

## THE INFORMATION CHANNELS THAT MATTER: THE CASE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CUSTOMERS IN LATVIA

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### ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship is becoming more and more popular as there is a growing share of people who would like to contribute for social enterprises and are ready to become customers of the social enterprises and in this way participate in reduction of poverty in the country and support entrepreneurship development. For social enterprise marketing communications to be effective, an understanding is necessary not only of the information channels which are most effective but also of the preferences customers hold regarding the information channels that they would like to receive information from. Purpose of research: to investigate the preferences for different information channels among customers of Latvian social enterprises. Research methods: scientific publications analysis, analysis of previous conducted research results, social enterprise customers' survey conducted by Kristīne Casno. Results of research have indicated that regular customers of social enterprises prefer such information channels as social networks, followed by television and radio.

KEYWORDS: *social enterprise, information channels, decision making, social entrepreneurship, survey*

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### Introduction

Social entrepreneurship is becoming more and more popular as there is a growing share of people who would like to contribute for social enterprises and are ready to become customers of the social enterprises and in this way participate in reduction of poverty in the country and support entrepreneurship development. However, social enterprises operate under tight budget constraints and have limited funds available for marketing purposes. Therefore, they have to make sure they select the right communication channels for their message to reach both their existing and potential customers. Although general information on information channels and their effectiveness is available, what social enterprises usually lack is the knowledge of the actual preferences of their customers with regards to the information channels that they would like to receive the information from.

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Purpose of research: to investigate the preferences for different information channels among customers of Latvian social enterprises.

Tasks of research: 1) to analyze recent research findings on social entrepreneurship development and information channel effectiveness reflected in recent scientific publications; 2) analyze the preferences of social enterprise customers with regards to information channels that they would like to receive information about social enterprises from 3) analyze if there are any differences in preferences among consumers with regards to their age, gender and place of residence.

Research methods: scientific publications analysis, analysis of previous conducted research results, social enterprise customers' survey conducted by Kristīne Casno. For survey data analysis indicators of descriptive statistics (indicators of central tendency or location (arithmetic means, mode, median), indicators of variability (range, variance, standard deviation, standard error of mean), cross-tabulations, testing statistical hypotheses with t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), as well as correlation analysis are applied.

Results of research have indicated that regular customers of social enterprises prefer to receive information from such information channels as social networks, followed by television and radio.

## 1. Overview of research on social entrepreneurship

Research world-wide has paid a lot of academic researchers' attention to several aspects of social entrepreneurship including social mission as competitive advantage with analysis of the strategic conditions of social entrepreneurship (Muñoz, Kimmitt, 2019: 859; Sekliuckiene, Kisielius, 2015: 1017; Currym, Donker, Michel, 2016: 112) as well as performance relationship to different approaches of marketing (Palacios-Marqués, et al, 2019: 429) and innovation applications for sustainable development (Geradts, Bocken, 2019: 81) and social innovations (Ko, Liu, 2019: 781); social innovations and sustainable entrepreneurship (Satu, 2019: 551). Research results on social entrepreneurship in non-governmental organizations toward a realistic theory of social entrepreneurship has grounded on microfinance research and finding ways on selling dreams to society (Arvind, 2019: 312). As social enterprises during last years are created and developing and contributing to national economy and also to social security – often there arises a question: what will be next (Bacq, Janssen, Noel, 2019: 842). Questions on risk of social enterprises are often asked by entrepreneurs and by researchers (Sukwoong, Namil, Wonjoon, 2019: 935). Researchers and teachers state questions on readiness of university students for social entrepreneurship (Wenke, Tang, Liu, 2019: 41). Value drivers of social businesses and business model perspectives are on research agenda with finding the best possible solutions (Spieth, Schneider, Clauss, 2019: 441) and investigations of several approaches to find the best possible solution for social entrepreneurship (Martinez, Rubio, Fernandez, 2019: 456).

