

Observational research on Self-promoting Television sets

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project outline

The course Strategy & Marketing of the Master Computer Science at the Radboud University of Nijmegen includes a practical study for an external organization. For us this research is done for Philips Consumer Electronics in Eindhoven, that is represented by Tom de Groot who is at Philips Consumer Electronics. Following table includes all people involved in this research and their role within the research.

Name	Responsibility
Tom de Groot	Representative on behalf of Philips Consumer Electronics
Geert Vissers	Responsible teacher of the Radboud University of Nijmegen
Jeroen Broekhuizen	Researcher
Christian Gillisen	Researcher
Maurice Samulski	Researcher
Koen Vermeer	Researcher

Table 1: Project people

1.2 Context

Philips Consumer Electronics has already conducted a lot of marketing research and made some interesting observations already. The buying process can be seen as divided into the following steps:

1. First the consumer comes up with the initial idea that he needs a new television set. This set is mostly meant to replace an older one, or as an additional set (e.g. a TV set in the bedroom).
2. The next step in the process is the collection of information. When the consumer has decided to buy a new set, he/she starts with gathering information. This is done by comparing different shops and asking relatives, friends or professionals (sales staff). These relatives, friends and professionals can have a huge influence on the decision what TV set to buy.
3. Finally there is the decision phase. In this phase the consumers look at the price/value rate of the selected sets. In this process attributes like picture quality and screen size are the most important factors on which consumers base their decision.

Other interesting findings include:

- Most people have around three brands in mind before entering the shops.
- The majority of the consumers plan one week before they actually buy a new set.
- During the planning process consumers decide on what features the new set should support and what their budget is.
- 82% of the consumers has a fixed budget in mind before going to the shop of which 57% spends less or equal to that budget.
- There are four main factors that have been found to determine a customer's judgement of a shop:

1. Availability of well known brands
 2. Good pricing
 3. Customers can look around freely without being disturbed
 4. A wide variety of choice
- The sales staff is mostly consulted for technical information, explanation and prices.

Philips mainly makes use of a push model to sell their television sets. Customers come in to a shop with 3 brands in mind and Philips uses nice margins that a salesman will probably find back in his salary when having the customer choose the Philips television set. Because Philips feels they are concentrating too much on push sales they now want to pay more attention to pull sales. This requires a very different promotion style than a push model.

Philips now feels the need for a smaller but more qualitative research: an anthropological research. (or field research) By an anthropological research Philips hopes to discover what are key elements that influence customers in the shop. This is especially important in the context of pull factors. Philips reckons that as shop personal have less and less time for customers, it is important that TV sets can sell themselves. This is done by adding promotion material to TV sets in the form of stickers, brochures, design etc. It is then important to know what factors contribute to this self-selling idea, and what factors are of no or minor importance.

2 Research Goal and Question

2.1 Research Goal

From our introduction it is clear that Philips is looking for new ideas to promote their television sets as to move from a push oriented approach to a more pull approach.

“Delivering to Philips Consumer Electronics, ideas for the promotion of televisions with consumers in shops, that Philips does not yet pay much or any attention to in promotion campaigns”.

2.2 Research Question

Our research questions can thus be formulated:

1. **“How do customers behave, when looking for televisions in a shop?”**
2. **“What do customers pay attention to, when looking for televisions in a shop?”**
3. **“What factors in a shop influence customers buying behavior?”**

3 Method

For this research we are going to observe potential buyers of televisions in electronics stores. There are several things people pay attention to when they are looking for a television, but not everything is just as observable. It is also hard to predict whether someone who comes into an electronics store will buy a television, or just browses through the store (or even worse, buys a washing machine).

We plan to observe people in following electronic stores:

- De Harense Smid
- IT's

We will do the observations at a time and day that the shop is most likely to have a lot of customers. This is for 2 reasons convenient:

- We don't attract too much attention to ourselves while observing
- We can do a lot of observations in a relative small amount of time

We believe that the best day and time to do these observations are thus Thursday nights from 18:00 till 20:00 (shopping evening) and Saturday morning and afternoon. The shopping staff will be informed of our intentions and asked for approval before we start observing, as to avoid unpleasant situations.

