THE CORRELATION BETWEEN EXTERNAL STIMULATION AND THE DECISION TO CHOOSE A SUPPLY OF WIDE PRODUCT CONSUMPTION BY CONSUMERS

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Abstract: Considering that the proposed model is based on the knowledge of external stimuli, which can be key factors in the design of a message and which can thus influence the consumers' decision regarding the choice of a product, determining the sociological variables that can contribute to the modification in favorable sense of the buying behavior of consumers was conducted an exploratory research at the level of consumers of consumer products in Prahova County.
Key-words: external stimuli, decision, choice, product assortment, consumer.
JEL Classification: B41, D47, M31, O47.

1.   Timelines of the research
By conducting a direct research, the current information requirement was ensured.
Through the formulated central objectives, the investigated issue was investigated in detail.

2.   The purpose and objectives in research
The main objectives that have resulted from the research purpose are the extent to which the price, quality, packaging, brand and, including, the family influence the consumers' decision to choose a product assortment.

3.   Research methodology and main working tools
3.1.   Defining the purpose, objectives, hypotheses and variables of the research
The purpose of the research was aimed at two directions, namely:
1. identification of the main external stimuli underlying the choice of a product range by consumers and which can thus be key factors in designing a communication message;
2. determining the sociological variables that can contribute to the favorable change in the buying behavior of consumers.

Considering the first purpose of the research, which consisted in identifying the main external stimuli that underlie the choice of a product range by consumers and which can thus be key factors in designing a communication message, a series of hypotheses have been established, depending on the variables considered in the research. The price represents the result of the evaluation process of goods and services, existing on a given market, in order to satisfy the interests of the participants in the exchange process.

Hypothesis 1a: Most consumers consider price as a factor that largely influences their decision to choose a product assortment.

Hypothesis 1b: There is a statistically significant correlation between the extent to which the price influences the consumers' decision to choose a product assortment and the advertising through the media, respectively by television, radio, print media, etc. Quality refers to the extent to which a product meets the specific needs of a consumer.

Hypothesis 2a: Most consumers consider quality as a factor that greatly influences their decision to choose a product assortment.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a statistically significant correlation between the extent to which the quality influences the consumers' decision to choose a product assortment and

the various promotional campaigns, such as contests, raffles with prizes in cash or gifts, free product tastings, etc. Packaging is a coordinated system of preparing the goods for handling them in safe, efficient and operative conditions, transport, distribution, storage, retail, consumption or reuse, all combined with maximizing the value of consumption, sales and therefore profit.

Hypothesis 3a: Most consumers value packaging as a factor that does not play an important role in their decision to choose a product assortment.

Hypothesis 3b: There is a statistically significant correlation between the role played by the packaging in the decision of the consumers to choose a product assortment and the websites of the companies in the related field. The mark represents a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination thereof, designed to identify the goods or services of a seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.

Hypothesis 4a: Most consumers consider brand as a factor that greatly influences their decision to choose a product range.

Hypothesis 4b: There is a statistically significant correlation between the extent to which the brand influences the consumers'decision to choose a product assortment and advertising through media, respectively television, radio, print media, etc. Regarding the second purpose of the research, which consisted in determining the sociological variables that can contribute to the favorable change in the buying behavior of consumers, a series of hypotheses were also established according to the variables, considered in the research. The family is part of a household consisting of two or more persons living together. The family is the most influential factor in purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 5a: Most consumers consider the family as a factor that greatly influences their decision to choose and purchase a product range.

Hypothesis 5b: There is a statistically significant correlation between the extent to which family members (parents, siblings, sisters, spouses, wives, etc.) influence consumers' choice of a product range and the age category in which they fall.

4.   Choosing the sources of information

The choice of sources of information was based on the objectives identified in the previous phase. Thus, external and primary data sources were used (data obtained directly from the company supplying consumer products, as well as by INS).

5.   Research

Analysis of the act of purchase, of the concepts of buyer, consumer, purchase behavior, consumer behavior, of the fundamental theories regarding the consumer behavior, the factors that influence the decision of purchase, as well as the relation between the consumer and the brand (like many other factors) are essential elements in understanding the buyers' decision to purchase a certain product range. Consumption occupies a central position in the mechanism of economic life, having a close connection with the production of goods and the provision of the service and playing an active, energizing role on them. Regardless of the importance given to it in the different types of companies (depending on the type of economy), the role or within any economy is irreplaceable. It can be said that the term "consumption" in all its complexity represents a faithful mirror of a society, reflecting the various social stratifications and differentiations, contradictions, place and role of socio-professional groups and categories in society. Also, "consumer behavior" reflects to some extent the expression of the level of education, culture and civilization but also of the quality of social life of a community.

