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ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS – PSYCHOLOGY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

ZACHOWANIA ORGANIZACYJNE W KONTEKŚCIE PROCESU PODEJMOWANIA DECYZJI – PSYGOLOGIA ZACHOWAŃ KONSUMECKICH

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Abstarct

Article presents management functions in the context of organizational decision-making. Organizational management functions are the fundamental areas of managerial activity, allowing them to direct the work of people and resources to achieve organizational goals. This chapter will teach you that management is defined as a process aimed at achieving organizational goals. A process is a set of continuous and interrelated activities. Continuity is demonstrated by the fact that activities are not performed in a linear, step-by-step manner, and responsibility is not transferred from one activity to the next. Instead, activities continue as new activities are initiated. Interconnectedness means that the results of each activity influence other activities and tasks. Management's responsibility is to ensure that important activities are performed efficiently (in the best possible way) and effectively (to produce the desired result).

Keywords: *process management, consumer behavior psychology, decision-making model, internal motivation, management psychology, cognitive processes in consumer behavior*

Streszczenie

W artykule zaprezentowano funkcje zarzadzania w kontekście podejmowania decyzji w organizacji z uwzględnieniem psychologii zachowań konsumenckich. Funkcje zarządzania organizacją to podstawowe obszary działań menedżerów, które pozwalają kierować pracą ludzi i zasobów w taki sposób, aby osiągać cele organizacji. Proces jest zbiorem ciągłych i wzajemnie powiązanych działań. Ciągłość objawia się tym, że działania nie są wykonywane w sposób liniowy, krok po kroku, a odpowiedzialność nie jest przekazywana z jednego działania na kolejne. Zamiast tego, działania są kontynuowane w miarę rozpoczynania nowych aktywności. Wzajemne powiązanie oznacza, że wyniki każdego działania wpływają na inne aktywności i zadania. Obowiązkiem kierownictwa jest dopilnowanie, aby istotne działania były wykonywane efektywnie (w najlepszy możliwy sposób) i skutecznie (by przyniosły pożądany wynik).

Słowa kluczowe: *zarządzanie procesami, psychologia zachowań konsumenckich, model podejmowania decyzji, motywacja wenwętrzna, psychologia zarządzania, procesy poznawcze w zachowaniach konsumenckich*

Introduction

Consumer behavior psychology is an interdisciplinary field of research that integrates knowledge from cognitive psychology, social psychology, behavioral economics, and management sciences. According to Solomon's (2020) classic definition, this discipline deals with the study of processes during which individuals or groups choose, acquire, use, and dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. This definition emphasizes the dynamic and processual nature of consumer behavior, which goes beyond the moment of purchase itself. Antonides and van Raaij (2003) expand on this view, pointing out that consumer psychology analyzes not only observable behaviors, but also hidden mental processes such as perception, learning, attitude formation, and information processing. The authors emphasize that consumer behavior does not take place in a vacuum – it is deeply embedded in a social, cultural, and economic context that significantly shapes individual preferences and choices.

From a contemporary perspective, especially in the context of the dynamic development of digital technologies, the definition of consumer behavior should also take into account the specific nature of the online environment. Hoffman and Novak (2018) argue that the digital shopping environment introduces new dimensions to the consumer experience, such as interactivity, real-time personalization, and multi-channel communication. E-consumers (consumers who shop online) are characterized by different patterns of information search, decision-making, and brand loyalty compared to traditional consumers. Stasiuk and Maison (2014) point out that the digital environment offers an unprecedented amount of information and comparison opportunities, which fundamentally changes both the cognitive processes and decision-making strategies of consumers.

Reaserch methodology

Research in the social sciences, is inspired by numerous and diverse needs. Therefore, we will reduce the existing needs to two main types, to which certain types of research correspond. The first is combined with needs of a theoretical or cognitive nature, that is, it includes all those needs that are associated with the development of a particular science. The second is combined with the various needs of practice.

The research methodology in management psychology and consumer behavior is based on rigorous social science principles, integrating quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches. The research is empirical in nature, requiring the operationalization of psychological constructs and basing hypotheses on falsifiable assumptions. The key principles are accuracy, reliability, and replicability of procedures, as well as compliance with ethical standards – voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. The most commonly used methods include experiments, surveys, statistical analyses, in-depth interviews, focus groups, observations, and modern neuromarketing techniques such as eye-tracking, EEG, and emotional response analyses (Hackett, Schwarzenbach, Jürgens, 2016).