Observations start as soon as a customer enters the shop and will continue until he has left the shop again. We will then approach the customer to answer a few questions about his shopping behavior and whether he is seriously considering to buy a television set. If a customer showed no interest in television sets while shopping, we will leave our observations out of this research.

3.1 Questions

We have divided the things we are going to pay attention to into a few categories.

When the customer comes in:

1. What day and time does the customer enter the shop?
2. Is he looking around while entering?
3. Does he seem familiar with the shop?
4. Does he walk straight to the television department
5. Which departments in the store does the customer visit?
6. Is the customer carrying something noteworthy? (like a shop magazine)
7. Is he alone? Who is probably with him?

On the television set the customer is looking at:

1. Which brand is it?
2. What is the price?
3. What are the specifications?
4. What is the location of the television?
5. What information is there with the television?

6. How is the television adjusted? (for signal, color or sound)
7. How is the design of the television?
8. Can the sound of the television be heard?
9. What program is currently on?

On the customer behavior when looking at the television set:

1. Does he touch the television set?
2. Does he try the television set
3. Does he look at the price, for how long?
4. Does he look at the specs, for how long?
5. Does he look at the television screen, for how long, at what distance?
6. Does he look at promotion stickers, for how long?
7. Does he look at the backside of the television set?
8. Is he listening to the sound of the television set?
9. Does he consult his partner? On what?

On the customer behavior when comparing television sets:

1. Does he compare television sets?
2. Does he compare on design?
3. Does he compare in price?
4. Does he compare in specs?
5. Does he compare on image quality?

On the customer asking shop personnel:

1. Does he seek help from shop personnel?
2. Does he ask for explanation of the specs?
3. Does he ask for the opinion of the salesman on a particular television?
4. Does he ask for comparison of television sets?
5. Does he ask for/about a particular brand?
6. Does he ask about image quality, sound quality, useability, guarantee?
7. Does he ask something else?

On the customer when leaving:

1. At what time does he leave?
2. Does he buy a television set? What television set did he buy?
3. Does he leave with a magazine of some kind? What magazine?
4. Does he buy something else? What?

When the customer leaves the shop we will ask the customer some additional questions:

1. How serious is the customer about buying a television set?
2. Is this the first shop he has been in, looking for televisions? What other shops?
3. What did he like/dislike about the shop?
4. Will he visit other shops? What shops will that be?
5. Is he shopping for a certain brand? What brand?
6. What television characteristics are most important for him?

3.2 Timetable

We'll start our project with following timetable, which can of course be altered during the project.

Taskname	Description	Time	Start	End
Research Proposal 1	Literature review, preliminary re- search, writing research proposal	3 weeks	2004/11/01	2004/11/22
Research Proposal 2	processing review comments / improving research proposal	2 weeks	2004/11/22	2004/12/06
Collecting Research data	Observing customers in shops	1 weeks	2004/11/29	2004/12/06
Analyzing Research data	Merging different observations	2 weeks	2004/11/29	2004/12/13
Writing report	Writing the report for Philips	2 weeks	2004/12/06	2004/12/20

Milestones:

Taskname	Milestone	Product
Research Proposal 1	2004/11/22	Research Proposal
Research Proposal 2	2004/12/06	Research Proposal
Collecting Research data	2004/12/06	Research data
Analyzing Research data	2004/12/13	answer to research question
Writing report	2004/12/20	Research report

4 Results

In total we conducted 11 observations in different shops:

- MediaMarkt Heerlen
- Osnabrucke Nijmegen
- It's Tilburg

We visited some other shops as well, but failed to observe much due to a lack of customers.

4.1 Procedure

We used an uniform way of conducting our observations. The observer awaits an incoming customer and which time the observation starts. The customer is being followed throughout the store. If the customer leaves the shop without having spend more than 3 minutes in the television department, the observation is regarded as not interesting. If the customer however does spend more than 3 minutes at the television department, the customer will be addressed as soon as he leaves the shop. The observer will introduce himself and state that he noticed the customer paying attention to televisions, and that he would like to ask them some questions about it, as he is conducting a research for the University of Nijmegen. For all observations the questions of section 3.1 are used as a guideline for observing. The exit questions are handled as a starting point.

