

## **CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

Bass Tatiana  
*University of Bucharest*

### **ABSTRACT**

This article reviews the role played by a producer of goods and services in consumer life. But because the manufacturer can achieve its purpose, to obtain profit and to attract more clients, he needs to know the consumer's needs and preferences. Equally important for the producer is to find solutions for his products and services to be developed in conditions of maximum efficiency and become more aware of why they are buying, find out who, what, from where, when, how and how much to buy and how often. In other words, he must find out why the people respond into a certain way to products and services that are offered to them on the market. This attitude of consumers when buying or consuming goods and services is reflected in consumer behavior. The essential faced by manufacturing firms, for some time, is knowing how consumers will respond to various stimuli that they will use in order to achieve the ultimate goal, a bigger profit.

**Keywords:** behavior, consumer, from where, why, when, how and how much and how often.

JEL Classifications: M 300

Paper type: Research paper

### **Introduction**

The field of consumer behavior has its roots in marketing concepts. Marketing research is not an exact science and, even less, a perfect one. It works with people, with needs, their desires, all in constant change. More accurate, consumer behavior refers to consumer perceptions and decision making 'to buy that product or not'. A market study shows us what people want to buy, to consume or to use. This study did not involve only elements of the economy, but also from sociology and psychology.

Consumer behavior research deals with different attitudes in the buying decision (e.g. attitude to information, choice of place of purchase, brand loyalty, awareness and attitudes, difficult consumer prices, etc.).

Companies have paid and continue to pay great attention to such research. Empirical studies in the early 1980s in the United Kingdom emphasized that research consumer behavior plays an important role in the marketing operations of successful companies. Many authors cite

examples of successful companies which are constantly seeking quality product in terms of buyers. Consumer behavior research tactics included:

- exploring ways of meeting the customer's needs;
- tracking and recording all problems and complaints;
- filling out a questionnaire to all customers who returned goods;
- conducting extensive tests related to new products;
- analysis of claims relating to warranties;
- assesment of goods received by completing a questionnaire.

Most companies have paid attention to consumer behavior research, many ideas about development opportunities and design from customer analysis.

Within certain limits, some research of consumer behavior are made every day, without being necessarily aware of it, to check quality and refusals to see where the products are returned irregularly, see the book of suggestions and complaints, is participating in various mundane meetings where customers and competitors meet, is asked one of his old customers who stopped coming to the company, so why not coming, etc.

National Authority for Consumer Protection (ANPC) protected by Law nr. 363/2007<sup>9</sup> all consumers amending the providers who cheat customers with products and services, which have different price than the ones posted, shows other curative properties, false, other than the real ones, resorting to malpractice, to sell their goods and services.

The term refers to the behavior of consumer behavior that we manifest in consumer research to purchase, use, evaluation and leave the products and services that they expect to satisfy their needs. The study of consumer behavior is the study of how individuals make decisions about spending the available resources (time, money, effort) for consumer goods or services. It includes the study who buy them, what they buy, you buy, where to buy, how often they buy, and how often they use a certain product or service.

The term customer is often used to describe two types of entities of consumption: consumer and organizational staff. Buyer purchasing goods and services for personal use (shaving cream, lipstick), for use in the household (cooking oil), for a family member (a shirt), or a gift for a friend (a book). In all these contexts, the goods are bought to be included in final consumption of individuals who have received specialized in literature, on behalf of end customers.

A second category of consumer, organizational consumer, includes both firms whose main purpose is to obtain profits and organizations, government agencies (local, national) and institutions (schools, churches, hospitals, etc.) who buy products, equipment and services management direction and operation for a particular purpose. The person who buys a product is not always the only user or user of the product in question. Neither consumer is not necessarily the person who makes the purchase decision. Marketers must decide to whom to direct promotional efforts: to the buyers or the users.

---

<sup>9</sup> Law nr. 363/2007 on Consumer Behavior, National Auctorithy for Consumer Protection

**CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS**

Conducting a customer survey can lead to all the information that could not be found in the customer database, library or media specialist. It is undesirable to buyers of your product or service such as: responding to the price that the firm intends to practice or to a particular delivery method, such company that wanted to use it, or to name intends to use a newly established company.

