

Lifestyle - Behavior Correlation Customer Purchase

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Abstract: *The customer's buying behaviour (whether he is a consumer or not) is complex, referring to a number of issues, such as: reasons for purchase (materialized in needs, desires, destinations in consumption, price level, forms distribution, brand, group influences, etc.); buyers' preferences (determined by the emotional compatibility with the product, brand, form of marketing, etc.); purchase intentions (representing probabilistic estimates of future purchasing behaviour - depending on the availability of information on purchase intentions and required revenue); buying skills, which can be: temporal (seasonal, monthly, etc.) spatial (data of average distance to stores, for example) and modal (depending on the preferred sales forms of buyers, brand loyalty or presentation, etc.). All these aspects give content to the client's lifestyle. Buying behaviour (which is not necessarily confused with consumption) reflects people's behaviour both in the case of buying and in the case of not buying a good (or postponing the satisfaction of a need) - this does not automatically include the consumer. Having a very complex content, the human-consumer lifestyle must be seen as such, respectively as: work style, recreation style, knowledge or cognitive style, problem solving style, communication style, relationship style or interaction with other individuals, consumption style, ecological style etc.*

Keywords: *consumer, buyer, customer, behavioural style, lifestyle*

Introduction

There is practically no market-oriented economic activity that does not involve careful investigation of consumer acts.

In general, consumers are very different subjects from each other, acting (not only rationally, but also emotionally) differently at different times (even under the impulse of the same stimulus), being able to be convinced (easier or harder) by certain people. or institutions (including competitors) to change their options. At the same time, there is a wide range of similarities of behaviour between them, which need to be placed in the foreground following the studies that target them.

In general, behaviour means: "The set of objective manifestations of humans and animals through which the psychic life is externalized", respectively "Totality of the body's reactions to the environment".

Being a side of people's economic behaviour, **consumer behaviour** refers to people's behaviour as customers in relation to the valuation, purchase and consumption of tangible and intangible goods from which they expect to meet their needs.

Ph. Kotler is of the opinion *that this concept expresses the actions of consumers (in sight, observable) undertaken in order to maximize satisfaction by purchasing and consuming material goods and services, as well as the decision-making process that precedes and determines these acts resorted to defining behaviour in a cyber-manner. In his opinion, the client's behaviour is an output, respectively a result of some inputs (offer, price, choice, distribution methods, education, environment, etc.), which take place on certain channels (promotional actions, knowledge, personal observation, mass media etc.), entries that have been processed (processed) by the human being in the so-called black box of the system).*

One of the most comprehensive definitions given to behaviour is the following: "consumer behaviour can be defined as a multidimensional concept par excellence, as a specific result of a system of

dynamic relationships between the processes of perception, information, attitude, motivation and effective manifestation, which characterizes the integration of the individual or the group in the space opened by all the consumer goods and services existing in the society at a given moment, through individual or group decision-making acts regarding them". [1, 5-6]

Summarizing, it can be concluded that this concept *is a multidimensional one, designating (in an overall approach) all decision-making acts made at individual or group level, directly related to the acquisition and use of goods, to meet current and future needs, including and the decision-making processes that precede and determine these acts*. It therefore reflects several aspects: what to buy (targeted goods), why to buy (need to be covered), where to buy, how often to buy, post-purchase reactions etc.

1. The Characteristics of Consumer Behaviour

Therefore, the *defining characteristics* of consumer behaviour could be expressed as follows:

- behaviour reflects (through preferences, dislikes, beliefs, attitudes and values, position in society, frequented entourage etc.) the development of human individuality *both naturally* and through *education*;
- it expresses *the individual's reaction* to various endogenous and exogenous variables;
- involves *successive or concomitant actions* for the selection of choice and decision alternatives;
- if it is studied in relation to other processes that take place at the microeconomic level, it has a relatively *autonomous character* - which makes possible its modelling;
- the elements and processes that give it the content being well assembled, the customers' behaviour manifests itself as a unitary whole;
- consumer behaviour *determines interactions*, and therefore it is important to know what consumers think (perception), what they feel (impression), what they want, what they do (conduct), what are the things and places that influence them etc.;
- in the interaction between its elements, this unitary whole has a systemic character - the behaviour manifesting itself as *a complex system of manifestations, attitudes, motivations, decisions*;
- its components (systemically reunited) have *a synergistic effect*, enhancing each other - which makes the overall result of the interactions to be greater than the sum of the results of its processes viewed separately;
- as society, groups and individuals evolve, consumer behaviour is *dynamic* - reason for generalizations about it should be limited to certain periods of time, certain products and certain groups of consumers;
- in its dynamics, the sphere of consumer behaviour widens, mainly due to the development and diversification of material production and services;
- there is cooperation (emotional and social) both between consumers, on the one hand, and between consumers and producers, on the other hand, behaviour leads to interactions that are generally *based on the law of interest*.

Nowadays, knowing consumer behaviour has become more than vital for any entrepreneur, for any marketing decision. Marketing optics requires managers to judge everything through the prism of the consumer, with all his needs and aspirations.

At the level of marketing, the approach to behaviour is made through the prism of the 4 P, looking for answers to a whole series of questions regarding:

- *Product*: What products do customers need? What products are offered to them? What are their positive and (especially) negative views on them? How is the set of suggestions and complaints regarding the products offered to them presented? How could their performance be improved to meet customer demands? and so on
- *Prices*: What is the quality / price ratio of the products offered by the company in the context of the other offers on the market? What price levels are appreciated by consumers as too high or

too low, respectively? How are buyers' dissatisfaction with the prices charged? How sensitive are customers to promotional prices? and so on

- *Placement*: On which distribution channels does the offer reach the buyers? What are the types of sales that are very popular, but also much ignored by them? How do customers express their dissatisfaction with the behaviour of sellers? Where do people buy the products they need? How big are the distances from the customers' home to the company's product points and how do they influence the sales volume? and so on
- *Promotion*: What types of promotion are customers sensitive to? What are buyers' reactions to aggressive or false advertising? What are the most popular forms of sales promotion? But the ignored ones? and so on

The first marketing studies on people's buying and consuming behaviour date back to the early 1960s, and their knowledge became the number one concern of marketers. This is because, in the conditions of considerable diversification of the offer, consumers (with increasing level of education and income level) have not only more and more choices, but also more and more possibilities to satisfy the needs (more and more diverse, more sophisticated and harder to know) - aspects that producers and traders must take into account.

The information resulting from these studies gives the possibility to substantiate all marketing strategies and decisions, starting with those on products and their positioning on the market and continuing with those on market segmentation, pricing, choice of promotion and distribution etc.

Becoming aware of the manifestation of these trends, organizations involved in research, production, promotion and distribution must:

- to relearn to understand the consumer and to have a continuous dialogue with him - based on new types of listening and communication;
- to personalize their services in such a way as to be able to provide the customer not only individualized product variants, but also flexible delivery solutions, adaptable prices and payment methods, communication options on specific channels etc ;
- to help the client in gaining a full (positive) experience in the relationship with the brand - thus managing to build strong communities around the brand and strengthen its prestige;
- to strengthen its relations with the digital client, without neglecting the direct contacts (face to face) with him;
- make every effort to turn the customer into a business partner - finding etc.

Being a very complex field of interdisciplinary study, any attempt to approach human behaviour in the face of acts of purchase must be undertaken starting from the analysis of the factors that exert its influence on it. One such factor is human lifestyle.

Lifestyles are models according to which people choose to live, being imposed by a complex of economic, cultural and social factors that contribute to the development of the qualities of individuals. During his life, man goes through several lifestyles, which are formed or adopted in the stages known to everyone: childhood, adolescence, maturity, old age. They include some major components of his life (such as: work, recreation, feeding, problem solving etc.), which define a set of general typologies of behaviour. These behaviours can be grouped into a number of intertwined structures that outline the main components of the lifestyle, respectively:

- *work style* (the ways in which the individual studies, creates and produces - according to his occupations);
- *recreation style* (the way individuals spend their free time: resting, playing sports, painting, shopping etc.);
- *style of knowledge* or *cognitive* (ways in which people think, study, make decisions etc.);
- *the style of solution* (the way people resolve their events - conflicts, sufferings, desires etc.);
- *communication style* (the way in which individuals allow others to find out what they want, what they feel, what they think, to which are added the ways in which they respond to the ideas and feelings of others);

- *the style of relationship or interaction* (the ways in which people approach each other - trying to impose themselves as leaders, to be subordinated to them or to collaborate, on an equal footing with them);
- *consumption style* (the way individuals choose, buy and use the goods they need);
- *ecological style* (the way people get involved in creating and maintaining a healthy environment - through the decisions they make about cars, food, waste recycling etc.)