4.2 Observations

Below you will find the observations we conducted. The observations are numbered arbitrary.

4.2.1 Observation 1

The customer enters the shop (MediaMarkt Heerlen) at 15:25 on Wednesday the 15th of december and walks in an almost straight line to the television department, together with his wife. He is not seriously looking round while walking through the shop, so he seems familiar with the shop. He is not carrying anything with him, nor is his wife.

The customers walk from television set to television set. The only thing these have in common is that they are LCD television sets. There seems to be no specific brand the customer wants because he views in succession: JVC, Philips, Toshiba JVC, Thomson. The prices vary as much as the brands, the customer is looking at television sets of 649 euro and of 2299 euro. The televisions show only a MediaMarkt add sign with information about: brand, type, screensize, resolution, connections and options. Furthermore, some MediaMarkt add signs show a "100MHZ" sign. There are no additional sources of information like stickers. Some television sets are poorly adjusted, some seem to be adjusted properly. There seems to be no consistency in the designs the customer is looking at. All televisions can be heard and for that reason any conversation between the customers is inaudible. Each rack has its own television program that is playing. The most televisions that the customer is looking at have a DVD of Marco Borsato playing.

The customer seems to focus on either image quality or design, because he spends most of his time looking at the television itself, he only takes a brief look at the price and the specifications. The customer is neither touching not trying the television set. Nor does he look at the backside of the television. He does however frequently consult his partner, who from time time wanders off herself, looking at television sets. The customer does not ask any shop personnel, although there are plenty available.

He leaves the television department at 15:48 and walks together with his partner to the household department where they start looking for water boilers. After introducing myself he tells me following: He is looking for a new television set to replace the old one. Because the old one is still working he takes his time to find the right television set. He does however want to buy a set before the end of the year. His old set is a Nokia, so he tells me. He has been looking at some other shops already, like Maxwell and Expert. He definitely wants to buy a LCD television, and he prefers the brand Philips. However, because he dislikes the square designs of the LCD televisions, he is now looking at two other brands: LG and Sony. He wants to buy a television that is at least 26 inch. He compares the televisions mainly on brand, screensize and price, and says to wonder about the huge price differences that he cannot place. On the question whether he also compares on image quality he answers: "No, I cannot compare the television when its at home". On the question why he was initially looking for Philips he answers that he has a lot of confidence in the brand and that believes the brand provides a good guarantee.

4.2.2 Observation 2

The customer enters Osnabrucke Nijmegen at Thursday 9 december 20:12. While he walks through the store he is looking at some big LCD screens, as well as HIFI sets and subwoofers (speakers). He is alone and isn't carrying anything with him.

When he is at the television department he's looking at one particular television, a Philips widescreen TV. The TV costs 1044 euro, but there's a 10% discount card on it. On the specification card (in Osnabrucke style) is written: Philips 28pw9528 Widescreen TV, 70 cm, 100 Hz Digital Scan, Real Flat, Pixel Plus, Silver. Also a pixel plus sticker is on the television. The television is back in the store, totally on the right but at eye level. He looks a few seconds to its price tag and a bit longer at its specifications.

The television is currently switched off, so he can't judge its picture quality or sound at this moment. He lightly touches the pixel plus sticker and switched the TV on by its on/off button. He couldn't switch channels or try out the television because there wasn't a remote control next to it. He asked shop personnel to tell him more about the television and give him a little demonstration. The customer does a few steps backwards and looks concentrated to the screen for a few minutes, while asking about the feature Pixel Plus. The shop personnel replied that it's a technique to enhance the overall image quality and that it works for normal television signal as well as while watching DVD's. Furthermore he wants to know at what distance you have to sit watching a television of this size, how long the -10% discount will hold and he asks if the shop personnel can connect a DVD player to it because he wants to know if the image quality is superb when used in combination with a DVD player. The shop personnel fulfilled his request and connected a DVD player to it with an action movie DVD. After watching it a minute or three he seems to be satisfied with the image quality of the television. He didn't look at other televisions, only this Philips television.