Analysis of approaches in achieving sustainability through Schumpeterian social entrepreneurship and the role of social enterprises are investigated by many scientists including (Rahdari, Sepasi, Moradi, 2016: 356) and on different success factors (Pal, Altay, 2019: 176). Different fields of national economy are analyzed in respect to social entrepreneurship like (Aquino, Lück, Schänzel, 2018: 28) in the field of tourism with a conceptual framework of tourism social entrepreneurship for sustainable community development – including significant engagement and development of disadvantaged and underdeveloped communities sustainably through the tourism industry with suggested practical and innovative approaches. Social entrepreneurship is investigated in respect of creating value in the context of institutional complexity (Cherrier, Goswami, Ray, 2018: 251) analyzing global companies, SMEs, management differences by gender, and many other factors. In numerous research it has been indicated that women have a very special role in social entrepreneurship even giving “women as vectors of social entrepreneurship” (Kimbua, Ngoasong, 2016: 71). Different countries have different approaches for social entrepreneurship (Korstenbroek, Smets, 2019: 484; Ayman, Johnson, 2019: 531; Lall, 2019: 573). Although many aspects of social entrepreneurship have been researched, the area of social enterprise marketing has received relatively less attention from the academic researchers and is therefore an interesting field of study with practical implications for social enterprise.

## 2. Relative importance and effectiveness of various information channels in marketing

The overwhelming amount of information today that people encounter makes it more and more difficult for companies to convey their marketing message to consumers effectively. In the digital era communication is changing from previously so common one-way communication to a many-to-many communication model where consumers hold a fair share of power that companies must become aware of (Klepek, Starzyczna, 2018: 501). Businesses have turned to integrated marketing communication with a deeper focus on the consumer and a unified message across all communication channels for a greater impact (Duralia, 2018: 94). Regardless of the communication channel, one must evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. For example, while television is highly effective because of the possibility to combine visuals with sound, the costs are high and it is impossible to select whom to target the message to. Direct mail, on the other hand, allows to select the audiences, but is associated with high costs and has earned a negative reputation. Radio allows audience selection as well, but is limited only to sound which diminishes the efficiency of this information channel. Using internet, including social networks, for communication of information, is a relatively low cost option which allows to select audiences but the message has to compete with millions of others in the digital networks (Kotler, Keller, 2016: 616).

Irrespective of the dominance of internet in modern digital era, consumers are still highly influenced by traditional mass media information channels (Pešek, 2012: 48). Television is found to be most efficient, print media the least efficient but internet, used separately, the second least efficient marketing communication channel. Therefore, for best results internet as a channel should be combined with traditional media (Stolyarova, Rialp, 2014: 213). Given the challenges in communication today, an in-depth understanding of the information channels that social enterprise consumers prefer to receive information from, would provide practical insights for social enterprises that could increase the effectiveness of their marketing communication.

## 3. Empirical research methodology and main results

For data collection purposes authors used quantitative research in the form of the customers' of social enterprises survey. It was distributed over a period of 2 months through social networks with support from Latvian Social Entrepreneurship Association and Latvian social enterprises. Possible respondents got invitation to participate in the survey and if the possible respondent have not filled the survey, invitation was sent in two weeks and a third time reminder was sent after four weeks. Respondents were asked a set of questions to investigate in-depth insight about the purchasing habits and opinions of Latvian social enterprise product consumers. Among other questions, the respondents were also asked to indicate their preference on a scale from 1 (would not like to receive) to 10 (would like to receive) towards receiving information about social enterprises and their offerings across various information channels.

The survey was completed by 329 respondents (the number of fully completed surveys was 224), 84% of them female, 16% male of whom more than 80% were of age 16–45 and held either a master's or bachelor's degree. The number of respondents who had not made any purchases of social enterprises' products or services during 2018 was only 63. Most respondents (46.8%) had made purchases 1–4 times during 2018, 11% of respondents – 5–8 times, 5.9% – 9–12 times, and 9.7% of respondents – 13 times and more. Overall, consumers of Latvian social enterprise products indicated on average the highest preference for such information channels as social networks, television and radio, as reflected in Table 1.