It is also important to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative methods. The first ones allow for the study of causal relationships and modeling of complex psychological constructs (e.g. SEM, ANOVA). Qualitative methods, on the other hand, enable an in-depth understanding of the motivation, emotions and decision-making processes of individual people. It should be noted that in order to increase the credibility and completeness of the picture of the phenomenon under study, triangulation of methods is increasingly used (Rószkiewicz, 2004).

The research process includes identifying the problem, formulating hypotheses, selecting the sample, choosing methods, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting the results. In consumer research, ecological validity, i.e., conducting research in realistic shopping conditions, is of great importance. In management psychology, theoretical models of motivation, leadership, and organizational behavior are particularly important. Overall, the research methodology in these areas is characterized by interdisciplinarity, integrating

psychology, management, marketing, statistics, and data science. This makes it possible to explain psychological mechanisms and formulate practical recommendations for organizations and the market (Rusdian, Sugiat, Tojiri, 2024).

Consumer behavior models

Classic models of consumer behavior, developed since the 1960s, were the first comprehensive attempts to systematize knowledge about consumer decision-making processes. Although criticized for their excessive complexity and difficulty in empirical verification, these models played an important role in shaping the contemporary understanding of consumer behavior and set the direction for future research.

The Howard-Sheth model, published in the monograph *The Theory of Buyer Behavior* in 1969, is one of the most ambitious attempts to develop a comprehensive theory of consumer behavior (Howard and Sheth, 1969). This model assumes that consumer behavior is the result of complex learning processes in which external stimuli are systematically processed by the cognitive structures of the individual, leading to a gradual reduction in uncertainty and the formation of preferences. The conceptual basis of the model is based on three categories of variables that make up the consumer information processing system. Input variables include stimuli from the marketing and social environment that provide consumers with information about available alternatives. These stimuli are divided into two types: significant stimuli, which include objective product characteristics such as price, quality, and availability, and symbolic stimuli, which are represented by marketing communications, including advertising, sales promotion, and PR activities.

Hypothetical constructs are at the center of the model, representing the consumer's internal psychological states that mediate between input stimuli and observable behavior. Cognitive constructs in this system include the evoked set – a set of brands considered by the consumer as potential solutions to a purchasing problem, choice criteria – standards used to evaluate and compare alternatives, and confidence – the degree of certainty the consumer has about the accuracy of their judgments. In addition, the model takes into

account elements such as purchase intention, attitudes toward brands, and predisposition to purchase (Bettman, 1979).

Learning processes play an important role in Howard-Sheth's model. Consumers, exposed to repeated marketing stimuli and experiencing the consequences of their choices, gradually reduce uncertainty and simplify decision-making processes. The model distinguishes between three types of purchasing behavior depending on the consumer's level of experience: extensive problem solving, characterized by high uncertainty and intensive information seeking; limited problem solving, where the consumer has some experience with the product category; and routine response behavior , representing automated, habitual purchasing behavior. The model's output variables represent observable consumer behavior resulting from the processing of information by a system of mediating variables. These include attention to marketing stimuli, perceived brand quality, brand attitude, purchase intention, and purchasing behavior itself.

The evaluation of Howard-Sheth's model highlights both its strengths and limitations. The model was the first to attempt a comprehensive integration of various psychological processes influencing consumer behavior, taking into account the mechanisms of perception, learning, attitude formation, and decision making. Its particular value was in emphasizing the dynamic nature of consumer behavior – consumers do not make decisions in a vacuum, but in the context of previous experiences and a gradual learning process (Foxall, 2005). At the same time, the model was criticized for its excessive complexity, which made it difficult to verify empirically and apply in practice. Over a hundred variables and numerous relationships between them made the model difficult to operationalize. In addition, the assumption of systematic, rational information processing does not always reflect actual consumer behavior, especially in the case of impulse purchases or situations of limited involvement. The model also took limited account of the role of emotions and automatic processes in consumer decision-making.

