SHAPING CONSUMERS’ BEHAVIOR IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Summary: The twenty-first century is characterized by an increasing tendency for the choice of new types of tourism in Poland as well as all over the world. Even today it becomes necessary to move away from a conventional and slightly common tourist offer for innovative, more attractive proposals which take into account individual customer needs and newly created types of tourism. The search for more and better ways to manage leads, therefore, a wider knowledge of the principles of psychology and this is the content of this article.

Keywords: management model, image, motives for customer behaviour

Introduction

Humanity has always been characterized by a tendency to break down barriers and boundaries in different areas of life. This process has lasted till today and its consequences can also be noticed in tourism. New types of tourism and even its extreme variations connected with a constant human pursuit of discovering new and exciting ways of being active come into existence and are more and more popular.

Pursuing much better ways of managing tourism must lead to interests based on the search for new models of attracting tourists thanks to an offer. Using elements of psychology in managing tourism we can better get to know needs, opinions, attitudes, plans, intentions, and tourist's motives in order to fulfil those interests much better.

1. Customer behaviour

In marketing orientation in action the consumer and his needs are a starting point for undertaking any ventures. All human activity is connected with creating and fulfilling needs. Consumers become less stereotypical, show an active attitude and are more difficult to satisfy. A company pursuit of great customer satisfaction is the necessity for firms because a transition to the competition or a change of brand name are particularly dangerous forms of reaction of dissatisfied customers. Then the firm loses contact with the customer and it does not have the chance to get to know reasons of his dissatisfaction and thereby it does not have the possibility of eliminating those reasons. It also affects the firm, worsening its image and decreasing its profit. Adjusting the offer to customer’s expectations requires then conducting extensive research. In Poland consultancy firms, research centres or companies are more interested in those problematic aspects.

It is also visible in selling tourist service. The firm more often has to adjust itself to individual needs, establishing only a standard product. In tourism many different factors, which are subject to analysis and marketing research, influence customer behaviour. The research on customers' behaviour concerns mostly:

- consumer needs and preferences,
- signs of particular behaviour and the determinant of that behaviour,
- opinions, attitudes,
- behaviour motives,
- plans, intentions, purchases etc.

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The aim of carrying out the research on consumers' behaviour is here therefore to improve the processes of adjusting a company offer to purchasers' expectations, and apart from existing needs also future needs must be taken into consideration. The pursuit of influencing the demand by the company requires therefore not only getting to know but also anticipating needs and even creating them\(^3\).

Nowadays behaviour becomes the object of study conducted by many scientific fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, marketing and that is why in literature there are so many different definitions of this concept.

In a broad conceptualization, behaviour is understood as „each reaction to stimuli from the outside which is possible to be observed or all reactions of a living organism to the environment”\(^4\). In many scientific papers customer consumption behaviour is generally defined as „the sequence of reactions to stimuli (instincts, emotions) which motivate to fulfil perceivable needs”\(^5\).

Consumer behaviour is also presented as „all actions, performances, ways of behaving with the aim of getting sources of fulfilling needs and all ways of dealing with those sources”\(^6\). In this conceptualization they are the performances connected with searching, purchasing, using and assessing goods and services which have the ability to fulfil needs.

Much broader interpretation is used by J. Szczepański. According to him, consumer behaviour concerns „feeling and assessing needs, taking priority which means establishing a subjective hierarchy of own needs, choosing sources of fulfilling needs regarded as the most important ones, choosing ways leading the consumer to get those sources, deal with them, and fulfil needs”\(^7\). Factors which determine individual behaviour on the market have a cultural, social, personal and psychological dimension.

Norms or value systems which are in effect, have an influence on consumer behaviour on the market. It is the most noticeable in the following areas\(^8\):

- in the sphere of preferences concerning consuming and using particular goods and services; distinct national cuisine or inability to consume some products due to religious rules can be the example;
- in the sphere of acquired customs meaning those aspects connected with acquiring as: bargaining, place, frequency or purchase circumstances.

