



HOW SOME INTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR FOR PURCHASING CIGARETTES ON THE BULGARIAN MARKET

Veselina Spasova, Stefan Zhelev

e-mail: veselina.zheleva@gmail.com; jelevs@gmail.com

Abstract *The purpose of the present research paper is to examine and analyze what internal factors influence consumer buying behaviour for purchasing cigarettes on the Bulgarian Market. The study is limited to within the Bulgarian Tobacco Market. The factors were divided into two main categories: internal and external influences. The research focuses on the internal factors as age, gender, perception, motivation, lifestyle, attitudes.*

Key words: *Tobacco Market, Consumer Behaviour, Influencing Factors*

Rationale

Consumer behaviour is dynamic and complex study. The study of consumer behaviour usually focuses on a couple of main topics: the factors that motivate people either to buy or reject products; the buying decision-making process; why consumers make the purchase; what are their choice criteria. To examine consumer behaviour is important for the marketers and essential for the development of marketing strategies [9, 17]. The purpose of the research is to examine and understand what factors influence consumer buying behaviour for purchasing cigarettes on the Bulgarian Market. Many authors [1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 14] when explaining consumer behaviour first go through the buying decision making process and then explain the fac-

tors which affect this process. For the purposes of the research I have focused mainly on the influencing factors themselves.

Research Objectives:

To analyze how some internal factors as age, gender, perception, motivation, lifestyle and attitudes influence consumer purchasing behaviour on the Bulgarian tobacco market.

Research Question:

Which of the factors influences consumer's purchasing behaviour the most?

Religion. Religion, as a factor, influencing consumer behaviour, has been an area of study of sociologists for quite some time now. It had been studied that religion could play a huge role in some cultural landscapes and behaviours.

Attitudes. Different concepts can be found for the term attitude. Most of them present the idea of a general assessment of whether one is positive or negative about an object, person or situation [16]. Attitudes also include an individual's value system, personal standards of what is good and bad, right and wrong and so forth [2]. The attitudes arise in order to satisfy one's day-to-day needs. Attitudes involve feelings, beliefs, knowledge and experience [1]. Most important, attitudes provide response patterns of the decision processes towards different products.

Lifestyle. People coming from the same subculture, social class, and occupation may have quite different lifestyles. Lifestyles can involve a lot of dimensions such as every day activities

A number of research firms divide lifestyle into eight groups based on two major dimensions: self-orientation and resources. Self-orientation groups include consumers who make their buying decisions, according to their views of the world; status-oriented buyers are those, who base their purchases on the actions and opinions of others; and the action-oriented buyers are those, who are driven by their desire for activity, variety, and risk taking.

Motivation. People have many needs and desires at any given time. Motives could be unconscious or conscious, emotional, rational, positive or negative [6].

Perception. Perception is usually explained as the process where people receive, interpret and act at the moti-

vation stimuli [9]. Perception is a process by which an individual gathers, organizes and interprets information, in order to create a significant portrayal of the surrounding environment. Two people in the same motivated state may act in different way because they understand the situation differently.

Gender. Usually men and women have different needs, standards, principles, requirements and preferences, when it comes to products and services, but nowadays, roles of men and women are changing, as their preferences and choices [15]. There are brands and products that are characterized as feminine and some as masculine, but as the perceptions are changing in many countries, including Bulgaria, women buying "masculine" brands and men "feminine" brands is not so unusual any more [8].

Age. People's taste in food, clothes and furniture preferences and etc. are often age related. Consumers in different age groups have very different needs and wants. Buying is also shaped by the stage of the family life cycle - the stages through which families might pass as they mature over time.

Research Methodology:

The aim of the research is to find, understand and analyze the factors that influence consumer's purchasing behaviour. The methods, which are more suitable for a certain research project, depend on the research problem and the purpose of the research. In order to answer the research questions and achieve the purpose of this study, one method that was used is *deductive approach*. As

the research hypothesis are based on theory and principles, the deductive approach is more appropriate to use. Because it has to deal with a large number of respondents, in order to answer to the research questions another method that was used is *quantitative method* for collecting data [21]. The power of this method is that the researcher could obtain general conclusions, as long as the sample frame is well selected.

Sampling Framework

The population for this research includes 350 smokers, essentially for the Bulgarian tobacco market and includes people at age from 18 to 65. The participants in this research are males and females, who definitely smoke tobacco products. Former smoker are not included in the research. The participants are chosen by the non-probability method.

Sample

An invitation for participation in this research was sent to 350 people, from which only 319 responded to the request, which is about 10% of non-responses.

Research

For collecting data authors used a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of twenty one questions about factors as attitudes, lifestyle, motivation, perception, gender and age. Among all the respondents in my study (total number of 319) 113 are males and 206 are females.

