



Consumer Behavior

T H I R D E D I T I O N

Michael R. Solomon

.....
.....**THIRD EDITION**.....

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Buying, Having,
and Being

.....

Michael R. Solomon

Auburn University



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..... ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Michael R. Solomon is Human Sciences Professor of Consumer Behavior in The Department of Consumer Affairs at Auburn University. Before joining Auburn in 1995, Professor Solomon was Chairman of the Department of Marketing in the School of Business at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Prior to that appointment, he was a member of the faculty of the Graduate School of Business Administration at New York University. Professor Solomon earned B.A. degrees in Psychology and Sociology at Brandeis University and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Social Psychology at

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Professor Solomon's primary research interests include consumer behavior and lifestyle issues, the symbolic aspects of products, the psychology of fashion and image, and services marketing. He has published many articles on these and related topics in academic journals. He is an Editorial Board Member of the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Retailing*, and *Psychology & Marketing*.

Professor Solomon received the first Cutty Sark Men's Fashion Award in 1981 for his research on the psychological aspects of clothing. He is the editor of *The Psychology of Fashion* and coeditor of *The Service Encounter: Managing Employee/Customer Interaction in Services Businesses*, both published in 1985 by Lexington Books.

Professor Solomon is also a frequent contributor to mass media. His feature articles have appeared in *Psychology Today*, *Gentleman's Quarterly*, and *Savvy*. He has been quoted in numerous national magazines and newspapers, including *Allure*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, *Mademoiselle*, *Mirabella*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Self*, *USA Today*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He has been a guest on "The Today Show," "Good Morning America," CNBC, Whittle Communications' Channel One, "Newsweek on the Air," "Inside Edition," and National Public Radio.

Professor Solomon has provided input to a variety of organizations on issues related to consumer behavior. He has been a consultant to such companies as the Celanese Corporation, Levi Strauss & Company, Johnson & Johnson, Kayser-Roth, United Airlines, and Hakuhodo Advertising (Tokyo). He is also in demand as a speaker to many business groups on consumer behavior and marketing topics. He lives with his wife, Gail; their three children, Amanda, Zachary, and Alexandra; and Chloe, their golden retriever, in Auburn, Alabama.

Preface

I wrote this book because I'm fascinated by the everyday activities of people. The field of consumer behavior is, to me, the study of how our world is influenced by the action of marketers. Since I'm a consumer myself, I have a selfish interest in learning more about how this process works—and so do you.

In many courses, students are merely passive observers, learning about topics that affect them only indirectly, if at all. Not everyone is a plasma physicist, a medieval French scholar, or even an industrial marketer. We are, however, all consumers. As a result, many of the topics dealt with in this book are of both professional and personal relevance to the reader, whether he or she is a student, professor, or marketing practitioner. Nearly everyone can relate to the trials and tribulations associated with last-minute shopping, primping for a big night out, agonizing over an expensive purchase decision, fantasizing about a week in the Caribbean, celebrating a holiday, or commemorating a landmark event, such as a graduation, getting a driver's license, or (dreaming about) winning the lottery.

BEYOND CANNED PEAS: BUYING, HAVING, AND BEING

As the book's subtitle suggests, my version of this field goes beyond looking at the act of buying to having and being as well. Consumer behavior is more than *buying* things, such as a can of peas; it also embraces the study of how *having* (or not having) things affects our lives and how our possessions influence the way we feel about ourselves and about each other—our state of *being*.

In addition to understanding why people buy things, we also try to appreciate how products, services, and consumption activities contribute to the broader social world we experience. Whether shopping, cooking, cleaning, playing basketball, hanging out at the beach, or even looking at ourselves in the mirror, our lives are touched by the marketing system. And, as if these experiences were not complex enough, the task of understanding the consumer multiplies geometrically when a multicultural perspective is taken. This book not only probes the psyche of the American consumer, but also attempts wherever possible to consider the many other consumers around the world whose diverse experiences with buying, having, and being are equally valid and vital to understand. In addition to the numerous examples of marketing and consumer practices relating to consumers and companies outside the United States that appear throughout the book, chapters contain boxes called "Multicultural Dimensions" that highlight cultural differences in consumer behavior. I developed the models of consumer behavior that appear at the beginning of text sections to underscore the complex—and often inseparable—interrelationships between the individual consumer and his or her social realities.