*Table 1.* Main statistic indicators of respondents, who had made purchases from social enterprises in 2018, preference for receiving information about social enterprises across information channels

	Printed media	E-mail	Radio	Social networks	Direct mail	Television
Mean	4.22	5.21	6.46	8.25	2.28	6.52
Mode	1	1	8	10	1	10
N	143	157	148	166	144	155
Std. Deviation	2.929	3.229	2.651	2.076	2.218	3.059
Median	4	5	7	9	1	8
Std. Error of Mean	0.245	0.258	0.218	0.161	0.185	0.246
Range	9	9	9	9	9	9

*Source:* Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

Social networks are clearly the most preferred means of communication about Latvian social enterprises and their offerings among existing social enterprise customers, which confirms the appealing nature of interactive internet communications.

Respondents who had not made any purchases from Latvian social enterprises during 2018 compared to those who had, indicated on average lower scores across all information channels, as reflected in Table 2, however social networks, television and radio still remain in the leading positions which suggests that aforementioned are equally optimal for communication with both existing as well as new customers.

*Table 2.* Main statistic indicators of respondents, who had not made purchases from social enterprises in 2018, preference for receiving information about social enterprises across information channels

	Printed media	E-mail	Radio	Social networks	Direct mail	Television
Mean	2.75	4.00	5.76	7.07	1.76	5.89
Mode	1	1	1	10	1	10
N	52	53	54	59	51	55
Std. Deviation	2.848	3.223	3.174	2.924	1.807	3.665
Median	1	2	6	8	1	6
Std. Error of Mean	0.395	0.443	0.432	0.381	0.253	0.494
Range	9	9	9	9	8	9

*Source:* Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

Taking into account that social enterprises are usually restricted by tight financial and human resources, the understanding of frequent shoppers' communication preferences across various information channels is of utmost importance for sustainable operations of the social enterprise. While those who made purchases from social enterprises more than 13 times during 2018 indicated on average higher scores across all information channels compared to the rest of consumer base among respondents which confirms the previously defined trend of social networks, television and radio as the most preferred means of communication, the Authors found the relatively high value of mean and mode for e-mail as information channel particularly interesting in this consumer group, as reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Main statistic indicators of respondents, who had made purchases from social enterprises 13 times and more in 2018, preference for receiving information about social enterprises across information channels

	Printed media	E-mail	Radio	Social networks	Direct mail	Television
Mean	4.38	6.17	6.70	8.48	2.12	7.25
Mode	2	8	8; 10	10	1	10
N	16	18	20	21	16	20
Std. Deviation	2.872	2.684	2.774	1.914	2.062	2.693
Median	3.5	5.5	7.5	9	1	8
Std. Error of Mean	0.718	0.633	0.620	0.418	0.515	0.602
Range	9	9	8	7	8	8

Source: Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

Correlation analysis identified a statistically significant (sig 0,006) correlation relationship which suggests that consumers who indicated a higher preference for e-mail as an information channel on average made purchases from social enterprises more often.

Table 4. Correlation analysis results (consumer shopping frequency and preference for e-mail as an information channel)

Correlations			
		How many times did you purchase products/ services of social enterprises in 2018?	E-mail
How many times did you purchase products/ services of social enterprises in 2018?	Pearson Correlation	1	0,220**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,006
	N	174	157
E-mail	Pearson Correlation	0,220**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,006	
	N	157	157

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

Such results suggest that, despite rather big differences in evaluations of respondents with very different indicators of central tendency or location (arithmetic mean, mode and median) and rather big indicators of variability, e-mail as an information channel may still serve as an effective mean of communication with a high potential to bring in sales for Latvian social enterprises. Authors did not recognize any other statistically significant correlations between consumers' shopping frequency and preference for other information channels.

