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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ONLINE ACQUISITION BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS FROM THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING OF HUNEDOARA

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Abstract: The prerequisite of this research is the ascent of the digital medium in all daily life domains. Digital technology has given the individuals the power to promptly react to whatever upsets them and, at the same time, to assume the role of brand ambassadors, by expressing their likes or dislikes during an online shopping session. Under the new economic paradigm, online marketing is the study of the online shopping behavior, according to Brandtzaeg, P.B. and Heim, J. The old industrial order, characterized by dynamism and innovation, has been replaced by an IT and network-based economy. Understanding the behavior of the digital consumer has become a priority both for the business milieu and for the researchers in this field, considering the dimension and the dynamics of the e-commerce phenomenon. Also, the evolution of the means of approaching consumer behavior is marked by the achievements in general human knowledge, it being viewed anthropologically, sociologically, psychologically or economically, which results in an abundance of concepts and interpretations, according to Cătoiu, I. and Teodorescu, N. Within this context and considering the impact of the digital environment upon the young generation, the theme under consideration is considered to be highly actually. The study is meant to bring some extra knowledge with an impact upon the behavior of the product/service online student consumers, by identifying the factors that define their profile.

Keywords: online consumer, online environment, satisfaction, acquisitions

1. INTRODUCTION

„Everybody thought that it was necessary to spend millions in order to build a brand. At present, we have the proof that the success of the Internet is the result of releasing ideas and turning them into account. We do not mean TV commercials, but the ideas sent by means of the mouse”[11].

The Internet is an environment that allows new ways of information processing, displaying and communication, the implementation of new models and concepts, which had been unimaginable before: „from another way of screening written information, by means of cross reference hyperlinks, to multimedia presentations including text, images, animations and sounds; from social investigations and real-time statistics generated while input data are being changed, to the presentation of user-customized information” [6].

The online environment gives the marketers numerous opportunities, particularly due to the applications it can offer, it is an excellent means of promotion, which allows direct answers, a distribution channel, an environment that facilitates fast and direct relations with the clients, companies and collaborators, an environment that can offer non-stop support to the clients, an environment that can help the management of an activity, etc.”[4].

Online marketing is different from the traditional one in terms of several factors: „costs, time, interactivity, globalization and availability”[9]. According to J., Blythe, consumer behavior is „a dynamic interaction between impression and perception, conduct and common natural events, thereby human beings direct the changes arisen in their own lives”[2]. Thus, consumer behavior, which varies from one individual to another, is the result of a complex interaction of several factors, it is dynamic and determines interactions and changes.

In spite of the fact that most organizations have been making efforts to identify and shape up the profile of the virtual consumer, the results are not satisfactory for the companies, in terms of business growth as a result of using it.

One of the most comprehensive studies that reveals the Media User Typology, was done by P.B. Brandtzaeg and J.Heim in 2011: „the non-users, sporadic users, debaters (those who use the Internet for discussions), the entertainment users and socializers use the Internet in order to socialize with the family, friends and advanced users” [1].

The appearance of a new type of consumer, with different needs from the usual is due to the exponential evolution of the Internet in the last two decades. This consumer can be called the digital consumer (also including here the consumers of online news, online media, socializing networks as well as those using online auctions, virtual shops and consumers of the technology that allows the

access to the digital environment). The fact that the Internet is mainly used by the young with higher education and income above the average, bearers of credit cards, who do not have time enough to go shopping and do it online is no longer true.

Recent studies define a variety of consumers that cannot be synthesized into a single composite drawing. The envisaged tendencies focus on personalizing the products and services according to narrower characteristics. The most targeted segment online is teenagers, as they have a steeper curve of adopting new technologies, but the over 60 segment is also to be considered, as they are ever more present in the virtual environment. Knowing the consumer profile is of utmost importance "both for the focusing of the future promotions, for identifying new or cross opportunities of sales and for the creation of new products and services meant to cover the needs that are going to appear"[7]. Regarded from this perspective, the social networks represent the most accurate instrument that can define this profile, going even deeper, namely creating individual profiles. The creation of such profiles takes time and it is based on:

- ✓ the interaction between the user and brands, of the type "X brand fan";
- ✓ the publication of personal information such as interests in sports, music, past time activities;
- ✓ the interactions between the users by messages, comments, etc.;
- ✓ the interaction between users and the commercials they are subjected to. This technique has been developed by Face book.

2. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses can be set out:

- ✓ The behavior of a person is determined by the intention of performing an action, an attitudinal change also influences the behavioral intention.
- ✓ There are certain pre-established behavioral patterns of the online buyers when they purchase products/services in the digital environment; they expect, as a result of previous personal experience, to have a predictable online experience.

3. RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

The topic of this paper is part of a larger study, approached from the perspective of marketing and considering the interdisciplinary character of this perspective; marketing is known to use knowledge, theories and models from psychology, economics, sociology and management. The paper includes a theoretical part, consisting in a review of the reference literature approaching this topic, and a practical one, consisting in a quantitative research based on polling surveys. The research instrument in use is a standard questionnaire. The questionnaire, „an investigation instrument consisting in a set of written questions", [5], was used in order to obtain information required by the research and to have a more accurate view upon the specific problems related to the online consumers of products/services among the students of the Faculty of Engineering of Hunedoara. After having studied the information from the reference literature on the "typology of questions" the questionnaire used in the study included 19 close ended questions and three identification questions, structured into 22 items.

The results of the survey revealed the aspects pertaining to the purchasing of products/services from online shops by the students of the Faculty of Engineering of Hunedoara. At the end of the study, the information obtained from 50 respondents (50 questionnaires) has been processed. Data were interpreted graphically, and in tables, which gave a significant image of the phenomena under study and the relations among them. The content of the questionnaire included the specific issue of the behavior of product/service online buyers studying at the Faculty of Engineering of Hunedoara of the 22 operation items, items 1, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 19 referred to the subjects' purchase behavior.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Most human actions are based on various types of reasons, but the greatest weight is to be found in the rational behavior of the individual, in the sense of adapting the means to the target, interest and preferences. The economic reason is more and more present in social life, penetrating all its spheres, but the economically inspired approach does not express everything involved by social life.

A first approach consisted in distinguishing between the students who shop/do not shop online. In this sense, of the 50 subjects, 44 have affirmative answers, while 6 stated they do not shop online

(Figure 1). The information pertaining to the purchasing behavior of the respondents is graphically given in items 10,12,13,14.

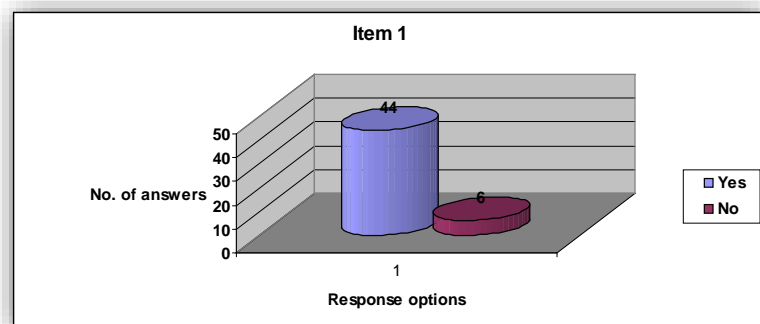


Figure 1. Item 1 – Buy or not products/services on the internet?

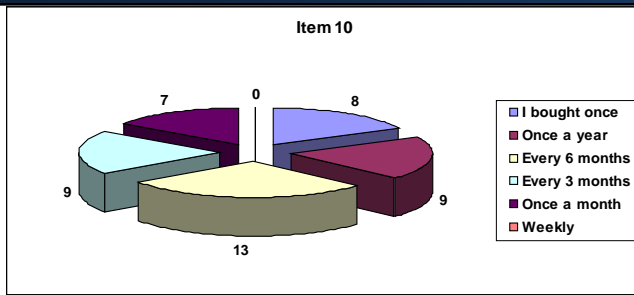


Figure 2. Item 10 – No. Answers/How often you shop online?

