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**CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND FACTORS OF MAKING PURCHASING DECISIONS
COMPORTAMIENTO DEL CONSUMIDOR Y FACTORES DE TOMA DECISIONES DE COMPRA**

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Abstract

The orientation of products towards the needs and desires of the consumer is the basic principle of marketing in the modern era with the frequent changes and reclassifications in the field of the market. The knowledge of the consumer's behavior by the enterprises is an essential condition for their success. In this article the practices of marketing that help in understanding the behavior and decisions that those who create the final demand for products and services make are highlighted. The main target of article is the investigation of situation consumer related to way of market and criteria that choose the consumers in order to buy a product. While the research methods that used in this work are content analysis, export conclusions for the use products from consumers, understanding results of the actions marketing and method of analysis and synthesis. Moreover, with this article becomes a great effort so the consumer understand how should operate and how can be best and more informed. It is very important tone in today's economic situation requires consumers to revise the consumer behaviors, as a result the leaders of marketing develop the suitable and effective strategies.

Keywords

Consumer – Decisions – Behavior – Culture – Subculture – Factors – Life cycle

Resumen

La orientación de los productos hacia las necesidades y los deseos del consumidor es el principio básico del marketing en la era moderna con los frecuentes cambios y reclasificaciones en el campo del mercado. El conocimiento del comportamiento del consumidor por parte de las empresas es una condición esencial para su éxito. En este artículo se destacan las prácticas de marketing que ayudan a comprender el comportamiento y las decisiones que toman quienes crean la demanda final de productos y servicios. El objetivo principal del artículo es la investigación de la situación del consumidor relacionada con la forma de mercado y los criterios que eligen los consumidores para comprar un producto. Mientras los métodos de investigación que se utilizan en este trabajo son analizar el contenido, extraer conclusiones para el uso de productos por los consumidores, comprender los resultados de las acciones de marketing y el método de análisis y síntesis.

Además, con este artículo se realiza un gran esfuerzo para que el consumidor entienda cómo debe operar y cómo puede estar mejor y más informado. Es muy importante en la situación económica de hoy que se revisen los comportamientos de los consumidores, y como resultado que los líderes de mercado desarrollen las estrategias adecuadas y efectivas.

Palabras Claves

Consumidor – Decisiones – Comportamiento – Cultura – Subcultura – Factores – Ciclo vital

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Introduction

The commercial success a product does not depend only on the product itself, but also on the mood of the consumers themselves. For this reason, marketing is more interested now for the consumer himself and especially for his buying behavior.¹ It is very important for the marketers to know how the consumer behaves, as in this way they will be able to influence him and satisfy his needs more effectively, within the frame of the ideology of marketing concept or in the frame of the even more recent ideology of social marketing concept.

The significance of research and analysis of consumer behavior has increased further in the last years with the globalization of markets and rapid growth and penetration of the internet. Those recent developments have led to a lot of important changes among which the change in the way of making decisions by the consumers is included.² A lot of enterprises, based on the research of modern consumer behavior, develop suitable strategies of e-marketing.

The study of consumer behavior includes both the understanding of emotions, thoughts, and actions of consumers and how all these are connected with the human activity. The way he receives their buying decisions and the factors that influence the way of making these decisions is the object of the study of consumer behavior by marketing.

Study of consumer behavior

Nowadays, the consumer behavior at a scientific level has taken on a global character and consists the basis for the procedure of promotion of sales. Researches showed that in order for the consumption to take place several ways of promotion are needed having as a driving force the characteristics of the product. A product is now purchased and consumed in different ways by different consumer teams.³

The study of consumer behavior includes the understanding of emotions, thoughts, and actions and the way all of them are connected with the human activity. Consumers from different places or different cultures of the world live in different ways. Nevertheless, consumers from different backgrounds often have common ground and characteristics of consumption.

The consumer behavior is a multi-level science that researches the procedure of consumer decision making. The consumer does not focus only on the acquirement of the product but also on actions after the market such as use, evaluation, rejection etc. The well-known orientation of social marketing which claims that the role of marketing should not end after buying and using the product but continue covering all the consumer actions after the market contributes to that.

The study of consumer behavior researches how people make decisions to spend the available resources (money, time, effort) on objects to consumption. It includes the study of the following questions:

¹ G. Baltas, Consumer behavior (Athens: Editions Rosili, 2003).

² G. Siomkos, Consumer behavior (Athens: Editions Livani, 2016).