Behaviour in the process of buying the product also depends on a person's role in the group or his status. Each man in his life plays different roles starting with a child's role, then undergoing a parent's role till the role of a subordinate or a boss. The role is a certain type of activity which is expected from a given person by people who surround him. Each role also defines a position in society. People buy those products and decide on those services which reflect their role and position in society.

The choice of the consumer also depends on personal factors such as: age, profession, economic conditions, lifestyle, personality, and own image.

Purchase preferences, which concern different products, change together with age. The demand for food products, flat furniture or cars is shaped differently in the period of population explosion and decline.

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Also a purchaser profession has an influence on the choice of products. A worker will buy e.g. clothes for work, protective gloves but a director will buy a suit and luxury cars. If the size of purchase is big then the firm can specialize in goods production for one of those groups.

Income intended for expenses, savings, possessions, debts, the possibility of getting credit and an inclination to save money are next factors determining the choice of products. If a person has a relevant level of income, savings, and credit facilities then he can afford to buy e.g. a new car contrary to others, who because of economic conditions must be pleased with a second-hand car often with a lower standard of equipment. So with low income the consumer spends all his income on goods necessary to fulfil the most urgent needs. „When income is higher the consumer starts spending a large amount of it on goods of higher quality - more luxurious”

Lifestyle, which describes a certain way of behaviour and which is visible in person's activity, his interests and opinions, also decides on the inclination to buy a certain group of products or services. For example some people can choose a conformity style which will be manifested through a conservative way of wearing clothes and spending time with family. Other people, on the other hand, choosing a lifestyle of success will spend their free time travelling and practising sport.

Personality also influences our behaviour while buying the product. It can be described in the category of self-confidence, domination, autonomy, passivity, adjustment, and defensiveness. It has been noticed that there exists a strong correlation between products and brand names, and purchaser personality. The person buying a portable computer is defined by his firm as self-confident, dominant and independent.

Many producers, while working on the project for the advert, use the image which we have of ourselves when they decide that beautiful women advertise perfumes, creams, shampoos etc. We can differentiate a current image, an ideal image and an image of ourselves perceived by other people. The answer, which type of image should be chosen while producing the advert is not defined precisely.

2. Motives for customer behaviour

Understanding customer behaviour also requires specifying motives for such attitudes. Motivation is understood in psychology as „an internal process leading to pursue certain aims”. While buying products the consumer is led by needs which he wants to fulfil. Unfortunately, not all needs stimulate us to act because a need becomes a motive only when it reaches a high level of intensity. In psychology many motivation theories have been described but we will focus on one of the most described ones i.e. the theory of Abraham Maslow.

Maslow's theory helps entrepreneurs to understand how different products refer to plans, aims, and a lifestyle of potential consumers.

Needs connected with tourism are included into a group of higher needs - from social needs (holiday abroad Polish borders) to self-actualization needs (taking part in pilgrimages).

Perception plays the major role in shaping impressions of a product. It is described as „a collection of internal impressions of the individual on a product”. Each of us interprets and gets impressions in a different way which means that the same product can be perceived

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differently by various people. A subject is assessed thanks to senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. It is impossible to notice all impulses which interact all around us. We, among other things, let those pieces of information reach us, which refer to our current needs.

It often happens that people forget a considerable part of what they get to know. They remember only news which prove their rightness of attitudes and beliefs. Because of this selective way of remembering things we can expect that after having chosen a product we will subconsciously remember only positive information and omit negative one.

Perception factors, which have been characterized above, suggest that a company must try really hard in order to have its information finally reached the consumer.

The next psychological factor is the process of learning which means „changes in individual's behaviour coming from experience”¹⁴ which is previous behaviour in a given situation.

The consumer while making a decision is guided by his previous experience and he aspires to get satisfaction from a product. If he gets it then he strengthens his attitude to this brand name and often creates the attitude of a loyal customer to a producer.

