Consumer behavior: buyer personas, customer experience and journey (part 1)
There are more social media users today than there were people on the entire planet in 1971
3.8 billion people are on social media and spend on average of 2 hours and 24 minutes per day using social and communication apps,

and 4.5 billion people worldwide are now surfing the Internet (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2020).
The advancement of cyberspace and the pervasiveness that digital media and smart devices have in our lives have revolutionized the ways we relate to brands.

Shopping via multiple online and offline channels is now a consolidated phenomenon, with firms recurrently adding new occasions for interaction with consumers who increasingly exploit different tools ubiquitously and at any time to gather information about products.
Digital touchpoints with brands have become broadly used, leading to

- more options for customers, and more power and control for consumers over the processes of orienting choices and purchasing merchandise

- along the different stages of their shopping journeys: information seeking, buying products, benefitting from after-sale assistance, etc.
CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

The set of processes used by individuals and groups to evaluate, select, use and eliminate products, services and goods for the satisfaction of needs and desires.

We identify 4 aspects:

1. The actor (the subject)
2. Activities and processes
3. The object of the behavior
4. The ultimate goal of the consumer
1) THE SUBJECT

- Most of the literature focuses on the individual, a single person

- The only social aggregate that most draws the attention of the literature is the family (now only partially true …)

- Most of our purchases are of an individual nature
2) ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

- Articulation of consumer behavior

- The literature considers the aspects that see the consumer protagonist before, during and after the purchase

- Also events that take place much before and much after the purchase
3) THE OBJECT

- Traditionally it is the physical product
- Then come the services
- In general terms: it is whatever is able to satisfy needs or fulfill desires
4) THE ULTIMATE AIM

- Unanimously recognized in the satisfaction of needs

- Reference to individual needs (subjectivity)

- The consumer is the only one able to determine whether the choice made is satisfactory or not
### EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACHES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Positivism</strong></th>
<th><strong>Interpretivism</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims at <strong>predicting</strong> consumer behavior</td>
<td>Aims at <strong>understanding and interpreting</strong> behavior</td>
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<td>It mainly uses <strong>quantitative</strong> methodologies</td>
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<td>Assumes that consumers are <strong>rational</strong> (maximization, optimization)</td>
<td>There is <strong>no absolutely valid reality</strong> (it varies according to the observer and the way he or she observes).</td>
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<td>and that it is possible to describe (&quot;<strong>measure</strong>&quot;) the behavior with a good degree of approximation and control it</td>
<td>Consumers <strong>are not rational</strong>, but consumption varies according to the context and the symbology of the behavior</td>
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<td><strong>Difficulty</strong> in predicting and controlling behavior</td>
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BRAND TRUST AND BUYING INTENTION
PALM OIL: ONLINE CONVERSATIONS

Score (99.743)

Campaigners are working to encourage manufacturers to remove it from their products and raise awareness so that consumers stop buying foods, soaps and cosmetics containing palm oil. They are also working to raise awareness of palm oil as a transport biofuel, that is a fuel from plant sources, and have stopped two palm oil power stations in the UK from going ahead. Myths about palm oil.

Score (66.580)

Palm oil as an ingredient is often hidden, as manufacturers label their products as containing ‘vegetable oil’ to mislead consumers. But thanks to campaigns, in the UK it will soon be compulsory to name palm oil when it is an ingredient.

Score (57.979)

Biofuel Power Stations There are plans by a number of companies to build electricity power stations in the UK using palm oil as a biofuel. Palm oil power stations have disastrous consequences...

Score (51.993)

The largest palm oil producers: Major palm oil traders: The largest individual consumers of palm oil: Wilmar, IOI and Sinar Mas Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) Unilever, Nestlé, Procter & Gamble and Henkel according to its own figures, the Unilever Group alone consumes 1.6 million tons of palm oil every year (2008).

Score (51.205)

Manufacturers and palm oil LUSH, a company that sells highly fragranced soaps and bath products, sent two representatives to visit Indonesia to check out the palm oil that they were using. They found the oil was not sustainable and it wasn’t possible to ensure that it would be in the future. They are removing palm oil from their products.

Score (45.183)

But few companies have done so far and some companies mislead consumers by claiming to care about the issue whilst some of their products still contain palm oil. Another said they have removed palm oil from some of their range, but not ‘where a recipe needed it.’ This attitude does not go far enough and we can live without eating food that kills.

Score (41.270)

Palm oil is an edible plant oil which has become a common ingredient in many consumer products. Today, around 50 percent of the goods we use every day contain palm oil, from processed foods to candles, grooming products and “biofuels”.
PALM OIL: WORD CLOUD CLUSTERS

1. **Wildlife**: legato alle ripercussioni sulla fauna delle aree in cui avviene la deforestazione legata alla produzione di olio di palma.

2. **People**: ripercussioni sulle popolazioni locali, lesione dei diritti umani, ecc.

3. **Climate change**: ripercussioni dell’incremento di inquinamento, CO2, ecc.

4. **Consumer**: inserimento di olio di palma nei prodotti e attività di comunicazione «mendace» da parte dei produttori.