In the context of modern e-commerce, Howard-Sheth's model takes on new meaning. The digital environment dramatically changes the nature of input stimuli – consumers are exposed to countless marketing messages, have easy access to comparative information, and can quickly obtain the

opinions of other users. Recommendation algorithms and real-time personalization introduce new mechanisms that influence the evoked set and the process of preference formation. At the same time, the digital footprint of consumer behavior enables precise study of learning and uncertainty reduction processes (Häubl and Trifts, 2000).

The EKB model, first presented in 1968 and revised several times in subsequent decades, is the most influential model of consumer decision-making (Engel et al., 1968). Unlike the Howard-Sheth model, which focused on learning mechanisms, the EKB model takes a processual perspective, conceptualizing consumer behavior as a sequence of logical stages leading from problem recognition to post-purchase evaluation.

Management processes in the organization

In each organizational unit there are two basic groups of processes:

1. Basic processes (also called main or key processes), these are the processes for which a given unit was established and which result directly from the statutory activities of the organization, are strategic for it and significantly contribute to the achieved financial results, the main feature of this group of processes is the creation of added value,
2. Auxiliary processes (also called supporting processes) are processes whose purpose is, as the name suggests, to support the functioning and implementation of key processes; one of their basic features is not the creation of added value as in the case of basic processes, but the generation of additional costs.

Due to the nature of their global impact within an organization, management systems can be distinguished from auxiliary processes by an additional group of processes known as management processes. A characteristic feature of this group of processes is that they operate unidirectionally and control primary and auxiliary processes by measuring their optimization, determining compliance with requirements and objectives, and verifying the status of preventive or corrective actions taken to address any nonconformities.

Management processes are responsible in an organization for (Vom Brocke, Schmiedel, Recker, Trakman, Mertens, Viaene, 2014):

- creating a vision, i.e. setting the direction of the organization's development,
- strategic planning, i.e. planning the implementation of previously established goals over a longer period of time (over a year),
- short-term planning, i.e. planning the implementation of assumed short-term operational goals (up to one year),
- setting short and long-term goals,
- resource allocation, i.e. they manage and supervise the resources owned by the organization (financial resources, material resources and human capital),
- human capital management,
- monitoring and evaluation of activities, i.e. they assess the compliance of the actual state with the adopted assumptions and requirements in the identified processes and evaluate the organization's activities based on collected and analyzed information.

An organization implementing process management should focus on five elements:

1. Pervasiveness – the need to understand and implement the principles of process management throughout the organization,
2. Ownership – all processes should have a clearly defined owner/process team manager, responsible for achieving process goals and its continuous improvement,
3. Documentation – the need to define standard documents (such as internal process measures, document circulation methods, procedures) that meet the expectations of process participants,
4. Measurement – the need to assess the effectiveness of processes using measures, organized by categories: quality, cost and time,
5. Inspection – the process owner's responsibility for monitoring the process (identifying process gaps and eliminating them).

Business process management is performed at all decision-making levels, from operational to strategic, encompassing the full process sequence through planning (process identification and analysis), organization and control (process implementation and improvement), and process monitoring. Process management is closely linked to the company's strategy. Within the framework of strategic objectives, company management should clearly define which business processes are particularly important. The strategy derives requirements for business processes. This means that business processes are a necessary condition and means of implementing the company's strategy (Hernaus, Vuksic, Štemberger 2016).

Pillars of Personal Productivity in the Context of Organizational Goals

Setting and achieving goals

To increase your personal effectiveness, you first need to determine where you're headed. Setting specific goals increases clarity and transparency. It allows you to decide where to focus your energy and how to utilize your resources. Knowing where you're headed prevents you from wandering around in the dark; you know where you are at all times. Goals give your life meaning and direct your attention. They make you more committed and persistent (Lee, Dale, 1998).

Time management, or rather self-management in time

The goal of time management is to use it effectively and optimally towards achieving your goals. In reality, time is unmanageable. It simply flows, whether we like it or not. The only thing you can do is manage yourself with time. In other words, you can plan all your activities and structure your environment to make the most of your time, without feeling like you're wasting it. To increase your personal effectiveness, it's worth first eliminating all unproductive activities. It's important to determine the times of day and days of

the week when you're most productive, and then schedule your most important tasks for those times.