This is why approaching consumption and consumption behavior from a psychosocial perspective is particularly important. The role of consumption, and implicitly

the need for its study, is even more evident from the multitude of functions it exercises in society.

This is why the quality of consumer has a special relevance, being in fact the final element, but at the same time the triggering element of the decision to buy or not to buy.

Therefore, the concept of consumer behavior is more complex, for at least two reasons:

1) it is more varied, being influenced by a number of factors (personal, psychological, cultural, social, situational, etc.);

2) he is dynamic (knowing a whole series of transformations in a given period of time).

Summarizing, purchasing behavior (which may or may not accompany consumer behavior) reflects people's behavior in the case of buying or not buying, or delaying the satisfaction of a job; while the consumption behavior mirrors the behavior of people in the case of the consumption of material goods / services. Buying not only means paying, but also choosing. And to choose means ultimately to decide. The needs that determine a person to buy can be utilitarian - which determines the objective, functional characteristics of the product.The buyer is perceived in the decision process as the solver of a problem to which he must answer as correctly as possible: what to buy? how much to buy? where to buy? when to buy? how to buy? etc. The evaluation of the possible variants is the moment when the consumer removes certain marks from his list, after a previous analysis of them. Finally, only one brand will be bought, the rest will be rejected. The attributes according to which the consumers compare the different variants are known under the title of evaluation criteria. These can be: price, number of functional options, brand reputation, availability, etc. The purchase can be planned (both the product and the brand are chosen before the store visit), partially planned (there is an intention to buy a particular product, but the choice of the brand is delayed until the store is visited), or unplanned (both items are chosen in the store). Market studies show that most decisions, especially for consumer goods, are made in the store, in front of the shelf.

6.   Method

The research closely followed the relationship between the demand of the products and the offer of the analyzed company, which determined a ratio of forces on the market.

Thus, the ratio between demand (C) and supply (O) determines the ratio of market forces (Rf):

$$R_f = \frac{Offer(O)}{Application(C)} \tag{4}$$

It is known that the market forces report attests to the market situation at one point. There can be three situations for Rf, namely:

a) Rf < 1, supply is lower than demand. In this case the absorption state is manifested and the market is a sales market;

b) Rf = 1, (offer = application) is the equilibrium state of the market;

c) Rf > 1, (offer > application) the market is characterized by the abundance of products / services, thus asserting the buyers market. The saturation rate (Rs) indicator of the market allows the assessment of the potential of developing the sales of a product on the reference market.

$$R_s = \frac{Pa(i)}{Pp(i)} * 100 \ [\%] \tag{5}$$

unde:

- Pa (i) is the current product market "i" in volume or monetary units;

- Pp (i) is the potential market for the product "i" in volume or monetary units.

The Penetration Rate (Rp) indicator of the market allows to evaluate the possibilities of increasing the sales of a company.

$$R_p \, (j) = \frac{Pa(j)}{Pp(j)} * 100 \; [\%] \tag{6}$$

in which:

- Rp (j) is the penetration rate (diffusion) of the company's product "j" on the reference market;
- Pa (j) the current market of the company "j" in volume or monetary units;
- Pp (i) the potential product market "i" in volume or in monetary units.

We mention that the comparative analysis that aimed at the situation of sales of a category of consumer product has been made for the last two years, according to the graph1:
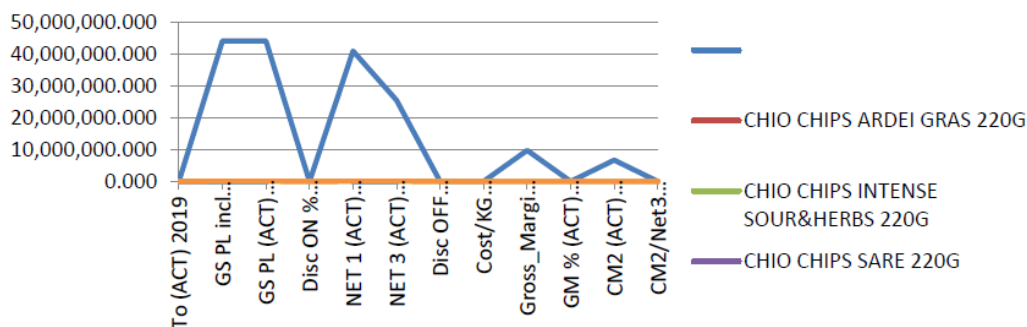

Chart 1. Comparative evolution of sales in 2018, respectively, in 2019

Large increases were also recorded among households in large localities, with over 150 thousand inhabitants. Modern trade formats remain the main channel for home shopping.