**Frequencies:**
- **Wildlife**: 18,03%
- **People**: 17,21%
- **Climate change**: 33,61%
- **Consumer**: 31,15%
THEORETICAL APPROACHES

3 main strands of study

1. Cognitive approach

2. Behavioral approach (or behavioristic)

3. Study of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)
COGNITIVISM

The models study

- How individuals acquire **information** from the environment
- How they give them a **meaning**
- How they store them in **memory**
- How they use them **to acquire and interpret further stimuli** to direct behaviors towards the achievement of the set objectives
Virtually infinite environmental information

With attention the consumer **selects** the information

With understanding the consumer **gives a meaning** to the stimuli

If they enter the memory they can confirm, modify or restructure existing knowledge

With the integration the consumer **evaluates 2 or more alternatives to make a choice**
The consumer's behavior is explained on the basis of extra personal influences of environmental type.

The behaviorist approach is based on the concept of learning: behaviors change as a result of learning, i.e. the experience accumulated over time of the repeated association between stimuli and results.

The main types of learning are classic and active conditioning (different ways in which environmental stimuli affect the conduct of individuals).
LEARNING

It is a permanent change in the behavior of the subject induced by the experience of environmental events.

- The cognitive processes that mediate the environment-behavior relationship are not relevant.

- The mechanisms that explain the learning are the processes of conditioning.
BEHAVIORAL APPROACH: PAVLOV’S DOG

1. Before Conditioning
   - Food, Salivation
   - Unconditioned Stimulus, Unconditioned Response

2. Before Conditioning
   - Bell, No Salivation
   - Neutral Stimulus, No Conditioned Response

3. During Conditioning
   - Bell + Food, Salivation
   - Unconditioned Stimulus, Unconditioned Response

4. After Conditioning
   - Bell, Salivation
   - Conditioned Stimulus, Conditioned Response
Learning is the result of conditioning by delivering a reinforcer selected among many possible in a given context.

- A hungry mouse, introduced in the Skinner-box, during the exploration activity randomly presses a lever.
- The pressure emits a food pellet (reinforcement) and this will happen every time the rat presses the lever.
- An operating conditioning is thus established.
CONSUMPTION CULTURE

- In the ’80s alternative theoretical perspectives develop
- 2 premises:
  1. The emerging approaches concentrate consumption experiences and not merely on purchases. Try to explain what happens when products enter people’s life
  2. Investigate the aspects that go beyond mere economic utility (identity, social affiliation, etc.)
Theoretical models which aim to describe and comprehend the aspects of consumption that are:

- Contextual
- Symbolic
- Experiential

NEED FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCHES
Contextual
Symbolic
Symbolic
Experiential
Emphasizes the «productive» aspects of consumption

Consumers who transform in a creative and personal way the symbolic meanings that are codified in advertising, products and brands

Importance of activities because consumers learn from other consumers and base their preferences on what they see “in the others’ hands”
CCT CONSUMER CREATIVITY
COMPANIES EXPLOIT CONSUMERS’ CREATIVITY!!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6V1dWH4X9U0
CONSUMPTION AS A CULTURAL ACTIVITY

- Goods, services and brands influence people’s culture
- Goods, services and brands are used by consumers to gain a certain position in the society
- A position that changes:
  - In time,
  - In different contexts (home, with friends, at work, etc.)
  - In different moments of the day, of the week (sport, pubs, study time, weekend, etc.)
1. Individual projects of identity creation
2. Market cultures
3. Historical analysis of models and institutions linked to consumption
4. Consumption as practice of reproduction or ideological resistance
1. IDENTITY PROJECTS

- Activities that consumers implement to express themselves and the image they want to transmit to others

- Development of a real «wardrobe» (clothes, cars, accessories, etc.) needed to build an image (self concept)

- This image is fundamentally coherent, but changes and adapt to different contexts

- The conflict among our different images is deceptive, we are able to manage them all!!!!!
EXTENDED SELF (BELK 1988)

The identity of a person is given by her personal characteristics, but also by her objects, services used, and accomplished consumption activities.

Frustration and dissatisfaction if a person CANNOT afford to buy those goods and services needed to communicate her identity (or the one she aspires to).
COUNTERFEIT GOODS

- Why do people buy branded goods?
- And why do people buy counterfeit goods?
- Who buys counterfeit goods … do they say it?
2. CONSUMER CULTURES

- **Collective expression** of individual consumption
- Identity projects **converge** in aggregated socio-cultural structures (see Harley).
- Relationships based on **solidarity, mutual identification and distinction** are created with respect to others.
- Consumer cultures may be short-lived (built during a holiday, excursions, etc.), but links are created that **last beyond** the end of the experience.
It is a phenomenon that CANNOT BE EXPLAINED by the sole marketing strategy of the company.!!
Official page
Nel Mulino che vorrei

https://www.nelmulinochevorrei.it/index.html
3. CONSUMPTION MODELS AND INSTITUTIONS

- Analysis of **social structures** that have influenced consumer behavior (social class, ethnicity, gender, level of education, etc.)
  - Role of **cultural capital**: linked to the level of education of the subject, of relatives (especially parents) only indirectly related to disposable income
  - Social links **induced by consumer choices**: stronger and transversal to the social structure (income, religion, profession)
- **If someone is a fan of a soccer team ...**
4. IDEOLOGICAL RESISTANCE

- Traditional marketing sees consumer activity as **NEUTRAL** from a moral, ideological or personal value perspective.

- The CCT is linked to the **critical marketing** trend.
Consolidated perspective

- Accepted market logic
- Institutions and organizations (including media) that strengthen the consolidated value system
- Consumers buy goods without caring about ideological issues

Critical consumption

- Consumers begin to evaluate their purchases with an eye to ideology
- They oppose to the so-called mainstream market
- Supported by information from institutions and associations that do counter information
Need to find new ways to deal with customers