Consumer Response to Product and Service Quality

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Abstract

In investigating the behavior, one of main directions refers to the process of choosing between several competing products and evaluating alternatives. It is known that people buy according to their emotional desires. Practice has proved that there are four factors for emotional reasons, such as: fear, gratuities, effortless gain turning dreams into reality. The research was conducted on 100 people using three surveys that have aimed to identify how consumers respond to different situations in the quality of products and services.

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1. Buying decision

Analysis of consumer impacts requires an understanding of the nature of consumer insight into the effect the policy may have on consumer information, and knowledge as to how consumers may respond to complex products, services and transactions.

According to Kotler, in making the decision a person can perform five functions (Kotler, 2007):

- The person who first suggested the idea of buying a product;
- The person whose views or advice influences the decision;
- The decision maker - the person who decides on the components purchasing decision;
- The buyer - the person making the purchase;
- User - the person who consumes or uses the product effectively.

Types of buying behavior (Iliescu & Petre, 2004):

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1. Complex buying behavior - occurs when consumers are deeply involved in the buying process, the product is expensive, it is not purchased frequently and is accompanied by a number of risks. Initially there is an information process, then the buyer goes through a learning process, forming certain beliefs, and attitudes, and finally to select the desired product knowingly.

2. Purchasing behavior toward reducing disparities - occurs when on the market there are many brands that are relatively difficult to differentiate. The acquisition is costly and risky, so the buyers spend much time to search for information. In this case the buyer will react more quickly at an attractive price or convenience purchase. Also, the buyer will pay attention only to information that justifies the choice.

3. Normal purchasing behavior - occurs for purchasing household products on the market in a wide variety of brands. Consumer involvement in the procurement process is minimal. In this case commercials and promotional schemes of manufacturers and retailers play an important role in the decision making process of the buyer.

4. Behavior-oriented assortment diversity - occurs where there are significant differences between brands and the buyer is involved than in the purchase. The main phenomenon that accompanies this type of behavior is the buyer's migration from one brand to another, out of curiosity or to avoid monotony. To impress the buyer, the seller frequently resorts to techniques of merchandising, promotional and emotional advertising offers.

2. Stages of decision making

The buyer decision process with its five stages (Gueguen, 2006):

1. Identifying the need - the purchase starts with identifying a need, a problem. The need may be the result of an internal or external stimulus.

2. Information - once the need has been identified, the consumer will seek information. This activity is more or less intense, according to the complexity of the problem faced by the consumer. Sources of information that the buyer can access can be classified:
   - Personal sources: family, friends, colleagues;
   - Commercial sources: advertisements, vendors, websites, exhibitions, packaging;
   - Public sources: the media, consumer organizations;
   - Direct experimental sources: examining, using the product.

   The power of influence of these resources varies depending on product and personal characteristics of the buyer. Usually commercial sources are designed to inform and personal sources strengthen consumer choice (Cătoiu, 2003).

3. Evaluation of alternatives - each buyer has a valuation formula according to its own needs and resources. The assessment takes into account a number of criteria: importance criteria, utility criteria, criteria of brand image and strength in time of the declared values, future possibilities related to the product.

4. Buying decision - the assessment phase forms preference for a particular product or brand. In support of the information resulting from the previous step, evaluation, two other factors can operate now: the attitude of others and the emergence of unforeseen circumstances. The extent to which the attitude of others affects the
choice of a buyer depends on two factors: the intensity of the negative attitude of others towards buyer's choice and its motivation the consumer comply with the wishes of others. Thus, the greater the negative attitude of others, the more likely the change in the initial purchase decision. Also, a user can modify, postpone or cancel a purchase based on perceived risks. The size of the perceived risk increases depending on the amount of purchase required and the degree of uncertainty of the consumer on the product. For a practical application of the purchase decision, a consumer’s purchasing decision can take five steps decision on the brand, decision on the retailer, a decision on the amount, timing the purchase decision and decision on the method of payment.

3. Post purchase behavior - after purchase, consumers will exhibit a certain degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. After purchase, the consumer can identify some inconsistencies related to the product purchased, something that generates dissatisfaction. If confirmed or exceeded the expectations of direct experience with the product generate satisfaction. Both consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction on the product determines ulterior behavior.

