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Victoriya Orlova

FORMATION OF TARGET SEGMENTS OF CONSUMERS AS A COMPONENT OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Abstract. *The target segments of consumers of ecologically safe products have been defined with the help of cluster analysis segmenting technology by studying the demand of population for the effective strategic management. Interpretation of segments takes into account the consumer characteristics and helps to make the consumer profile of buyers of ecologically safe products.*

Key words: *Market of ecologically safe products, Segmenting, Cluster analysis, Consumer type, Ecologically safe products.*

Intensive modern market development gives opportunities for the companies, functioning on it to notice basic tendencies, needs, wants and requirements of consumers to focus efforts on particular segments, to carry out a competent strategic management and to occupy deserving competition position.

Presently with growth of substantial influence an ecological constituent on development of society the special attention is paid to ecologically safe commodities, the production of which does not allow using poisons, synthetic fertilizers, growth stimulators, genetically modified products [1].

Market of ecologically safe commodities and services is one of fast growing and perspective. As evaluated by Organic Trade Association, the world market of organic products annually grows in four times quicker, than market of food products on the whole. The capacity of world market of organic products is made by a more than 60 milliard of dollars. Dynamic development of organic production influences the increase of amount of the registered trade marks and packaging, positioning themselves as eco-friendly [2].

In Ukraine the market of organic products is developing actively. In 2010 a market volume made a 2,4 million euro, and in 2016 this number increased to 21,2 million euro [3], that allows to forecast further year-on-year growth of domestic market of ecologically safe products.

Different aspects of market research of demand formation and management of ecologically safe products have been examined in the works of P. Antonets [1], T. Zaychuk [4], N. Krupinina [5], E. Smirnova [2], E. Shubravskaya [6] and other authors. However, analysis of behavior of consumers of ecologically safe products, based on description of their basic types, criteria of forming of demand on products taking into

account social, demographic and other factors were not studied enough and require additional research in practice.

The purpose of this article is analysis and description of market segments of consumers of ecologically safe products to satisfy their needs by forming the clear profiles of special purpose consumer segments and the best conditions of sale of commodity for an effective management.

For the selection of homogeneous consumer groups, having approximately identical requirements to the ecologically safe commodities, the special research has been made, the tasks of which included: determination of segmentation characteristics of consumers of ecologically safe products, defining the segments of users on the basis of the most expressive characteristics and description of the defined segments taking into account their attractiveness for companies for making administrative decisions.

Segmenting was carried out in a few stages. On the first stage the basis of segmentation for the system factors included consumer properties of ecologically safe commodities on the basis of estimations of the importance of properties of the given products. Taking into account that an amount of segmenting characteristics must not be large, otherwise it results in the narrowing of a special target segment. Those properties of products had the most value, preference of which was given by the basic amount of users. Further forming of the defined segments and establishment of their sizes has been made. On the next stage interpretation of segments has been made taking into account the descriptions of consumers using the method of construction of customer profiles.

The basic data were received by a questionnaire. A questionnaire contained questions with the variants of answers. The selection of respondents was carried out by the method of quota selection, parameters of quotas were chosen by gender belonging. Correlation of respondents made 70% for women and 30% for men. A sample size made 323 people. The selection was made from ordinary passers-by from Dnepropetrovsk. In a selection the basic layers of population were reflected on categories: gender, age, education, social position, level of income and size of family.

During the research the respondents were suggested to estimate meaningfulness of basic parameters of products on a 5-grade scale: safety for health, correspondence to the standards of ecological cleanness, price, reputation of trade mark, economy of time and comfort of purchase, easiness of purchase [7].

The method of segmenting included cluster analysis, allowing to group consumers in comparatively homogeneous groups which are characterized by similar consumer preferences within a chosen cluster. The choice of this method is justified in those cases, when information on the structure of market is not presented and we can not set the types of users of ecologically safe products.

The most popular hierarchical method includes aglomerative clusterization. Within an aglomerative clusterization every object is a separate cluster, united in large clusters [8].

As a result of data processing five segments were defined, which can be described as «Balanced», «Ecologically oriented», «Imaginary», «Economical» and «Loyal» (fig. 1).

