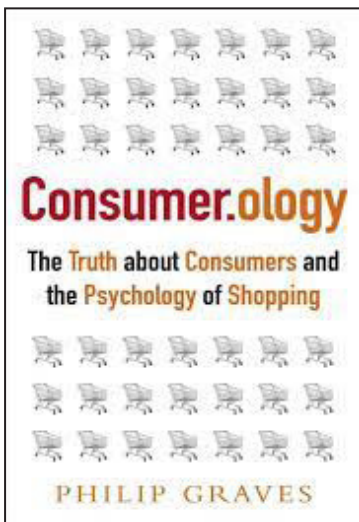




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Author's Profile

Philip Graves is a lecturer, author, and consultant on consumer behavior. After working for 20 years as a market research manager and research consultant, he saw a discrepancy between what participants in studies stated and did. This inspired him to incorporate the psychology of purchasing into his work. Many multinational companies, such as Comet, ITV, Whirlpool, Dr. Martens, New Covent Garden Food Company, Camelot, Virgin Media, Hotpoint, and Pepsi, have benefited from his advice. Philip is not only the owner of Shift, his own consulting firm, but he also works with Frontier Economics.

Overview

Understanding consumer behavior has always been an important aspect of management and marketing. As businesses attempt to meet consumers' changing preferences and needs, understanding the psychology of shopping and the true characteristics of consumers becomes increasingly important. In this environment, Philip Graves' "Consumer.ology" provides a unique perspective, challenging traditional market research norms and diving into the true behavior of customers (Graves, 2010).

Since its publication in 2010, the book has contributed to the body of knowledge on consumer behavior, consumer research, and marketing research. It critiques established market research methods, calling their accuracy and dependability in projecting customer behavior into doubt. Graves contends that many traditional market research approaches are flawed, resulting in potentially incorrect results.

The necessity for a review of “Consumer.ology” derives from its potential to transform our understanding of consumer behavior and the methods employed to study it. The book’s critique of established market research methodology, as well as its investigation into the psychology of purchasing, can provide managers and marketers with useful information. These insights can help them develop more effective tactics and make more informed judgments.

Internet commerce has changed client behavior. Customers’ purchase decisions have changed due to the Internet’s convenience, diversity, and simplicity (Khosrow-Pour, 2008; Verhoef et al., 2015). Consumers used to visit actual stores to try products before buying. Internet commerce has switched the focus to product specs, consumer feedback, and ratings to make informed decisions. Customers also use internet platforms to compare prices and items. Digital commerce has changed shopping habits and trends (Ally et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021). Consumers can shop anytime from home. Customers now shop more often, but in smaller amounts. Internet commerce has also changed customer-firm interactions. Social media and online reviews help consumers voice their opinions and experiences. Online customer service is increasingly expected from brands.

Furthermore, the book’s emphasis on shopping psychology and consumer realities is relevant in today’s corporate world. Understanding consumer behavior is more important than ever in the age of digital commerce, when online purchasing has developed as a new trend in the post-pandemic world. Because of the convenience and safety of internet shopping, the pandemic has dramatically impacted consumer behavior. This transition has increased the book’s relevance, as firms must understand these new consumer behaviors in order to thrive in the digital economy.

The book encourages managers and marketers to explore beyond conventional research methods and consider additional elements that can influence consumer behavior by defying market research norms. This is especially significant in the context of digital commerce, where a range of elements, such as website aesthetics, online reviews, and social media presence, can affect consumer behavior.

Thus, a review of “Consumer.ology” is not only significant but also necessary in the realms of management and marketing, particularly in the age of internet commerce and post-pandemic transformations. It can provide a fresh viewpoint on consumer behavior and market research, questioning pre-existing assumptions and encouraging creative thinking. The purpose of this critique is to thoroughly investigate the book’s arguments and assess their consequences for management and marketing in the digital era.

