

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the analyses of the theoretical foundations of the study of consumer behavior: reference was made to the economic, marketing and psychological approaches. The essence of consumer behavior, psychological features and mechanisms are discussed. The psychological causality of consumer preference and choice is revealed, particularly, the study of positions, motives and needs is of significant importance. In the psychological analysis of the consumer behavior the influence of both psychological and socio-cultural factors is highly important.

Today consumers are quite well-informed and they know well what they want. Therefore, marketers should be very careful and prudent when developing a marketing strategy and presenting their brand to the consumers. It can be said that the creation of the best brand depends on to what extent the marketer is familiar with the psychology of consumers. The marketing tricks, such as advertisements, posters, billboards, celebrity endorsements, display, which are used by marketers to present their new products to a wide range of consumers, to attract consumers and buyers, are almost the same and they are used by numerous organizations, manufacturers and marketers. However, successful are those, who can be more informed about the consumers' psychology and the psychological mechanisms of consumer choice.

Keywords: *consumer, consumer behavior, choice, perception, needs, motive, position.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the world economy is experiencing unprecedented development, which

leads to an intensification of competition between organizations and enterprises. Hence, it can be noticed that those organizations and entrepreneurs succeed in the market, in whose activities the emphasis is put on satisfying the consumer's personality, the latter's wishes and needs.

Currently consumer-producer relationships are constructed in such a way that the consumer is in the center of the producer's interests, he/she is considered to be the producer's main goal and the object of targeted impact. That's why it is important for the producer to study the consumer from a psychological, economic, sociological and cultural point of view.

The modern marketing concept is built on creating an effective interaction with the consumer. Accordingly, the importance of studying consumer behavior both around the world and in the Republic of Armenia is becoming more significant and more actual, especially with the mass transfer of consumers to the virtual environment, where access to a variety of services is growing.

Consumer behavior as an object of study is currently considered to be interdisciplinary, combining economic, marketing, sociological and psychological knowledge. From an economic point of view, consumption is the use of a product in the process of meeting the needs. In economics consumption is identified with the acquisition of goods or services and it is made possible by considering the receipt of income or the expenditure of savings. Some researchers in the field of psychology (O.S. Deineka, V.I. Verkhovyna, O.S. Posipanova) distinguishes one type of behavior - economic behavior, by which they understand the behavior caused by economic impulses and the activity of the economic entity. In the works of the mentioned authors economic behavior is considered as an object of study of economic psychology, a modern branch of psychological science, which is aimed at the study of preferences, choices, decision-making and the factors influencing them. O.S. Deineka views economic behavior from three aspects of its manifestation (components): cognitive (cognitive component), affective (emotional component), and connotative (practical-dynamic component) (Pokul V., 2018).

It can be concluded that consumer behavior is considered to be a private form of economic behavior, and the main subjects of economic behavior are the companies and the buyers.

American marketer and economist F. Kotler describes consumers' behavior as "the process of choosing, acquiring, using and eliminating products, services, ideas or impressions by individual buyers, groups and organizations to satisfy their own needs

and desires." The model of consumer behavior was developed by F. Kotler. F. Kotler's model shows that consumer behavior is not defined by the primary formula of behavior proposed by behaviorism - "S - R" ("Signal" - "Reaction"). Marketing or other stimuli (signals) do not directly lead to the selection process, let alone the purchase decision. Between these two blocks is the central one: the person, consumer behavior as an object of interdisciplinary research, the consumer with his/her psychological features, cultural, social, personal characteristics. (Pokul V.,2018)

In the case of theoretical analysis of consumer behavior, the following structure can be conditionally distinguished: components of consumer behavior, directions of study and factors of influence. In consumer behavior, whether it is purchasing or utilizing, three components are considered which are typical of economic and social behaviors. The emotional component of consumer behavior includes emotions, feelings and emotional evaluations of products and services. The cognitive component is made up of opinions, judgments, comparisons and rational evaluations of products and services. The motivational- volitional component is the desire and striving for buying or using the product/service.

The term "consumer behavior" is considered to be a scientific abstraction (conventionality), that is, in fact there is simply human behavior, it becomes "consumer", when only those actions are separated from the whole complex of human behavior which relate to the consumer. The studies of consumer behavior began to be carried out back in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and it was during this period when the scientific discipline "Consumer Behavior" was formed. All the scientific research of the second half of the last century, in one way or another, referred to the analysis of the consumer's mental processes. Motives and needs that determine consumer behavior, as well as different types of consumer behavior are studied. (Blackwell R.,2014)

The concepts of S. Freud and A. Maslow were the basis for the study of the motives and needs of consumer choice. Freudianism had a significant impact on the practical studies of consumer behavior: the potential role of unconscious motives was important in the process of consumers' choice and purchase.

