

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN TURKEY: AN EXAMPLE OF A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN UNIVERSITY

ADILA AHEMAI

Eastern Mediterranean University, Gazimagusa, Turkey.

HABIB ALIPOUR

Eastern Mediterranean University, Gazimagusa, Turkey.

Abstract

This article discusses the basics of consumers' choice of certain goods. Students of the Eastern Mediterranean University are considered as a consumer group. The article analyzes both the theoretical foundations of consumer behavior and the practical analysis of consumers' choice of a certain group of goods. Based on the results of a sociological study, the impact of such factors as income level, price, quality of goods, advertising, fashion, etc. on consumption in the student environment was revealed. The author explains the essence of the sociological approach to the problems of consumption, examines the phenomenon of consumer society and the place of youth in it. Specific specific characteristics of youth consumption and their dependence on socio-demographic factors are highlighted.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, consumer preferences, product selection, consumer category.

1. Introduction

Understanding consumer behavior is a difficult task for marketers. Consumer behavior has already become quite an independent science (Jayaraj, 2017). The student group of the university has strong practical use ability, being the most important catalyst for making a profit for the relevant enterprise. Students of higher educational institutions play a significant role and have become a target group and a source of prosperity for many enterprises. The purpose of this article is to analyze the consumer behavior of students of the Eastern Mediterranean University, which will determine the key areas for business development of Turkish enterprises.

The homogeneity of the target group is reflected in the uniformity of the image of university students in terms of age, behavior, and life experience. They have a strong desire to create new products and products, and they like to follow the trends of the modern world.

Students are the most active social group at the moment. The unique model of social relations of university students is simple, but at the same time it is of considerable interest for research. In addition, such a direction as student communities is currently developing. Today they have become quite widespread around the world, and therefore they are also of great interest to researchers.

2. Methods

The main method used in conducting this study is analysis. A number of sociological surveys, as well as the results of numerous observations of the purchasing behavior of foreign students, were chosen as the basis for the analysis. When determining the methodological basis, it was also determined that the most optimal would be the construction of a logical model "from the general to the particular". In this regard, the induction method was chosen as another study - it allows the general behavior model to identify the most characteristic cases, on the basis of which it is possible to determine the trend in the purchase of goods by a particular social group.

3. Results

The contribution of international students to the world community and the economy can now be called quite significant. International students can be divided into two types: students whose duration ranges from a few weeks to a year and students whose duration of study is more than one year. Despite the fact that students with a short duration of study stay in the relevant territory for less than a long time, in comparison with students of the second category, their contribution to the development of enterprises in terms of consumer preferences is significant and practically in no way inferior to the potential of students of the second category.

It is also important to consider such a moment as gender differences within a social group. There are gender differences in all types of purchases and consumer behavior (men and women). This study will demonstrate differences in consumer behavior between male and female students.

The theory of consumer behavior is one of the oldest sections of economic theory. However, today this field of research, at least in the native literature, is almost completely «subordinated» to applied market research and is mainly considered the field of marketing. All that this line of research «owes» to economic theory is that it «led to marketing,» from which, in turn, the direction in question was derived. Therefore, the connection with economic theory is very indirect. The work of economists devoted to the study of consumer behavior emphasizes the applied nature of research and the corresponding understanding of its topic in the definition itself. D. Angel, R. Blackwell and P. Minyard emphasize that the study of consumer behavior «is traditionally understood as finding out why people buy, in the sense that it is easier for a seller to develop a strategy for influencing consumers if he knows why buyers buy certain products or brands» (Omran, 2015).

Such an applied, purely «marketing» approach to understanding the content of the category «Consumer behavior» seems very narrow. According to L. Robbins, «economics is a science that studies human behavior in relation to the relationship between goals and limited means that may have different applications». Thus, consumer behavior is undoubtedly the subject of the entire economy, and not just its «specialty» - marketing (Ogbeba & Hoskara, 2019).

Consumer behavior (as well as human behavior in general) is considered by a whole complex of social sciences. Thus, consumer behavior is an interdisciplinary field of research. What

determines the details of the topic of economics in human behavior in general and, in particular, consumer behavior?

Actions that are directly related to the acquisition, consumption and sale of products, services and ideas, including decision-making processes, decisions and actions, shape consumer behavior. The need arising from the need or desire to consume various riches (both material and spiritual) is considered as an economic motive of a person. Demand largely depends on the tastes and preferences of people, because well. From their subjective perception of the product or consumer preferences.