What that really means a research aspect is to study the customer a product?

The first thing to do is to be split was planned buyers of the product categories. It is possible to address a single product category, but if more are concerned, they should be treated separately. There are three categories of persons whose information may be used for the proposed research:

- current customers to find out why not buy the product and other competition;
- former customers to find out why they changed their buying choice and competition;
- potential customers to find out what would persuade them to buy the product.

In addition to dialogue with these three groups of people, information can be found and others who come into direct contact with them, such as retailers, intermediaries, agencies, media specialist, etc. We must not forget that company's team of telephone sales or retail staff, which might say more about why customers buy what they buy.

Ideally, not with standing the very high costs, should talk with everyone who uses the product or service, they have used before or are likely to use it in future. This method is extremely expensive and almost impossible. Therefore, if you can be contacted by telephone for example, only 50 people, then there must be assurance that such persons are the most suitable for research purposes.

If you need to discuss only, a certain number of people (who are part of sample determined in advance) can be determined by two methods, known as the experts: random sampling and sample group.

The first method, for example, consists in extracting a sample of customers throughout the product market. The second method could form a sample of customers who live in the company. Of course, there will be other guests, it is a research aimed at a practical market segment.

It's always good to know what sampling method is used. If research is based on a small random sample, you will need to pay particular attention to its random nature, otherwise the results can be very misleading. It is possible that responses are not at all representative. For example: that the company might be located in an area with more population than the national average; might it be located in a rural area and city consumers have different needs, etc.

If the research is to determine whether it is worthwhile or not to implement a product idea, sending the mail an offer for sale to all customers in the South, for example, thought to be formed if the clients or not viable market. Degree of accuracy must be weighed and then research will determine whether or not it is worthwhile to continue the research.

Regardless of the persons addressed, there are two basic ways to study buyers: mail surveys or questionnaires and interviews (which can be made face to face or by telephone). Larger surveys or questionnaires are expensive, that it should appeal to professionals, but almost

## **HOLISTICA Journal of business and public administration**

**No. 1/2011**

always cheaper to hire specialized personnel to conduct research than being made directly by the firm. However, any method will be used, in most cases be asked questions.

Although it is possible to verify the assumption made in large part, it is best not to assume that something is as it seems, but to be analyzed carefully.

For example, when the company founded Video Arts, producing films for training personnel in commerce, it decided to make two films in a way that staff deal with a customer dialogue. The specialists of the firm knew that there was a corresponding market because they had been in plenty of stores in which the sellers had no idea even how to deal with buyers. However, what they knew was that no trader is spending any money for training vendors in the early 1970s. Fortunately for them, they learned it just in time, causing them to change the firm sets that produced the atmosphere of places like travel agencies, banks, control of airports and ticket receipts of hotels, adequate staff training places for firms good customer relations.

Another example is that of Joe Hyman, legendary entrepreneur in the textile industry, which in 1960 took control of Gainsborough Cornard, a textile factory belonging to East Anglian Corporation. While rebuilding the factory, he received more orders based on a wide range of colors, but just when it was ready to start production, the board of directors of the firm got involved. Getting those colors based on the painting using two baths, no, they said, the sewage system will not survive. In conclusion, it will not be able to use only one bath.

It would have been turned into a disaster. Range depended on the use of color combinations of the two baths, and now their number had halved. In despair, the company notified customers what had happened and, although they were very disappointed, every customer asked for one of the colors of the year, especially one of the other existing colors. As a result, there wasn't lost any order and using a single bathtub significantly decreased production costs. Although you might think that a particular firm's own customers want a particular product, or that opt for an urgent delivery is better to check this, because a negative response that the company could make a fortune.

Default assumptions should be avoided. Suppose that people will ask: "Do you prefer to assemble the product where you need it or make it yourself?". One question seems to be justified and, if they have a preference, they will communicate without doubt. In reality, it is possible that they would prefer to receive the product already assembled. In this case, they would need to do the assembly themselves or wait until someone else will. So customers should be provided with all possible options.