At 20:25 he said thanks to the shop personnel and decides to leave the shop without buying the television. When he got outside he told me that he wanted to buy that particular TV type. He had been searching on the internet and in magazines/newspapers comparing prices and specifications. His decision fell on that Philips widescreen television. Osnabrucke was the first shop he entered today and he wanted to visit several shops that evening to compare prices. Furthermore he said that picture quality was most important to him, especially in combination with a DVD player. He loves watching movies and wants to have a mini bios at home. It has to be a wide screen for sure and the sound of the television was not important, he said he is planning to connect the television to his HIFI system.

4.2.3 Observation 3

The customer enters Osnabrucke Nijmegen at Thursday 9 december 20:38. He and his girlfriend/wife came in unnoticed and we saw him watching televisions at the television department. They didn't have anything with them. They are walking up and down and looking at all televisions in display. They stand still at a Philips television which costs 729 euro excluding the -10% discount which is given on all televisions in the store. It's Dutch specification card reads: 28PW6516 Breedbeeld televisie, 70cm, RealFlat Blackline-S beeldbuis, Crystal Clear III, Silver. This widescreen television is located in the back of the store, somewhere on the right and just above eye height. The sound is switched off and currently all the televisions are switched to the same channel: TMF.

They don't touch or try the television, most likely because there isn't a remote control next to it. They look a few seconds to its price tag or its specifications (it's on the same card). The customer stands only 1.5 meter away from the television. From there you can clearly see the television lines. He looks at the screen on and off for about three minutes. There aren't any promotion stickers on the television.

He's talking with his partner: "What should we do?", "Do you like it, or should we take a look at something else?". His wife replied that this television was nice but that she wants to look at other television also first. They compare almost all television in the same segment (same size and price) with each other. It seems they don't really compare on design but more in price and image quality. Furthermore he isn't comparing specifications, because he doesn't look much at the specification cards. They don't ask any shop personnel, probably because there is no one available.

They leave the store at 20:44 without a television. They were asked several questions. He and his wife said they were just looking around to see what's currently available and look what an average widescreen TV costs. This wasn't the first shop they visited, they were looking around whole day and not specifically for televisions. They said that they didn't like or dislike this shop, it was just a normal shop, nothing special. They were just walking into stores which sell televisions. They weren't looking for a certain brand. The most important features a television must have according to them are good picture quality. The design should be 'new', not an old squared box, old fashion design. Furthermore they are searching for a flat wide screen.

4.2.4 Observation 4

The customer enters the MediaMarkt Heerlen at Saturday 4 December 15:55 and he looks in the direction where the television sets are being displayed and walks straight to the television/home cinema section of the store. Whether he is familiar with the shop isn't clear because when entering the shop it's easy to see where you have to go for television sets. At first he's walking to the Home Cinema area where they have complete sets (TV and surround audio). He is not carrying anything with him, nor is his girlfriend or wife.

He's looking at different television sets, primarily JVC, Sony and Philips. The prices of the televisions vary between around 500 and 1100. He stands still at Sony for a longer time at looks interested to its specifications. The typical MediaMarkt card said (in Dutch): KV-28FX68, 72 cm beelddiagonaal, 100 Hz, Digital Scan, On Screen Display, 35 Watt stereo. It also had an added sign "aanbieding" (special price) on it. Other than these cards there aren't any promotional stickers.

The television was located somewhere in the middle, on eye height. Next to the Sony there was a JVC and a Philips wide screen with about the same size and price category. The television set seems to be adjusted properly although the TV signal is generally weak in stores. The design of the television can be described as a silver colored wide screen television with full-height small speakers at each side of the screen.

All the televisions have the same channel on: TMF, a music channel. The customer can select which television he wants to hear, but he didn't. He touched the television set by stroking with his hand on the top of the television. He doesn't try the television set itself because there isn't a remote control.

He looks briefly at the price and specification of the television and compares these to other cards from different televisions. He seems to be most interested in the picture quality of the televisions because he's walking a few meters backwards until there isn't more space to walk backwards and looks fairly long to the screen. While he is watching, he talks with his girlfriend or wife. They were talking primarily about the picture quality and design and its price. Also he's discussing to his wife/girlfriend about the discounts given and which televisions they rule out because they are too expensive.

