link clicks offer the visitors a referral to the object they like and wish to buy. The downloaded cookie of affiliate marketing is not something the visitors are aware or deeply care about when they click on the link and receive the satisfaction from the referral. Contrary, the AdSense banner is a known form of an advertisement that visitors try to avoid. Only when the visitors are extremely interested in the commercial, they would chose to click on the AdSense ad. This makes the choice of the visitor between the two forms of clicks biased towards the URL links, as seen in the figure. The ratio of the AdSense clicks was so small compared to the URL link clicks that the author had to apply logarithmical scale to the chart in order to improve clarity.



**Figure 8: Click Conversion Types (By Author from Analytics, WordPress & AdSense)**

Following after Figure 8, Figure 9, exhibits two series, one for the page views which are sessions and the other for the clicks on AdSense ad banners. Observe that in some cases, number of clicks and amount of traffic have negative correlation. This observation suggests that AdSense clicks significantly depend on the nature of the ad itself, and its relevance for the typical visitor of the MyLoveTips.com web site. The exact comparison of a specific ad

and visitor is impossible to examine because each visitor sees an individual ad, tailored to him by Google.



Figure 9: Page Views & Clicks (Source AdSense)

### 3.1.3. Results of connection between acquisition method and visitor behavior

To find the relationship and the connection between acquisition methods and the desired outcome (clicks) there is a need to examine broader view.

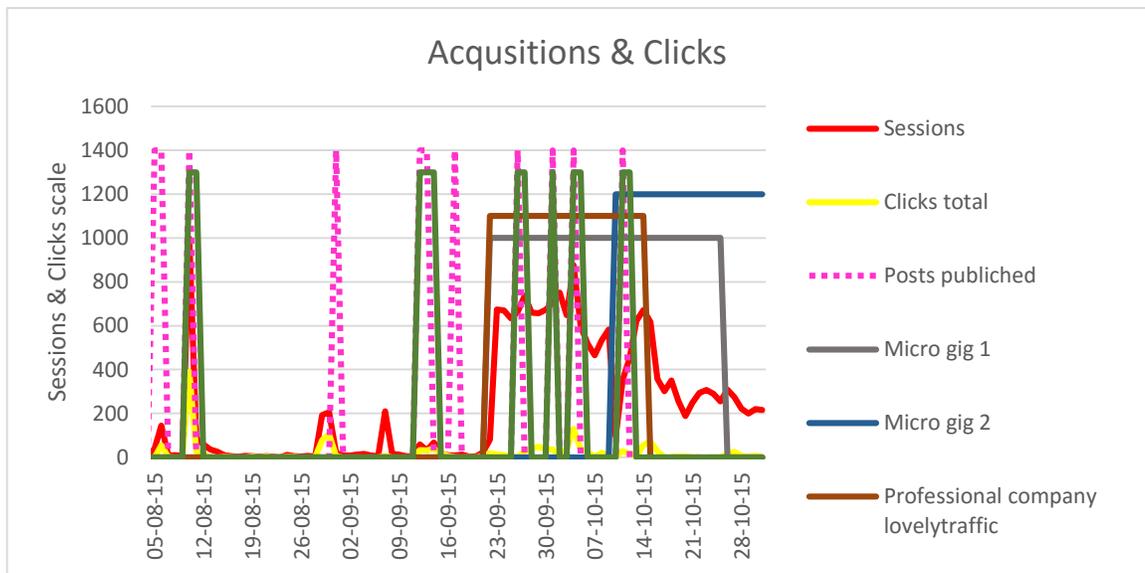


Figure 10: Acquisitions & Clicks (By Author from Analytics, WordPress & AdSense)

Figure 10 brings together the amount of sessions compared with the times when there were post publications.

All of the acquisition methods contribute to the spikes of the sessions. The spikes with higher number of visitors, lead to conversions from visitor to customer. The more sessions/visits there are, the more chances are for visitor engagement with the content and consequently rise in the number of clicks (especially link clicks). The highest amount of clicks were achieved at during the time of organic campaign as well as when micro gig 1 and professional company services were in play.

