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## THE CONCEPT OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: DEFINITIONS IN A CONTEMPORARY MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

There have been some multiple understandings and considerations of the concept of consumer behavior, however little is known about the concept in this contemporary area. This research purpose is to explore the concept of consumer behavior under different aspects of its interpretation. The approach is based on a sound documentary analysis, with some direct and indirect observations. It consists of a sound search for relevant literature, followed by the evaluation of sources, an identification of themes, and gaps.

The results show that there are some similarities but also some differences in the definition of the concept following the research context. As such, there is not a quite common definition of this concept. However, a common conception of consumer behavior refers to the particular perceptions of habits, lifestyles, attitude and practices.

**Keywords:** Consumer behavior, Consumption, Africa, Marketing.

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### INTRODUCTION

The concept of consumer behavior is defined by several authors in the Western context specifically such as De Mooij and Hofstede (2011), Schneider, Krieger, and Bayraktar (2011), Campanella (2016), Agarwala, Mishra, and Singh (2018), and Islam and Chandrasekaran (2020). In the African context little is known about the concept of consumer behavior (Diop,

2012; Sahlaoui, 2016; Nassè, 2020). For some researchers such as Hulland (2019), Vargo and Koskela-Huotari (2020) there is a need for conceptual papers in a marketing perspective but researchers interest in conceptual papers is trifling for many reasons such as the numerous challenges confronted in framing conceptual papers (Vargo & Koskela-Huotari, 2020), the failure of both academia and publishers to motivate and encourage researchers to do so. The purpose of this research is to revitalize the consideration for conceptual papers by intending a conceptual review of consumer behavior. However, the deep understanding of consumer behavior in different context can help both companies and managers to refine their strategies towards consumers, and thus, renovate their given products and services.

Still, what is the understanding of the consumer behavior concept virtuously by researchers in contemporary marketing perspectives?

This paper aims to make a thorough review of the literature on the concept of consumer behavior in a present marketing angle.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Process:** This is a sounding documentary analysis in which articles and books are gathered for the purpose of this research. The documentary analysis is also completed by some direct and indirect observations. Thus, a synthesis is made to bring out the different themes on consumer behavior.

**Research Context:** Most of the definitions on the concept have been made in developed countries context and what is known about the concept in developing countries' context is very little. Thus, the research is carried out in Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou). Consumption practices have been observed and therefore described.

**Data Collection and Gathering:** The data is from multi-secondary sources. The data is based on several research papers conducted in the African context but also, it derives from other various papers from the same source. Some various sources are: The researcher has chosen the papers that have a good quality. These sources are from internet, particularly from the different search engines such as 'Google, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Yahoo, Researchgate, and Academia'. These sources are analyzed, examined, synthesized, and critically evaluated to provide a perfect picture of the state of knowledge on the research concept.

**Ethical Considerations:** It is assured that the articles and the papers that are considered for this review are published in some quality journals. Some of these papers are from open access journals and some other papers are from non-open access journals (Nassè, 2020).

### **THE CONCEPT OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

The concept of consumer behavior has been well-defined by several researchers. Some Western researchers have defined consumer behavior as the exactly how and the why individuals consume some given products or services (Bergadaa & Faure, 1995; Esso & Dibb, 2004). The definition of the concept of consumer behavior given by Bergadaa and Faure (1995), Esso and Dibb (2004), is too narrowed and it does not bring out the motives around consumption not only in the context of Western consumption, but also in the other contexts such as Africa or Asian. For Further Mokhlis (2008), consumer behavior refers to the different aspects of the consumer's consumption choices. Mokhlis states that consumers do make some decisions on the choices for instance to consume or not to consume a given product. Mokhlis' approach of the concept of consumer behavior is much more centered in the Asian context and

it is strongly related to the religious environment, to the extent that it is not possible to perceive that other factors can also influence the consumption choices of consumers. Diop (2004) defines consumer behavior as an acquired attitude by individuals that consume a given product. The acquired attitude is specific to each sociocultural context and to each consumer. Diop goes that consumers cannot be categorised into one single group for the reason that each consumer is characterised by his or her socio-cultural differences. This approach to consumer behavior concept limits the consumer to his or her own environment, and it is too centered on the Senegalese Muslim consumption context. However, the concept of consumer behavior has been defined later by Diop (2012) still in the context of Senegal. Diop (2012) shows that consumer behavior includes some values that significantly influence consumers' shopping and consumption choices, and these values include knowledge, manners, beliefs, and customs. For Agarwala, Mishra, and Singh (2018) consumer behavior is portrayed as attitudes, values, and actions exposed in a consumption perspective by consumers. This perception of consumer behavior fails to bring out the psychological aspect related to consumer behavior. In the Burkinabe context, Nassè et al. (2016), Nassè (2018), Nassè et al. (2019) have defined the concept of consumer behavior as the how consumers examine, evaluate, decide, which products, and/or services they need, and then they make purchases with some specific motives related to choice, consumption, quality, taste, advertising, or price.

In the Ghanaian context, the concept of consumer behavior has been approached differently. Galbete et al. (2017) have defined consumer behavior as an aspect of the daily life styles that concerns diet and food. This aspect is always subject to some changes and to some variations that reflect the specific needs of every consumer. This definition of Galbete et al. (2017) is centered on the diet and food whereas consumption includes other type of products that may not be edible such as clothing, transportation, and housing. Thus, their definition is too narrow. For Nassè (2021) consumer behavior is a decision mode, examination mode, and an evaluation mode of on products and some services before making their purchases or repurchases with some specific choice, consumption, quality, taste, advertising or price requirements and expectations.

In a word the conceptions of consumer behavior can be classified into two themes. First, there is the conception of consumer behavior as an attitude (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Portray of Consumer Behavior as an Attitude*

Authors	Conceptions of consumer behavior in the literature
Bergadaa and Faure (1995) ; Essoo and Dibb (2004)	Consumer behavior is how and why people consume products.
Diop (2004)	Consumer behavior is an attitude adopted by individuals who consume a given product or service.
Galbete et al. (2017)	Consumer behavior is a daily life style.
Agarwala, Mishra, and Singh (2018) ; Nassè (2021)	Consumer behavior refers to attitudes, values, and actions exposed in a consumption perspective.

(Source : Nassè, Synthesis on the concept of consumer behavior, 2015-2018.)

Second, there is the conception of consumer behavior as a choice (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Portray of Consumer Behavior as a Choice*

Authors	Conceptions of consumer behavior in the literature
Zikmund and D'Amico (1996)	Consumption behavior corresponds to the activities in which people engage in making selections, purchases.
Mokhlis (2008)	Consumer behavior is similar to that of the consumer's choice on a particular product.
Diop (2012)	Consumer behavior includes these values which significantly influence purchasing and consumption choices.
Nassè et al. (2016); Nassè (2018); Nassè et al. (2019); Nassè (2021)	Consumer behavior is a mode of purchases or repurchases with some specific choice, consumption, quality, taste, advertising or price requirements and expectations.

(Source : Nassè, Synthesis on the concept of consumer behavior, 2015-2018.)

**CONCLUSION**

The concept of consumer behavior, according to the relevant literature has been defined in several context and different context. Consumer behavior concept has some similarities but also some differences following the research context. As such, there is not a quite common definition of this concept. However, a common conception of consumer behavior refers to the particular perceptions of habits, lifestyles, attitude and practices. Consumer behavior portrays how customers or consumers examine, choose, purchase, repurchase, use, and order ideas, products, and services to mollify their needs and wants. Thus, consumer behavior puts an emphasis on consumer's different attitudes, choices, actions and underlying motivations in the marketplace.

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