2. Types of Consumers

Behavioural studies have highlighted several types of consumers depending on their lifestyles.

Thus, the RISC Research Agency in Paris, for example (starting from the classification of the population in 12 European countries, as well as in the USA, Canada and Japan - based on demographic, social, cultural characteristics, etc.), identified six styles of different life:

- *traditionalists* (people who value education, culture, traditions, the economic and social situation of their own country);
- *individuals connected to the home* (deeply attached to their origins and childhood, less concerned with material security, eager to establish close and warm relationships with others, opponents of violence in society etc.);
- *rationalists* (individuals who can more easily cope with unforeseen situations, ready to take risks and engage in new initiatives, always looking for self-expression, confident in science and technology, for which the financial reward is not very important when raises the issue of personal achievement);
- *pleasure lovers* (people for whom sensual and emotional experiences are at the forefront, who prefer to be placed in hierarchically unstructured groups, in which there are no leaders or formal decision-making processes);
- *fighters* (individuals eager to organize their own lives, having attitudes and values related to social dynamics);
- *trend creators* (people who prefer spontaneity in exchange for formal procedures, who do not show the need to demonstrate their skills), who are more individualistic than fighters and like lovers of pleasures vis-à-vis non-hierarchical social structures.

Starting from the idea that the lifestyle is related to the way a person lives, spends his time and spends his money, respectively the way people carry out their daily activity according to their attitude towards life, we have come to the classification known under the abbreviated name of VALS (Values and Life Styles) made by Stanford Research Institute USA [2]. This includes:

- *relatives* (traditionalist, sentimental, stable, patriotic people, satisfied with their life);
- *filmmakers* - materialistic, prosperous, self-confident, middle-aged individuals);
- *emulators* - young adults, ambitious, eager to make their way in life;
- *self-lovers* - somewhat narcissistic, impulsive, experimental types;
- *those aware of their social role - mature people* who have succeeded in life, always ready to get involved, to defend a cause;
- *survivors* - elderly people, usually poor, pessimistic about the future.

The same *VALS typology*, depending on the way of spending time and the way of spending money, also identified the following groups [3, 232-234]:

- *customers dominated by principles*, who buy their goods in accordance with their own precepts and beliefs about life;
- *status-oriented customers*, who base their purchases on the principles of the groups they belong to;
- *action-oriented clients*, who are (obviously) very active, eager for variety, prone to risks).

By deepening the groups according to the level of resources they have (including income, education, health etc.), each group was divided into two more types:

- *customers with abundant resources*;
- *customers with minimal resources*.

There are other ways to classify clients according to the lifestyle they adopt. For example, using a synthetic criterion (the way they spend their time and spend their money) and two analytical criteria (self-orientation and resources), eight consumer groups were identified:

- *self-oriented customers*, which include:
 - a) *customers in principle* - who buy various products under the influence of their perception of the world;
 - b) *customers who use the status as a benchmark* - who make purchases based on the actions and opinions of others;
 - c) *active consumers*, who are inspired by the appetite for action, variety and risk-taking.

Taking into account the inclination towards the new (but also the other criteria invoked so far), we arrived at:

- *modernizing clients*, who want and can afford any of the three types of guidelines listed;
- *retained (needy) customers*, who, due to lack of income, cannot afford any of these guidelines (obviously).

The Centre for Advanced Communications in France (based on information on the needs, aspirations and motivations of the French) proposed the following 9 socio-cultural types of lifestyles:

1. road opener;
2. self-centred innovator;
3. socio-centred innovator;
4. efficient consumer;
5. "society's yeast";
6. defender of the established order;
7. partisan of the past - of contestative nuance (regardless);
8. partisan of the past - of moderate nuance;
9. partisan of the past - of extremist nuance (reactionary).