3. Research objectives:

1. Identification of the purchasing behavior of participants in the research and the response to product and service quality.
2. Identification of variation in buying behaviour by earnings.
3. Identification of variation in buying products by gender.

The research was based on three surveys that have aimed to identify how consumers respond to different situations in the quality of products and services. Respondents were instructed to complete the questionnaires appropriately to situations most frequently encountered in everyday life.

The research was conducted on a sample of 100 people aged between 19 and 40 divided into two categories: the first category between 19 and 29 years of age and the second group between 30 and 40 years.

By the age criterion, most of the respondents were in the first category - 53%, while in the second category 47% of respondents were located.

Analyzing the sample in terms of gender variable, we see that 46% of the respondents are women and the remaining 56% are men.

Of the 100 participants in the research concerning the use of mobile services, 82 are coffee drinkers and 56 are smokers.

In terms of tobacco, their distribution according to age is 46.43% variable in the category 19-29 years and the remaining 53.57% are aged between 30 and 40 years. In this case, the variable type is evenly distributed.

Analyzing the income variable we see that it is divided into five categories as follows: income less than 700 RON – in this category 21% of the respondents were located; incomes between 701 and 1500 RON - representing the largest share of 40% in the sample; income between 1501 and 2500 RON - 18% of participants; income between 2501 and 3500 RON - 12% of respondents and income exceeding 3501 RON - a category in which were placed 9% of respondents.

3.1. Identifying response to product and service quality.

Research participants had to express their opinion in three situations that they might encounter: how would they react if the signal would be is weak, if the telephone service does not work or if the signal is very weak or nonexistent on holiday. The responses were quite different: 21% of respondents said they would take action after it ends, 19% of them do nothing or do not use phones during holiday, but there are people who would react immediately in 42% of cases. Only 9% of respondents would be willing to change mobile operator.

If the signal is weak for a week, the proportion of customers who give up using mobile services is 16%, 46% of respondents do nothing giving another chance to the mobile operator, 14% wait or buy a card from another mobile operator.
In analyzing the response to coffee quality, research participants have given great importance to this issue as 36.58% of the respondents choose their coffee based on its quality, 26.35% depending on the flavor, 11% are influenced by promotions found in supermarkets where they shop, 6.07% are influenced by branding coffee, 15% by advertising various products and 5% choose coffee without having some reason.

Research participants were asked to rank the elements of which take into account when purchasing a pack of cigarettes. So 53.57% attach importance to the quality of the cigarettes they smoke. 21% take into account the flavor of cigarettes, 8% promotions and 17.43% the price of cigarettes.

### 3.2. There are significant differences in the response variable concerning product quality and kind.

Data normality was checked and has obtained values of Kolmogorov-Smirnov coefficient at a significance level greater than 0.05. To analyze the response to the mobile service quality, we used two groups broken down by gender in 54 and 46 participants. Homogeneity was checked with Levene test where we obtained $F = 0.333$ at a significance level $p = 0.565$. As $p$ is greater than 0.05 then we conclude that we have homogeneous variances, and thus the second condition for applying a parametric test was performed. From the t-test calculation we obtained $t = 2.077$ at a significance threshold $p = 0.009$ which means that there are significant differences in the response to the mobile service quality and the variable type.

To see if there are significant differences in terms of product quality and type variable we considered for coffee two groups of 41 participants each - participants divided by gender.

Homogeneity was checked with Levene test where we obtained $F = 3.363$ at a significance level $p = 0.070$. As $p$ is greater than 0.05 then we can say that we obtained from the calculation of the t-test $t = 2.854$ at a significance threshold of $p = 0.001$ which means that there are significant differences in terms of gender variable and drinking coffee.

The two groups that did the test consisted of 28 participants because only this are smoke cigarettes. Homogeneity was checked with Levene test where we obtained $F = 0.007$ at a significance level $p = 0.935$. As $p$ is greater than 0.05 then the t-test calculation we obtained $t = 2.3834$ at a significance level $p = 0.035$ which means that there are significant differences in terms of gender and consumption of cigarettes in the participants.

