

STUDY ON DECISION –MAKING IN THE FAMILY (QUANTITATIVE MARKETING RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN SFANTU GHEORGHE AND SURROUNDING AREAS)

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Abstract: Consumer’s behavior is the main component of marketing research. Consumer’s behavior is influenced both by cultural factors and social factors and by personal factors. The main purpose of this study is to determine if there are differences between Romanian and Hungarian with respect to the roles the family members assume in the household.

JEL classification: M30, M31, C14

Key words: consumer’s behavior, family, culture, nationality, nonparametric tests

1. Introduction

Consumers behavior, in a specific approach, can be defined as a multidimensional concept par excellence, as specific result of a system of dynamic relationships between processes of perception, information, attitude, motivation and effective expressions that characterize the integration of the individual or of the group in the space described by all consumer goods and services existing in the society at a given moment, through individual or group decisions relating to them.²⁷

The main factors influencing the purchasing behavior are: the cultural factors, the social factors, the personal factors. The cultural factors exercise the most powerful and broad influence on consumer’s behavior. Culture is the main factor to influence a person's desires and behavior. A culture is composed of secondary cultures that provide increased opportunities for identification and socialization of their members. Secondary cultures include persons belonging to the same nationality, religion, race or geographical regions. Many such cultures form important market segments and in order to meet their needs marketers are developing specific marketing products and programs.²⁸ Cultural factors also include social class.

Besides the cultural factors, consumer’s behavior is also influenced by social factors such as: reference groups, family, role and social status, family members are the most influenced reference group.²⁹ A buyer’s decisions are influenced by personal

²⁷ Florescu C., Málcomete P., Pop N. Al., Marketing. Explanatory Dictionary, Economic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 156

²⁸ Kotler Ph., Marketing Management. Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control, Teora Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 236-238

²⁹ Kotler Ph., Keller K. L., Marketing Management, Akadémia Publishing House, Budapest, 2006, p. 249-254

characteristics, particularly age and stage of life, occupation, economic factors, lifestyle, personality and self opinion.³⁰

2. Objectives

This paper aims at three goals:

1. Presenting an image that will reflect the roles of husband and wife in Romanian and Hungarian families,
2. Knowing the extent to which the division of roles between partners can be considered traditional,
3. To find an answer to question if children are treated as equal partners in decision making.

3. Methodology

The process of obtaining primary data is complex and takes place over time. The main method of obtaining primary data is the survey. Sample survey, in its traditional form, is a research, a precise study aimed at measuring or investigating something³¹.

To achieve this marketing research we applied the descriptive technique, namely primary data collection. Marketing quantitative research was conducted based on a survey, the questionnaires were administered face to face and self administrated. The questionnaire includes structured questions, unstructured questions and introductory questions and personal questions. Primary data collection period was from 16.08.2009 to 03.12.2009. The research covered 200 respondents, 100 Romanians and 100 Hungarians in the city of Sfantu Gheorghe and the surrounding areas.

4. Analyses

Often the concepts of household and family are considered to be synonyms; starting from this aspect, we consider it necessary to clarify the differences between the two mentioned concepts.

Household means all persons who normally live together, generally having family ties and participating wholly or almost wholly in generating the income and its spending.³²

The family is that household where at least two people live together who relatives are by birth or marriage³³.

Marketing specialist interest is focused on analysis of those roles that family members play and on studying the influences occurring between them with respect to the purchasing of various services provision or products.

In the United States, for example, husband and wife's participation in the buying process differs strongly according to the categories of products purchased.

³⁰ Kotler Ph., Marketing Management. Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control, Teora Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 244

³¹ Lefter C., Marketing Research, Theory and applications, Infomarket Publishing House, Brasov, 2004, p. 71

³² Florescu C., Mălcomete P., Pop N. Al., Marketing. Explanatory Dictionary, Economic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 273

³³ Bodonyi E., Busi E., Hegedűs J., Magyar E., Vizelyi Á., Family, child and society, Bölcsész Konzorcium Publishing House, 2006, Budapest, p. 9

Previously, the wife was dealing with food purchase and the purchase of various items of clothing. These traditional roles of purchasing are changing and marketing experts consider that both men and women can be considered as target groups to the same extent.³⁴

As we known, men appreciate strength, intelligence, efficiency and achievements. When they do something they do it for a single reason, namely to prove that they are able to do it and desiring to improve themselves. Generally, for them success means self-fulfillment.³⁵

Over time, however, men's expectations have changed divergently. The "new" man needs to show his emotion, be sensitive, to take over other tasks, such as buying different products.³⁶

Women consider that love is very important in their life, communication continues, beauty and "deep" relationships. Women are convinced that the most important purpose is to maintain harmony and the cooperation full of love³⁷. However nowadays women's role has changed substantially, she does not deal only with domestic affairs but has a job, earns her own income like man, that she can spend according to personal or family needs.

In recent decades, children's role gradually changed too, they are treated as equal partners in the family, before making an important decision parents are asking and take into consideration their views. Some researchers consider that this is due to the fact that the period when adults become parents phased. The vast majorities of children today have their own "income", receive pocket money from parents and grandparents. Confused on gifts, they give money for winter celebrations, Easter, the last bell or birthdays.³⁸

4.1 Presentation of results considered to be of interest

To the question on who is the "head of the family, 58% of Romanian respondents are convinced that woman is the most appropriate person for that role and only 42% of respondents believe that man is the right person for this" task " while 40 % of Hungarian respondents felt that women are the most appropriate person to fulfill this role, and 60% of respondents felt that the men are the most appropriate person to act as "head of the family."

