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FACTORS DETERMINING THE PURCHASING BEHAVIOURS OF CONSUMERS IN THE MARKET OF DAILY USE GOODS

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Key words: purchasing behaviours, fast-selling goods.

A b s t r a c t

The paper presents the results of studies concerning the purchasing behaviours in the market of fast-selling goods. Economic and demographic factors were the subject of the analysis. The results of studies showed, among others, that the behaviours of consumers are influenced mainly by the quality of products associated mainly with absence of defects, durability and brand as well as the product price. The studies also showed significant influence of the gender on purchasing behaviours of the consumers, as women are more willing to visit shops, they make spontaneous purchases more frequently, and they review the offer in detail while men go shopping rather out of the necessity to make a specific purchase.

CZYNNIKI KSZTAŁTUJĄCE ZACHOWANIA NABYWCZE KONSUMENTÓW NA RYNKU DÓBR CODZIENNEGO UŻYTKU

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Słowa kluczowe: zachowania nabywcze, dobra szybkozbywalne.

A b s t r a k t

W pracy przedstawiono wyniki badań dotyczących zachowań nabywczych na rynku dóbr szybkozbywalnych. Przedmiotem analizy były czynniki ekonomiczne oraz demograficzne. Wyniki badań wykazały między innymi, że na zachowania konsumentów wpływa przede wszystkim jakość produktów kojarzona głównie z brakiem wad, trwałością produktu i marką oraz ceną produktu. Badania wykazały również istotny wpływ płci na zachowania zakupowe konsumentów. Kobiety chętniej odwiedzają sklepy, częściej dokonują zakupów spontanicznie, szczególnie zapoznają się z ofertą, a mężczyźni udają się do sklepu raczej z konieczności w celu dokonania konkretnego zakupu.

Introduction

The problems related to consumer purchasing behaviours represent a continual subject of interest not only among marketing specialists. This results from the fact that winning and retaining a client decides the enterprise existence. Appropriate identification of client needs and expectations concerning the ways of satisfying them represents the base for development of effective enterprise market strategies. As the old saying has it – “the business has just one boss – the client” as without the client/consumer there is no revenue and, consequently there is no business. Under the circumstances where the supplies increase significantly faster than the demand, i.e. under the consumer market conditions, coaxing and winning the client is a common phenomenon, sometimes taking even impudent. Only the companies that identified the client needs the best and are able to meet the expectations stand a chance to win the client and secure his loyalty. Under conditions of post-modernism and consumerism, the client lives from temptation to temptation, which results in variability of his needs and purchasing behaviours. This also applies to the markets of daily use goods that also (or rather first of all) include the food products. That market encompasses products satisfying the daily needs where the consumers make regular purchases. In addition to food products, also cosmetics, household chemistry and means of hygiene, tobacco products, clothing, shoeing and small technical household goods belong to group of goods forming that market. Such goods are frequently referred to as fast-selling or fast-rotating goods. This is a relatively stable sector because it satisfies the fundamental (existential) needs of the consumers. On the other hand, it is characterised by continual growth and high dynamics of internal changes as concerns the offer of products, marketing activities, sources of competitiveness and market organisation. This induces the continual need for conducting studies on the factors influencing consumer behaviour and determining the scope and structure of demand. The aim of the studies presented in this paper was the identification and determining the hierarchic structure of factors influencing consumer behaviour in the market of daily use products. Particular attention was given to economic factors associated with the perception of product prices confronted with consumer’s income, the role of brand and quality of products and also with the personal factors, such as, especially, the role of gender in shaping the buying behaviour. The analysis was based on the information obtained from questionnaire-based surveys conducted via the Internet among 116 residents of Warmia and Mazury. Among the respondents were 54 women and 62 men with domination of people with secondary (58%) and tertiary (34%) education as well as people belonging to the age group of 21–30 years (65%). The vast majority of survey participants lived in cities of different sizes.

Market conditions of consumer behaviour

Different approaches concerning identification and typology of factors influencing market behaviours of consumers can be found in the literature. Obviously, those considerations also take into account the possibility of occurrence of spontaneous unpredictable behaviours that are not subject to the rationality rules, which is not infrequent. The typologies (classifications) of the consumer behaviour determinants are in their nature of just averaging character indicating certain regularities (BYWALEC, RUDNICKI 2002, p. 87). For example, G. Światowy identifies mental, social and economic determinants of consumer market behaviours (ŚWIATOWY 2006, p. 115). Among the psychological factors, he includes motivations, attitudes and emotions. The social factors according to him include the influence of the community and family, reference group, social acceptance (prestige), influence of culture and influences of advertising. The economic factors are related to the income (purchasing power), prices and availability of goods. L. Garbarski, in turn, divides the factors determining the consumer market behaviours into psychological, social and demographic-economic ones (GARBARSKI 1998, p. 167). The classic of marketing, Ph. Kotler, on the other hand identifies the social, personal and psychological factors attributing the highest importance to the cultural factors (KOTLER 1999, p. 267). The diversified criteria and approaches to the typology of factors determining consumer behaviour are reflected in the classification proposed by J. Kramer, who identifies the following factors (KRAMER 1995, p. 186): economic and personal, internal and external, objective and subjective, measurable and non-measurable, of macro and micro character.