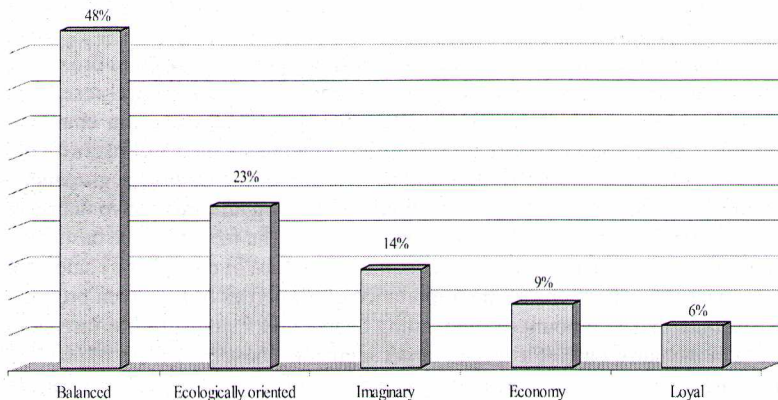


Fig.1. Segmenting of consumers of ecologically safe products on the basic parameters of products

The largest in size segment is presented by 46% users, the decision factors at a purchase for them there are safety for health and price. Despite their orientation on the ecological consumption, they will not buy ecologically safe products, if a price on them will considerably exceed the cost of traditional products. The second large segment makes 22% of users for whom the safety for health and accordance to the standards of ecological cleanness and quality of commodity is important. A price, trade mark and comfort of purchase does not play substantial role. It is possible to assert that users of the second segment make a special target audience for enterprises, offering ecologically safe products, and will not demand considerable efforts for bringing them. The third place segment made 12% of consumers, giving a preference to reputation of trade mark and comfort of purchase, while safety for health and ecological cleanness are not important. The most essential is an image of trade marks, i.e. orientation on the already known and established brands. The fourth segment includes 6% of respondents, paying attention to price and reputation of trade mark. A segment of 4% of buyers for which the greatest value is comfort of purchase and safety for health, appeared the smallest in numbers. This segment prefers not to spend a lot of time on the purchase of commodities.

For making administrative decisions it is not enough to define segments, it is necessary also to get description of every segment. Interpretation of segments was carried out by the construction of customer profiles of every segment taking into account socially-demographic and other descriptions of consumers, describing the peculiarities of their buying behavior.

The most numerous segment which was described as «Balanced» for the type of consumers is presented on a fig. 2.

For the consumer segment «Balanced» a certificate of ecological safety of the bought products and conclusion of administrative control bodies, special marking and packing which does not harm an environment are the most important for making the purchase. Thus most buyers are interested in a purchase of ecologically safe products, if a price on it will not exceed 30%. This segment is presented by people of middle age, having children, getting incomplete higher and higher education, being office workers and specialists of state and private enterprises with the level of income of 1501-2500 Uah in a month on one family member.

Type of buyers of the second segment, getting the name «Ecologically oriented» resulted on a fig. 3.

The distinguishing feature of this segment is that the index of ecological safety of the bought products and conclusions of state control bodies are very important, 47% of users wish and ready to buy organic products, 20% agree to pay for them 1,5-2 times more as compared to traditional. It is the most educated segment, more than half of the respondents have higher education, in age from 31 to 50 years, 20% occupy leading posts or are businessmen with a high monthly income. I.e. the second segment is the most active, solvent and ecologically-oriented group of population.

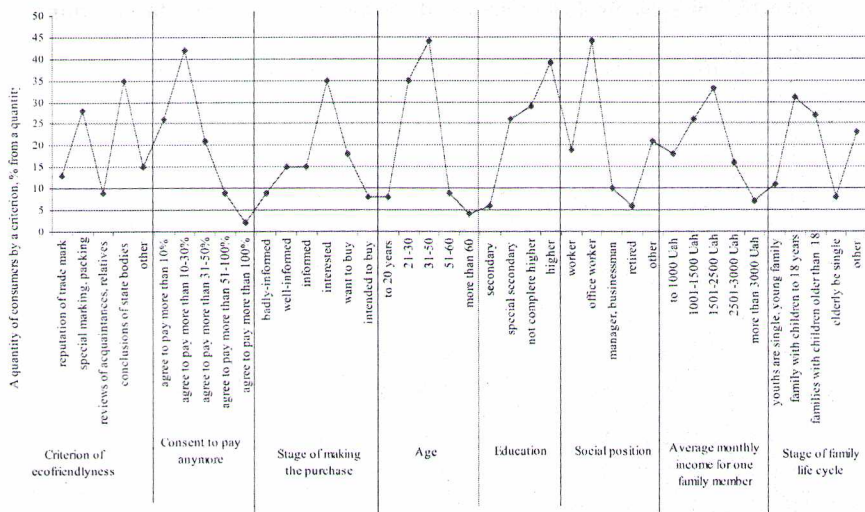


Fig. 2. Portrait of users, considering the safety for health and price as decision-making factors for purchase