³ P. Papastathopoulou, Consumer behavior (Athens: Editions Rosili, 2003).

- What do consumers buy?
- Why do they buy it?
- When do they buy it?
- Where do they buy it from?
- How often do they buy it?

The study of consumer behavior constitutes one of the most basic research fields of the science of marketing. Marketing exists every time that there is an interest in the transaction between a client and an enterprise. The meaning of transaction leads to the meaning of the **market**, that includes all the possible clients who share the same need or desire and are available to do a transaction in order to satisfy it.⁴

The **needs** form the essence of the meaning of marketing. Marketing does not create needs, but seeks to a) connect a product with one or more existing needs b) give prominence in a considered level to needs that exist in a latent subconscious form c) form the desire of consumers to buy a product to satisfy their needs. According to the above mentioned, an enterprise increases its competitiveness and profits adapting its products to the needs and requirements of the consumer public.

The effectiveness of strategies that the marketing applies is tested during the time that the consumer decides if they will buy or reject the product. The consumer should be able to select among alternative solutions in order to decide. There are a lot of consumers decisions making theories. The variety of models that results is due to the assumptions regarding the nature of people that the researchers make.⁵

With regard to the information processing for **making decisions** both quality and quantity of information on which the consumer is based to choose a product, influence their final decision. Although nobody can refuse the right of the consumer to know as much as possible about the products that circulate in the market, experiments have shown that increased information maybe leads the consumer to wrong decisions i.e. that does not maximize their benefit from the consumption of a product that they themselves chose.

The informational environment in which the consumers are influences the way in which they process the available information but also the way itself influences the effectiveness of their decisions. The strategies that consumers follow about the collection of information differ accordingly to demographic characteristics.⁶ Apart from the demographic characteristics, it was proved that the available time influences the information search. The sex of the consumer constitutes one more factor that influences the information process and by extension the final purchasing decision.

Regarding the procedure of **making decisions** the consumer follows different stages that start with the recognition of the need and finish with the evaluation of the purchase in order to make all the relative decisions. The stages that the consumers follow are five:

⁴ P. Kotler and K. L. Keller, Marketing management (Estados Unidos: Prentice Hall, 2011).

⁵ S. Dimitriadis & A. Tzortzaki, Marketing (Athens: Editions Rosili, 2010).

⁶ Kim M. Laroche and T. Matski, "Which decision heuristics are used in consideration set formation", Journal of consumer marketing, Vol: 17 num 6 (2003).

- 1) Recognition of need: This need can come to the surface as a result of both “internal” and marketing stimulations. This combination of stimulations mobilizes the procedure of making decisions that aims at satisfying any need.
- 2) Information Search: This stage has the form of active or passive information search, which will help the consumer in the decision of the purchase.
- 3) Evaluation of alternative brands: This stage is based on the marking of alternative brands according to specific criteria of selection or characteristics.
- 4) Choose and purchase: The consumer chooses the most advantageous one among the alternative solutions.
- 5) Post-purchase evaluation: At this stage, the consumer tries to eliminate the possible doubts about the choice that they made. Here, the significance of marketing is special because it influences to a high degree the possibility for the consumer to buy again a product of the same company.

The five stages of the decision making procedure are useful for the executives of marketing and help them to develop and apply the suitable marketing strategy so that they influence and direct the prospective buyer in a final and positive decision.⁷

Mood of the consumer

The mood is a mild, diffused and general emotional situation which a person perceives subjectively. The disposition of a specific person changes and is influenced by different stimulations that they accept from the environment (including of course the surrounding marketing). Relative researchers showed that the disposition of the consumer plays an important role in the formation of behaviors about various products as well as in the selection of brands.⁸

The mood of consumers is often influenced by factors that are not controlled by marketing, whereas it can be importantly influenced by seemingly insignificant characteristics of the behavior of the marketer (for example, a smile by the seller).

In regard to the role of **mood in consumer behavior**, the researchers have determined two basic ways of mood influence in consumer behavior. Firstly, the mood can play the role of some indication that the consumer uses like a close at hand and rapid solution in the procedure of different topics evaluation and making decisions when the systematic process of information is not feasible. Secondly, the mood can influence the recall of information, which will be used for the evaluation of a topic or the making of a decision.

