
Consumer Behavior

Professor: Roger Pagà.
Office hours: by appointment
Course Type: Compulsory
Credits: 4 ECST
Term: 3rd Term

Course Description

As they seek to increase their market share and consolidate their brand, marketers around the world keep pondering the same questions: How can we keep our products at the top of consumers' minds? How can we influence their decisions so that they start (and keep) buying from us? How can we further influence consumers to make them willing to recommend our products to their family, friends and acquaintances?

If we hope to reliably influence consumers, we first need to understand them. The goal of this course is to use a variety of insights from the social psychology literature to help students understand how consumers behave and *why* they behave in the way they do.

In this course you will learn how consumers' attention can be shifted towards a product or away from it. You will learn how to boost brand recall and how consumers form beliefs and attitudes towards products and brands. The course will cover several models that illustrate how consumers make decisions and will explore how factors like motivation and emotion play a key role in the decision-making process. Beyond that, the course will show how consumers can be susceptible to persuasion and will outline several useful persuasion strategies.

Objectives

Drawing on the social psychology literature, this course seeks to provide students with a body of knowledge that deepens their understanding of the following aspects of consumer behavior:

- 1) **Perception:** the limits of our senses, factors that influence attention, and subliminal advertising.
- 2) **Learning and memory:** how companies manipulate product knowledge and product attitudes via classical conditioning, and how they exploit the many flaws of our memory.

- 3) **Motivation and emotion:** the many needs of the consumer and the importance of targeting these needs to motivate consumers to buy. Nostalgia-based marketing, and the role that emotions play when consumers are faced with innovative products.
- 4) **Consumer decision making:** four different mindsets that consumers adopt when making purchase decisions: brand laziness, brand loyalty, variety seeking behavior, and problem solving.
- 5) **Influence:** seven psychological principles that influence consumer behavior.

Methodology

The lecturer will introduce each topic of the course with the help of a PowerPoint presentation. The presentations are by no means a complete account of each topic. Therefore, students are encouraged to take notes during the sessions. When presenting a topic, the emphasis will be on its marketing applications. The lecturer will not reveal those applications immediately but instead guide the students so that they can figure out those applications by themselves. The goal is to **achieve a dialogue between the lecturer and the students**, rather than a monologue in which the lecturer talks and the students passively listen to him.

Most topics will be complemented with an **assignment** that students will have to solve **in groups**. The goal of the assignments is to give students an opportunity to apply the knowledge learnt in class, or to highlight additional applications/implications of the covered topics. These assignments will normally involve case studies. Whenever possible, students will work on the assignments in class. Even if students work on the assignments in class, students will still need to upload their answers to eCampus before the specified deadline. One copy per group will be enough.

The very last session of the course will be devoted to summarizing the topics seen throughout the course and discussing the format, duration etc. of the final exam. Mock questions will be provided to help students understand what kind of final exam to expect.

General Competencies

CB6. Possess and understand knowledge that provides a basis or opportunity to be original in the development and / or application of ideas, often in a research context.

CB7. That the students know how to apply the acquired knowledge and their ability to solve problems in new or little-known environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their area of study.

CB8. That students are able to integrate knowledge and face the complexity of making judgments based on information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments.

CB9. That the students know how to communicate their conclusions and the knowledge and ultimate reasons that support them to specialized and non-specialized audiences in a clear and unambiguous way.

CB10. That students possess the learning skills that allow them to continue studying in a way that will be largely self-directed or autonomous.

CE1. Apply marketing management decision-making models based on intuition, co-creation, creativity, critical thinking and responsibility taking including the social dimension.

CE2. Decide between the main methodologies of market research and adaptation of consumer insights for decision making with market research companies.

Learning Outcomes

CE1.

R1. Analyze decision-making situations intuitively and technically

R2. Include the social dimension in decision making

R3 Apply a comparative and holistic analysis to decision making

R4 Make decisions with creativity and / or including co-creation.

CE2.

R1. Methodologically differentiate market research options.

R3 Discriminate between the advantages and limitations of each of the methodologies

R2. Differentiate the usefulness of the information from the implementation of each of the methodologies.

R4 Perform the complete planning of a market study.

