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CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: SUBSTANTIATION OF ESSENCE AND A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MODEL IN THE CONSUMER MARKET

In contemporary market economy conditions, consumer behavior is becoming increasingly complex and multidimensional, encompassing a growing range of interrelated processes and interactions. This complexity necessitates an authorial approach to defining the concept, one that reflects its essence, content, and outcomes, aligns with current business practices, and ensures practical applicability.

This article provides a systematic analysis of national and international scholarly approaches to defining the concept of “consumer behavior.” Similarities and differences among existing interpretations are identified, forming the basis for a classification of approaches according to the following criteria: (1) need (demand) formation processes; (2) decision-making; (3) characteristics and indicators; (4) causes and outcomes of actions; (5) behavioral activities; (6) forms of consumer interaction; and (7) models and choice strategies.

Based on a comparative analysis of definitions, and considering a three-component structure of the phenomenon (essence, content, and outcome), as well as evaluation criteria such as the presence of key conceptual elements, prevalence in the literature, theoretical validity, and practical applicability, the paper proposes an original interpretation of the concept of “consumer behavior.”

Unlike existing approaches, the proposed definition conceptualizes consumer behavior as a sequence of interrelated actions, ranging from information acquisition and evaluation to the formation of purchase intention, actual purchase, consumption, and disposal of goods or services, while simultaneously accounting for the influence of internal and external factors.

Such an approach not only structures consumer behavior as a coherent system of interconnected actions but also enables the identification of key determinants of influence, which are presented in the article through an improved consumer behavior model. The proposed conceptual refinement expands the applicability of the concept in marketing and business analysis, behavioral modeling and demand forecasting, sociological and psychological research, as well as environmental management and sustainable development studies.

Keywords: consumer behavior, consumer decision-making, behavioral models, purchasing process, consumer motivation, factors of consumer choice, behavioral modeling, purchasing activity.