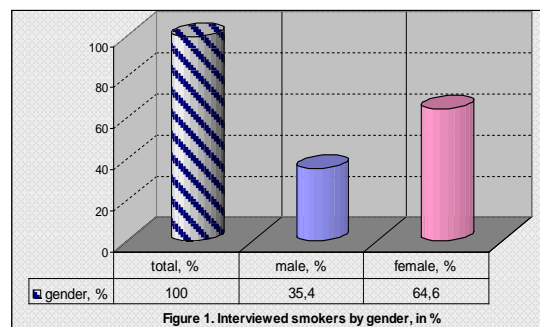


Figure 1 shows that the majority of the respondents in my study are women – about 64 % of the total respondents are female and about 35 % are male. However, many studies show that women smokers are less than man smokers in Bulgaria. Unfortunately their number is constantly growing.

All of the respondents are split in 4 age groups: 18÷25; 25÷35; 35÷45 and over 45. The biggest percentage is 40% in the *age group of 18÷25*. This age group is followed very closely with 38% for the *25÷35 age group*, next is *35÷45 age group* with 14% and last is the *Over 45 group* with less than 10% of the respondents.

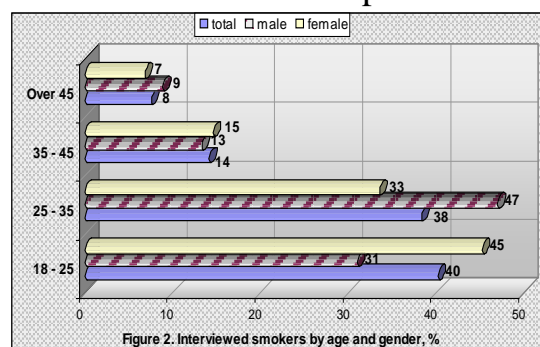


Figure 2 shows the distribution of the respondents by age and gender. Interesting point is that, in the age group of 18÷25 we can see that the women smokers (45%) are more than the men smokers (31%), and in the age group of 25÷35, men smokers

(47%) are about 20% more than men in the age group of 18÷25.

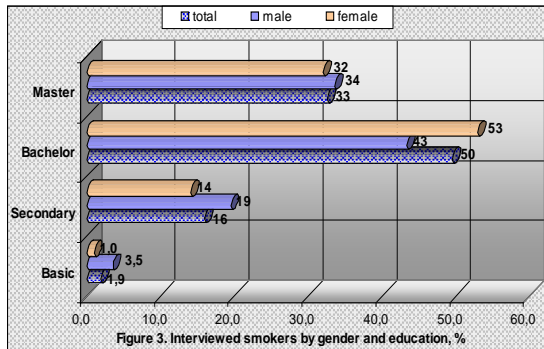
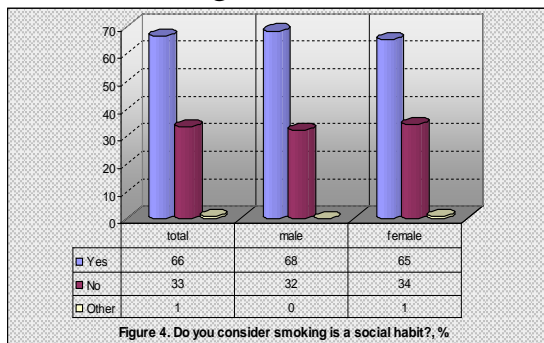


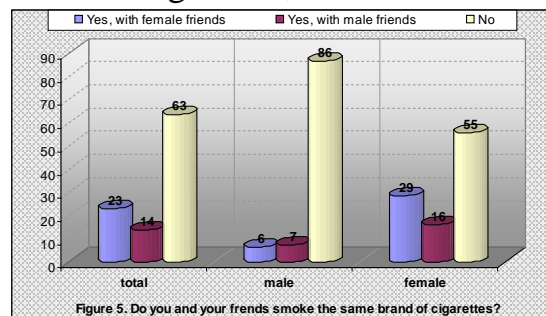
Figure 3 shows the distribution of the respondents by gender and education. Most of the participants in the study are very well educated: 50% (158 participants) of all the respondents have bachelor degree and 33% (104) have master degree. These are followed by the secondary education with 16% (51) and the group of basic education is about 2% (6). The biggest percentage here is for the women with bachelor degree – 53%, followed by men, having bachelor degree with 50% from the total male count. From all respondents with master degree, 32% are women and 34% are male. Education is the primary determinant of people’s potential to earn money [13]. It is assumed that people with better education have better positions and receive higher salaries [18].



On the question “Do you consider smoking is a social habit?” most of the respondents answered “Yes” (66%

of the total sample size) said that smoking is a social habit and helps them connect to people, and only 33 % think that smoking is not social and prefer to be in the company of a non-smoker (Figure 4).

Next figure (Figure 5) show the results when the respondents were asked whether they smoke the same brand of cigarettes, as their friends.