There is a lot of shop personnel walking around in the MediaMarkt, but the customer doesn't ask anything and leaves at 16:33 with a small piece of paper with type numbers and prices on it. After they have left the shop, they were asked some questions and they said the following: We are serious in buying a television set in the near future, certainly before Christmas, because our old television has some flaws. They went to another shop named 'Modern' to look for a new television before they went to this store. They like the MediaMarkt very much because they have a lot of televisions to choose from. Next they will go to "Vogelzang" and "It's" and other similar shops they've come across in Heerlen. They told me that they aren't shopping for a certain brand, they only have a pricing limit (below 750 euro) and it must be a "known" brand such as Philips, Sony, JVC. The most important characteristics they are looking for are: wide screen, middle sized about 70 cm, silver color (because their DVD player at home is silver) and it must have a decent picture quality.

4.2.5 Observation 5

The customer enters Osnabrucke Nijmegen at Thursday 9 December 19:33. Apparently the man and his wife, know the shop pretty well because they walk straight to the television department, at the back of the store. They aren't carrying any promotional material like a shop magazine with them.

They are looking at three different JVC televisions (well 2 of them are exactly the same except the color silver vs. black). The price of the televisions is between 499 and 649 euro. The specifications of both television which were displayed on a very small card were as follows (in Dutch): (1) JVC AV-28T4S Breedbeeld TV, platte 71 cm beeldbuis, 16:9 weergave, kleur zilver (499 euro) and (2) JVC AV-28T35S Breedbeeld TV, 71 cm Natural Flat, A2/NICAM stereo, kleur zilver (649 euro). The televisions were displayed at the back of the store, the black JVC television is on the floor on a television furniture. The other two were in the middle on the rack and on eye height. They touch the case of the televisions, not the controls. They are comparing the two JVC's with each other for at least 10 minutes and look carefully to its picture quality and price tags, the specifications seem to be of a minor importance. He's talking to his wife about the price of both televisions, especially because the one with the better image quality is more expensive.

Because they were surprised by the huge picture quality difference they wanted to talk to the shop personnel. They waited quite some time until the shop personnel finished talking to other customers. When the personnel was finally ready to help, they ask if they should buy a regular sized television or a wide screen television. Initially the customer wanted a normal size television (no wide screen) because his wife didn't like wide screen at all: one of the main reasons were 'stretched heads'. The shop personnel answered that they didn't have a choice, because almost all TV's sold were wide screen, but he admitted that the quality isn't what it used to be. Furthermore they ask why the two televisions differ so much in picture quality. The shop personnel said it's

because the huge price difference between the two televisions and that the television signal of the shop is bad because it is splitted into 200 separate TV connections. Another question they asked is how many SCART connections the TV had. After these questions the shop personnel gave a little demonstration.

At first, when the customers didn't tell what brand they wanted, the shop personnel said that he highly recommends Philips and that he has only Philips equipment at his home. But the customer apparently only wanted a JVC.

Their final decision was the most expensive JVC television of the two. They asked how many JVC televisions are still in stock and decided to reserve the 649 euro JVC television.

At 19:58 they decide to leave the shop. When they got outside they answered a few questions: They are very serious in buying a television because their old JVC television is 13 years old and is having some issues. Osnabrucke was the first shop they were visiting today and they like it here because it's a good and known store to them. They bought their old television there as well. They are going to visit other television shops today. They only want to have a JVC television. The most important characteristics they are looking after are: high picture quality. That is the most important aspect. They admit that the price plays an important role in their decision in buying a new television and it's going to be a wide screen television.

4.2.6 Observation 6

The customer enters the shop (Osnabrugge, Nijmegen) at 19:42 and he walks straightly to the television department, together with his father. They are not seriously looking round while walking through the shop to the television department, so he seems familiar with the shop. They are not carrying anything with them.

The customers walk from television set to television set. The only thing these have in common is that they are Philips television sets. The prices vary not very much; the customer is looking for a good television around the 1200 euro. But the specifications of the sets he looked at are almost the same (all had pixel plus and 100 Hz). Underneath the televisions only a simple ads sign is shown with information about: brand, type, screen size, resolution, connections and options. Furthermore, some sets have brand stickers with some marketing terms like Pixel plus, etc. Some television sets are adjusted fairly well. The dealer explained that all televisions are connected to the same cable and that the televisions interfere with each other.

