

THE IMPLICATIONS OF BUYING HABITS AND USAGE WITHIN MARKETING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE BUYER'S BEHAVIOR

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Abstract:

This paper aims to answer some questions such as "Why do people buy?" and "What are the criteria which influence choices in the market?" by reversing the traditional point of view and focusing upon the psychological dynamics, hidden motivations and "the dark side" of the consumption behavior. The consumption psychology is one of the least studied and applied phenomena within any organization mostly because of the traditional perspective in which the consumer is believed to be a rational subject endowed with reasoning.

Key words: motivation, consumption, consumer, marketing research

JEL classification: M31

Introduction

The life of any individual or organization is dotted with a multitude of buying moments.

More often the persons' behavior within the field of consumption in terms of the products he buys can be difficult to explain. For example, if we pigeonholed the acquisition into "conscious and unconscious", "rational and irrational", "useful and useless", most of the consumer's buying decisions could be considered as irrational.

Analyzing the scientific evidence in terms of the reasons the acquisition was based on we notice that in most of them we cannot find even a thing from the theories of the traditional economy. The concept of the product's rational usage vanishes and the acquisition becomes a psychological phenomenon taking into account some other criteria such as "obtaining the mood of psychological comfort", a mechanism for "solving the negative emotional moods".(Trevisani, pp.11-13).

For example:

"Sometimes, when I'm not in the mood, I get out and suddenly I start to feel better. Then I think I would like to have a little fun and when I see something interesting, I say, well I will buy it. In this way, I travel to another world. In my mind there is a magic trip which takes me out completely of the previous mood and makes me feel good. I start to feel that it feeds me in a way I really need."(quote taken from Dittmar, H&Drurry, J. (2000). Self-image-is it the bag? A qualitative comparison between "ordinary" and "excessive" consumers. Journal of Economic Psychology, 21.109-142).

The psychological factors represent the endogenous variable which explain the consumer's behavior by taking into account their multiple incidents upon the individual.

Most of them cannot be obviously noticed and therefore they are usually assumed. (Blyte, 1998, p.34). Among the various variables based on the psychological nature with a big impact upon the consumer's behavior we can mention the following ones: perception, motivation, learning and attitude.

The aims of the research

The habitual buying occurs in two different situations - either the consumer is satisfied with the product he bought, or the consumer is resigned with the product and thinks that the product is the best option ever and buys it every time.

There are six factors which define the buying and usage habits: what do people buy? how much do the people buy? in what way do people buy? where do people buy? when do people buy? who really buys?. The marketing research aims to give an answer to all the six questions related to the buying and usage of the product. (Datculescu, pp.26-27)

The frequency of consumption is important because the companies want people to use their products as much as possible. Not less important than the former it is the quantity of consumption as the companies want the volume of consumption to increase as much as possible. One of the methods used to increase the consumption is to suggest that the product can be used in other ways or occasions the consumer is accustomed to.

Also, measuring the lapse between two occasions of consumption is important especially when some products are rarely used.

The marketing experts are interested to impede the possibility that a product is prone to be useful just on one occasion because this fact would considerably limit its potential in the market. For example, the black vehicles are usually used for funerals, the computer is usually used by professionals and so on.

From any point of view, the issue of acquisition needs to face the motivation of action, more precisely the factors which urge a person to act.

The theory of motivation takes into account **the tension** as a basic component of motivation.

Tension → **Impulse** → **Reason** → **Action**

If we succeed to understand what exactly causes the tension inside an individual, it means that we really identified certain potential leverages of acquisition.

How to measure the usage and buying habits

Most often, this measure is realized by asking the consumer some **direct behavioral questions** such as -

« How often are you used to drinking wine this period of the season? »

« Which of the brands enlisted here do you buy most frequently? »

Another measure frequently used is the **Scale of the Constant Sum**, in which a typical example of statement is: "Please enlist here the last ten non-alcoholic drinks you have bought mentioning the brands, package and the number of bottles so that they should amount to ten".

In order to ask behavioral questions as well as possible you are supposed to have experience and talent.

Another method is the **Technique of Buying Interception**, which consists of noticing and interviewing the buyers inside the shops. The buyer is observed without his notice and after he bought the product he is asked questions about it. In this way the researcher is allowed to have an immediate access to the reasons and opinions which urge a buyer to buy a certain product.

In the last years some modern systems of electronic recording of behavior such as the bar code on the package of the products which can be clearly read by the

scanning system. There are some companies of marketing research which buy these recordings from a wide range of shops and then they compare the buying of different products in the market.

Analyzing the buying reasons

While fully analyzing the buying reasons, Trevisani (Trevisani, p.16) starts from the three levels of the buying motivation:

1. Conscious:

- rational
- based on mental calculation (math calculation of opportunity, comparisons and rational assessment),
- obvious methods of assessment-each weighty variable is taken into account,
- the individual knows exactly what he does and why he does so,
- there is no hidden aspect.

2. Subconscious

- it is subject to the cultural tensions and laws which were learnt during the growth and interactions with the familiar or educative inputs from the nearby social zone or society in general,
- acts at a deeper level,
- the persons are not always aware of the cultural forces acting upon them,
- hidden aspects acting at a less rational level;

3. Unconscious

- within the consumption behavior, the selection of the products is influenced at the unconscious level,
- it displays completely hidden aspects to the person
- behavioral features usually met at animals ,
- it involves sexual drives, behavior such as run-attack, possession, fear.

The level of becoming aware of your own tensions decreases from the conscious and subconscious to unconscious .

Conscious	+
Subconscious	↕
Unconscious	-

At present, not all of the functions of the human brain are fully known. The cortex is divided into 2 parts : paleo-cortex, which is the oldest part and neo-cortex, which is the newly developed part.

Due to the fact that paleo-cortex is the active cerebral zone, it influences our way of thinking, behavior and even the acquisition we make. Its influence urges us to make choices which sometimes seem illogical, but they become fully understandable within the theory of tensions.

Conclusions:

Buying is not an isolated action, but a process; more precisely it is a sequence of activities performed before and after an acquisition which has an important impact upon the buying decisions. The marketing researcher is interested in all the buying stages as he wants to make the customers aware of their demands and desires before they buy a certain product.

In order to get great results during the direct interaction with the customer, it is highly recommended to make use of training, planning, designing some valuable

products and communication strategies and a better understanding of the source launching the purchasing impulse. It is very important to understand why people buy and which conscious or unconscious reasons of their acquisition are.

Nowadays, in order to be successful, you need to keep up with reality, and the only reality that really matters is that which already exists in the consumer's mind. But to create something which does not already exist in the consumer's mind is increasingly difficult if not impossible indeed.

The key problem of marketing is to place the consumer in the middle of their own activity. Peter Lynch emphasized that "they who do understand the individual consumer's behaviour get bigger profits in the markets in comparison with the professional wholesalers who rely on financial data"

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