

Consumer behavior as an independent discipline business essay



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This paper reviews about the disciplinary status of consumer behavior. There have been debates over the past years whether consumer behavior should be an independent discipline or interdisciplinary. History of consumer behavior has been tracked down back to the 1950s to identify which discipline consumer behavior derived from. This study has been broken up in to two sections; the first section would be from marketing perspective and on the other hand from the psychology perspective.

Introduction

The intellectual field of consumer behavior has long been allied with the marketing discipline (Kernan, 1995) . Growth in the study of consumer behavior was stimulated in the late 1950s by a set of commissioned studies on the state of business education. Those studies focused the need for business schools to move from their professional teaching roots and descriptive research status to an academic status characterized by theoretical research (Dahl, Mason, & Lazarsfeld, 1959) Consumer behavior analysis is the use of behavior principles, usually gained experimentally, to understand human economic consumption (Sheth, 1985). It stands academically among economy psychology and marketing science. For the past few decades, the history or the origins of consumer behavior has yet to be solved. The history of consumer behavior seems to be linked with the history of marketing. Some researches argued that consumer research started form motivation research. Motivation research has been developed over centuries in several of the behavioral science, sociology and anthropology and minimal areas from the economics. Stated by Gardner (1959) “ motivation research represents the introduction into consumer or

market research of new concepts drawn from the whole range of social science, especially clinical psychology, sociology, and anthropology.” A committee organized by the American Marketing Association in 1950 concluded that: “ Motivational research is so important to the development of the applied science of marketing that a constant effort should be made to see that the truest insights of the other social sciences be made available to marketing in a form in which they can be made to bear on marketing problems” (Woodward et. al., 1950) While the origin of consumer behavior is still unknown, marketing has shifted its dependence on other disciplines as well as its center of understanding (Sheth, 1985). The birth of marketing was acknowledged by Bartels in the early nineteen hundreds. In closing a major monograph study of Motivation Research, (Newman, 1957) wrote: “ In our examination of...motivation research, we found a number of systematic efforts to make use of the behavioral fields.... Together, they constitute a movement, now young, which promises important conceptual growth and therefore appears destined to be a major landmark in the history of marketing.” What persists to attract and involve the concentration of social scientists is not only the perseverance of behavior analysis as an approach to psychology, but the theoretical and experimental growth of part of its research programmed that are of central concern to understanding marketer and consumer behavior. That field eventually became known as Consumer Behavior.

Methodology

This study philosophically falls under interpretive class, undertaken research approach is explanatory and research strategy is literature survey.

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Secondary data was used for this study. International journals as well as proceedings are searched through international well-recognized databases like Emerald, Proquest and Ebscohost. The arrangement of literature review was planned to be started with the origins of consumer behavior and how it is used widely among organizations then elaborating the concepts of independent discipline and interdisciplinary of consumer behavior, it's purpose in psychological and marketing studies. It then leads to the discussion whether which category would consumer behavior be and how it affects future research.

Literature review

Consumer behavior as an Independent discipline

For the past decades, there were three issues that were debated in academic research about consumers. First of all, the issue discussed was whether consumer behavior should be an independent discipline. Consumer behavior is a psychological study of consumers but its purpose was to help marketers to understand their consumer. Since it is derived from both disciplines, can it become an independent discipline? The second issue debated was what is and is not consumer behavior despite its marketing origins, early leaders in the consumer behavior field desired to establish an independent field, one that would break free from marketing and not be beholden to a marketing perspective (Kassarjian & Robertson, 1982). And lastly this literature discussed whether consumer behavior should be interdisciplinary. The author then explains the term ' discipline' and how consumer behavior could attain the independent discipline status. The word ' discipline' was explained through the perspective from the sociology of science. ' Discipline' in terms