Authors were also interested to investigate how the patterns for the preference for receipt of information across various information differed among various consumer age (16–55) groups, as reflected in Table 5.

*Table 5. Main statistic indicators of preferences for receipt of information across different information channels in various consumer age groups*

Age group	Statistical indicators	Printed media	E-mail	Radio	Social networks	Direct mail	Television
16–25 years	Mean	4.93	6.07	7.00	8.27	1.69	6.13
	N	14	15	15	15	13	15
	Std. Deviation	3.385	3.327	2.420	2.404	1.109	3.399
	Std. Error of Mean	0.905	0.859	0.625	0.621	0.308	0.878
	Range	9	9	8	9	3	9
26–35 years	Mean	3.97	5.23	6.47	8.26	1.89	6.51
	N	60	65	64	70	62	68
	Std. Deviation	2.531	3.131	2.714	2.076	1.812	3.141
	Std. Error of Mean	0.327	0.388	0.339	0.248	0.230	0.381
	Range	9	9	9	9	8	9
36–45 years	Mean	4.08	5.02	6.15	8.42	2.32	6.26
	N	39	45	41	50	41	42
	Std. Deviation	3.064	3.265	2.780	1.991	2.339	3.029
	Std. Error of Mean	0.491	0.487	0.434	0.282	0.365	0.467
	Range	9	9	9	9	9	9
46–55 years	Mean	4.13	6.24	6.07	8.24	3.81	7.18
	N	16	17	14	17	16	17
	Std. Deviation	2.986	3.364	2.464	1.985	2.786	3.005
	Std. Error of Mean	0.747	0.816	0.659	0.481	0.697	0.729
	Range	9	9	7	7	7	9

*Source:* Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

E-mail communication is overall most preferred by consumers of age groups 46–55 and 16–25. E-mail as an information channel is positively appreciated (score 8 and above) by 60% of consumers in the age group 16–25 and 41.2% of consumers in the age group 46–55, leaving such age groups as 26–35 and 36–45 behind with 32.3% and 26.7% of positive scores (score 8 and above) respectively. Radio as an information channel is most preferred by the younger consumers of age 16–25, 53.3% of whom indicate scores of 8 and above for this information channel, followed by the age group 26–35 with 40.6% of scores 8 and above. Authors find it interesting that social networks have the highest mean indicator of 8.42 among age group of 36–45, leaving other age groups behind. It must be noted that positive scores (8 and above) for social networks are indicated by 82.4% of consumers in the age group of 46–55, 80% of consumers in the age group 36–45, 73.3% of consumers in the age group 16–25 and 77.1% of consumers in the age group 26–35, which makes social networks an attractive information channel for communication across all of them, especially with consumers of age 36 plus. Compared with other information channels, social networks have also received the lowest percent of scores below 3 (included) across all age groups. Direct mail is clearly the least preferred information channel across all age groups. More than 80% of consumers in all age groups, indicate scores below 3 for this information channel, except age group 46–55 years with almost 54%. There is recognised a statistically significant correlational relationship between consumer age and consumer preference for direct mail, as evidenced by the results of correlation analysis reflected in Table 6 which data suggest that the preference for direct mail as an information channel tends to increase on average with increase of consumer age.

Table 6. Correlation analysis results (consumer age and preference for direct mail as an information channel)

Correlations			
		Age group	Direct mail
Age group	Pearson Correlation	1	0,196*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,023
	N	159	134
Direct mail	Pearson Correlation	0,196*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,023	
	N	134	144

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

Television as an information channel is highly preferred (scores of 8 and above) by consumers of the age group 46–55 (58.8% of respondents), followed by age groups 26–35 (50% respondents), 36–45 (47.6% respondents) and 16–25 (40% respondents). The popularity of printed media is below average. This information channel is most preferred (scores of 8 and above) by youngest consumers of age 16–25 (21.4%; mean indicator of 4.93), followed by consumers of age 46–55 (18.8%, mean indicator of 4.13). It must be noted that Authors find the differences in consumer preferences for various information channels across all age groups to be statistically significant, except for direct mail, as reflected in Table 7.