There seems to be some consistency in the designs the customer is looking at. All televisions can be heard when dealer puts on the sound. Most televisions have the same program that is playing, but a few others (looks at random) display other channels. The most televisions that the customer is looking at have TMF playing (actually most televisions do). The customer seems to focus on both image quality and design, because he spends most of his time looking at the television itself, he only takes a brief look at the price. He consulted the dealer about the specifications. The customer touched the set a short time, playing with a feature on top of the set. He can't look at the backside of the television, limitation of the shop. He does however frequently consult his dad. He leaves the television department at 19:58 and the customers both left the shop immediately. They wanted to participate to the little interview only if it was brief as they had to go elsewhere.

After introducing myself he told me the following: He is looking for a new wide-screen television set to replace the old one for watching DVD's. He currently has a Philips and now wants a new Philips as the previous set was very good. He has been looking at some other shops already, like Expert. Now he is serious about buying a set very soon. He's comparing the set only on features and a bit about the price which shouldn't be too high (didn't want to express what price exactly). Screen quality was also important, but he didn't see much difference in

the price category he was looking. The customers both didn't have anything to say about the shop.

4.2.7 Observation 7

The customer enters the shop (Osnabrugge, Nijmegen) at 20:11 and she walks via the vacuum cleaner department to the television department. She isn't seriously looking round while walking through the shop to the television department, so she seems familiar with the shop. She only has her handbag with her, but during the observation she didn't get anything out of it.

She walks from television set to television set. It seems that she doesn't really has a brand in mind as she looked at all kinds of televisions (both small and wide screen). The prices vary a lot as well as the specifications. She is probably just looking for fun. Some television sets are adjusted fairly well. The dealer explained that all televisions are connected to the same cable and that the televisions interfere with each other.

There seems to be some consistency in the designs the customer is looking at. All televisions can be heard when dealer puts on the sound. The customer seems to focus on both image quality and design. She spends about one or two minutes per set and takes only a brief look at the price. She didn't want help of the dealer; she said that she was just looking around. She leaves the television department at 20:18 and returned to the vacuum cleaners and bought one. After that she left the shop.

After introducing myself she told me following: She was just looking around as she had an idea to replace her current television set which is 7 years old. She prefers a wide-screen though she doesn't want to spend too much money at a new set, as she doesn't watch television very much lately. She currently has a JVC set and she has no complaints about it. She hasn't really looked at other shops yet. She thinks it will take some time before she really is going to buy a set. She is not so technical so the specification signs in the shop don't mean a lot to her. So, today she only looked a bit at the design and for prices. She liked the shop, as she comes here for quite some years now. She also likes the television department, good overview of all kinds of televisions.

4.2.8 Observation 8

The customers enter the shop (Osnabrugge, Nijmegen) at 20:31 and they walk straight to the television department. It looks like a family consisting of both parents and a child. They are not seriously looking around while walking through the shop to the television department, so they seem familiar with the shop. They carry a few bags of different kinds of shops (Blokker, V&D).

The customers walk directly to a television set and ask the dealer about the specifications. It is a Sony wide-screen set. The set is 998 euro. As said before it is a wide-screen set of 28 inch, 100 Hz WEGA screen and Dolby surround sound. It seems that the kid likes the set very much and so do the parents.

The television set that the customers are looking at has TMF playing (actually most televisions do) and the quality is seems ok. They look at it from a close and further distance, and also the sound is turned on. The customers seem to focus on image quality, because they spend most of their time looking at the screen itself. He consulted the dealer about the specifications. The customer touched the set a short time. The man does however frequently consult his wife which seems a bit less interested. They left the television department at 20:42 and left the shop immediately.

After introducing myself he told me the following: They are looking for a new wide-screen television set to replace the old one. He currently has a JVC but heard of friends that the set he looked at

(Sony) was good and they both liked it. They have compared prices in different shops already. He noticed that another shop (they forgot the name of the shop) was a bit cheaper and they were going to buy the set at that shop after the interview. They were comparing the set only on screen quality as most of the features wouldn't be used anyway. The customers didn't have anything to say about the shop besides that it looks nice.