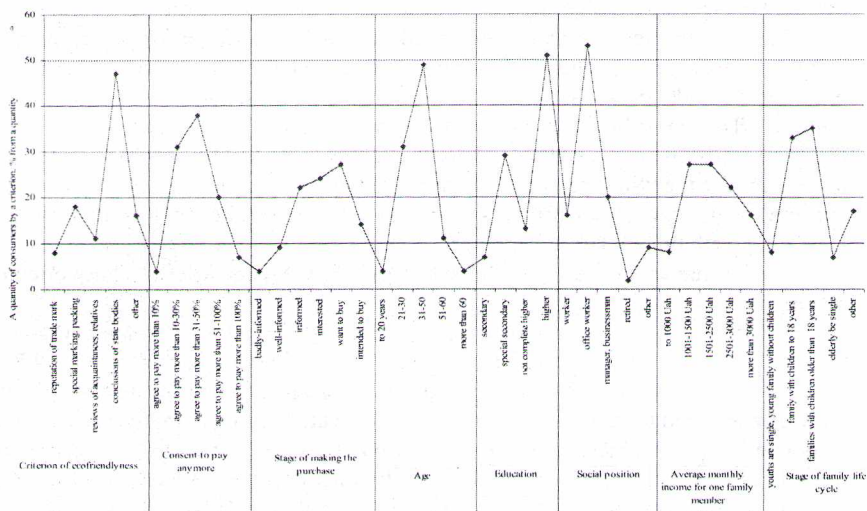


Fig. 3. Portrait of users, considering safety for health and correspondence to the standards of ecological cleanness as decision-making factors for the purchase

The third on a quantity segment got the name «Imaginary», his type is presented on a fig. 4.

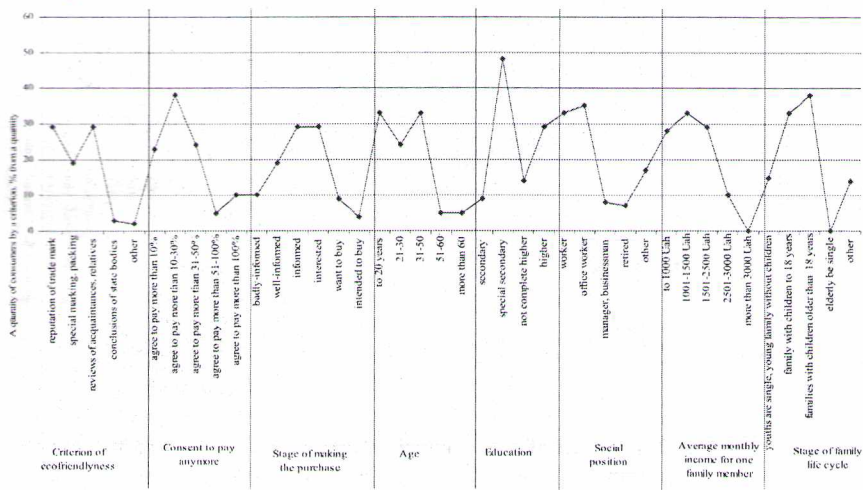


Fig. 4. Portrait of users, considering reputation of trade mark and comfort of buying as decision-making factors for the purchase

This segment is presented by buyers, for which a purchase of ecologically safe commodities is conditioned by an equal degree of the reputation of trade mark and recommendations of friends, acquaintances and relatives, this group is subject to influence of public opinion. In spite of adherence of buyers to the trade marks they do not intend to pay for the purchase of organic products, that can be explained that this segment is presented by young people (57% under the age of 30 years) with special secondary education, without high social position and low level of income who by the age do not pay attention to the healthy food. Thus the negligible quantity (15%) of this segment is made by users ready to pay for these products more than 50-100%, their high social status, employment and financial independence gives a preference to the indicated factors.

Type of fourth segment marked as «Economical» is presented on a fig. 5.