The referenced classifications of factors influencing consumer behaviour are of general character while every market has its specific characteristics and hence a specific set of factors determining behaviours. This also applies to the market of daily use goods. That market satisfies the fundamental (existential) needs of the man and hence the individual factors, i.e. in addition to the general economic determinants, the psychological determinants play a special role in determining behaviours. In most cases, they include the needs, motivations, perception, attitudes, personalities, customs, traditions and propensity to assume risk (SZWACKA-SALMONOWICZ 2006, p. 186, RUDNICKI 2006, p. 116). As concerns personal-demographic factors, those that influence consumer behaviour include age, gender, life style, profession and education (RUDNICKI 2006, p. 92). During the analysis of consumer behaviour in the discussed market, it is impossible to dismiss the social-cultural factors, including the influence of the family and reference persons and groups as well as the economic factors, including the level of income and consumption structure (ZMITROWICZ-TKACZYK 2009, p. 68).

The market of fast-selling good develops very rapidly. This applies to the width and depth of the products range as well as the organisational solutions. In this market, consolidation and internationalisation take place. The rivalry between trade networks intensifies. The methods of consumer service, distribution and storage, promotion and brand position, etc. change. The range of products differing in usable properties as well as packaging, aesthetics, unit weight, added values and other characteristics expands rapidly. This results from producers and retailers striving at satisfying the diversified expectations of the client expressed by market behaviours.

Influence of economic factors on consumer behaviour

Among economic factors, the consumer income and product price influence purchasing behaviours of consumers directly. The influences of those factors may cross each other or mutually level each other (ZALEGA 2011, pp. 26–27). In 2011, the households with per capita income of from PLN 801 to PLN 1,000 represented the largest group of households in Poland (35.6%). The situation was similar in the population surveyed where the share of respondents with per capita income not exceeding PLN 1,000 was the largest (38%). Men were not satisfied with the level of their incomes more frequently than women (61% and 39% respectively). As many as 42% of the respondents stated that the money they had was enough to just satisfy their fundamental needs while only 37% possessed savings.

Consumers purchase only the products they can afford at a given time. Over 90% of consumer perception is focused on the product price first (MRUK 2009, pp. 48–50). Of course, nobody buys anything just on the price (because it is cheap) and other factors are also considered such as those related to product quality. However, particularly in low-income level cases, the consumer checks the price first. With the general price increase trend in the market of daily use products, and particularly the food products (in 2011 the food prices increased by 6.7%), seasonal fluctuations of prices occur. Price increase had strong influence on the purchasing decisions of the population surveyed as 68% of the respondents declared that increase in the products' price forced them to limit the volume purchased or/and to choose products of poorer quality. Respondents considered quality decrease and shorter life of products the basic threats to the interests of consumers. Quality was considered the main product choice criterion by as many as 66% of the respondents. They interpreted the quality mainly with absence of defects and appropriate durability (58%). The price and the brand are linked to the quality so they were considered in the purchasing decisions very frequently (Tab. 1). A. Baruk obtained similar results of surveys. She established that brand is associated mainly with quality (67%).

This is confirmed by the results of studies concerning the relation between the price and the brand. Although brand is the purchasing decisions influencing factor that was indicated less frequently than the price by the respondents, still the price was less important than the brand for those decisions. This means that consumers would be more willing to choose a brand product despite its higher price than a product without established brand. In addition, advertising and packaging have significant influence on purchasing decisions (respectively 70% and 71% of the responses as high and very high). Out of four promotion tools, advertising has the highest positive influence on consumer behaviour (75% of the responses). Promotion of sales is of slightly lower importance (72%), while public relations activities (54%) and personal sale (44%) score significantly lower. Those results also find confirmation in the results of studies by A. Baruk, who, however, showed a significantly lower than in the presented studies role of packaging in determining the purchasing decisions (BARUK 2010, pp. 17–21).