The style of consumer decision-making can be defined as a mental orientation that characterizes the consumer's approach to decision-making. Studies of this construction can be divided into three main approaches: an approach to the typology of consumers: an approach to psychography /lifestyle and an approach to consumer characteristics (North Cyprus News). The unifying theme among these three approaches is the principle that all consumers make purchases with certain preferences regarding their characteristics or decision-making styles, including rational purchases, brand awareness, price, quality and promotion, among others.

The process of consumer purchasing behavior begins when the consumer realizes the problem or the need to purchase a certain product. Recognition of a need also arises when you have the opportunity to change your buying habits.

Many elements, features and characteristics influence a person in who he is, and consumer preferences in his choice technique, shopping behavior, shopping behavior, brands that he buys. The choice of purchase is the result of a number of factors. The consumer category includes a number of elements - his business, his circle of relatives, his personality, incentives, logistics, type of generation, etc.

The student community is attractive to marketers, as they face many problems when making decisions in their lives regarding the purchase of a product or receiving services due to limited financial resources and the influence of parents. This area has not yet been definitively investigated; very little research has been done to understand the specifics of consumer preferences. At present, it is also important to understand the purchasing behavior of students, since they are becoming no less important for the economy of the state, especially for foreign students (Radaev, 2019).

As a social group, students move to different countries for the purpose of studying, and thus the need to study their consumer preferences increases. International students have made a significant contribution to the national economy; they have become an economic resource for the destination country. The contribution of foreign students to the national economy, the economy and the destination country, as well as to the way higher education institutions operate is also significant. The growth of global integration of economies is largely due to the increase in the number of international students (Giuliodoriet al., 2018).

Not so long ago, a report was published that reflects a general shift in the purchasing habits of foreign students, which may be due to an increase in spending among young people. Now every day they spend more and more money on luxury and branded items.

It was revealed that foreign students are economic resources that can contribute to the economy of the country in which they are located. Indeed, no country in the world receives much economic benefit from international students. International students are becoming a new economic resource for the country. The contribution of international students to the national, State and local economy, as well as to higher education institutions is significant.

The purpose of economic development in relation to this social group is to have foreign students as a basis for the development of the national and world economy, as well as directly for the development of specific enterprises. International students spend large amounts of money that contribute to the financial well-being of the colleges and universities where they study, as well as the cities in which they live (Guest, Schneider, 2020). International students have been an important source of economic activity in the regional economy, and therefore in recent years they have had a significant economic impact on the economy of the host countries.

The ten main aspects of marketing are a combination of the traditional 6 elements (products, prices, promotions, channels, public relations, responsibilities) and the new 4 elements (research, division, priority, positioning).

Each of the listed elements is an integral attribute of consumer behavior, since it has a direct impact on the choice of the buyer. Next, it is necessary to consider those properties and attributes that relate to each of the listed elements:

- Products: quality, functionality, style, brand, packaging, etc.
- Price: Appropriate pricing setting appropriate prices for various life cycle products.
- Promotion: Do a good job of promoting and advertising products.
- Distribution: creation of appropriate sales channels; For example, if the company's products are more suitable for college students, it is necessary to establish channels with retail space next to the educational institution.
- State power: in order to establish international trade, relations should be developed between the relevant state authorities of different countries (which are planning to develop partnership trade relations).
- Public relations: it is advisable to use various mass media to promote the relevant product or service. With the help of propaganda, the media are able to promote a certain product to the relevant market even without direct advertising.
- Research (exploration): This is a market research, through which a survey is carried out, necessary in order to understand the market demand for a certain product and consumer preferences when purchasing this type of goods.
- Separation is the process of market segmentation: segmentation in accordance with the factors affecting consumer demand; A deep understanding of the consumer needs of various categories of consumers is necessary.

- Priority: here it is necessary to determine the market to which the corresponding product will be displayed.
- Positioning: to give certain characteristics to the products produced by the respective enterprises and to form a certain impression about a particular product or group of products in the minds of consumers. In other words, it is the process of creating a competitive advantage of products.

Marketing is the study of the entire process of promoting and selling a product or a group of products in a particular market. The result of marketing is the application of research results to generate profit for one seller or the company as a whole. The whole process of market research of certain products is very complex, which creates problems in marketing, such as research and development, market research, strategy, division, etc.