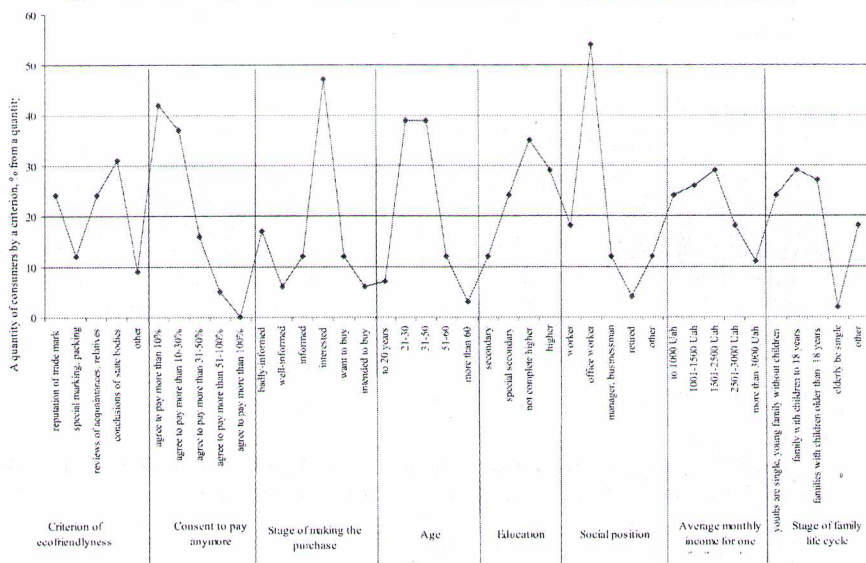


Fig. 5. Portrait of users, considering price and reputation of trade mark as the decision-making factors for the purchase

Buyers, forming the segment «Economical», do not have obvious preferences in regard to the criteria of eco-friendliness of the acquired organic products. The distinctive feature of this segment is that almost half of users (42%) will buy ecologically safe products, if a price on it will not exceed 10% as compared to traditional because of low-level of income (24% have a monthly income on one family member to 1000 Uah), and also lack (17%) of information in regard to this group of commodities. Leaders and businessmen (12%) in a segment can allow buying expensive organic products, but have low level

of ecological motivation, the small percentage of consumers intended to purchase ecologically safe products makes 6%. «Economy» group makes a type of buyers of middle age most of whom are older than 36 years having incomplete higher or higher education, being mainly government and office workers of state organizations.

Type of the last segment which got the name «Loyal» is presented on a fig. 6.

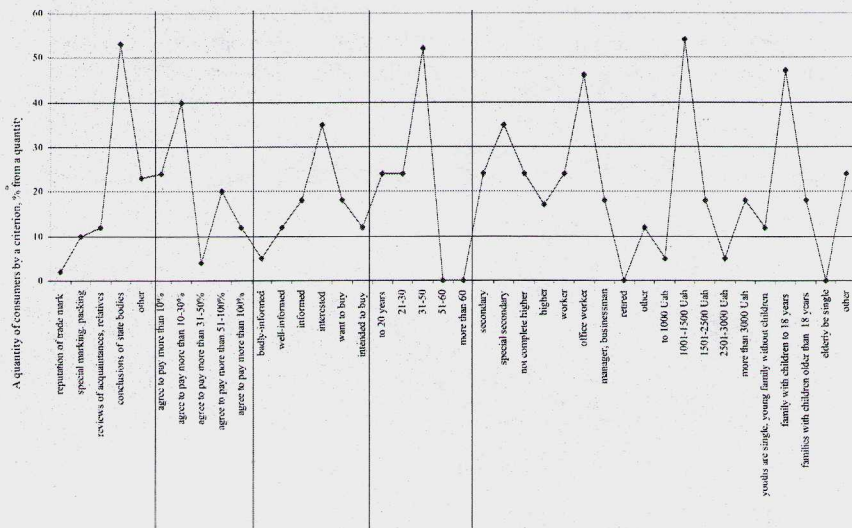


Fig. 6. Portrait of users, considering comfort of buying and safety for health as decision-making factors for the purchase

The certificate of ecological safety of the bought products for the segment «Loyal» is conclusion of bodies of the state control. They are interested (35%) and intend to buy organic products (12%) in spite of the fact that users with the low level of income (54%) have an income for one member in the family of 1001-1500 Uah). Therefore they can be considered as the ecologically oriented users. However for them the economy of time and comfort of purchase is important, as this segment is presented by the people of middle age of 31-50 years (52%), having families with children to 18 years (47%), having full working day and not ready to spend additional time on a search and purchase of ecologically safe commodities.

Summarizing the information mentioned above, it is possible to recommend for the basic players on the ecological market to attract attention to the safe products for making administrative decisions and concentrate basic efforts on their realization on a special target segment «Ecologically oriented», which is made by 23% users. Thus,

taking into account a world market tendency on the decline of the cost of organic products, it is possible to count in the near time on the considerable increase of market capacity due to bringing in of the segment «Balanced», made up by 48% of buyers.

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