Regarding the population in Romania, some studies have identified 3 categories of lifestyles with 8 segments:

- *past-oriented lifestyle* (with two segments: passive survivors and traditionalists), which corresponds to the low-income elderly generation, characterized by difficulties in adapting to change, inertia and passivity;
- *present-oriented lifestyle* (with four segments: timeless, traditionalist family members and sophisticated family members), specifically people who show moderate optimism, preoccupied (mostly) with the present (and having a sense of anxiety about the future), convinced that The family and God are the ones who support them in everything;
- *future-oriented lifestyle* (comprising three segments: aspirants, imitators and ambitious), related to young, optimistic and adaptable people, for whom change is the main opportunity for social evolution - money, career and success being the main motivating factors in everything what I undertake.

3. Behavioural Styles

Based on the lifestyles of the buyers to which we referred, the literature in the field pays attention to *behavioural styles* derived from them.

Thus, as early as 1920, W. Marston proposed the DISC behavioural style (DISC meaning the abbreviation of the 4 factors on which it is based: Dominance, Influence, Stability and Compliance). This is a two-axis model, whose poles are:

- *perception of the environment* (as friendly or hostile);
- *self-perception* (as being *stronger* or *weaker* than the environment, which results in an *active* or *passive* reaction to it).

He highlights the existence of four types of customers:

- *the dominant (tiger)*, who is a direct, hurried, noisy, dynamic and competitive customer, for whom the most important thing is the end result, being ready at all times to put pressure to get it, often exaggerating with the desire to control others;
- *the influential (monkey)*, who is an enthusiastic, optimistic, sociable (and even friendly) customer, always willing to interact with people, loving the conversation (even more than its subject), always having a smile on his face;
- *the stable (elephant)*, who is a calm, patient, organized, kind, conservative, sensitive and long-term loyal buyer, who does not like conflicts and risks (accepting only verified solutions), a good listener, following established procedures - but and undecided, without initiative, too permissive and tolerant, but afraid of change;
- *the meticulous or conscientious (ant)*, who is an orderly, precise, disciplined, logical and perfectionist customer, emphasizing details and any information given to him before buying the goods - but insensitive to criticism and hard to convince and delegate tasks.

Knowing these types of behaviour, the marketer must know how to present his offer in each case, in this sense the following rules are recommended:

a) in the case of the *dominant*, as he wants to know what the EC can make your product for him:

- Give short, direct answers to the topic!
- Tell him what to do!
- Show him what he wins as soon as possible!
- When presenting a product, give them alternatives to choose from!
- When you want to establish a relationship with him: Be very friendly! Be more distant but determined! Appreciate it!
- On sale, Make him a short offer!
- At the end, make a summary and sell!

b) in the case of the *influencer*, because he wants to know WHO he is dealing with and who he will work with in the future:

- Listen to him carefully!
- Show them that your product is new, possibly revolutionary!
- Tell him who he will work with!
- Show them as soon as possible what others are saying about what you are selling!
- When presenting a product or service, be enthusiastic!
- When you want to establish a relationship, be very friendly! Talk about him!
- Give her the product with a smile!

c) in the case of the *stable*, knowing that he wants to know, first of all, HOW to proceed after the purchase:

- Give him answers calmly and with pauses!
- Tell him how to do it!
- Show him the safety as soon as possible!
- When you present a product, show it its reliability and services!
- When you want to establish a relationship, be patient with him! Be calm and quiet!
- When selling, give them time for a decision!

d) in the case of the *meticulous*, as he needs time to process all the information, having to understand WHY to buy:

- Give him answers with lots of details!
- Tell him why to buy!
- Show them the quality and reliability as soon as possible!
- When presenting the product, use comparative data!
- When you want to establish a relationship, be distant, calm and quiet! Establish a formal relationship!
- To sell, accompany the offer with many details!

Undoubtedly, there are many other aspects to consider related to the consumer's lifestyle.

Conclusions

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