

Saving and credit

Results of a qualitative study on consumer behaviour

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- 1. Study design and random sampling
- 2. Summary of the results
- 3. Results in detail
 - 1) Saving in general
 - 2) Saving in detail
 - 3) Saving: Challenges and wishes
 - 4) Loans in general
 - 5) History
 - 6) Loans in detail
 - 7) Process of borrowing
 - 8) Credit: Challenges and wishes
 - 9) Comparison of saving and credit

Study design and sampling



Study design

| Methods | 12 individual interviews of 45 minutes each |
|------------------------|---|
| Торіс | Saving and credit |
| Target group | Private customers using instalment loans Regular financing (have currently at least one instalment loan and more experience with credit in the past) A minimum of 6 respondents with at least one car financing |
| Location of study | Munich and Berlin |
| Length of field period | 19/02/2013 and 20/02/2013 |
| Institute | GfK Marktforschung |
| Further information | Validation of the results by means of a quantitative study of $n = 1,767$ participants. |



Random sampling



Summary of the main results





Saving

"Saving" has many facets. Overall, saving is seen by most respondents as positive. Not everyone however can or wants to save.

The savings products used are extremely diverse. At the same time, the use of different products for individual saving correlates to a great extent with the level of knowledge and risk-taking of each individual.

Altogether, the end customer gets a clear idea of what should be done with the money saved. Here, both short- and long-term (usually higher-value) goals are referred to. The attitude towards the current saving is shaped as far back as the parental home. If an example of discipline in saving is set, this behaviour is passed on to the next generation.

Financial constraints argue first and foremost against saving. But a lack consciousness for saving and a lack of "self-discipline" in putting money aside on a monthly basis are also cited as reasons for this.

It is important for all respondents that - if they save - it actually pays them to do so (in the form of interest rates).



Saving - a market overview

In a parallel quantitative study on savings and loans (n = 1,767 participants) representative of Germany, it was found that 62% of Germans save.

This shows that the respondents have widely differing financial conditions, but also widely differing attitudes. About 32% currently lack the financial resources to save. 11% immediately spend the money saved and are not able to put away an appreciable sum. 37% on the other hand have saved so much money that they could afford larger purchases.



F4. Please state to what extent you agree with each the following statements. Base: n = 1,755 without n/s.



Credit

The forms of credit used are varied and essentially reflect the living environment of the respondents. Loans are generally considered to be a type of security product – if goods need to be replaced, nothing stands in the way of borrowing money.

Here, loans are used judiciously. All respondents know the exact amount of their monthly payments and have experience in dealing with loans. A enduring value or the viability of the loan are conditions for borrowing. Travel would therefore in principle not be financed through credit by the majority of respondents. Even in regard to smaller sums of money, many respondents are more skeptical about financing. Nevertheless, objects of "lesser" value - for example, electronic devices – are indeed financed through credit. What is regarded as a large or small amount of money depends heavily on the financial background - above all the income – of the individual.

Past loans dominate one's present view. Whereas the first loan is seen as something special, the perception of credit has moved to its current status as a rather "everyday product."

Generally, there are no concerns upon the final arrangement of credit. In the back of their minds, the respondents always have a fear of not being able to pay back the loan because their financial situation could change - for example, due to the loss of a job. What is striking is that global credit facility is not perceived as real credit above credit cards but also above overdraft facility.



Loans provide end customers financial freedom and open up new possibilities - not only for current consumption, but also for one's own personal goals.



Credit - a market overview

More than one out of three consumers firmly includes the repayment of loans in his monthly budget. At the same time, 22% could not make any large purchases without the possibility of borrowing.



F4. Please state to what extent you agree with each the following statements. Base: n = 1,755 without n/s.



Credit use and saving

A comparison of credit users and non-users shows that:

The proportion of credit users among savers and non-savers is almost same, being 35% among savers and 34% among non-savers.



Saving in general



General attitude towards saving



Overall, saving is seen as positive – but it must also pay for end customers. In addition to the current lack of monetary incentives in the financial markets, primarily one's own financial situation is cited as a barrier, but a lack of discipline is also cited as such.



Reasons/goals for saving



All in all, there is clear idea about what to do with the money saved. Here, both short- and long-term objectives are cited.

Bankenfachverband

Reasons for not saving



There are first and foremost financial reasons that stand in the way of saving. But also a lack of consciousness for saving and a lack of "personal discipline" to put away money every month are cited as reasons.

Historical factors influencing saving behaviour



Saving behaviour of the parents / upbringing

Current behaviour

"Actually, I come from a family where you learn to save. We're not a family that squanders money."

"I don't have much of a picture as far as my parents go, because I wasn't really too interested." "My allowance was intended purely for my pleasure."

"I also tried to get by with my allowance, so that there was something left over at the end of the month. If, for example, I got money for a class trip, then I tried to bring some part of it home."