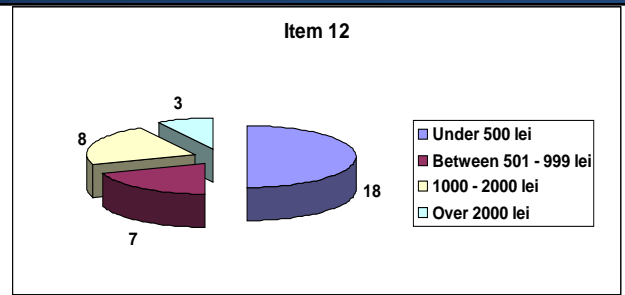


Figure 3. Item 12 – No. answers/The total amount spent last year on online shopping?

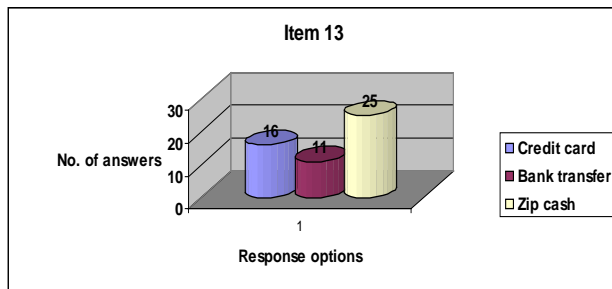


Figure 4. Item 13 – No. answers/What methods of payment use online?

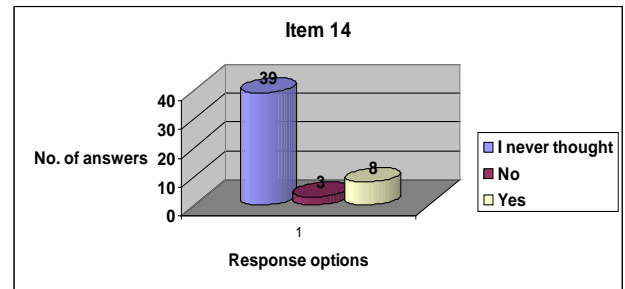


Figure 5. Item 14 – No. answers/In the future you use more money for shopping online?

The perception of the subjects upon the type of product/service and the reason form buying from online shops was given by items\ 11, 15.

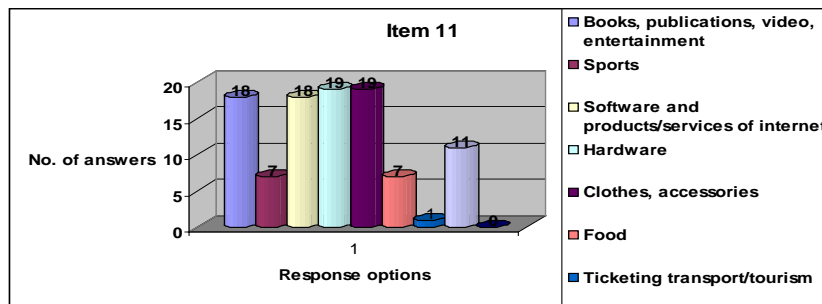


Figure 6. Item 11 – No. answers/Types of products/services bought online?

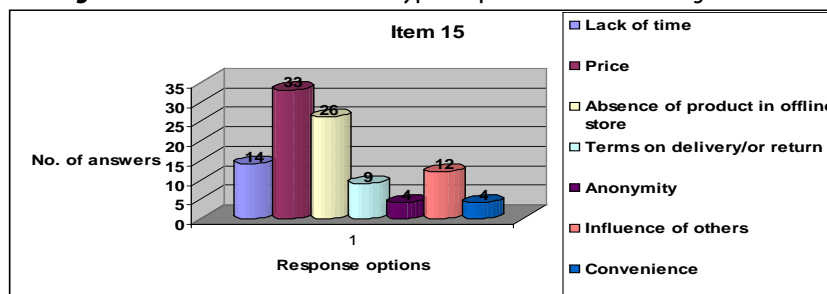


Figure 7. Item 15 – No. answers/The motivation for purchasing products /services online

Item 19 tried to identify the reasons why some students do not buy online. The request is addressed particularly to the 1st year students who answered negatively at item 1.