THE RELEVANCE OF CONSUMER RESEARCH

The field of consumer behavior is young, dynamic, and in flux. It is constantly being cross-fertilized by perspectives from many different disciplines. I have tried to express the field's staggering diversity in these pages. Consumer researchers represent virtually every social science discipline, plus a few represent the physical sciences and the arts for good measure. From this melting pot has come a healthy "stew" of research perspectives, viewpoints regarding appropriate research methods, and even deeply held beliefs about what are and what are not appropriate issues for consumer researchers to study in the first place.

Several unique features in the book will help you to experience the potential of consumer research. The ABC News Connection at the end of each chapter provides a visual, real-world tie-in to relevant topics currently reported in the news. Related video segments showing the ABC news stories are also available. These have been selected to complement what you read in the text. In addition, the exercises featured in the Simmons Connection features (and contained on the Simmons Data Disk made available to your instructor) will allow you to "play with" real data from the Simmons Market Research Bureau, a process that can illuminate some of the consumption activities described in the text. These data are the same findings used by many actual marketing organizations to develop their consumer targeting and communications strategies, so you'll be "reading from the same page" as many of the important decision makers in the field of marketing. Finally, I hope this course will inspire you to consider the field of consumer research as a career. If that's the case, you'll find the career information presented in Appendix I helpful. Appendix II, Careers in Consumer Research, provides an overview of possible career paths, and it also includes some suggested references for further exploration.

CONSUMERS AND MARKETING STRATEGY

The book also emphasizes the importance of understanding consumers in formulating marketing strategy. Many (if not most) of the fundamental concepts in marketing are based on the practitioner's ability to know people. After all, if we don't understand why people behave as they do, how can we identify their needs? If we can't identify their needs, how can we satisfy those needs? If we can't satisfy people's needs, we don't have a marketing concept, so we might as well fold our tents and go home! To illustrate the potential of consumer research to inform marketing strategy, the text contains numerous examples of specific applications of consumer behavior concepts by marketing practitioners as well as of windows of opportunity where such concepts could be used (perhaps by alert strategists after taking this course!). Many of these possibilities are highlighted in special features called "Marketing Opportunities."

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

This strategic focus is, however, tempered by an important qualification: Unlike some contemporary treatments of consumer behavior, this book does not assume

that *everything* marketers do is in the best interests of consumers or of their environment. Likewise, as consumers, we do many things that are not positive either. People are plagued by addictions, status envy, ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, and other “isms,” and, regrettably, there are times when marketing activities—deliberately or not—encourage or exploit these human flaws. This book deals with the totality of consumer behavior, warts and all. Marketing mistakes or ethically suspect activities are also highlighted in special features labeled “Marketing Pitfalls.”

On the other hand, marketers have helped to create many wonderful (or at least unusual) things, such as holidays, comic books, the music industry, “pet rocks,” and the many stylistic options available to us in the domains of clothing, home design, the arts, cuisine, and so on. I have also taken pains to acknowledge the sizable impact of marketing on popular culture. Indeed, the final section of this book reflects very recent work in the field that scrutinizes, criticizes, and sometimes celebrates consumers in their everyday worlds. I hope you will enjoy reading about such wonderful things as much as I enjoyed writing about them.

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My friends and colleagues have been fantastic since this project began. Without their support and tolerance, I would never have been able to sustain the “illusion” that I was still an active department chairman and researcher during the two years I worked on this edition. Special thanks go to Carol Gibson for her assistance throughout. I am also particularly indebted to Basil Englis for his intellectual and emotional support—he personifies my image of what a good colleague and friend should be.

Also, I am grateful to my students, who have been a prime source of inspiration, examples, and feedback. The satisfaction I have garnered from teaching them about consumer behavior motivated me to write a book I felt they would like to read.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends for sticking by me during this revision. They know who they are, since their names pop up in chapter vignettes throughout the book. My apologies for “distorting” their characters in the name of poetic license! My gratitude and love go out to my parents, Jackie and Henry, and my in-laws, Marilyn and Phil. A special note of thanks goes to Dave Greenberg, who gave me my start. My super children, Amanda, Zachary, and Alexandra, always made the sun shine on gray days. Finally, thanks above all to Gail, my wonderful wife, friend, and occasional research assistant: I still do it all for you.

ANCILLARY MATERIALS AVAILABLE FOR INSTRUCTORS

The following supplements are available with this text:

Instructor's Manual with Transparency Masters and Video Guide.