People acquire particular beliefs and attitudes, which have a further influence on consumer behaviour, by learning process and action.

Producers are interested in what consumers think of their products and services. If there are negative opinions then firms have to work on a correcting action to persuade customers of their products and services.

Attitude describes our beneficial and unfavourable assessment, feelings about given things or ideas. People usually have a tendency to behave in a typical way in familiar situations. That is why it can be concluded that an entrepreneur should adjust his products to existing attitudes than try to change them.

To sum up, it can be claimed that many factors such as cultural, social, personal, and psychological have an influence on consumer behaviour. A firm can influence some of them but not others.

The consumer is in the central position of marketing action. If a company wants to influence a purchaser (the consumer) then it tries to get to know his behaviour to be able to somehow influence him.

The concept „behaviour” is one of the ideas widely analysed in the sphere of psychology, however, I will use the definition which is purely encyclopaedic, where behaviour is understood as „each reaction to stimuli from the outside which is possible to be observed or all reactions and living organism adjustments to the environment”¹⁵.

Consumer behaviour is included into the most important forms of behaviour. In literature of the subject there are many different definitions and they concern different aspects. I would like to briefly refer to those definitions which in my opinion are characterized by the relevance of expression.

And so e.g. J.F. Engel, R.D. Blackwell and P.W. Miniard define consumer behaviour as all actions connected with acquiring, using products and services, and having them at his disposal¹⁶.

Another definition puts emphasis on three types of reaction: communication, purchase, and consumption, but others think that consumer behaviour is the result of the individual's feeling of a need and includes all objectively and subjectively defined, rational, and emotional moves that lead consumers to acquire goods/services¹⁷.

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¹⁴ See above, page 164.
¹⁵ Nowa Encyklopedia Powszechna ..., op. cit., p. 956.
¹⁷ Badania popytu konsumpcyjnego, quoted in: L. Rudnicki, Zachowanie konsumentów ..., op. cit., p. 15.
From the above analysis of the definition it can be concluded that consumer behaviour has great importance to both specialists of different fields: marketing, psychology etc. and the consumer itself.

3. Reference groups

The reference group i.e. the group to which a person wants to belong to, which he identifies with, and which norms of behaviour he accepts, is one of the most important factors shaping human behaviour. From a sociological point of view that group is defined in the following way: a social group to which the individual belong or wants to belong and for whom it is a role model to follow.

Reference groups are therefore a model of socially accepted behaviour for the individual, which provides assessment criteria for own action and other people's actions. We can differentiate the following examples of reference groups:\(^{18}\):

- an auditorium reference group, the so called „audience” through which eyes the individual perceives himself (the mechanism of a reflected ego),
- a normative reference group to which the individual belong or which membership he aspires and wants to belong to. The individual identifies with it for fear of being excluded or not being accepted, he acts according to its recognized norms and values,
- a comparative reference group is for the individual like a comparative background for his own and other people's norms and values. It interacts thanks to a feeling of disability or superiority which is a result of comparison.

Each human looks for honour and acceptance for his behaviour and manner. Looking at a group's influence on the issue of human behavioural model we can find common ground because a human imitates the individual or a group, tries to resemble it. It is also connected with decisions made on goods purchase. Those groups' influence on purchase is visible when consumers submit suggestions from people around them while making commercial decisions.

The reference group's influence on consumer behaviour can be indirect and direct. Direct influence takes place when the reference group has an impact on particular purchase acts whereas indirect influence is based on shaping consumers' preferences towards particular sources of information\(^{19}\).

It depends on a type of group when it comes to the strength with which a group interacts. In literature there are the following group types:

- initial reference groups - the closest to the consumer (to this group belong: a circle of friends, neighbours, classmates, and its influence on consumer behaviour is comparable with family influence),
- secondary reference groups - they are created by inhabitants of the same district, club members, association members, union members to which the consumer belong (that type of reference group is therefore created by people less known to the consumer than initial group members),
- aspirational reference groups - to which those people belong who the consumer does not know personally but he knows them through mass media (they are sportspeople, singers, actors so often people who belong to a group which is socially distant from the consumer).

