
Consumer Behaviour

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Objectives

This course provides insights in the mechanisms underlying consumer behaviour. The course goals are:

- > Learn key theories and research from the behavioural sciences (e.g., psychology, sociology, Economics) that help us understand consumer behaviour
- > Apply buyer behaviour concepts to decision-making at the managerial and social policy levels
- > Develop analytical capability in using behavioural research

Description

Contemporary approaches to business emphasize the importance of adopting a customer focus. Marketing, in particular, begins and ends with the consumer – from determining consumer needs to ensuring customer satisfaction.

The primary goal of this course is to enhance your understanding of consumer behaviour. We are all consumers, but our beliefs about our own behaviour as well as that of others are often inaccurate. We will discuss intuitive and some non-intuitive ideas about behaviour. The goal is to train your intuition, so that you can think more accurately about how consumers perceive and respond to market events. Many of the psychological insights are particularly useful for strategy, brand positioning, and marketing communication decisions.

Contents

- > Evolutionary bases of consumption
- > Perception
- > Motivation
- > Consumer preferences
- > Decision Making
- > Learning
- > Personality and Consumer Behaviour
- > Hot topics in consumer research
- > Consumers in their social setting

Methodology

During the first couple of weeks, there will be lectures, intended to establish the mindset which we will use to analyze consumer behaviour. The remainder of the sessions will use a tutorial methodology. This method optimizes participation and involvement. Below, more details regarding the tutorial. We might modify details based on the number of students taking this course.

The tutorials

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- > We will create groups of 3-4 people. One group will host the session every week. Each of you will be a member of 2 groups.

The course material for these meetings includes reading material (chapters in the textbook and articles) and discussion tips. Each book chapter also has a list of "consumer challenges" at the end. The discussion tips and consumer challenges are only suggestions to get started. Your task is to adjust and/or add (relevant) discussions, quizzes, examples... yourself. It is advised to look for additional information and integrate this in the meeting, however make sure this is relevant for the topic. In other words, you can use everything that is useful to explain, illustrate and integrate the course material. You decide what will be discussed!

The hosting team is expected to integrate this course material and present it in an interactive way by raising issues and provoking discussions. If you do not host the tutorial you are expected to be prepared and study the assigned material as well.

- > One group is responsible for facilitating the discussion. The Course Schedule (see above) indicates which team is responsible for which meeting. The hosting team should present the relevant course material, and at the same time involve the other students. A few hints may be helpful:

- There are two principles that you should absolutely adhere to: integration and interaction.

Integration means that you should not just go down the list of things that need to be addressed (e.g., first textbook material, then discussion x, then article y ...). Bring specific parts from the textbook or articles up at the right moment! Make an agenda of the topics you want to discuss, and share it with your fellow students at the beginning of the meeting.

Interaction implies that you encourage the others to actively participate (e.g., ask them for other examples, their experiences and opinions, create good discussion questions, small tasks, quizzes, etc.). In case of an exercise or a look-up assignment, do not immediately give the answer yourself but allow the other students to come up with solutions. They are expected to be prepared too!

- Try to be creative in preparing your session. Bring stories and artifacts with you, including ads from magazines, commercials, and videos. Think about possible marketing implications. Or, do a little experiment. Allow others to 'experience' your story. The numerous consumer behaviour textbooks in the library may be of help when looking up additional information or examples. And obviously there is the internet (e.g. <http://adland.tv>, adage.com,

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www.slate.com, the New Yorker, numerous advertising and marketing Blogs, YouTube, etc).

- You have 2 sessions of 1.5 hours to tell your story.
- Suggested methodology: Read all the assigned material attentively first. Then brainstorm in group about the story you want to tell. Make a selection of the elements you consider most relevant and feel free to drop others. Make good notes and write down the different points you want to discuss and how you will do that. Then work out each point in more detail and look for illustrations.
- Do not explain the details of the methodology used in the academic articles (unless they are relevant). Just communicate and discuss the general idea and its implications.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation is based on 3 pillars:

1. Participation in class discussions
2. The presentation of discussion material as a host in the tutorials
3. Weekly reaction papers (no exam)

Each of these elements is equally important and will account for 1/3 of your final grade.

Bio of the professor

Gert Cornelissen is an Associate Professor at the Department of Economics and Business at Pompeu Fabra University. He is also an affiliate professor at the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics. He obtained his PhD. in Psychology at the KULeuven, Belgium.