Point of View

The author of “Consumer.ology”, Philip Graves, offers an insightful viewpoint on customers in the realm of shopping behavior. He underscores the significance of recognizing the environmental factors that shape consumer behavior, asserting that the setting in which shopping occurs is vital for comprehending why consumers opt for certain purchases. Graves proposes that components of the retail environment, which might seem inconsequential initially, can profoundly sway consumer behavior. For instance, elements such as ambient music and lighting can influence consumers’ moods and, subsequently, their buying decisions. He contends that these environmental elements can have a substantial impact on sales, emphasizing the necessity of conducting research in the actual shopping setting rather than in locations that are merely convenient for researchers.

Moreover, Graves highlights that consumers themselves are often oblivious to how the environment shapes their behavior. They tend to provide plausible explanations for their purchases, even when these explanations do not accurately represent the subconscious influences at work. For example, consumers

might assert that they have been contemplating buying a specific product before seeing it in the store, even when the product is new and they are encountering it for the first time. Graves also discusses the role of visual cues in influencing consumer behavior. He notes that consumers are more inclined to buy certain products, such as lottery scratch cards, when they are visually prompted by the product display. This suggests that the manner in which products are displayed can significantly affect consumers' purchasing decisions.

Understanding customer behavior is complicated. These theories shed light on customers' buying decisions and market behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), states that consumers' intentions to do certain behaviors are impacted by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This idea says that consumers are rational decision-makers who weigh their options before buying. Another theory, the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), states that personal, contextual, and behavioral factors influence consumer behavior. This hypothesis suggests that consumers learn by watching others and their results. Meanwhile, the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) also explains consumer behavior. This model suggests that environmental cues affect consumers' organisms, which affect their behavior. According to this paradigm, the shop environment can influence consumers' emotions and purchases.

In "Consumer.ology", Philip Graves presents a perspective that both aligns with and diverges from traditional theories of consumer behavior. Graves' emphasis on the environmental influences on consumer behavior aligns with the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model. Similar to the SOR model, Graves suggests that environmental factors such as the retail environment and visual prompts can significantly influence consumers' internal states and their purchasing behavior. He argues that these environmental factors can have a dramatic impact on sales, highlighting the importance of conducting research in the actual shopping environment.

However, Graves diverges from the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Social Cognitive Theory in his view of consumers as not entirely rational decision-makers. He suggests that consumers are often unaware of how the environment influences their behavior and tend to offer plausible justifications for their purchases, even when these justifications do not accurately reflect the unconscious influences at play. This perspective challenges the notion of consumers as rational decision-makers who consider the potential outcomes of their actions before making a purchase.

In conclusion, personal attitudes, societal influences, environmental stimuli, and information processing affect consumer behavior (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010; Solomon, 2020; Wänke, 2008). Understanding these effects can help marketers improve consumer behavior strategies. Consumer behavior is complicated and varies by person and situation.

Crowd Factor

In his book "Consumer.ology," Philip Graves investigates the impact of the crowd, or the presence of other people, on consumer shopping behaviors. He contends that the mere presence of others can influence a consumer's buying journey and product decision. Graves also investigates how salespeople influence customer decisions. He contends that a customer's relationship with a store's sales staff can completely determine the outcome of a shopping experience. Graves claims that skilled salespeople may get clients to share what influences them and then use that information afterwards.

This point of view is consistent with sociological theories that emphasize the importance of social influences on individual behavior. For example, the Social Impact Theory (Latané, 1981) suggests that the presence of others might influence an individual's behavior. Similarly, according to the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2001), an individual's behavior can be influenced by their membership in social groups. Finally, Graves' viewpoint on the "Crowd Factor" in consumer behavior emphasizes the importance of social influences on purchasing behavior. He contends that the presence of others, whether fellow customers or salespeople, can influence consumers' shopping experiences and purchasing decisions.