Another error to be avoided is influencing the response in question. For example: "Do you prefer the scent of lavender flavored with apple flavor?". Would be more appropriate question: "What would you like as perfume: the scent of lavender or apple-flavored?". Also, questions used have to be clear, understandable. Respondents must have the chance to easily understand all the questions they are asked. In addition to a plain language, this would mean bringing them together in a logical manner. Question must be explained orally for interviews or in writing if the respondents completed the answers themselves, if this can help.

There must not be any vague or confusing questions. For example, the questions would sound like: "You spend more time shopping?" What they think is "more" might not coincide with business ideas. It is better to ask: "How many hours per week do you spend shopping?". In this case it is better to give some choice (less than one hour per week, 1-3 hours per week, etc.), With appropriate squares to signify that, if they answer the questionnaire themselves.

Otherwise, it will take time grouping responses, where each will give a slightly different response of the other.

So these are the main issues to be considered when formulating the questions to a survey or an interview. In the analysis of results is quite difficult to formulate well-defined guidelines, which depends largely on questions that have been made. If a question has been ambiguous, in which one person said "5" and other "personal manager" will be difficult to compare responses. Therefore, researchers can ensure that they receive all possible useful information, including those arising from questions which refer to other issues raised in the interview.

#### **MARKET RESEARCH. WHO'S THE ROMANIAN CUSTOMER?**

"Romania is an unusual market, with consumers rapidly changeable and low price search." This is a common opinion among the marketing people in our country. In fact, these considerations are largely prejudices caused by ignorance of the consumers and their needs.

Knowledge of the Romanian consumer has over the more than ten years of advertising in Romania several forms, from intuition or the application of international and templates to actual research, which revealed complex results about them. But many of these investigations proved to be less relevant than previously thought, at first because Romanians were not accustomed to speak freely in the polls by research and provide false information or refuse to answer certain questions. To determine Romanian consumer behavior, research was conducted based on data from the TGI study, those obtained from various surveys and the use of a network owned by BBDO - Staff Drive Analysis - designed to analyze the motives that determine the behavior of consumers (what makes them act in a certain way).

Thus, the consumer is viewed from four perspectives: purchasing power and preferences for brands, media consumption habits and needs. When purchasing power has been determined the degree of endowment of household durables and no income. Thus, the degree of equipment is higher, the consumer or a family has more money to spend.

If preferences towards certain brands, we started from the idea that consumer brands and products chosen standard of living shows. Thus, both brands have been analyzed most often used by consumers and the degree of trial and loyalty to each other to determine the frequency of consumption. In the analysis of media consumption habits of the population and attitudes towards the media, there were taken into account media preferences and vehicle exposure favorite categories of programs and the preferred time of day in which consumers are exposed to different means of communication table.

To determine the needs of the consumer, BBDO was used tool (PDA), with which it could better understand the relationship between consumers, brands and motivations relevant to him. Thus, we found 75 basic motivations, explaining, however, any human behavior, of which, however, was excluded at this point irrelevant examples for the Romanian consumers. Based on these four criteria, the population was classified in five groups of consumers. Sophisticated consumers (2% of adult urban population). They are full of success and believes they have succeeded in life and this is reflected in everything we do. I am confident in their own forces, and their success is recognized by others. There are people for whom fast food outlets do not really matter. Here, eat only when they rush and do not have time to go to a restaurant. Eat at the restaurant several times a week, looking for places where people gather to have the same

## HOLISTICA Journal of business and public administration

No. 1/2011

status as them. When you have health problems, people in this group go to private clinics and, if necessary, if more serious problems occur, they go abroad. Life insurance, health and foreign goods are not even considered the norm, many of them having entered the life insurance / health insurance from multiple companies. When you go shopping, choose the most expensive shops, the price having almost no influence on the choice they make.

Some media buyers prefer magazines and sophisticated as they have an active life, are difficult to "reach" of television (but not impossible).

Preferences: Beer: Carlsberg, Heineken, Budweiser, Corona. Chocolate: Milka, Toblerone. Coffee: Lavazza, Douwe Egbert, Tchibo. Vodka: Finlandia, Smirnoff, Absolut. Mineral Water: Perrier, Vittel, White Spring. Detergents: Persil, Omo, Ariel. Television pursued: Discovery, HBO, Prima TV. Favorite Sports: football, billiards, tennis, auto.