Also, considering the external determinants evaluated in 2018 compared to 2019, I clearly prove that sales had a positive evolution in 2019, increasing compared to 2018, according to graph 2:
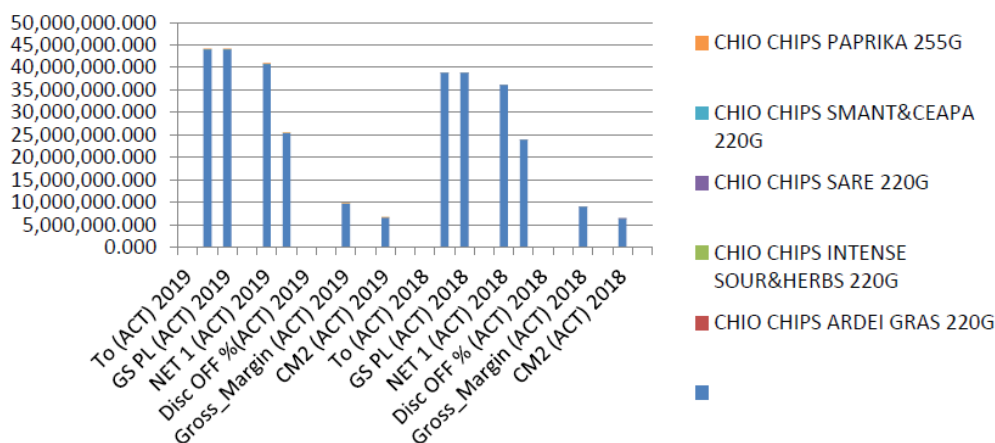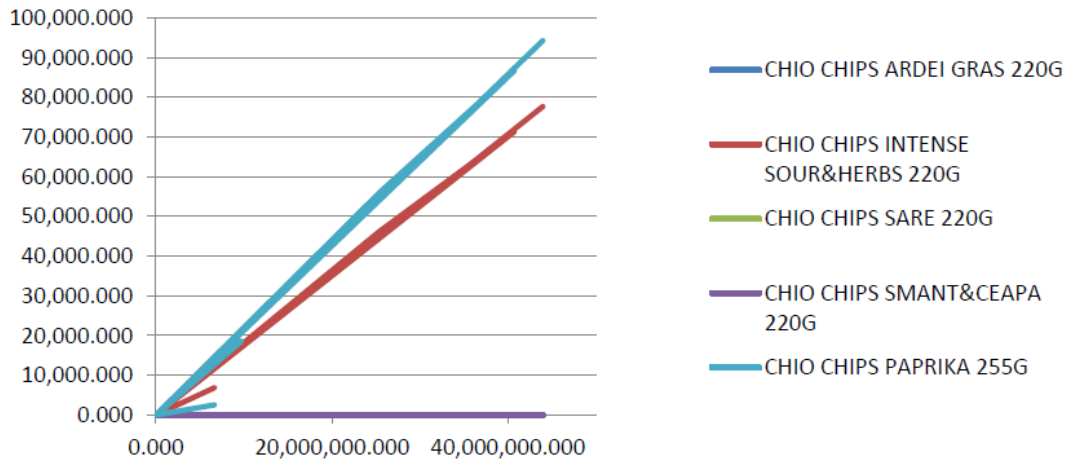

Chart 2. Sales evolution in 2019 compared to 2018

Given the current, sensitive situation, in fact, where we are, the analysis followed the evolution of sales and in the first quarter of this year, 2020 and, according to graph 3, as expected, the evolution of sales of consumer products exploded.

Graph 3. Evolution of categories in the first quarter of 2020 compared to last year

It is known that the model of economic growth of our country is based on consumption. Moreover, consumption is mainly oriented towards food.

7. Conclusions

As a result of the qualitative research carried out, the proposed objectives have been fulfilled, so we can say that they have been identified as main external stimuli that can be key factors in designing a communication message and which can thus influence the consumers' decision to choose and buy the of a product - price, quality, brand and packaging. Also, it is a certainty that the market is driven and influenced by the consumer.

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