Evaluation criteria

- **Final Exam:** accounts for **50%** of the course's overall grade.
- **Group assignments:** account for **40%** of the course's overall grade
- **Participation:** accounts for **10%** of the course's overall grade.

Important:

In courses that feature a final exam, a minimum grade of **5 out of 10** in the final exam is necessary for the other evaluation criteria to be taken into account when computing the student's overall grade for the course. Therefore, students who obtain less than a 4 out of 10 in the final exam will fail the course automatically. Those students will have to take a remedial exam (more details below).

Courses in the Program will generally include group assignments (case studies, projects etc.). At the end of each term, and in order to disincentivize free-riding behaviors, students will have the opportunity to evaluate the involvement of the rest of their team members in all group assignments that took place within the term. Students who obtain sufficiently poor evaluations from their team members will be penalized. The penalty will involve a reduction in the overall group assignment grades of **all** courses that include group assignments (max penalty: 20% reduction of those grades). More details on the topic are available on eCampus.

All the activities that are submitted past the deadline or that do not follow the submission instructions in terms of content, format, etc. will be considered as 'not submitted'. Students will be informed about the submission and presentation dates the first day of class.

Students are required to attend 80% of classes. Failing to do so without justified reason will imply a Zero grade in the participation/attendance evaluation item and may lead to suspension from the program

Students who fail the course during the regular evaluation are allowed ONE re-take of the evaluation, in the conditions specified above. If the course is again failed after the retake, the student will have to register again for the course the following year.

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they

study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the “Retake” period). In the meantime, the student will get an “incomplete”, which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The “incomplete” will not be reflected on the student’s Academic Transcript.

Plagiarism is to use another’s work and to present it as one’s own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the “Honor Code,” students acknowledge that they understand the schools’ policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program.”

Calendar and Contents

DATE	BLOCK	TOPIC	ACTIVITY/READINGS
Week 1	Perception	Sensory thresholds, subliminal advertising, and attention influence factors	Assignment 1: Humor in advertising
Week 2	Learning & Memory	Classical conditioning, operant conditioning, memory pitfalls	
Week 3	Learning & Memory (continued)		Paying in cash vs. with a credit card Experimental designs and their marketing uses
Week 4	Motivation & Emotion	Motivation types, effects of motivation on behavior, need theories	Assignment 2: ‘Prams are not just for babies’ (case study)
Week 5	Motivation & Emotion (continued)	The role of emotions in marketing: discrepancy-interruption theory and affect-transfer theory.	The risks of innovation Assignment 3 ‘How much would you pay for a rock?’
Week 6	Consumer Decision Making	Consumer mindsets when making purchase decisions: brand laziness, brand loyalty and variety seeking behavior	
Week 7	Consumer Decision	Consumer mindsets when making purchase	Assignment 4: ‘Holiday decision making’ (case study)

	Making (continued)	decisions: problem solving	
Week 8	Influence	Seven psychological principles that influence consumer behavior	
Week 9	Influence (continued)	Seven psychological principles that influence consumer behavior	Assignment 5: 'An influence agent at work' (case study)
Week 10	Course summary and final exam preparation		
TBA	Final Exam		

Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

- Kardes, F.R., Cline, T.W., Cronley, M.L. (2015), *Consumer Behavior: Science and Practice*. South-Western: Cengage Learning.
- Solomon, M.R., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S., Hogg, M.K. (2014), *Consumer Behaviour: A European Perspective*. London: Pearson Education.

Bio of Professor

Roger Pagà is a Lecturer at the Barcelona School of Management at Pompeu Fabra University (UPF-BSM). He has served as the academic coordinator of the M.Sc. in Marketing at UPF-BSM. Before joining UPF-BSM's core faculty, he collaborated with Toulouse Business School as a lecturer. He teaches both at UPF-BSM and at ESCI-UPF School of International Studies. His courses cover a broad set of topics within the area of marketing, ranging from consumer behavior, to market research, to data analysis. His scientific work places special emphasis in the areas of consumer behavior, social psychology, and decision making. He is also involved in knowledge transfer activities about the circular economy (Mercadona Chair in Circular Economy). He holds a PhD in Economics, Finance and Management from UPF.