"A big saver I am not. But it's still important to me

"I think I'm not the type that doesn't watch his

money. But I could save even more."

"A big saver I am not. But it's still important to me to always have a nest egg."



"It was always part of me, trying to handle money well. I can't say that my account was ever in the red."



The attitude towards current saving is influenced by the attitude in the parental home. If an example of discipline has been set, it rubs off on one's own behaviour.



Saving in detail







The savings products used by the respondents are extremely diverse. Each use of such products correlates to a strong degree with the level of knowledge and the willingness to take risks.

Unplanned use of saved money





The majority of the respondents have been in a situation where money earmarked for one thing is spent other than as planned.

Saving: Challenges and whishes





Saving for future purchases



It is important to the respondents that saving is actually worth it. The possibility of fulfilling one's own wishes in the future also plays an important role.



Saving on a regular basis

To save on a regular basis, it is necessary to...



Discipline is considered by the study participants to be essential for saving on a regular basis.



Purchasing a motor vehicle

In order to be able to purchase a car, one should...



For a major purchase like a car, some participants see the availability of money that can readily be used (at least as a down payment) as a condition. But also the right approach (consultation, the right bank, the real car dealership) is also considered important.

Factors influencing saving







Loans in general



General attitudes towards loans



When does a loan make sense?





Loans are generally considered to be a type of security product – if goods need to be replaced, nothing stands in the way of borrowing money. However: Loans are not used naively - a lasting value and the profitability of the loan are additional conditions.

Regular instalments





The respondents clearly see a major advantage in regular instalments. They are fixed and help one handle money in a more disciplined way.



What would you have financed?



The willingness to use credit is particularly strong when it comes to higher value products. However: People hardly ever say no to loans.

What would you not have financed?



Value of the product



If something is to be financed, there should be also a "value" behind it. For this reason, most would not as a rule get financing for a trip. The respondents tend to be sceptical about low-priced products as well. Nevertheless, electronic devices, for example, get financed. What is regarded as a large or small amount of money depends greatly on the financial background of the individual.



Financial behaviour of parents and upbringing



Financial behaviour of parents

[Raised by grandmother]

"For God's sake. Just don't run into debt." "Then I secretly took money from the piggy bank and bought, for example, something to wear."

"I come from a household where money was always just enough to get by, but was never limitless. Which is to say, I always learned that you can only spend what you have."

"I also tried to get by with my allowance, so that there was something left over at the end of the month. If, for example, I got money for a class trip, then I tried to bring some part of it home."



uldn't hoard tons of money. You only live

Current behaviour

"I wouldn't hoard tons of money. You only live once, after all. But loans for everything... better not."



"I'm disciplined, I like saving." "... I've never lived on credit. ... I didn't like having to take out the loans I got."



"It was always part of me, trying to handle money well. I can't say that my account was ever in the red."

The attitude towards this topic area is strongly characterised by the respondent's own history – as already was the case with saving.

The first loan



"My first loan was when I was studying, because I unfortunately didn't get any assistance from the government. It was DM 10,000. That was in 1987, to fund my studies."

"... 1989 at eighteen, it was overdraft. I think I asked about it and got it right away."

My first Ioan

"It was for a car. I must admit, it was a second-hand dealer. I was right in the middle of my studies, but he got me a loan. But I was just 21 and wanted to have a car."

"... was overdraft credit. I was at a very early age. Then I overdrew my account..."

"... from my grandfather, when I was about four. For sweets. My grandfather was an accountant, he duly made a note of everything."

Usually only little to no information was obtained for the first loans. Past loans shape one's view. Whoever has had good experience with loans in the past continues to use them -e.g., vehicle financing.



Communication about loans



None of the respondents would talk to just anyone about loans; nevertheless, it is not a taboo subject for most of them. However, they do indeed compare notes with friends and acquaintances about their own financial behaviour or loans.

Social acceptance of loans





Higher-quality products and real estate are often seen as acceptable in connection with the use of credit – with small loans and products of low duration, the valuations are rather reserved.



Loans in detail


Loans and the credit card

"The credit card is a form of payment. I don't use it to get a line of credit from one month up to the withdrawal. When I'm in America, I can't catch even fill the gas tank without a credit card. For me, it's a means of payment, just as the debit card also is."

"Back then, just after my studies, a credit card always kept my head above water. After all, for 30 days, I didn't have to pay a thing. I find it a very practical thing."

Credit card

"I pay for almost everything by credit card alone, if I can. It's a kind of credit, an overpriced one."

> "It entices me to spend more than I'd like to."

"From the feeling of it, it's not credit. But in fact, it is. But until the amount is withdrawn, you might have forgotten about it. From the feeling of it, it's actually not credit, but a means of payment."

The credit card is considered by most to be a common means of payment. The overdraft facility and the delayed payment option are indeed used, but are not perceived as credit.