By separating reference groups I would like to specify how the influence of those groups on consumer behaviour is expressed. First of all, a human identifies with a group, tries to


\(^{19}\) L. Rudnicki, *Zachowanie konsumentów* ..., op. cit., p. 17.
imitate it. We accept behaviour of group members because we treat ourselves as a part which is integrated into the whole.

Such groups influence behaviour and can lead to such consumer behaviour in which he starts aspiring to get such position which a whole community has. A consumer derives good examples concerning e.g. spending money, furniture arrangement, equipping a car of some make etc.

That influence can have different strength - it depends on how close a person is connected with a group and also how impressionable he is when it comes to factors' influence (group).

Influencing means suggesting the purchase of a product of a defined kind, brand name. And so e.g. reference groups strongly influence the consumer in the choice of both a product and brand name - a car, cigarettes, beer, medicine. The group does not influence in those types of products on the choice of brand name but on purchase itself.

In the case of those products brand name has a little importance because using or eating products mean a particular consumption model, social status. However, reference groups do not influence the purchase of furniture, clothes or watches so products which are actually bought by everyone.

However, they influence the choice of brand name. Finally, group's influence does not have any importance - neither in the choice of a product nor brand name in the case of such products as soap, washing powder, fridge.

The relation between a product's life cycle and the strength and scope of interaction is worth mentioning. Namely, in the phase of releasing a product on the market a group pays attention mainly to a product not to brand name and the consumer behaves in the same way, in the phase of growth reference groups influence both decisions on the choice of products and brand name. In the phase of maturity that influence remains the same only in the choice of brand name, and in the phase of sales decrease group's influence is small - both on the purchase of a product and brand name.

To sum up, it can be claimed that groups influence the consumer and cause him to have a particular behavioural model. A group can influence attitudes, promote a certain type of behaviour or lifestyle, create a certain image with which the consumer aspires to identify.

Examples which prove the above mentioned claim can be multiplied e.g. the middle class tries to imitate the upper class. Group's influence is especially noticeable with reference to easily-noticed products e.g. a person going on a trip to Mexico does it not only because he is interested in such places but also because of social prestige. It is clear that the hierarchy of needs, which someone feels, is different because it refers to people of different education and the amount of money in their wallets.

Conclusion

It is often said that the sale of tourist services is based on selling dreams but those dreams can too easily become a nightmare for consumers if they do not get products of good quality. In marketing management of a tourist firm the consumer and his individual needs are a starting point for all its decisions. The knowledge of customer's expectations requires a wide use of psychological methods.

In tourism many factors influence consumer behaviour. By applying psychological methods in examining consumer behaviour we can get to know their needs, preferences, opinions, attitudes, motives, plans, and intentions.

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20 See the previous reference, p. 175.
21 B. Żurawik, W. Żurawik, Zarządzanie marketingiem ..., op. cit., p. 151.
The examination of consumer behaviour will contribute to making the process of managing tourism more efficient.

**Bibliography**


**KSZTAŁTOWANIE ZACHOWAŃ KONSUMENTÓW W ZARZĄDZANIU TURYSTYKĄ**

**Streszczenie:** Dwudziesty pierwszy wiek charakteryzuje się wzrastającą tendencją wyboru nowych rodzajów turystyki zarówno w Polsce, jak i na całym świecie. Już dziś niezbędnym staje się odchodzenie od konwencjonalnej, nieco zrutynizowanej oferty turystycznej, na rzecz innowacyjnych, atrakcyjniejszych propozycji uwzględniających indywidualne potrzeby klienta, a także nowo powstałe rodzaje turystyki. Poszukiwania coraz to lepszych sposobów zarządzania wymaga zatem szerszej znajomości zasad psychologii i to stanowi treść niniejszego artykułu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** model zarządzania, wizerunek, postępowania klienta

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