ISBN# 0-13-367269-7

Completely revised and expanded, the Instructor's Manual provides instructors with the resources for a more interactive and innovative classroom. Key features include Summary Bullets, Lecture/Discussion Ideas, Field Project Ideas, Consumer Behav-

ior Challenges, Video Guide, Simmons Connection User Guide, and Transparency Masters.

Test Item File

ISBN# 0-13-367277-8

The Test Item File includes a large number of multiple-choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. Several questions per chapter are based on the chapter-opening vignette, the chapter-closing ABC News Connection, and (where applicable) the Simmons Connection.

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50 full-color transparencies highlight key concepts for presentation and offer additional advertisements for class discussion and analysis. Each transparency is accompanied by a full page of teaching notes that includes relevant key terms and discussion points from the chapters as well as additional material from supplementary sources.

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SIMMONS CONNECTION EXERCISES: STUDENT INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Several practical data-oriented exercises have been designed for selected chapters in the text. These exercises are designed to give students some hands-on experience with the sort of data that marketers use better to understand the behavior of consumers. Each exercise is keyed to examples and concepts covered in the chapter in which it appears. There is also a computer disk that contains real market data. In order to "solve" the various problems posed in these exercises, students will need to access the data contained on the disk. The exercises are user-friendly and will increase your involvement in the learning process. Most of the exercises relate directly to the opening vignettes of the chapters in which they are assigned. Students may wish to reread the vignette before they begin working on an exercise. The only thing you will need to run the exercises is a standard spreadsheet program and access to either a DOS or Macintosh computer.

The data come from a widely used, syndicated data service—the Simmons Study of Media & Markets. This very extensive study includes data on over 800 product and service categories. The data provided on the Simmons disk are taken from the 1994 study, which interviewed a total of 22,051 adult Americans (11,063 men and 10,988 women). The real value of this database is that it allows marketers to look at patterns of buying behavior as a function of a wide array of consumer characteristics, including demographics (age, education, income, race, and so on) and psychographics (attitudes, self-concept, buying style, and so on).

The Simmons Study of Media & Markets is conducted annually, and the results are tabulated into 34 separate volumes that are offered as Simmons products. Additional tabulations are prepared on a custom basis for individual clients. Simmons also conducts studies of special groups; for example, CompPro is its study of computer professionals, STARS focuses on teens between 12 and 19 years old, and KIDS focuses on children younger than 12. For the exercises in your text, we have extracted portions of the 1994 database and provided summary data in the form of spreadsheets containing the critical information needed to work on each exercise.

Although Simmons provides a great deal of information *at the brand level*, for many of the exercises the data have been aggregated to the product category level.

To use the data from the Simmons disk, you will need access either to a DOS or Macintosh computer *and* a standard spreadsheet such as Lotus, Excel, Quattro, or another comparable program. The files are saved on the disk in what is called a “WKS” format, which is a generic format for spreadsheets. This means that any standard program should have no problem reading the information from the disk.

Since the disk itself is already a DOS disk, DOS users can access the files with no prior translation. If you are using your own computer *and* the computer has a hard disk, then you should first copy all of the files from the floppy disk onto the computer’s hard drive.

If you are using a Macintosh computer and some version of System 7, you should be able to insert the Simmons disk and get an immediate translation to Macintosh format. For users of earlier versions of the Macintosh operating system, you will need to run a utility program such as Apple File Exchange. All users of System 6 should have received this program. If you do not have it, you can obtain it either through your local Macintosh Users Group or directly through Apple. The following instructions apply whether you are copying the files onto another floppy in Macintosh format or onto a hard drive (only the destination changes). To translate the files using Apple File Exchange, first open the Apple File Exchange icon. Then insert the Simmons disk into your floppy drive. The dialog box will show the Simmons files on the right-hand portion of the screen. Select all of the Simmons data files and click on the “Translate” button. The next dialog box will ask how you want the files translated. Just select the format that matches your spreadsheet program.