Use of the overdraft facility

"In recent years, I've lived in part from my overdraft and was happy made it to the last week of the month with what was left of my overdraft. Something like that can be a life-saver sometimes." "But of course. It wasn't all that long ago. I'd bought a computer, which was pretty clearly over what I had. As a result, it then went into overdraft, which I was happy with. The following month, it was automatically restored to balance."

"You do make use of the amount. But you do have the possibility. Usually, you exhaust it. It may indeed be back again on the first, but actually, it's already in the red again."

Overdraft

"I've also been in overdraft before, at certain times, for a short period of time."

"Well, an overdraft is always very expensive. It pays more to take out a loan at OTTO. It's a lot cheaper on me."

> "Only as an exception to the rule, out of necessity, but not as a credit facility."

"Sure, you can use your overdraft for a short time, if you have a large transfer to make, until the money's there and where I get it from somewhere else. But I don't see a reasonable way of borrowing money in overdraft." "There are always phases. I was also already out and at the moment I'm in again."

"I make use of my overdraft every month. Once in overdraft, almost always in overdraft. But I've already lowered it, thank God. 1500 Euros. It was much higher. But I'm glad I was able to reduce it. I want to reduce it even further."

I don't see it as a life product, but rather, really a lot has to happen before you need it." More for an emergency."

People justify overdraft in exceptional situations - it is used in many and varied ways!



Process of borrowing

Decision-making for a loan





In addition to the terms and conditions of the loan, good service and a consistent, reliable contact person are important to the respondents - especially where large sums of credit are concerned.

Borrowing information



Perception of the information



The focus is clearly on the bank, the dealer, but also private contacts when it comes to finding information. The Internet is regarded as an information channel, but not as a final decision aid.

Fears / concerns upon the granting of the loan





Generally, there are no major concerns at the conclusion of loan contracts. But at the back of their minds, the respondents are always afraid of not being able to pay back the loan because their financial situation could change - for example, because of losing their job.

Disturbing aspects of borrowing





What many respondents find particularly disturbing and unpleasant in the process of borrowing is the detailed examination, as well as the dependence on an unknown person or institution.

Credit: challenges and wishes





Possibility of taking out a loan



Loans provide the consumer flexibility and open up new possibilities - not only for current consumption, but also for his own personal goals.



Requirements of loans

When one takes out a loan, one wants...



In addition to favourable lending terms, the respondents wish above all a fair contact person, honesty, openness and clarity on the part of the supplier.



Importance of individual aspects

When selecting a loan the most important thing to me is that...



An important criterion when selecting credit is a reliable and trusted lender in addition to a low or reasonable interest rate!

Comparison of saving and credit



Save first or get financing right away?





With regard to the question of whether one should first save or get financing, the respondents are relatively open – the decision usually depends on the situation.

Common ground loans and saving





Only for a few respondents did loans and saving not belong together. For most, they go hand in hand.

Appendix: The target group in detail





Participants Berlin

| Name | Gender | Age | Profession | Children | Civil status | Instalment loan for (currently & over the last 3 years) |
|-----------|--------|-----|--|----------|----------------|---|
| Sebastian | m | 52 | Civil servant (teacher) | Yes | In partnership | New or used car Real estate Kitchen |
| Sabine | f | 53 | Company employee | Yes | Single | Furniture/kitchen Consumer electronics/ PC |
| Jeannett | f | 39 | Company employee | No | Single | New or used carOverdraft credit |
| Detlev | m | 41 | Retail (H&M) | No | Single | Overdraft credit Other |
| Uwe | m | 39 | Company employee insurance industry | Yes | In partnership | New or used car Furniture/kitchen |
| Timm | m | 38 | Self-employed / entertainment industry | No | In partnership | New or used car Furniture/kitchen |



Participants Munich

| Name | Gender | Age | Profession | Children | Civil status | Instalment loan for (currently & over the last 3 years) |
|---------|--------|-----|------------------------------------|----------|----------------|---|
| Robert | m | 49 | IT manager / insurance | Yes | In partnership | New or used carFurniture/kitchenReal estate |
| Beate | f | 46 | Travel agent | Yes | Single | Consumer electronics/ PC |
| Tanja | f | 34 | Shop assistant / bakery | Yes | In partnership | Furniture/kitchenNew or used car |
| Roberto | m | 27 | Cook | No | In partnership | New or used car Consumer electronics/ PC Real estate |
| Sylvie | f | 31 | Civil servant (teacher) | No | Single | New or used carFurniture/kitchen |
| Stefan | m | 35 | Motorbike & bicycle mechanic | Yes | Single | New or used car Consumer electronics/ PC Overdraft credit |





Your contacts:

Stephan Moll Head of Market and PR Bankenfachverband e. V.

Tel. +49 30 2462596 14 stephan.moll@bfach.de Markus Schmidt Research Manager GfK SE

Tel. +49 911 395 3160 markus.schmidt@gfk.com