Table 7. ANOVA results on investigation of differences in respondent evaluations on information channels by respondent age groups

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Printed media	Between Groups	10.634	3	3.545	0.436	0.728
	Within Groups	1017.381	125	8.139		
	Total	1028.016	128			
E-mail	Between Groups	26.710	3	8.903	0.858	0.465
	Within Groups	1432.508	138	10.380		
	Total	1459.218	141			
Radio	Between Groups	9.833	3	3.278	0.456	0.713
	Within Groups	933.988	130	7.185		
	Total	943.821	133			
Social networks	Between Groups	.924	3	0.308	0.072	0.975
	Within Groups	635.544	148	4.294		
	Total	636.467	151			
Direct mail	Between Groups	51.425	3	17.142	3.987	0.009
	Within Groups	550.294	128	4.299		
	Total	601.720	131			
Television	Between Groups	12.128	3	4.043	0.415	0.742
	Within Groups	1343.308	138	9.734		
	Total	1355.437	141			

Source: Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

Authors were also interested to investigate if there were any differences in preference for various information channels among men and women. Overall, while women tend to prefer social networks, followed by radio and television, men are more reserved with regards to social networks as an information channel. While for men social networks still hold the highest mean indicator, their second most popular choice of communication according to mean indicators is e-mail, followed by television, as reflected in Table 8.

Table 8. Main statistical indicators for preferences of receipt of information across various information channels by gender

Gender		Printed Media	E-mail	Radio	Social networks	Direct mail	Television
Woman	Mean	4.22	5.14	6.66	8.41	2.13	6.65
	N	113	126	119	136	115	126
	Std. Deviation	2.899	3.249	2.641	1.930	2.054	3.078
	Median	4	5	7	9	1	8
	Std. Error of Mean	0.273	0.289	0.242	0.166	0.192	0.274
	Range	9	9	9	9	9	9
Man	Mean	3.65	6.41	5.13	7.25	2.53	5.24
	N	17	17	16	16	17	17
	Std. Deviation	2.805	3.022	2.553	2.887	2.322	3.093
	Median	2	7	5	8	1	5
	Std. Error of Mean	0.680	0.733	0.638	0.722	0.563	0.750
	Range	7	9	8	9	7	8

Source: Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

With regards to e-mail communication, 41% of men compared to 33% of women identified a score of 8 and above. The proportion of the lowest scores from 1 to 3 was also lower for men (only 24% compared to 37% for women). The differences among men and women with regards to their preference for communication via radio was also interesting – 45% of women provided scores of 8 and above compared to 19% of males. A larger proportion of men also provided low scores of 1 to 3 for this information channel – 31% compared to only 13% of women. Social networks, while holding the most preferred position for both genders, were still more preferred by women – 79% of women provided scores of 8 and above compared to 63% of men. While for both genders television is the third most popular choice of information channel, 51% of females provided scores of 8 and above, compared to only 35% of males, independent samples t-test confirmed statistically significant differences in preferences for such information channels as social networks and radio between men and women.



Table 9. Results of the independent samples t-test on evaluations of different information channels by respondent's gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means					
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.
Printed media	Equal variances assumed	0.038	0.846	0.764	128	0.446	0.574	0.751
	Equal variances not assumed			0.783	21.478	0.442	0.574	0.733
E-mail	Equal variances assumed	0.527	0.469	-1.523	141	0.130	-1.269	0.833
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.610	21.313	0.122	-1.269	0.788
Radio	Equal variances assumed	0.192	0.662	2.185	133	0.031	1.530	0.701
	Equal variances not assumed			2.242	19.575	0.037	1.530	0.683
Social net- works	Equal variances assumed	4.457	0.036	2.148	150	0.033	1.162	0.541
	Equal variances not assumed			1.569	16.614	0.135	1.162	0.740
Direct mail	Equal variances assumed	0.856	0.357	-0.735	130	0.464	-0.399	0.543
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.671	19.880	0.510	-0.399	0.595
Television	Equal variances assumed	0,008	0.931	1.779	141	0.077	1.415	0.796
	Equal variances not assumed			1.772	20.516	0.091	1.415	0.799

Source: Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

It was investigated if there were any differences in preference for various information channels depending on the consumers' place of residence, reflected in Table 10.