**Active Professionals** (15% of adult urban population). Have an active life dedicated to particular career through which hopes to obtain an as high as possible social position. And do everything in their power to achieve its objectives. Active Professionals put great emphasis on their image, they grow through the acquisition of goods and services accordingly.

They often go to fast food, as this is a solution at hand and affordable. From time to time, they go to the restaurant, but mostly for business meetings. In recent years they have discovered the importance of insurance for many of its most valuable asset, which is their own person (they make great and constant family income). When patients go to private clinics, but if their relationship or appointment was "arranged", also look at the state medical system.

To leave is very important to them, making sure not to remain in this time around the house. They find increasingly more pleasure in trips abroad and they make efforts to leave the country at least once a year. On weekends, if they are not at work (being very involved in professional life), they leave town, trying to escape from everyday stress, or go shopping in supermarkets and malls, luxury shops being visited only on certain days.

Active professionals are great readers of magazines, but do not ignore television either, which is one of the favorite ways of spending leisure time.

Preferences: Beer: Carlsberg, Tuborg, Stella Artois, Hopfen Konig. Chocolate: Heidi, Glade. Coffee: Tchibo, Jacobs, Elita. Vodka: Finlandia, Absolut. Mineral water: White Spring, Dorna, Perla Harghita Borsec. Detergents: Ariel, Persil. Television pursued: Discovery, HBO, ProTV. Favorite Sports: football, billiards, chess, basketball, tennis, badminton, auto.

**Sedentary families** (20% of adult urban population). I cherish the values of family and safety. Although related to quality, often make compromises, being influenced by price. Most leisure activities and events in the family, mostly watching TV.

Going to fast food with family entertainment is seen as an exit. Insurance penetration is low among family-sedentary, those who have secured an insurance policy by making it the minimum amount in order to obtain a supplementary pension in old age. When health problems arise, the public is preferred, but for some special situations or a famous doctor, and go to private clinics. Spend holidays with family at the sea, countryside or, more rarely, in the mountains where the air is fresh and healthy.



So go shopping in supermarkets and in food markets and wholesale sites. Because they spend much of their time around the house, they are big sedentary consumers of television. There are also readers of magazines, but pay attention to price.

*Preferences:* Beer: Hopfen Konig, Bergenbier, Ursus, Skol. Chocolate: Alpina Ambassador, Glade. Coffee: Elite, Nova Brasilia. Vodka: St. Petersburg, Bartenders. Mineral water: Carpathian, Spring Wonderland. Detergents: Tide, Bonux, Bona. Television traced: Antena 1, Acasa TV. Favorite Sports: football, billiards, chess, volleyball.

**Passive traditionalists** (27% of adult urban population). Consider that life is not the past. I am confident. Conservatives by definition, adhere to traditional values, they apply in your own family. Fast-food restaurants in their case, means little to prepare the street or terrace. No insurance trust, convinced that they are scams in which someone tries to steal money. We fell the same about private medical clinics.

Holidays and often spend their home or country to strive to reach the seaside summer. Purchases made them especially in grocery stores and open markets, although slowly beginning to realize the savings they can make by buying from supermarkets. When I go shopping, I am willing to go from one shop to another to buy in locations where there are the cheapest products.

Consider the money given as money thrown on magazines and newspapers read only occasionally (mostly men). Television, however, occupies a central place in their lives.

*Preferences:* Beer: Bergenbier, Golden Brau, Ciuc. Chocolate: Excellence, African, Kandia. Coffee: Nova Brasilia Alvorada. Vodka: Perfect Skandia Pop. Mineral Water: Source of Wonder. Detergents: Dero, Rex, Tide. Television traced: Antena 1, Romania 1. Favorite Sports: football, chess.