Purchasing behavior is primarily influenced by their personal preferences, as well as factors of their social status, which mainly include:

- First, the economic situation of consumers. The monetary capabilities of customers will decisively influence the level of their purchasing power and the scope of acquisition of the relevant categories of goods, as well as determine the degree of interest and purchasing power of buyers. Buyers with a higher financial position may have a higher level of interest, buy goods of higher quality and thereby contribute to improving the quality of the corresponding products. In fact, the financial situation of the average student is sometimes quite bad and, as a rule, can simply meet basic life needs, such as food, clothing, housing and transportation costs (Marburger, 2018);

- The second is the profession and the status of consumers. Consumers of different professions often have different needs and preferences in goods. For college students, as a rule, preferences are dictated by the desire to purchase stationery of good quality. In addition, students of this category follow fashion and pay attention to online stores. For women of this social group, beautiful clothes and elegant cosmetics are often a necessary attribute. Various professions and consumer positions held at the time of training also affect the purchase of certain goods. Consumers in high positions will buy goods of higher quality that can emphasize their individuality and status;

- Third, consumer behavior is influenced by the age and gender of consumers. Consumer demand for products will change with age. For example, college students need school supplies, cosmetics, games, fashionable clothes, etc. In old age, more medical care and health products are needed. Consumers of different genders also make different purchases. For example, tobacco and alcohol products are mainly bought by male consumers, while women like to buy fashionable clothes, jewelry and cosmetics (Durden, Ellis, 2019);

- The fourth is the consumer's personality and self-esteem. In this case, it is appropriate to consider the nature and characteristics of consumer behavior, which is usually described as courageous or shy, enthusiastic or withdrawn, extroverted or introverted, creative or conservative, etc. Consumers with different personalities also have different purchasing behavior. For example, buyers who lack any complexes show courage and confidence in

buying, while shy consumers are often timid in choosing products (Stenberget al., 2017). The function of advertising is to give consumers the opportunity to form a clear idea of the goods, to arouse certain feelings among consumers and encourage them to buy, to contribute to the emergence of consumer purchasing behavior.

When putting a product on the market for the purpose of selling it, it is extremely important to do everything possible to awaken the attention and needs of consumers. Advertisers should select several practical examples related to the type of advertising product and understand the potential needs of consumers. In addition, the method of displaying the product, as well as the place of its presentation to the buyer, is of no small importance (Dumitrescu & Fuciu, 2015).

In most cases, consumers do not make a purchase decision, especially if it is an expensive purchase, immediately. In this regard, advertisers need to take advantage of the possibilities of a person's long-term memory in order to offer the appropriate product. First, you need to continuously collect information about products and make sure that the advertising content meets the future needs of consumers. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. The second point that is extremely important to pay attention to is that information is more effective if it is transmitted through various media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. Consumers will remember the content of advertisements intentionally or unintentionally. If the attention of consumers is attracted by visual and auditory means, buyers automatically record and remember the content of the advertisement, which will complete the psychological process from perception to persuasion and contribute to making a purchase decision (Kucherenko, 2014). Consumers use the information obtained from advertising for analysis, comparison, evaluation and decision-making. In the process of analyzing advertising, they seem to answer the questions - what is more suitable to meet the corresponding need, is the price of the products offered reasonable, does this or that product correspond to the user's personality? There are big differences in the criteria and methods used by different consumers to evaluate goods.

Not every consumer who feels the need to purchase the appropriate product will eventually buy it. Before buying, the psychological needs of some people will gradually decrease. For example, due to personal behavior factors, environmental factors, economic factors, etc. It often happens that consumers choose the most product from several similar ones by comparing them. Therefore, advertising should ensure that consumers who have concerns about products, when perceiving advertising, receive a kind of guarantees regarding the qualities of the corresponding products. At the same time, all types of advertising services should be used in order to create conditions to facilitate the work of customers, deepen their impressions of enterprises and goods, as well as encourage them to make a decision to purchase the relevant products.

3.1. The role of financial literacy

The students were asked whether it is necessary to introduce the teaching of financial literacy in universities, and if so, in what form. A third of students supported the introduction of a separate subject, 57% would prefer to study financial literacy within the framework of existing subjects or in elective classes. Only 7% of students believe that financial education in

universities is not necessary at all (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). Today, many organizations related to financial markets have declared their readiness to improve the financial literacy of the population. In this regard, the students were asked who they personally would like to see as a "teacher" in the financial literacy program? According to the survey results, independent financial consultants are in the first place, while economics students spoke for them more often (47% versus 42% in the sample as a whole). The next three places in the preferences of students are occupied by employees of state organizations regulating these markets, commercial banks and universities of economic and financial profile (Muniadyet al., 2014). Economists are more likely than students of other specialties to speak out for such teachers, while it is curious that the "popularity" of commercial bank employees among students of economics faculties is 12 percentage points higher than the average for the sample. Perhaps there is some element of professional solidarity in this – most of the graduate economists work or plan to work in commercial banks.