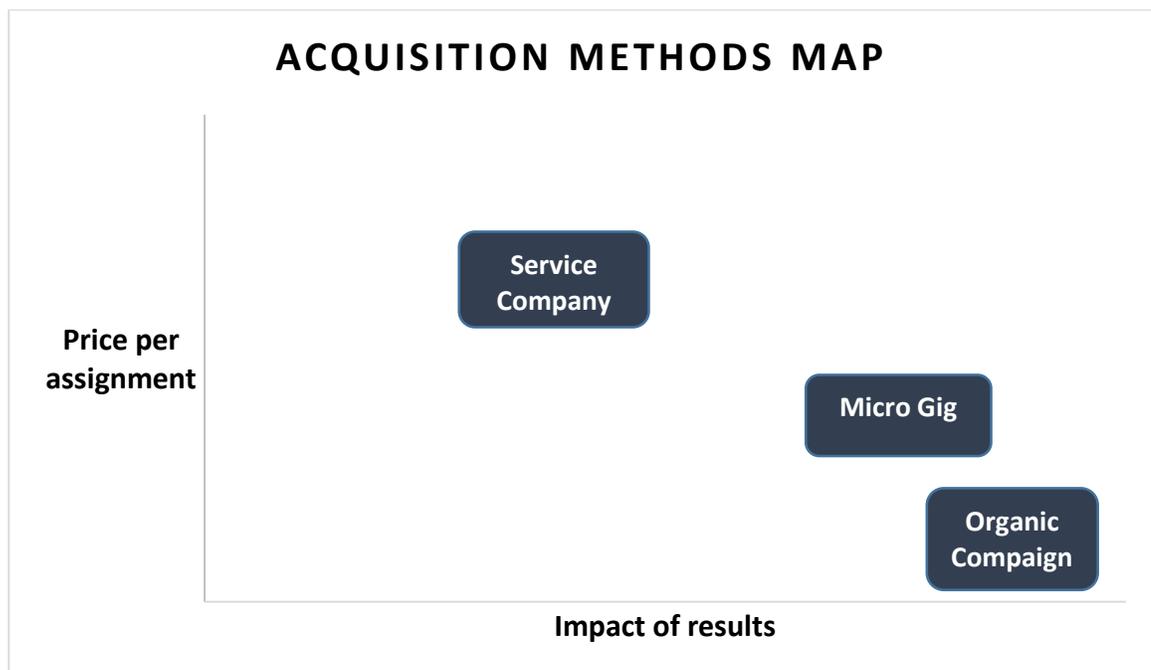


Figure 11: Acquisition Methods Position Map - Based on Results of Efficiency

The most powerful tool of converting visitors to customers is clearly when the visitor is brought by organic campaigns as illustrated by figure 11. Just like the concept of Google Ads, the organic campaign is tailored and targets specific segment of the public, which leads to good visitor experience. Good visitor experience on the web site and presence of relevant content ensures high conversion rates of the visitors to become customers. The visitor then will want to follow up and continue by using the links in the website and clicking on them to be transferred to the purchase websites.

In addition, it is evident that new content leads to increased traffic and is likely to result in more clicks. When doing organic marketing, the publishing in the social channels is done to mostly the same audience. Therefore, can be assumed that many times the visitors are returning visitors and not new ones. When dealing with such returning visitors, reoccurring content and repetition will not work. Therefore, there is a constant need for new, interesting and exciting content, which attracts returning and new customers alike.

In his book, Chaffey (2007) exhibited a figure illustrating the measurements and different objectives to acquire customers (pg 408). In comparison to Chaffey's ranking of success increasing methods, in this research, author lunched every "campaign" and action to acquire customers with the main goal in mind, which is to acquire and lead to lifetime value, as Chaffey called it step 6. The reason why such goal of lifetime value adds to increased success is that the results show that when traffic is targeted by their interests, the chances of continues interest and lifetime value for both consumer and website are much higher. Therefore, both Chaffey and author had a same target in mind.

An interesting comparison of results can be made to the work of Igin, Riley, Kocieniewski & Brustein (2015). They discuss the concept of authenticity of traffic. They claim that the most efficient way to get human traffic is mainly by improving website ranking in google and therefore people will find the website themselves. This is semi true in the case of this research. Although improving search results of the website is effective, a measurement of web improvement and traffic spikes can be hard to measure and is a more passive way of getting traffic. In addition, it does not reflect the aspect of active web traffic acquisition, which involves direct actions such as the ones the author tested.

Furthermore, the article describes bought traffic through sources such as micro gigs and professional company services as "traffic brokers" that will most likely supply non-human traffic to the website. The findings of the research clearly contradict this claim, as the proof of the traffic was the traffic's interaction with the website and the conversion from just traffic to clicks. Non-human traffic is unable to make clicks, following by purchases that will result in financial gain of the website. Although some of the traffic of the "traffic brokers" can be unhuman, still some of it is real humans. The result of this thesis show

insight that there is gain from bought traffic, especially when from micro gigs in comparison to other paid services.

## CONCLUSIONS

Thorough understanding of web-traffic acquisition methods, in conjunction with customer behavior is vital for the success of an online business. The aim of this thesis was to highlight practical aspects based on theoretical knowledge accumulated through previous works. In order to gain broader perspective we started off from an overview of the basic elements of the online business, followed through reviewing prior works and literature in the field of consumer behavior, and concluded by bringing in certain conclusions stemming from practical application of the discussed principles on a real web site.

Chapter one focused on the theoretical background and certain definitions. In the second chapter of the research, author presented the framework for subsequent discussion and reviewed tools used for conducting the research and analyzing the test case. Last chapter brought forward the test case, data and observations. Author determined traffic acquisition methods, which were most effective within the scope of the test case and led to desired customer behavior and engagement in the MyLoveTips.com web site. In this study, the author tested alternative traffic acquisition methods on her own online business for four months.