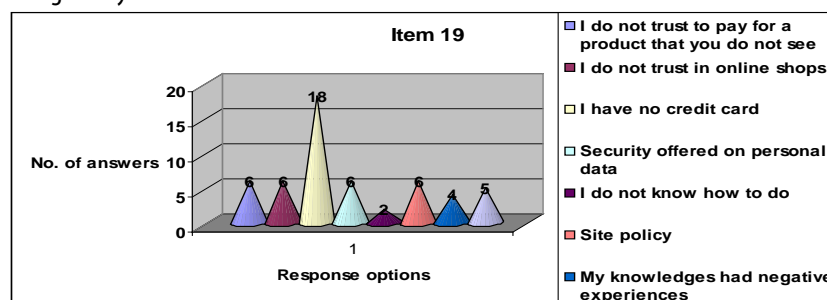


Figure 8. Item 19 – No. answers/The main reasons for not shopping on the internet?

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study leads to the following conclusions:

- ✓ The research revealed the fact that there are certain predefined behavioral patterns of online shoppers, when they purchase products/services from the digital environment; they expect, as a result of previous personal experience, to have a predictable online experience. Also, the consumers have individually pursued needs and targets and a devotion that is specific to their own interests, irrespective of the educational level, age, gender, occupation, income, social belonging, life style, etc.
- ✓ Each event, once lived, becomes part of the history of the consumer's learning. The situation of the consumer determines the formation, maintenance and repetition of that behavior, the consequences being of utilitarian and informative nature.
- ✓ Counting the frequency of online purchases of products/services, given in Figure 2, shows that 13 subjects buy online every 6 months, the same number of respondents stating they shop online every 3 months and once a year.
- ✓ The total amount spent in the latest year for online shopping shows that most of the subjects ranged below 500 lei (18 answers), 14 answers mention they have not done any shopping, which entitles us to believe that most subjects do not have their own income (Figure 3).
- ✓ The analysis shows that, according to the subjects, cash mailer is the means of payment preferred for the acquisition of online goods/services (25 answers), as it is the cheapest variant (Figure 4).
- ✓ When the respondents were asked if they intended to use more money in the future for online purchases, most of them ticked the variant I have not considered it (39 answers), which reveals the fact that most of them are not online shopping addicts (Figure 5).
- ✓ The investigation also revealed the typology of products/services purchased by the respondents online (Figure 6). Thus, part of the respondents (19 answers) opted for hardware, others buy clothes/accessories (19 answers), software/internet services, the same number as those who buy books, video publications, entertainment (18 answers), 11 answers referring to insurances, legislation or medical services.
- ✓ The opinions that show the motivation for purchasing products/services online lead to the conclusion that 33 of respondents are attracted by the price, while 26 state that the respective product cannot be found offline (Figure 7).
- ✓ The analysis of the answers, as shown in Figure 8, points to the fact that the most invoked reason for not buying products/services online – 18 answers is that the subjects “do not possess a bank card”.
- ✓ As to the online environment, the advantages offered to the customers are various, such as: the possibility of accessing a very large volume of information from all domains, a wide range of products available, the possibility of accessing socializing media, of personal products etc.

Considering the dimension and the dynamics of the e-commerce phenomenon, one can say that understanding the digital consumer behavior has become a priority both for the business milieu and for the researchers in this field. In this context, but also considering the significant impact of the digital environment upon the young generation (in particular), we consider this study to be really actually.

As a conclusion, one can say that this study brings some extra knowledge with an impact upon the professionalization of the behavior of the student online buyers of products/services, by identifying the factors that define their profile.

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