With respect to making decisions in the family, with Hungarian respondents we have obtained the following results: 55% of Hungarian respondents make decisions together, also involving family members in decisions, 32% of respondents in important matters seek for advice in decision making and 13% of respondents for minor problems make individual decision. In the case of Romanian respondents, 50% of respondents

³⁴ Kotler Ph., Keller K. L., Marketing Management, Akadémiai Publishing House , Budapest, 2006, p. 250-252

³⁵ John G., Men arrived from Mars and women from Venus, Fabula Publishing House Ltd, Budapest, 1995, p. 12

³⁶ Töröcsik M., Trendes of Consumer's behavior, Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest, 2006, p. 118

³⁷ John G., Men arrived from Mars and women from Venus, Fabula Publishing House Ltd, Budapest, 1995, p. 15-16

³⁸ Hofmeister-Tóth Ágnes, Consumer Behaviour, http://www.progressziv.hu/index.php?link=magazin.tmp&sz_id=596&funk=5 May 5th, 2010

make decisions with family members, while 30% seek for advice in important decisions and 20% of Romanian respondents make individual decisions on less important matters.

75% of the Hungarian respondents consider that the most appropriate person to decide what the shopping list should include is the one dealing most with house holding, with Romanian respondents it was found that the percentage of those indicating this answer possibility is lower i.e., 50%; 14% of Hungarians interviewees consider that the person who is mandated to "manage family's treasury" must also deal with buying different products, the percentage being 35% in case of Romanian respondents; and finally 11% of Hungarian respondents consider that person that wins the most should decide what to include in the basket of goods, a higher percentage, i.e. 15% of Romanian respondents had the same opinion as Hungarian respondents .

To the question who is the best person to organize a trip in their view, the results were the following: 21% of Hungarian respondents consider that the woman is the most appropriate person, while the percentage of Romanian respondents who say the same thing is higher, 30%. The man is seen in the hypostasis of the trips organizer by 13% of Hungarian respondents, the percentage of Romanian respondents being lower, 8%. We also found that most of the respondents, both those belonging to the Hungarian nationality, 66%, and those who are of Romanian nationality, 62% believe that family should organize together the desired trip / journey.

Analyzing data for ranking scale where respondents had to rank the importance of people they advise with when they have to choose between various strategic alternatives, we found that both with Romanian and Hungarian respondents, the second family, meaning that the person forms, has a more significant influence in choosing the alternative strategies than the family of origin, i.e. the first family. Both with Romanian respondents and with Hungarian ones children come third concerning their involvement in making strategic alternatives.

Regarding the statement "The desires of children are priority in making decisions" we found that in the case of Romanian respondents a very small percentage (3%) chose the alternative "totally disagreement" while in the case of Hungarian respondents the percentage is higher, 13% of respondents chose that option. The option "disagreement" was chosen by 1% of Romanian respondents and 18% for respondents belonging to Hungarian nationality.

4.2 Presentation of results obtained from the nonparametric tests

Next we shall present the results obtained by applying various statistical tests. Following the bivariate analysis, using the test we found that with Romanian respondents there is a connection between respondents' residence (rural or urban) and the variable that refers to the person best suited to organizing trips, but, in exchange, with Hungarian respondents there is no connection between the two variables mentioned. Also the application of the χ^2 test revealed that there was no link between Romanian and Hungarian respondents' income and the variable that refers to the most appropriate person (woman or man) for organizing trips.

We would like to highlight that before applying the two nonparametric tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Kruskal-Wallis) the two databases have been met. When applying the Kolmogorov - Smirnov test we concluded that in the two groups (gender of respondents) there is no difference in the opinion relating to the claim that the wife can not make a decision without the husband's approval. Also, there is no difference

between the two groups (rural and urban) with regard to the opinion on the statement "In making important decisions we do not have to consult with anybody."

After applying the Kruskal-Wallis test was found that between the five groups (respondents' age) of the population there are no differences in terms of respondents' opinion on the assertion that "Decision making is a difficult process." From the analysis of average ranking that the respondents in the older generation (over 60) consider that it is not easy to make a decision, a result that was expected considering the fact that these people have a longer life experience. Application of the Kruskal-Wallis test showed us that between the five groups of the population there are no differences regarding the assertion "Before making a decision I consult with others too"; the average ranking following the application of this nonparametric test showed that respondents over 60 are those interviewees who consult with others before making a decision. The next question which arose was whether there are differences between the level of education and the opinion of the interviewees with respect to the statement "Spontaneous decisions are best decisions?" Nonparametric test results showed us that there are differences between the four population groups and the opinion on the above mentioned statement. It resulted that high school interviewees think that spontaneous decisions are best decisions however respondents with higher education consider the smallest extent, that spontaneous decisions are good.

5. Conclusions

Following this quantitative marketing research we conclude that in Sfântu Gheorghe and in the surrounding areas, the concept of "modern man" is more characteristic to Romanians than to Hungarians. From this brief recital we consider that Romanian male respondents are likely not to feel embarrassed if women earn more, also involving more in household works. Also it was revealed that Romanian families grant greater importance to expectations, wishes of children than Hungarian families, although in both families children occupy third place in terms of their involvement in making strategic alternatives. Therefore, with respect to the division of roles in the family, to Hungarians family the classic one is characteristic, while for the Romanian families, the modern one.

The differences between the two nationalities were expected as each nationality has several features that define it very well.

Every day we make a decision, more or less important, that more or less influences our lives. Albert Einstein said: "We can live our life in two different ways. The first possibility would be to live it so that there would not be miracles or to live it so that every moment of life would be a miracle "... the chosen alternative only depends on us.

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