Table 10. Main statistical indicators for preferences of receipt of information across various information channels by consumers' place of residence

Place of Residence		Printed media	E-mail	Radio	Social networks	Direct mail	Television
Riga	Mean	3.79	5.51	6.32	8.46	2.11	6.27
	N	72	77	74	83	73	79
	Std. Deviation	2.653	3.251	2.639	2.014	2.052	3.201
	Std. Error of Mean	0.313	0.370	0.307	0.221	0.240	0.360
	Range	9	9	9	9	8	9
Municipalities surrounding Riga	Mean	4.45	4.80	6.00	8.50	2.26	6.36
	N	22	25	22	24	23	22
	Std. Deviation	3.004	2.915	2.760	1.383	1.738	3.259
	Std. Error of Mean	0.640	0.583	0.588	0.282	0.362	0.695
	Range	9	9	9	4	6	9
Kurzeme region	Mean	5.00	6.33	7.30	8.15	2.82	6.55
	N	10	12	10	13	11	11
	Std. Deviation	3.162	2.934	2.111	2.478	2.994	3.236
	Std. Error of Mean	1.000	0.847	0.667	0.687	0.903	0.976
	Range	9	9	6	9	9	9
Vidzeme region	Mean	4.39	4.89	6.61	7.50	2.31	7.15
	N	18	19	18	20	16	20
	Std. Deviation	3.381	3.665	2.973	2.724	2.522	2.519
	Std. Error of Mean	0.797	0.841	0.701	0.609	0.631	0.563
	Range	9	9	9	9	8	9
Zemgale region	Mean	4.80	5.00	7.17	8.62	2.00	7.15
	N	10	11	12	13	10	13
	Std. Deviation	2.898	3.406	2.725	1.387	2.211	2.968
	Std. Error of Mean	0.917	1.027	0.787	0.385	0.699	0.823
	Range	7	9	9	4	7	9

Source: Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

Overall, printed media was rated by consumers with the average score (arithmetic mean) of 5 or below in all regions. E-mail as an information channel was most preferred in Kurzeme region, based on mean indicators. 42% of consumers provided scores of 8 or above for e-mail communication in this region, while only 28% of consumers – in municipalities surrounding Riga. Radio as an information channel is also most preferred by consumers in Kurzeme. Scores of 8 or above were provided by 60% of consumers from this region, followed by 50% of consumers from Vidzeme and 41% of consumers from Riga. Social networks as an information channel were most preferred by consumers from Kurzeme (85% of scores 8 and above), followed by consumers from Riga (82% of scores 8 and above) and consumers from Zemgale (77% of scores 8 and above). Direct mail as an information channel was rated on average below 3 by consumers in all regions. Communication over television, compared with other regions, was slightly more preferred by consumers in Kurzeme – 64% provided scores of 8 and above, followed by 54% of scores of 8 and above in Kurzeme and 50% of scores of 8 and above in Riga and Vidzeme. However, the Authors found that the differences in preferences of receipt of information across various information channels are not statistically significant by consumers' place of residence, as reflected in Table 11.