Bakamitsos and Siomkos⁹ in a research of 2000 refers to the first way in which the mood of the consumer influences the process of information as “object” and to the second one as “tool”, while Jacoby and Kelley¹⁰ used the above-mentioned discrimination in order to separate the conscious and the unconscious recall of information. They define as “object” the conscious recall of information that has been saved in memory in the past. The

⁷ P. Kotler, Marketing Management (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994).

⁸ A. Isen, Toward understanding the role of affect in cognition in P. S. Wyer and T. K. Srull, handbook of social cognition Erlbaum. Hillsdale. 1984.

⁹ G. Bakamitsos and Siomkos, “Context effects in marketing practice: The case of mood”, Journal of consumer behavior, Vol: 3 num 4 (2004).

¹⁰ L. Jacoby and C. Kelley, “Unconscious influences of memory of mood for a prior event”, personality and social psychology bulletin, Vol: 13 num 3 (1987).

function of mood as an indication during the evaluation of an object/ product is a function of the need of consumers to pronounce on correct evaluations of products. Specifically, when the consumers are in the need to pronounce on absolutely correct evaluations and suspect a possible influence of their mood on their judgment. This evaluation correction is a complicated procedure.

Contrary to the cases in which our mood is used as an “object” and it influences directly the wording of an opinion, they define as “tool” the unconscious recall of information that can be used for the fulfillment of a target and is influenced indirectly. The indirect influence of mood on the recall of information can happen in two ways.

The first way is related to the mood in which the consumer is and the recall of information in their memory. Specifically, the mood in which they are during the evaluation of an object can influence the kind of information that the consumer recalls and uses for the finishing of evaluation.

The second way in which the positive mood can influence the evaluation of information is related to the increased ability of people in good mood to distinguish relations between objects that seem unconnected. Consequently, people in good mood are more creative, learn more easily and can recall information easier.

Therefore, the good mood allows the consumers to understand relations between objects that can seem irrelevant on the surface

Innovation and consumer behavior

The development and availability of innovative products is an intense phenomenon in the modern economy which originates from the rapid technological development and the changing needs of the consumer.

The diffusion of innovation is the procedure of the acceptance of an innovation by the consumers. Both the speed of the diffusion of innovation and its final diffusion in the market depends apart from the other factors mainly on the characteristics of the consumers that constitute the market. Specific characteristics of consumers that contribute to the adaptation of innovations are:

- A higher income
- A higher education
- A younger age
- A higher social motivation
- A will to take a risk
- Participating in civic life

The diffusion of an innovation needs an intense support, along with the suitable marketing policy practice in the fields of delivery, communication, and pricing. The effort of marketing has long-term influences on the diffusion of innovation which depends on various factors. Those factors include, among others, the properties of innovation, the effort of marketing, the external network economies and the social signals.¹¹

¹¹ E. Rogers, Diffusion of innovations (New York: Free press, 2003).

The time that is needed for the adaptation of an innovation differs among the consumers. Some consumers are more willing than others to adopt an innovative product in a shorter period of time since its import in the market. The time that is needed from the appearance of an innovation until its adaptation is a variable that is assigned to a population in an unequal way.

The meaning of culture in consumer behavior

The definitions of culture vary between anthropologists and researchers. The closer (and the most representative) one to marketing and consumer behavior is the following: “Culture is the total of convictions, values, customs, traditions, and rules which help to direct the behavior of consumers as members of a specific society.”

Culture plays an important role in the configuration of consumer behavior. It influences when, how and by what means the consumers satisfy their needs and desires according to the rules of the society which are accepted by its members. The culture is a) forceful, b) learnable, c) its values are commonly accepted by the members of the society and d) it satisfies the needs of the members of the society. All the components of culture influence almost all the cognitive procedures and behavior forms of people inside it. Consequently, it influences and forms plans and role-models.

In researches that analyze the **influence of culture on consumer behavior in a society** special importance is given to the following stages of procedure:

- Determination of relevant motivations for the purchase of the product in a given culture.
- Determination of the consumer behavior characteristics. What kind of buying and consumer customs apply?
- Determination of the general values of the culture which are relevant to the product.
- Determination of the characteristics of the types of making decisions by the consumers in a specific culture.
- Determination of suitable marketing organizations about the product in the mind of the consumer.