4.2.9 Observation 9

The customers enter the shop (Osnabrugge, Nijmegen) at 20:47 and they walk straight to the television department. The customers are a guy and girl somewhere in the mid twenties. They walk via the audio department (where they spend 3 minutes looking at a Sony system) to the television department. They both have nothing special with them.

The customers walk past several television sets of different kind of brands, though it seems they are more interested in a Sony (as I already suspected from the Sony audio set). They are only looking at wide-screen sets with Dolby sound. The sets range in prices between 800 and 1400 euro. They consult the dealer about the difference between some sets and look with him mostly at a JVC set.

The television set that these customers are looking at also has TMF playing and the quality is ok. They look at it mostly from a little distance as if they where at home, no sound is used. The customers seem to focus on image quality, design and color as they didn't want a black colored set. The dealer also explained a few specifications. No contact is made with the set. The man does however frequently consult the girl with him who seems to like the JVC set, while he prefers the Sony. They left the television department at 21:03 and left the shop immediately as it was closing time.

After introducing myself he told me the following: They are in the orientation fase of eventually buying a new television set. Thus currently they are not really serious about buying one as their current set works still fine. They have been in different shops already like V&D (disappointment..), Harendse Smit, etc. The planning contains more shopping but which shops is unknown. It depends on which shop they'll find on their way. They are looking for a wide-screen set with good sound and nice design, though they think most of the sets look almost the same. They both think that display quality is most important for them.

4.2.10 Observation 10

The customers enter the shop (Osnabrugge, Nijmegen) at Friday 31 december 13:23 and they walk straight to the television department. The customers are a pair of around the 60 somewhere. They look around in almost the complete shop before they finally arrive at the television department. The woman only has her handbag with her.

The customers walk slowly past several television sets of different brands. They look both at normal- and wide-screen sets. The sets range in price between 400 and 1200 euro. They don't need to consult the dealer. The specifications seem not to be important as they didn't look at them. Almost no similarity between the sets could be found (except the standard stuff).

The television set that these customers are looking at also have TMF playing. They inspect the sets from a close to intermediate distance but don't touch or try the sets. The customers seem to focus on design only. They talked shortly with the dealer but they said that they were just looking around and chatted a bit about the early black-and-white televisions of their childhood. They left the television department at 13:46 and left the shop immediately.

After introducing myself he told me the following: They are just looking around to see what kinds of televisions are currently available. So it was just plain coincidence that they took this shop to look, so they are not going to look further now. Their old set still works fine, which is a Philips. The customers were not looking specifically at something, but if they would buy a new set sound would be most important for them and then design as their eyes aren't as good as they were. As brand they like 'good old' Philips, but other brands look nice too according to them (but they prefer Philips). They have seen some advertising in the local newspapers and on television. They don't have internet at home so this is not a point where they can fetch additional information.

4.2.11 Observation 11

The customer enters the shop (Osnabrugge, Nijmegen) at Friday 31 December 14:14 and he walks straight to the television department. He is a guy of somewhere in the 20 or begin 30. He seems to know the shop as he greets a dealer by name and walks straight to the television department.

The customer walks slowly past a couple of wide-screen Philips television sets and one JVC set to which he compares the Philips set specifications. The sets range in prices between 700 and 1300 euro. After some time he consults a dealer about pixel plus and the difference between it and Trinitron of Sony. The designs of the sets are mostly the same, some have nice gadgets and some are simple standard sets.

The television sets also have TMF playing. The dealer puts on the sound of two sets when he probably made a final selection of two sets. They inspect the sets from an intermediate distance but don't touch them. He likes the quality of the displays and sound of both sets. The customers seem to focus on screen quality a lot and a bit on design, as he said that quality of the screen mattered a lot to him while watching DVD's. The dealer tried to show him a Sony machine, but he was not very interested. He was fixed on one Philips set now (the Philips 32PW8609). The television had not promotional stickers on it. He bought the Philips set at 14:26. After having paid for his new set he left the shop with his large new box.