63% of the total respondents do not smoke the same brand as their friends, and only 37% of the respondents say that they do smoke the same brand as their friends. These results are in contrast with [13]. They claim that reference groups influence consumer behaviour, values and attitude.

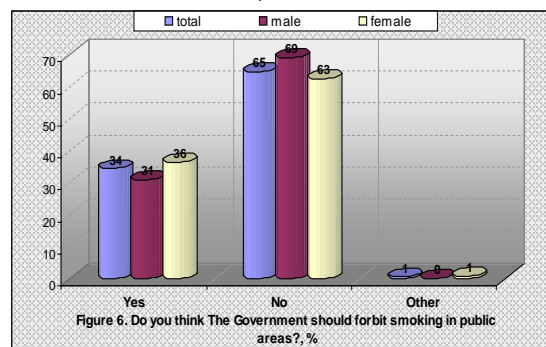


Figure 6 shows that 65% of all the respondents do not want the Government to forbid smoking in public areas and only 34% think that smoking should be forbidden. This information overlaps with the whole economic situation in the country. Bulgaria occupies the second place by number of smokers (40 %), after

Greece and holds first place in Europe on number of teenagers smokers (age 15 or less) (Bulgaria with fewer smokers, 29 September, 2010 [20]). The results from Figure 6 imply that people are comfortable with the current situation and prefer not to change. The lack of law legislations, in regard to regulation of smoking in public areas, drives people to smoke more and makes it harder for the people who would like to quit.

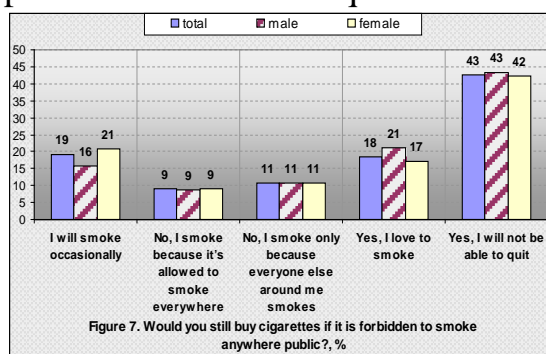
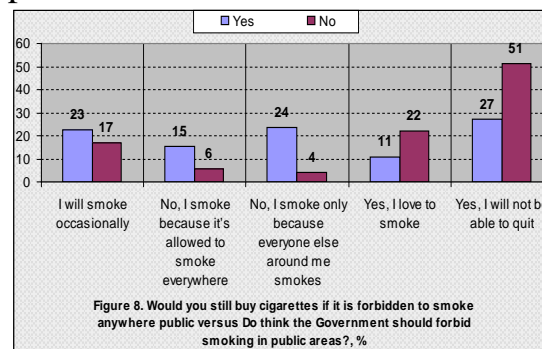


Figure 7 shows the results when the respondents were asked if they would stop buying cigarettes (quit smoking) if it is forbidden to smoke anywhere public. The results reveal that the major part of the respondents think they will not be able to quit smoking and therefore they would still buy cigarettes, when the government forbids smoking in public areas. 43% of the males and 42% of the females will not be able to quit, so they will continue to buy cigarettes. 18% of the total respondents claim that they would continue to buy cigarettes because they love to smoke, 19% of the total respondents will smoke occasionally. 9% of all respondents say they smoke because it's allowed to smoke, and they will quit if the Government forbid smoking in public places and 11% of all respondents say that they smoke only because their

friends, colleagues and family smoke, and therefore they would quit smoking if the Government forbids it in public areas.

The next figure (Figure 8) shows the results from two important questions: Do you think the Government should forbid smoking in public areas? and Would you still buy cigarettes if it is forbidden to smoke anywhere public?



The figure shows that 51% of all respondents claim they do not want the Government to forbid smoking, and they will not be able to quit. 22% of the people who do not want the Government to forbid smoking claim that love to smoke. And 24% of all people who want the government to forbid smoking in public areas say that they smoke only because people around them smoke. 15% of all respondents who want smoking to be forbidden say that they smoke only because it is allowed anywhere to smoke. And 27% of all respondents who want smoking to be forbidden probably will not be able to quit.

Conclusion

Occupation is a major factor affecting consumers purchasing behaviour [12]. It is assumed that people with better positions, such as middle and high management positions, receive higher salaries and therefore

purchase more and pay attention at quality and brand [18]. 57% of all the respondents of the research occupy middle-level management positions. Another 17% of all respondents occupy or used to occupy high-level management positions. The results also show that most of the participants in the study are very well educated: 50% of all the respondents have bachelor degree and 33% have master degree.

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As many authors [13] explain that education is the primary determinant of people's potential to earn money and get upper management positions. It is assumed that people with better education have better positions and receive higher salaries [18]. When the income is higher, the demand for goods will be higher, too, and therefore the consumer will not be too sensitive about the price [19].

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