Table 1
Factors influencing perception of the daily use goods

Factor/characteristic	Frequency of indication N = 116	The intensity indicator for the characteristic*
Quality	115	3.57
Price	112	2.87
Packaging	108	2.65
Brand	107	3.20
Advertising	96	2.98
Recommendations	96	2.68
Innovativeness	94	2.94

* – according to the scale from 1 (very low importance) to 4 (very high importance).

The surveyed consumers of daily use products chose supermarkets as the shopping location the most frequently, however here the evident differences in preferences between the women and the men manifest (Tab. 2). The shopping place choice is influenced by closeness to the place of residence (64% responses), large range of products (51%), good quality of products (52%), good working hours (50%) and low process of products (44%). Additionally to the above listed, the shopping location choice is also influenced by sensor factors influencing the consumer's emotions and mood such as nice and competent service personnel (79% of the responses), nice interior design (69%) and atmosphere (music, smell). For respondents communicativeness (56% of the responses) and speed of the personnel operation were also of high importance. Shopping at corner stores offering a limited range or products and generally higher prices than the hypermarkets usually have the form of "crisis" shopping in case of sudden exhaustion of the home stocks.

Table 2

Preferred places of daily use goods purchasing (% of the responses)

Place of purchase	Women	Men
Hypermarkets/supermarkets	47	51
Discount shops	41	24
Corner stores	33	36
Commercial centres	31	17
Markets/bazaars	20	8
Shops on-line	4	10

Source: own research.

Purchasing behaviours of women and men

There is no doubt as concerns differences in purchasing behaviours between women and men. There are even products that attributed to a specific gender. This is confirmed by numerous results of studies. Among others, women are more independent in purchasing decisions because, as indicated by the studies by J. Barbeka, 43% of women and only 38% of men take independent decisions concerning purchases (BARBEKA 1999, p. 21). Similar results were obtained in the here-presented studies where 46% of female respondents and 35% of male respondents declared independent taking decisions concerning purchase.

Women are less susceptible to the influence of the environment than men are. This applies in particular to purchases of clothing, cosmetics and furniture (BARBEKA 1999, p. 19). In addition, the purchasing path differs between the women and the men. According to the opinions by respondents, a woman, before making purchase, confirms it by visits in numerous shops (72% of the responses) and conducts the careful review of the offers (45%). Women frequently make unplanned purchases in case they find a product satisfying all the requirements during the search. On the other hand, the man visits a specific shop (68% of the responses) with the intent of purchasing a specific product (53%), and makes the purchase possibly fast (Tab. 3). Presented research results are confirmed, inter alia, by studies of M. Jerzakowska-Synoradzka, who claimed that the man must be interested in the product, he makes the rational choice, in most cases, he trusts selected brands, and he analyses and compares the functional parameters. At the same time, more frequently than women, men are persuaded by promotions, they use ready solutions more frequently. They are more willing than women to purchase ready sets and they also make purchases for reasons of prestige more frequently (JERZAKOWSKA-SYNORADZKA 2010, pp. 27–28).

The presented studies showed that men value exceptionality and exclusivity. They purchase luxury goods more frequently (48%) than women (37%).

The men appreciate technical novelties and gadgets that can be used to impress others. Women like shopping much more frequently than men do. The studies showed that shopping was a pleasure for as many as 57% of women and only for 32% of men. The women also manifested higher sensitivity to the influences from advertising. This applies in particular to purchases of clothing (78% of the responses) and cosmetics (64%). Men, on the other hand attributed less importance than women to the package, while they consider advertising mainly during purchases of the radio and television equipment (75% of the responses) and household mechanical goods (61%).

Table 3
Purchasing behaviours of the women and the men along the “purchase path” (% of the responses)

Purchasing behaviour	Woman	Man
The purchase is preceded by visits in many shops to which I return several times	73	5
I frequently purchase something spontaneously, additionally	55	15
I review the offer carefully until I find the appropriate product	45	27
I have the shopping list prepared	33	53
If I do not find the ideal product, I will take what is available	23	31
I enter a shop for shopping only	24	35
I enter a specific shop/target	23	68
I rather do not return to an earlier visited shop	17	44
I do the shopping as fast as I can	14	63

Source: own research.

Conclusions

The results of studies confirmed the influence of the majority of typical factors determining consumer purchasing behaviour in the market of daily use goods. Among others, the studies confirmed that economic factors related to the level and dynamics of prices and incomes represent important determinants. Another factor differentiating purchasing behaviours significantly is gender. Men and women differ in preferences and purchasing behaviours as well as the decision process. Quality, understood as absence of defects, durability and brand as well as the product price were factors with the highest influence on purchasing decisions. Promotional activities (especially in case of men) and advertising (more in case of women) gain increasing importance.

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