After introducing myself he told me the following: His old television (a JVC) broke last night so he really needed a new television. As he knew this shop very well he only looked in this shop. He also told me that a few weeks ago he started thinking about a replacement set already and had a look in this shop. He will not visit other stores for televisions as he already is the proud owner of a brand new set. Important features for him were wide-screen and screen quality. The sound was not so important as he will link his set up to his sound set at home. He had seen some advertising in the local newspapers and on the internet he found also some good information about the sets. He almost bought a set via the internet, but didn't trust it completely (what about reparations etc.).

4.2.12 Observation 12

The customer enters It's Tilburg at Saturday 11 December 2004 at 15:13. He walks in, looks around a little bit and then walks to the audio-department. He looks around there for a couple of minutes and then walks to the television-department.

His attention is mostly drawn by some Philips and Sony televisions between 1500 and 2000 euro. There is some music station on and you can hear the sound of it. He pays close attention to the specification of the television, with some televisions he is even comparing them on the specification because he is walking from one rack to the other and back, and always reads the specifications closely. Someone from the shop comes to ask if he needs some help, but he refuses it and says that he is only looking around.

He leaves the shop at 15:25 without a television. He says that he wants to buy a television in the near future but he did not have to buy one now. He already has been to other shops, and he will go the others in the future, he does not think this shop is very special. He likes Sony-television, but another brand is also good as long as it is a plasma television and the picture quality is good enough.

4.2.13 Observation 13

The customer and his wife enter Osnabrucke Nijmegen at Thursday 16 December 2004 at 19:03. They are looking around to see where the television department is. When they see it they walk right to it.

They are walking around the television department just looking at some televisions and then draw the attention of someone from the shop. They say they need a television for there new apartment and the person from the shop leads the to some Philips televisions. He says that these are probably the best televisions. The customers wife makes some comments on how some televisions will not fit in their apartment and they decide that one television of 643 euro is probably the best. The customer takes a measuring tape out of his pocket and measures the size of the television. He compares the size with that of some other television, but decide that this one is good. They ask the shop personal something about the guarantees they will get, and they buy the television.

They leave the shop at 19:45 with the television (A silver Philips wide-screen television of 643 euro). They say that they wanted to buy a television for their new apartment, so they looked for one that would fit in there, they did not had a particular brand of television in mind. They went to this store because they heard it was a good one and it had much choice. They had not been to any other store before this one, and they won't go to another one because found what they were looking for.

4.2.14 Observation 14

The customer enters Osnabrucke Nijmegen at Thursday 16 December 2004 at 19:40 He walks straight to the television department, so he seems to now his way in the store.

At the television department there are televisions on the top and bottom shelves and DVD-players in the middle. He looks at all kind of televisions from different brands and sorts, but he does not particularly look at flat screen televisions, but mostly looks at the DVD-players. When a salesman from the shop ask him if he can help him, the customer says that he recently bought a television here, and that wants an DVD-player now. They talk about some specifications of the DVD-players finally he buys one.

He leaves the shop at 20:10 with the DVD-player. He says that he did not come to the shop for a television, because he recently bought one. He came for the DVD-player. He looked at the television to see if there any better or cheaper ones since a bought his. He also went to other shops to look, but since he bought his television here also he went here to buy his DVD-player. Things that are most important for him in televisions are the overall looks and the picture quality.

5 Conclusions

Our observations should give some view on how customers behave when looking for televisions. We note that customers of our observations seem to pay most attention to (in arbitrary order): price, design and image quality. Because we only observed one buying customer, it is hard to say anything about the influence of shop factors on buying behavior.

5.1 Personal Opinion

We want to point out some personal expectations that we ourselves had at the start of this research that were contradicted or confirmed by our research.

- Although we had not expected otherwise, image quality still seems to play an important role in television comparison.¹
- We expected specifications to be more important in television comparison.
- We expected television sets to be surrounded by more SOP and POP material. Almost all sets however only showed some minor material from the shop.
- A shops size of assortment in television sets seems to play an important role in a customers rating of a shop.

¹Whether the perception of image quality is correct, is a different matter.

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