From the analysis we see that the hypothesis is confirmed in the sense that men and women show different behavior in purchasing products and services and in terms of responding to the quality services and products. Gender differences are also present in the answer to the quality of products and services. Women are more careful when shopping, analyzing existing market offerings and are more patient. Men are more careful when it comes to selecting mobile services. When faced with problems of product quality and service complaints appear faster in women. Man do not have the patience to analyze the products.

### 3.3. There are significant differences between participants’ revenues and their buying behavior.

Data normality was checked and has obtained values of Kolmogorov-Smirnov coefficient at a significance level greater than 0.05. Homogeneity of variances was also checked with Levene test. Levene coefficient = 1.948 at significance level 0.109 means that the variances are homogeneous. In ANOVA, $F = 2.482$ obtained a significance level $p = 0.049$, which shows that between the categories of income and purchasing behavior response to mobile services there is at least one difference. Post hoc Tukey HSD test was used by calculating and representing the differences between the graphical environments.
Fig. 2 Graphic representation of the differences between average a) mobile service b) coffee c) cigarette consumption

The graphical representation shows that there are differences between the average income of participants by category. It was necessary to calculate Tukey HSD test using comparisons between samples. Homogeneity of variances was also checked with Levene test. Levene coefficient = 0.126 at a significance level 0.973 means that the variances are homogeneous. Calculation of F omnibus ANOVA is the first stage of the procedure. We obtained an F = 2.148, p = 0.043 significance level, which shows that indeed we have at least one significant difference between groups.

In figure 2b. are the averages of income category purchase behavior of coffee. It may be noted that in this case there are significant differences between mean values of income categories. There are significant differences between the categories of income and consumer response to coffee so we see that in the category <700 RON responses differ significantly from those of participants in the 1501-2500 category. Another significant difference is between categories> 3501 RON and 1501-2500. To verify statistically significant differences which are shown graphically, the t test for independent samples has been calculated. We obtained F = 1.730 at a significance level p = 0.89, statistically significant. The calculations resulted in a t = 2.963, p = 0.009 significance level, indicating that there are significant differences between consumer responses and variable income. To verify statistically significant differences which are shown graphically, the t test for independent samples has been calculated. We obtained F = 1.730 at a significance level p = 0.89, statistically significant.

Looking at figure 2c. we see that the average results in category <700 RON have different average results of which are in the category of 2501-3500 RON. The calculations resulted in a t = 2.963, p = 0.009 significance level, indicating that there are significant differences between consumer responses and variable income.

Considering all the above we can say that hypothesis 2 was confirmed: participants behave differently in response to the quality of products and services by category of income. People analyzed on the basis of income fall within a certain social class, but it should be understood that they have the same position in the class. This has important consequences as regards the consumption patterns. In fact, membership of a social class is examined in the light of all consumer spending. Within this criterion effects are mitigated by the fact that a person with less money from a certain social class knows how to focus spending, and guide them to the essential attributes of the class to which he and she belongs.

A low-income person will think better about spending money than a person who is not constrained by the amount of money in his or her wallet. Those with low incomes will accept less quality products, make more frequently than those with a certain social status that even the demonstration prefer to make complaints about quality of products and services.

4. Conclusions

Study of consumer behavior concerns how individuals make decisions about how to allocate resources (money, time, emotional involvement, etc.) for the purchase of products. Thus, in addition to what to buy many other aspects are taken into consideration: what to buy, where, how often and how often the purchase is used. Among the dimensions that define buying behavior are the reasons to buy or not, customer preferences, purchase intentions, purchase habits, consumer attitudes, image brands.
The products and services reviewed show that the easiest changes consumer brand coffee at a rate of 89.02% followed by cigarettes at a rate of 35.71 and the last place consumers of mobile services at a rate of 16%.

This data shows that do not give up easily on mobile services. Among the reasons cited by research participants 52% made reference to convenience, 37% contract and additional costs, and the remaining 11% believe that such things can happen with any mobile operator and not see why to fill in many forms again to change mobile operator.

Consumers’ perceptions of quality change over time as a result of added information, increased competition in a product category, and changing expectations. Because products and perceptions change, marketers may be able to educate consumers on ways to evaluate quality.

References