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in that the sociology of science literature defines a discipline as a field of study containing its own population of experts (Nissani, 1997). Disciplines frequently have sub disciplines, which are describe as subfields contained by the wider community of experts. Sub disciplines form when disciplinary knowledge becomes so infinite as to be demoted to specialists (Tony & Trowler, 2001). This cognitive module explains what a discipline studies, clarifying what falls within and outside its intellectual orbit. Yet this content is socially constructed. Members of a discipline define what the discipline is by choosing and laying claim to the topics that fall within their disciplinary umbrella Disciplines serve important roles. They provide specialized knowledge, academic legitimacy, intellectual authority, autonomy, identity, and reproduction. This role is stabilized, in part, by the university system, which is dependent on disciplines and departments for reputational status and degree-seeking purposes (Richard, 1984). Literature on the sociology of science shows that academic disciplines with professional school orientations often attempt to gain status by distancing themselves from the professions that purport to use their knowledge (Abbott, 1988)

Consumer behavior as interdisciplinary field

Critics have often pointed out a conflict between an ideal of the field as interdisciplinary and the reality of our non interdisciplinary status. Research from the sociology of science provides useful input for understanding the interdisciplinary status and potential of consumer behavior research. That research and work in interdisciplinary studies acknowledges that the term “interdisciplinary” can create confusion because it has been used in many ways to refer to different things (Klein, 1990). Disciplinary scholars use the

term “ interdisciplinary” in regard to an area of study as meaning a boundary-spanning field that integrates from two or more discrete disciplines so as to form a unique and independent field. An interdisciplinary field aims to generate novel insights that cannot be obtained from any one discipline in isolation (Nissani, 1997). Interdisciplinary fields are most likely when the parent disciplines have established their legitimacy Interdisciplinary scholars have also used the term “ interdisciplinary” to describe a research process (Klein, 1990). Interdisciplinary research refers to the joining of researchers from multiple and distinct disciplines to address a problem whose solution is not possible from a single discipline’s perspective Even a cursory inspection of the articles published in consumer behavior journals reveals that the term “ interdisciplinary” does not apply to the way that many members of the field conduct research. This observation is not an indictment against the field in light of the abovenoted barriers that stymie such efforts. Though interdisciplinary projects are laudable and do have much to offer consumer research (Mick, 2006), they do not adequately characterize how our field operates.

Discussion

Consumer behavior holds a great important in marketing field because if look over the modern philosophy of marketing. It is an important consideration when constructing a marketing plan. While profits, sales numbers and all profit generating departments are important, when it comes down to it consumer behavior is a big part of the marketing puzzle (Goessl, 2010).

Businesses that cannot understand how a consumer’s mind operates will have a more challenging time figuring out how to target a campaign that will

attract or catch attention. In today's world of rapidly changing technology, consumer tastes are also characterized by fast changes. To survive in the market, a firm has to be constantly innovating and understand the latest consumer trends and tastes. Consumer behavior provides invaluable clues and guidelines to marketers on new technological frontiers which they should explore. ConsumerPsychologist. com, part of the University of Southern California, defines consumer behavior as " the study of individuals, groups or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences or ideas to satisfy needs." Essentially, consumer behavior deals with how frequently a person or organization may purchase an item from a company (Frost, 2011). It closely relates to elements of customer service—such as problem resolution and overall satisfaction—and to marketing strategies such as pricing, promotion and product placement. Consumer research allows companies to market more effectively by including images and text designed to resonate with a target demographic and by scheduling those ads during certain shows or time slots. As well, understanding behavior may lead to changes in the design of a pilot product, a product's packaging or its position within the store. Understanding why customers buy what they do also helps a company create campaigns to encourage repeat purchase and referrals (Frost, 2011).

Conclusion

The conclusion of the literature review stated that consumer behavior is a sub discipline of marketing and not an independent discipline on its own. They also argued that consumer behavior must have boundaries and they suggest acquisition, consumption and disposal by people in a consumer <https://assignbuster.com/consumer-behavior-as-an-independent-discipline-business-essay/>

role in the market place as the bound of the field. Thirdly, they also argued that consumer behavior field is open to adjoining disciplines and this is the way to help advance and grow the field. However, the engagement is multi-disciplinary not inter-disciplinary. For the latter to happen, major changes needed such as to include appropriate methodological tools in doctoral programs, change of personal incentives so that researcher's career are not jeopardize when publishing outside his or her home discipline etc. Whether or not consumer behavior is a independent discipline or interdisciplinary the most importance is that it is able to help marketers to solve their current problems.