Task and project management

Many people confuse time management with task management or use these terms interchangeably, referring to self-management. However, task management is a somewhat more complex phenomenon. To improve your personal effectiveness, you must learn, among other things, how to effectively plan and organize tasks, break down complex projects into smaller tasks, set priorities, and delegate tasks. Only once you learn to properly manage tasks and plan your activities will you be able to combine them with time management skills.

Assertiveness and personal effectiveness

If you want to be more effective, you need to learn assertiveness, and above all, learn the art of assertive refusal. This doesn't mean you should say no to everyone from now on. Rather, you should ensure you don't take on too many responsibilities and don't allow others to take advantage of your kindness. By saying *no,* you're saying no assertively without hurting others. Saying *no* assertively won't make you lose friends or offend them. It will free up more time for yourself.

Motivation and self-discipline in self-management

Motivation is what allows you to start taking action. Self-discipline is what allows you to persist and complete it. If you want to be more effective, you must learn to motivate yourself and stimulate yourself to take action. You should cultivate both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The former is the internal force that pulls you toward your goal. Extrinsic motivation includes all kinds of reinforcements in the form of punishments, rewards, and praise you give yourself, as well as support and inspiration from others.

Self-control and willpower

Self-control in personal effectiveness is the ability to resist momentary temptations and combat bad habits. It allows us to focus on what's most important and maintain concentration.

Stress and energy management

Self-management and stress management also go hand in hand. By managing stress, you don't let anything throw you off balance. You're composed and in control of your emotions. You can cope with stressful situations and act under momentary pressure. In particularly stressful situations, you use relaxation techniques to calm down and refocus your attention on the task at hand.

Maintaining life balance

Life is multifaceted (work, career, home, family, personal development, finances, health, dreams, hobbies, passions, etc.). Furthermore, we fulfill many roles (e.g., father, boss, friend, etc.). It's difficult not to get lost in this and maintain full control over our personal effectiveness. The ability to reconcile all areas of life and all roles allows us to maintain balance. The proportions between individual life spheres don't have to be equal. It's important not to feel like you're fulfilling one role at the expense of the others. Sometimes you'll need to focus more on one area of your life, and other times on others.

Being an expert in a given field

Proper self-management, time management, and assertiveness aren't enough to achieve professional success. If you want to be truly good and effective at what you do, you need to become an expert in your field. What does that mean? Experts and authorities in their field typically achieve more than *average* individuals. Hard work, commitment, and continuous development allow them to become masters of their craft. They make better decisions, act faster, and are more productive. They are more successful.

Personal effectiveness tools

Personal effectiveness isn't just about techniques and self-management skills. The tools you use are also important. The modern world offers us a wide range of solutions and applications that can make our lives easier and more productive.

From calendars for time management, through numerous applications for task management, taking notes or organizing documents, to complex programs for project management and group work.

Conclusions

Making purchasing decisions is a process in consumer behavior that combines all the elements discussed earlier – perception, learning, memory, motivation, personality, and attitudes – into the final choice of a product or brand. Every day, consumers make dozens, if not hundreds, of purchasing decisions, ranging from seemingly trivial choices such as *which toothpaste to buy* to life-changing decisions about education, health, or real estate.

Contemporary decision-making processes are much more complex than those before the digital age. Access to almost unlimited information, the ability to instantly compare offers, the influence of other users' reviews, and personalized recommendations have radically changed the way decisions are made. Paradoxically, greater access to information does not always lead to better decisions – it often causes cognitive overload, analysis paralysis, and buyer's remorse (Dasar, 2021).

Contemporary consumers operate in an environment characterized by what Barry Schwartz (2004) called the *paradox of choice* – while an abundance of options theoretically increases freedom and the chances of finding the perfect product, in practice it leads to anxiety, paralysis, and dissatisfaction. A grocery store offers dozens of types of jam, breakfast cereals, and yogurts. Streaming platforms present thousands of movies and TV series. Online stores list millions of products. Faced with such a wealth of options, consumers must develop strategies to simplify the decision-making process, often relying on mental shortcuts that do not always lead to optimal results.

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