Fourteen files are on the disk. Ten files are titled *Chap#*. These are keyed to the chapters in which you will find the Simmons exercises. The other four files are labeled *Self*, *Style*, *Media1*, and *Media2*. These general reference files may come in

MAGAZINES		BASE= ALL ADULTS	ALL ADULTS EDUCATION GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL	ALL ADULTS EDUCATION GRADUATED COLLEGE
ROW	CELL	TOTAL		
TOTAL	(000)	187747	73139	37353
TOTAL	Resps	22051	8179	5832
TOTAL	Index	100	100	100
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST	(000)	2939	591	1414
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST	Resps	883	151	488
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST	Index	100	52	242
HUNTING	(000)	3410	1642	292
HUNTING	Resps	636	323	83
HUNTING	Index	100	124	43
MADEMOISELLE	(000)	4237	1775	854
MADEMOISELLE	Resps	1027	392	253
MADEMOISELLE	Index	100	108	101

handy for several of the exercises. The following is an example of what you will find in the spreadsheets.

Hint: It is much easier to browse through spreadsheets if you learn how to have the spreadsheet program keep the row and column titles visible on the screen. Although the method varies from program to program, most have this capability.

Each file contains a cross-tabulation of data—columns by rows. For example, consider the sample table shown above for three magazines broken down by the gender of the reader. You should open several of the files and browse through them to familiarize yourself with the kinds of information they contain.

For each cell in the spreadsheet (a cell is defined as the intersection of a row and column), there are three pieces of information. The first number is identified by a ROW label of (000), which is a projection based on the raw count for each cell and the total U.S. population. This lets marketers immediately project the Simmons sample values onto the total U.S. population and thereby estimate total potential market size. In the example above, if the Simmons panel were projected onto all U.S. consumers, there would be 2,939,000 readers of *Architectural Digest*, 3,410,000 readers of *Hunting*, and 4,237,000 readers of *Mademoiselle* magazines.

The population projections are not a simple matter of multiplying the raw cell count by a constant. Instead, each respondent is assigned a weight that reflects his or her “representativeness” in the U.S. population as a whole (this relates to the probability of their selection in the first place). This weighting is a complex and proprietary procedure designed to provide the best possible population estimates. It is important to remember that because individual cases receive unique weights, two cells with the same raw count may have different population projection figures.

The second number listed is the actual number of respondents (out of a total of 22,051) that fit the characteristics defined by the column and row labels. In the sample above, the intersection of *Architectural Digest* and TOTAL shows a value of 883. This means that of the entire sample, 883 people reported that they are readers of *Architectural Digest*.

The last number—INDEX—is extremely valuable for marketers because it tells them whether a particular consumer group is more or less likely than all members of a particular “universe” of consumers to consume a particular product (or product category). For example, if we are interested in magazine preferences we would consider all adult magazine readers as our universe. Each Simmons file identifies the universe of consumers that form the basis for these index values. The top-left-most cell containing numerical information identifies the population base used in computing the index values in that spreadsheet (or portion of a spreadsheet when multiple bases are used).

For any breakdown defined by row labels—say, education of reader—a value of 100 would mean that a particular group of consumers would be no more or less likely to be a reader of, for example, *Architectural Digest* than the total universe (all adults). If you look at the intersection of Graduated College and *Architectural Digest*, you will see an index value of 242. This means that college graduates are 142 percent *more likely* (242–100) to be readers of *Architectural Digest* than are all adult readers of the magazine. Similarly, high school graduates are 48 percent *less likely* to be readers of *Architectural Digest* than are all adult readers of the magazine.

The index values are always computed using the projected population values according to the following formula: The percentage value of each cell against the category listed in the column is computed. The index is arrived at by dividing the cell percentage by the row-total percentage and multiplying the result by 100. For exam-

ple, 3.8 percent of college graduates read *Architectural Digest* ($[1414/37353] \times 100 = 3.786$). Readers of *Architectural Digest* represent 1.6 percent of the total population ($[2939/187747] \times 100 = 1.565$). Dividing these values yields the cell index of 242 ($[3.786/1.565] \times 100 = 241.9$).

Because the index values are a direct comparison of a market segment's behavior with that of a relevant universe of consumers, they provide extremely useful information for marketers. The index values are a particularly useful tool in defining market segments whose tastes, preferences, and past consumption behavior are particularly well suited for a particular product or product category.

Of course, there are numerous other measures that can be derived from the data. Percentages and averages across the appropriate categories will be useful for many of the exercises. It is a good idea to learn how to insert formulas into the cells of your spreadsheets and how to identify the appropriate cells for each computation that you want to make. In general, if you compute your own indexes, you should use the population projections because these are the more reliable indicators of the total size of the groups with which you are working.

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