The “Crowd Factor” takes several forms in e-commerce. Like a crowd at a store, a product’s online likes, shares, and favorable reviews might influence a customer’s purchase. The Social Impact Theory says that people’s actions are influenced by others. Celebrity endorsements influence consumer behavior. According to social cognitive theory, people learn from others. Consumers may buy a product if significant people endorse it (Solomon, 1983). This is related to “social proof,” the psychological idea that people copy others’ acts because they think they are right. Viral trends also influence consumer behavior (Berger & Milkman, 2012). To fit in, customers may buy a social media-famous product or brand. The Social Identity Theory states that social groups can impact a person’s behavior.

Online shopping, celebrity endorsements, and viral trends have expanded the “Crowd Factor” in consumer behavior. These points reinforce Graves’ “Consumer.ology” views on societal influences on consumer behavior. Marketers and other organizations can improve their efforts to influence consumer behavior in the digital era by studying the factors that affect it.

AFECT Aspect

The AFECT criterion is presented by Philip Graves in his book “Consumer.ology” as a tool for determining if the findings of consumer research represent consumer reality or are an artificial by-product of the research process. This is done to establish whether or not the conclusions of consumer research are contrived. The abbreviation AFECT stands for an analysis of behavioral data, a frame of mind, an environment, a covert investigation, and a timeline (Graves, 2010).

The AFECT criterion, according to Graves, can be used to determine whether or not a research investment is likely to be fruitful. He uses an example of a project that experimented with several techniques of in-store communication and price tags. In this case, he claims that traditional research methods such as in-depth interviews or focus groups may not yield accurate data since they do not meet the AFECT criteria. This viewpoint challenges typical market research assumptions, which rely mostly on self-reported measures and focus groups. Graves claims that these approaches do not accurately reflect the reality of the consumer market because they do not account for the unconscious elements that influence consumer behavior.

Thus, Graves’ AFECT criteria in “Consumer.ology” provide a fresh perspective on consumer behavior that opposes previous market research theories while correlating with certain psychological and sociological principles. These theories call the status quo in market research into question. His emphasis on the importance of environmental influences, unconscious factors, and social context provides a fresh perspective on consumer behavior as well as crucial insights for marketers and academics alike.

Conclusion

Finally, Philip Graves’ book, *Consumer.ology* offers a fresh and insightful perspective on consumer behavior. It contradicts the conventions of classical market research theory yet conveys a unique perspective consistent with a variety of psychological and sociological ideas. The book emphasizes the role of environmental influences, unconscious factors, and social context in shaping consumer behavior. This is especially relevant in today’s digital world, where e-commerce is the norm, because this book focuses on how consumers are affected by the environment.

The book’s exploration of the ‘crowd factor’ in consumer behavior is particularly relevant to the modern era, characterized by the dominance of e-commerce and the influence of viral trends and celebrity endorsements that significantly influence consumer behavior. The concept of “crowd factor” comes to life in the age of digital commerce in many ways. For example, the total number of likes, shares, and helpful reviews a product collects online can influence customers’ product-buying decisions in the same way that crowds’ influences in traditional stores influence purchasing decisions. Developed by Graves, his AFECT criteria offer a novel approach to analyzing consumer behavior that contrasts with traditional market research concepts and is consistent with specific psychological and sociological

models. To do. The focus on the importance of environmental influences, unconscious factors, and social context provides new perspectives on consumer behavior and important insights for both marketers and scientists.

In today's world, this book's insights into the "crowd factor" and his AFECT criteria are extremely important for marketers and entrepreneurs. The field of study known as "Consumer.ology" is becoming increasingly relevant in today's society, where online shopping has become more prevalent in the aftermath of the pandemic. It offers a new perspective that challenges traditional market research theories while providing valuable insight into customer behavior. By first understanding how influencers matter and how they work, marketers and organizations can be more effective at influencing customer behavior and succeeding in the digital age. strategy can be developed. In short, Consumer.ology is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in learning more about consumer behavior and motivations. His insights into crowd factors and his AFECT criteria, and his emphasis on the relevance of environmental influences and unconscious variables, provide new perspectives on consumer behavior and provide useful insights for marketers and researchers. To do. In addition, the value of environmental influences and unconscious factors is emphasized.

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