Table 11. ANOVA results on investigation of differences in respondent evaluations on information channels by place of residence

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Printed media	Between Groups	23.762	4	5.941	0.719	0.580
	Within Groups	1049.207	127	8.261		
	Total	1072.970	131			
E-mail	Between Groups	26.297	4	6.574	0.626	0.645
	Within Groups	1459.703	139	10.501		
	Total	1486.000	143			
Radio	Between Groups	19.475	4	4.869	0.678	0.608
	Within Groups	940.261	131	7.178		
	Total	959.735	135			
Social networks	Between Groups	17.288	4	4.322	1.041	0.388
	Within Groups	614.372	148	4.151		
	Total	631.660	152			
Direct mail	Between Groups	5.473	4	1.368	0.293	0.882
	Within Groups	598.632	128	4.677		
	Total	604.105	132			
Television	Between Groups	18.770	4	4.693	0.485	0.746
	Within Groups	1353.478	140	9.668		
	Total	1372.248	144			

Source: Authors' construction based on questionnaire developed by Kristīne Casno and survey conducted in 2019, evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – would not like to receive; 10 – would like to receive, n = 329

Overall, consumers prefer to receive information about social enterprises and their offerings over social networks the most, followed by television and radio. There exist statistically significant differences in preferences among age groups for various information channels except for direct mail. There is also find statistically significant differences in preferences by gender for such information channels as social networks and radio. However, consumers do not statistically significantly differ in their preferences for information channels depending on their place of residence.

## Conclusions

Latvian social enterprise consumers prefer to receive information about social enterprises and their goods and services via social networks the most, followed by television and radio. The same holds true for potential consumers of social enterprise products and services and customers, who have made purchases more often than once a month. However, customers who made purchases more often than once a month also regard e-mail communication highly, confirmed by a statistically significant correlational relationship. This suggests that e-mail communication may have potential to increase Latvian social enterprise sales.

There are statistically significant differences in preference for various information channels across several consumer age groups, except for direct mail.

E-mail communication is most appreciated by consumers of age groups 16–25 and 46–55, radio is most preferred by consumers of age groups 16–25 and 26–35. Social networks are most preferred by consumers of age group 46–55, followed by age group of 36–45, 16–25 and 26–35. Direct mail overall is the least preferred information channel in all age groups, however, as consumer age increases the preference for direct mail tends to increase on average, which is confirmed by a statistically significant correlational relationship. Television is most favored by consumers of age group 46–55 and 26–35.

Printed media received scores below average and is generally most preferred by the younger consumers of age 16–25, followed by age group of 46–55. While both men and women prefer to receive information via

social networks the most, the second and third most preferred options for women are radio and television, but for men – e-mail and television. With regards such information channels as social networks and radio, there are statistically significant differences in preferences of information channel use between genders for consumption of goods and services offered by social enterprises.

Social networks, while being the most preferred choice of communication medium for both men and women, received statistically significantly higher scores from women. With regards radio, women also expressed statistically significantly more positive attitude than men. Men expressed a more pronounced dislike for this information channel providing a greater proportion of low scores (1–3) than women.

Women also indicated higher scores for television, however, men showed a higher preference for e-mail communication. Authors also investigated potential differences in consumer preferences for various information channels depending on their place of residence. E-mail communication, based on comparison of arithmetic means, was most preferred by consumers in Kurzeme, followed by consumers in Riga and municipalities surrounding Riga.

Radio, based on comparison of arithmetic means, was most preferred by consumers in Kurzeme, followed by consumers in Zemgale and Vidzeme. Social networks, based on comparison of arithmetic means, were most preferred by consumers in Zemgale, followed by consumers in municipalities surrounding Riga and consumers in Riga. Direct mail was considered as less important information channel – received lowest evaluations with arithmetic mean scores below 3 (in 1–10 point scale) from consumers in all regions.

Television was most preferred information channel by consumers in Vidzeme and Zemgale, followed by consumers in Kurzeme for consumption of goods and services offered by social enterprises.

Printed media was most preferred by consumers in Kurzeme, followed by consumers in Zemgale and consumers in municipalities surrounding Riga. Although there were no statistically significant differences identified in preference for information channels depending on customers' place of residence, taking them into account may still have a positive effect on communication efficiency of Latvian social enterprises

Given the position of social networks as the most preferred information channel, it is of utmost importance for social enterprise marketing specialists to invest time and resources for quality relationship building with existing and potential customers via social networks, taking into account that social networks are more preferred by women.