A special cultural team that there is inside a wider and more composite society is an **individual culture** in which the members often buy the same or similar products. So, in an individual culture, it is possible to distinguish individual cultures that are defined among others based on the age (young or elderly people), the geographical area (North, South, Islands), the religion (Orthodox Christians, Catholic Christians, Muslims), the political ideology (liberals, socialists, conservatives, radicals).¹²

The **marketing director** should study in what degree the individual cultures of a society constitute individual market-targets and require a different approach of marketing, in order to follow the suitable marketing strategy to permeate more efficiently so that they influence each one among those market-targets.

¹² Goulding, C. “Heritage, nostalgia, and the grey consumer”, Journal of marketing practice: applied marketing science, num 5 (1999).

Apart from the cultural factors one more group of factors that influence the consumer behavior are the **demographic factors** which are included in wider personal factors. Those factors are the following.

The **sex** of the consumer (man or woman) can influence the consumer behavior, due to specific biological characteristics or needs of every sex. In this meaning, sex constitutes one of the basic variables that a marketing executive can initially use to segment the market according to the category of the product.

Moreover, the stereotypes of the roles between men and women that exist in a society undoubtedly influence their buying behavior. In essence, those that differentiate the buying behavior of men and women are the different characteristics of every sex, both the biological and the psychological ones.

Apart from the sex characteristics, the economic and social conditions form the buying behavior of men and women. Another of the most basic demographic factors of influence of the consumer behavior is the consumers' age but also their marital status. Undoubtedly, the products that the consumer prefers during his childhood differ importantly from those that they desire when growing up or entering in puberty or during adulthood when they have or do not have children.

A research of Kim et al¹³ relevant to the topic of the age presents a lot of interest data. More especially, it has been found that the biological age can be even ten years younger compared to the chronological age. Often, the advertisers use different types of ages to attract the interest of the public.

A meaning that is connected with the age and seems to influence the consumer behavior of a person is the generation to which the person belongs. A generation is defined as the time span (in years) that passes from the year of birth of parents until the year of birth of their children.

According to the theories of generations, the common experiences that people live in the various stages of their age in a social, political and economic conditions level lead to the creation of market departments with special values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Apart from the age, the consumer choices of a person are influenced by the phase of the **life cycle** of the family. The meaning of the individual phases of the life cycle of the family to the marketing exists in the fact that they can constitute a criterion of segmentation of the market that is directly connected with the age of the consumer but it indirectly incorporates information about the consumer behavior and allocation of the available income in different periods of their life. Apart from the personal consumer decisions, the members of a family are invited to make collectively a series of buying decisions for products that do not interest only themselves but are intended for being used by all members of the family. In this case, the buying decision can be unanimous or compromising. The factors that influence the degree of disagreement in family buying decisions are a) the degree of investment of the member in the family, b) the degree of mixing with the product and its use, c) the degree of responsibility.

¹³ G. Kim; H. Lee and M. A. Tomiuk, "Adolescents Perceptions of Family Communication Patterns and Some Aspects of Their Consumer Socialization". *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol: 26 num 10 (2009).

Another factor that influences the consumer behavior and is connected with demography is the **educational level** of consumers. Of course, in a lot of cases, the educational level is connected to the profession and the economic situation. It should be emphasized that the demographic factors either individual or combined cannot be usually used themselves for an absolutely effective segmentation of the market. Marketing should research the degree to which the consumers' behavior is influenced by them using them as variables for a first segmentation of the market. A very widespread marketing practice is to be researched whether other factors mainly psychographic (for example way of life) can further segment the departments of the market that have been formed on the basis of the demographic criteria.¹⁴

Conclusion

Based on the above it can be concluded that the consumption apart from one act via which the consumers satisfy their needs and solve consumer problems often has a deeper meaning for the consumer. It is noted that due to the nature of the behavior of the consumer marketing uses important tools and means for the development of its strategies. It is important for the marketing to know how the consumer behaves so that it will be in a position to influence and satisfy their needs effectively, always within the framework of the ideology of marketing. The essential condition of marketing is studying and knowing how the consumer behavior helps personally each consumer so that it is understood how they will behave regarding the purchase of the product.

In this article pumped a lot of data from the bibliography and became effort examine the important topics that related to behavior consumer. However, a specially gravity was given in factors that related to disposal of consumer, importance of culture, cycle life of family. Then from the short effort analysis of consumer behavior and exports factors that influenced could tell that from him nature is a topic inexhaustible because referred in human "logic" being which is constatly evolving as a result evolve their habits too.

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¹⁴ G. Baltas and P. Papastathopoulou, Consumer behavior (Arhens: Editions Rosili, 2003).

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