**Nostalgic resigned** (20% of adult urban population). Their main concern is providing daily living. They have confidence in the future, they charge rather menacing. Lacking ambition, are critical and even cynical, believing that life has given them the chance they deserved. Do not have money to eat at fast food restaurants or more "east". From time to time, leaving the neighborhood for several small terraces, a beer or a brandy / vodka. Insurance may not be involved here, nostalgic already making it difficult to have enough money to survive from one day to another. For health maintenance organizations make use of the state in all respects, including medicines that treat. Vacations spent "around the block" or countryside, if they have relatives there.

Purchases are limited to the cheapest products, purchased from the cheapest shops. TV is the main means of entertainment. Magazines are not only rarely and they always buy the cheapest, and read newspapers from time to time.

*Preferences:* Beer: Gambrinus, Ciucaş Cheers. Chocolate: Kandia, Nike, Rom. Coffee: Nova Brasilia, Brasilia Extra, Extra Arabica. Vodka: Skandia Pop, Alexander. Mineral Water: Source of Wonder. Detergents: Sole, Dissemble, Aris. Television pursued: Romania 1. Favorite Sports: football.

Such a study can serve many companies to establish promotional campaigns of the segment into the marketing decisions to be taken in general.

**Conclusions**

Through this article we tried to better understand the consumer behavior in different situations and contexts of life.

This study is a small sample of what is called consumer behavior, which is essential in all businesses. It has proven an important role in determining the success of all businesses: you have to know who the consumer is and what you want to serve. What are his motives to shape his buying behavior? These are of great importance to the business. In this exercise we learn about our buying habits and how they are influenced.

The fact is that the authors have gone from a truth accepted by all marketers: 'there is no business without customers'.

Theodore Levitt said that "the aim is to create and maintain business customers. The key issue is the placement of consumer marketing center on their activities, it is the only logical approach possible. As long as consumers live in an economy of abundance, with multiple choices at hand, the behavior ultimate consumer is the key for the marketing specialist. Peter Lynch warned that "those who understand the individual consumer behavior obtain higher profits than wholesalers goods markets professionals who rely on financial data. (Blyte, 1998, p.9) In a market economy the consumer is the king. Companies that do not take care of their own customers and those who believed that their task is only manufacturing a product at a price as small as possible, will not survive in this century.

In conclusion, studying customer behavior helps you not only to be a marketing professional but also to be a smarter consumer. It can also affect many areas of your life.

**References**

- Blythe, J. (1998). Consumer behavior. Bucharest: Teora  
Brătucu, G., Dima, D. (coordinator) (2002). Marketing in Tourism. Sibiu: Editura Psihomedica  
Catoiu, I. Teodorescu, N. (1997). Consumer behavior. Theory and practice. Bucharest: Economic  
Datculescu, P. (2006). Marketing research - How to penetrate the consumer's mind as you measure and analyze information. Bucharest: Brandbuilders  
Florescu, C., Málcomete, P., Pop, N. (2003). Marketing - glossary. New York: Economic Publishing House  
Gueguen, N. (2006). Consumer Psychology - factors that influence our behavior consumption. Science: Polirom  
Kotler, P., Armstrong G., Saunders, J., Wong, V. (1999). Principles of Marketing. New York: Teora Publishing House  
Larousse (2000). Dictionary of psychology. Bucharest: Encyclopedic Universe  
Lefter, C. (coordinator) (2006). Marketing (vol. I). Brasov: "Transilvania" University Publishing House  
Marder, E. (2002). Consumer behavior. Bucharest: Teora Publishing House  
Prutianu, Ș., Munteanu, C., Caluschi, C. (1998). Marketing Intelligence plus. Iasi: Polirom Publishing House  
Schiffman, I., Lazar Kanuk, L. (2007). Consumer Behavior. Prentice Hall: Pearson Education Publishing House



**HOLISTICA Journal of business and public administration**

**No. 1/2011**

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S., Hogg, M. (2006). Consumer behavior – an European perspectives. Prentice Hall: Pearson Education Publishing House

\*\*\* Science Daily for 2011, Consumer Behaviour News,  
[http://www.sciencedaily.com/articles/science\\_society/](http://www.sciencedaily.com/articles/science_society/), (Friday 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011)

\*\*\* Wiley Online Library for 2010-2011, Journal of Cunsomer Behaviour,  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>, (Friday 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011)