Needs and satisfaction of needs have a decisive influence on the formation of consumer's preference. What is a need? According to the dictionary definition, the need is the necessity of any phenomenon and value necessary for normal life and mental activity. (Nalchajyan A.,1984)

The need is an internal condition of the subject's activity, but it does not determine his/her direction. In order to understand the direction of the activity, it is necessary to

analyze the materialized need, the motive. The consumer always strives to meet his/her needs. The main means of satisfying the needs are the motives that encourage the person to take action. The motives are strong and weak, permanent and temporary, positive and negative. In the case of aesthetic motives, special attention is paid to the appearance of the product, the color, the attractiveness of its shape, the bright packaging, the harmonious combination with other objects, etc. The motives of reputation are expressed only in a certain social group (in particular, the referent): For some products the person can spend a huge amount of money only because it can emphasize his/her status, social status, raise the status in the society. As a rule, such motives emerge with the growth of material well-being. To express the motives of the tradition, as a rule, the color nuances specific to the national traditions, symbols (pomegranate, apricot) and the flag are used, thus arousing positive emotions towards the given type of the product. The motives for the achievement are very close to the motives of the reputation, in which the manufacturer of the given product tries to involve a reputable person in the process. (Yukhnevich I.,2003)

From the above-mentioned we can state that the motives of the activity carry the real substantive description of the needs and condition the style of consumer behavior (conservatism, reputation, business, etc.).

The business-process of market segmentation identifies groups of consumers who are similar to each other in one way or another, and then develops marketing strategies that correspond to the needs of one or more such groups. According to the segmentation, one of the most common means of distributing consumers is related to such demographic aspects as:

- *age*. People belonging to the same age group, as a rule, share a number of values and a common cultural experience, which they maintain throughout all their life.

- *gender factor*. Numerous products have a gender feature, and consumers often associate them with this or that gender. Marketers, as a rule, create a product that is attractive to this or that sex, based on the psychological characteristics of each sex.

- *geography*. The place of residence has an influence on the preferences in many product categories, ranging from entertainment to favorite cars, furnishing style or leisure. For example, studies have shown that drivers in France value their BMW cars for reliability and comfort, while drivers in Austria are more interested in BMW brand status.

Social class, income, racial affiliation and marital status are also highly significant, but despite the fact that these aspects of segmentation are very important, consumers may have the same demographic characteristics, but anyway they can be completely different people. Therefore, the consumer's personality, his/her individual characteristics

have a great influence on the product selection process. (Michael R.,2005)

Consumers first of all perceive those signals that correspond to their needs, interests and motivational sphere. The given aspect of perception is especially important for the development of a complex marketing strategy: the perception of price, product, promotion and marketing ways is directly connected with the selective nature of perception based on social experience gained in a particular cultural context.

Perception depends on the following factors:

- Characteristics of the main stimuli: brightness, contrast, color, size, volume, repeatability, etc.
- Influence of various stimuli
- emotional state
- needs, motives, stereotypes, interests, expectations and the attitude of the individual.

The person's expectations and preferences play a big role in the process of signal perception and response. It is possible to present the same object differently and react to it in different ways. It is assumed that individuals give their preference to the products that best suit their personality, their ideas about the person, "the self-image". For that reason, the main task of organizations and advertising agencies is to present the brand as an active component of the subject's vital activity. Thus, we can say that the world outlook, schemes of behavioral reactions, activity style, socio-psychological characteristics have a significant impact on the choice of the product. The stability of personal traits allows us to predetermine consumer behavior, as far as the decision to buy a product of a certain brand depends on the perception and peculiarities of the perception of the given product by the consumer. This is the reason why special attention is paid to this psychological mechanism when developing a strategy for determining the position and visibility of the product in the market.

In modern analyses of the psychology of consumer behavior consumption is considered as a social and cultural process (G. Taradi, G. Blumer). The model of consumer behavior is based on social perceptions of an acceptable lifestyle, which are reflected at the level of the desired "self-image". With the development of society, the object of consumption of goods turns into a symbol, by the consumption of which a person not so much satisfies his basic needs, but tries to show others his actual resources and existence with the help of the goods he has acquired. (A vivid example of this is the great desire to buy world-renowned expensive smartphones, especially among young people, regardless of their financial means). For both the consumer and its evaluator,

consumption becomes a way to introduce oneself to others and to communicate with them. "You are what you eat, what you wear, what you drive, where and how you rest, you are what you consume." Thus, consumption becomes the consumption of symbols (trademarks, brands) with the help of which social communication is carried out. (Statt, 1997)

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the results of the theoretical analysis, we can say that in the psychological analysis of consumer behavior, both needs and motives, as well as positions, social perceptions, value system, cultural and symbolic aspects of consumption are important. Accordingly, the study of the influence of socio-cultural factors, socio-psychological characteristics, personal qualities of an individual, cognitive-emotional processes on consumer behavior allows us to conclude that the emphasis of the development of organized sales should be placed on the compliance of the product features and individual psychological characteristics of consumers.

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