4. Discussion

The discussion about the peculiarities of the purchasing behavior of students in a certain country continues for quite a long time. At the same time, different representatives of the discourse cannot come to a common opinion. Thus, some representatives believe that the national characteristics of the host country have the main influence on purchasing behavior. For example, Turkey is characterized by an oriental style, and this cannot but influence the choice of certain goods by the corresponding social group, including students. Representatives of the other side of the discussion give the main role in purchasing behavior to the corresponding social group, determining the geographical location of secondary importance. According to their opinions, students have a peculiar view of what is happening around them. At the same time, their active position entails the appropriate choice of a particular product when buying. If we take different countries and different social groups, then the division of consumer preferences will be carried out depending on the social role (Galea & Keyes, 2019). Neither one nor another group of scientists succeed in scientifically substantiating their point of view, so they express the main statements based on sociological surveys or their own observations. The author of this article is of the opinion that it is necessary to consider the factors in aggregate. In other words, neither one nor the second group of views can be defined as unambiguously true. This can be explained by the fact that students, like any other category of the population, have certain psychological qualities by which they can be distinguished from other social categories. Based on this, it is not possible to consider the identity of students and, for example, persons of retirement age due to differences in personality psychology. On the other hand, consumer preferences are also influenced by such a feature as the national mentality, as well as the country in which a person is located. This is due to the fact that each country has a number of features that make it and its inhabitants unique. Accordingly, this cannot but affect consumer behavior. Thus, in this article the author reveals his own point of view, trying to challenge the results of numerous discussions.

5. Conclusion

Thus, consumer demand is influenced by many factors. All these factors ultimately determine the direction and trends of marketing and advertising development. Advertising borrows methods of influence from the field of marketing to increase its own effectiveness. But the most important thing for advertising is psychology. The correct use of an advertising psychological strategy should attract the attention of consumers and interest in goods using the means used by advertisers, stimulate consumer behavior, direct their feelings and contribute to the determination of consumers to buy.

References

- Dumitrescu, L., & Fuciu, M. (2015). Consumer behaviour in the tourist segmentation process—A marketing research. *Studies in Business and Economics*, 10(1), 66- 76.
- Durden, G. C., and L. V. Ellis. (2019). the effects of attendance on student learning in principles of economics. *American Economic Review*, 85(2), 343–46.
- Galea S., Keyes, K.M. (2019). Epidemiology at the heart of population health science. *American journal of epidemiology*. 188 (5), 883-885.
- Giuliodori, M.J., Lujan, H.L. & DiCarlo, S.E. (2018). Peer instruction enhanced student performance on qualitative problem-solving questions. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 30(4), 168-173.
- Guest, Andrew & Schneider, Barbara. (2020). Adolescents' extracurricular participation in context: The mediating effects of school, communities and identities. *Sociology of Education*, 76(3), 2-9.
- Kucherenko, E.A. (2014). Integral model of consumption in modern society. *Theory and practice of social development*, 21(3), 67-70.
- Marburger, D. R. (2018). Absenteeism and undergraduate exam performance. *Journal of Economic Education* 32 (spring): 99–110.
- Muniady, R., Al-Mamun, A., Permarupan, P.Y., & Zainol, N.R.B. (2014). Factors influencing consumer behavior: a study among University students in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science*, 10(9), 18-31.
- North Cyprus News. (2015). North Cyprus Universities – A boom in world-class education for students from the Middle East, Europe & beyond, available online at <https://northcyprusinternational.com>
- Ogbeba, J.E., & Hoskara, E. (2019). The Evaluation of Single-Family Detached Housing Units in terms of Integrated Photovoltaic Shading Devices: The Case of Northern Cyprus. *Sustainability*, 11(3), 593-602.
- Omrán, W. (2015). Marketing of Banking Services in Iraq. *Emil*, 22(5), 84-91.
- Osanloo, A., & Grant, C. (2016). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your “house”. *Connecting Education, Practice, and Research*, 4(2), 7-15.
- Radaev, V.V. (2019). Sociology of consumption: basic approaches. *Sociological research*, 17(1), 5-18.
- Stenberg, K., Hanssen, O., Tan-Torres, E.T. (2017). Financing transformative health systems towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: A model for projected needs in 67 low-and-middle-income countries. *Lancet*, 5(9), 875–887.