It is advised for social enterprise marketing specialists to take into account the differences in preference for various information channels depending on consumer age, gender and place of residence.

E-mail communication may have potential to increase sales, especially for social enterprises from Kurzeme region with a high proportion of male customers which should be taken into account by marketing specialists.

Direct mail is the least preferred means of communication among consumers, the preference for direct mail increases with consumer age, which should be taken into account by social enterprises with consumers of older age groups.

Social networks and e-mail communication are relatively low budget options that social enterprises can and should use, the high scores consumers indicated for such traditional information channels as radio and television cannot be ignored.

The synergy effect of integrated marketing communications, support is needed from the Ministry of Welfare in the form of additional funding for radio and TV programmes and possibly advertising campaigns that would help generate greater publicity and public awareness about social enterprises and their role in promoting social inclusion, sustainable regional development and other important social and economic aspects.

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## SVARBŪS INFORMACINIAI KANALAI: SOCIALINĒS ĪMONĒS KLIENTŪ ATVEJO LATVIJOJE ANALIZĒ

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### Santrauka

Socialinis verslumas vis populārēja, nes daudžēja žmoniū, kurie norētū prisidētū prie socialiniū ģmoniū veiklos, yra pasirengē tapti socialiniū ģmoniū klientais ir taip dalyvauti, siekdami mažinti skurdā šalyje bei remti verslumo plētrā.

Norint, kad socialiniū ģmoniū rinkodaros komunikacija būtū veiksminga, reikia ne tik atrasti veiksmingiausius informacijos kanalus, bet ir suprasti, kokiais prioritetiniiais informaciniais kanalais klientai naudojami, iš kuriū kanalū norētū gauti informacijos.

Tyrimu siekta ištirti Latvijos socialiniū ģmoniū klientū informaciniū kanalū pasirinkimą. Tyrimo metodai: moksliniū publikacijū analizē, ankstesniū tyrimū rezultatū analizē. Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidē, kad nuolatiniai socialiniū ģmoniū klientai renkasi tokius informacijos kanalus kaip socialiniai tinklai, tada televizija ir radijas. Tas pats pasakytina ir apie potencialius socialiniū ģmoniū produktū bei paslaugū vartotojus ir klientus, kurie pirko dažniau nei kartā per mėnesį. Klientai, kurie pirko dažniau nei kartā per mėnesį, taip pat labai vertina bendravimą el. paštu, tai patvirtina statistiškai reikšmingas ryšys. Taigi bendravimas el. paštu gali didinti Latvijos socialiniū ģmoniū pardavimus. Ryšį el. paštu labiausiai vertina 16–25 ir 46–55 metų vartotojai, radiją paprastai renkasi 16–25 ir 26–35 metų vartotojai. Socialinius tinklus labiausiai mėgsta 46–55 metų amžiaus vartotojai, mažiau – 36–45, 16–25 ir 26–35 metų grupēs. Tiesioginis paštas apskritai yra mažiausiai pageidaujamas informacijos kanalas visose amžiaus grupēs, tačiau, atsižvelgiant į tai, kad vyresni vartotojai vis tiek naudojami paštu, kaip informacijos kanalo jo visiškai atsisakyti negalima, tai patvirtina statistiškai reikšmingas koreliacinis ryšys. Televiziją labiausiai mėgsta 46–55 ir 26–35 metų amžiaus vartotojai. Socialiniai tinklai ir bendravimas el. paštu yra mažo biudžeto priemonēs, kuriomis gali ir turētū naudotis socialinēs ģmonēs, tiesa, nereikētū ignoruoti ir aukšto lygio vartotojų, nurodytū tokiems tradiciniams informacijos kanalams kaip radijas ir televizija.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *socialinė ģmonė, informacijos kanalai, sprendimų priėmimas, socialinis verslumas, apklausa.*

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