The research subject is **Methods of web traffic acquisition using customer behavior.**

In order to find more information about this subject, author needed to find out how web traffic connected to customer behavior, which subsequently helps the website, reach customer satisfaction on [www.MyLoveTips.com](http://www.MyLoveTips.com).

Main goal of the commercial website, as is of any online business, is to grow the business, maximize income and eventually grow shareholder value. Reaching the goal is possible through clear understanding on what is the customer value in the eyes of the business, and how to maximize on it. In this case, the most meaningful is the ability of a website to lead regular visitors that come through traffic acquisition, to engage with content and convert. The testing of conversion is done via clicks. Clicks are highly correlated with

the web site profit. Maximizing return on investment is possible by using the most efficient acquisition methods, which lead to highest number of clicks.

To achieve this goal and answer the research topic, it was necessary to focus on three sub questions, which together brought the needed answers for the topic.

**Sub-Question 1:** What are the main methods of web traffic acquisitions?

With this sub question, the focus was on the first part of the research topic, which is the acquisition method. Author discovered that there are many reasons for wanting to acquire traffic for an online business. The main reason for a need for traffic is for profit. All businesses, both brick and mortar and online, need to receive a return on their investments and at least break even on their business expenses. During the four months of this research, MyLoveTips.com used three methods of customer acquisition: Organic, paid micro gig and paid professional service company.

The results of the research were direct and clear when it came to traffic. It was evident that all of these methods did make an impact. The number of daily visitors on the web site measured the impact. Figure shows that on days with no traffic method, there was an average of 50 visitors, and when there was acquisition methods this average was minimum doubled and even tripled.

**Sub-Question 2:** Which possible behaviors of customer exist?

This sub question allowed the gathering of information about the second component of the research topic. The component is the behaviors of the customer. Previously learned, there are different distinctions between customer behaviors. It was necessary to define the frameworks of who considered a customer and possible engagement behaviors on the website MyLoveTips.com. For the purpose of this research, the customer was a website visitor who performed certain actions on the website. These engagements contribute to the profit of the website and they are clicks. Clicks, done by a visitor, make him a customer from the view of the website, because this action brought a return on investment of the website. When the website has traffic acquisition costs, it is necessary to cover these costs with income and exceed these costs for profit.

When analyzing results, the measured parameter of clicks, divided into two type categories, which were AdSense clicks, and Link clicks. Link clicks have proven to be most effective and contributed higher number of sessions. The number of clicks never exceeded the number of visits, but always exhibited positive correlation.

**Sub-question 3:** What is the relationship between traffic acquisitions and on website customer behaviors?

To make the connect between acquisition and behavior, Author looked for patterns between the type of the acquisition and the amounts of clicks. The assumption was that a specific traffic acquisition method is more efficient than other method, thus it brings more relevant traffic that converts into more clicks. Author found that highest conversion was achieved with organic acquisition method. The explanation is that the organic methods cater to potentially already interested audience showed previous interest in the theme of the website.

The second best method was a combination of micro gigs and professional company services. Although they are paid services, they focus on number of visitors, and so jointly, the number of visitors they brought was larger, making the chances of conversion greater.

The result of this research is partly different from previous works done in the field, because the concept of online business is still new. In addition, technology and online methods are constantly changing. Researchers find it hard to keep up with the pace of technological development. Affiliate marketing and concept of profit through clicks are still relatively new ways of doing online business and so this research attempts to add to the existing data in the affiliate-marketing field.

By looking at the misconceptions and biases of this research, future research can benefit to the topic. The future research notably should add range of acquisition methods. Subsequently it should study different possible ways of conversion.

Nevertheless, the author believes that this research is of good value and can be useful for online business owners.

To conclude, with nowadays-strong online competition, a small or new business can find itself lost. Having clear guidelines to profit can help the business succeed and business owner start to learn the basics about the online business life. After the research done, and experiencing the methods on own website, author can conclude that these acquisition methods do work.

Though there may be slight differences in results due to different niche websites and different content, still the principal is the same. To succeed online a website needs traffic. Getting traffic is not an easy job and can prove costly for a low budget starting business.

This research found that the most successful traffic acquisition method for later conversation using clicks is organic acquisition. Targeted audience, which shows interest in website theme by being in a themed FB group and so, is the best. Trying to educate new visitors can be hard, so when the visitor is already interested in the content, it is easier to convert such visitor to customer and then to profit.

However, bought traffic should not be ignored. Bought traffic can prove successful as well and targeted audience can be reached through freelancing micro gigs that will supply a quantity of visitors. Even though organic acquisition is the most effective, for businesses with low amount of time, traffic through micro gigs is a close second solution. Furthermore, a business that can combine both organic traffic and paid micro gig traffic can cover all fronts and lead to better financial results for the online business.

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