University of West Hungary
Faculty of Economics

CONSUMER GROUP CULTURE OF THE YOUTH OF BUDAPEST IN THE INFO-COMMUNICATIONAL SOCIETY AND THE ASPECTS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Thesis of doctoral (Ph.D.) dissertation

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1.1. Theme of dissertation and its relevance

The theme of candidate's dissertation is: consumer group culture of the youth of Budapest in the info-communicational society and the aspects of marketing communication.

There are a lot of studies dealing with the youth, the society of info-communications, (big city) (sub) culture and/or marketing communication. These studies mostly focus on the above-mentioned issues separately, or on two out of the four topics at a time. However, the relationship of the youth, (big city) culture and the society of info-communications has not been studied yet, not to mention the related aspect of marketing communications, in spite of the fact that the topicality and importance of the issue cannot be debated. Different means of info-communication and the digitalized media content (using the language of media) broadcast by them have taken and take part in the socialization of the age group of 14-29, mainly living in big cities and in the capital city. Most of this media content delivers messages of marketing communication, either openly or just impliedly. The goal of this is to create consumer/buyer activities of the target group by raising their needs related to purchasing and consumption.

1.2. The goal and actuality of the research

The goal of this study is to summarize the most important findings of the questionnaire-based, big-sample online research, which has recently been carried out related to the topic mentioned in the title of the present account. The final version of the questionnaire was available online from 10. June 2006 until 30. June 2006. The questionnaire can be considered representative, as 833 people filled it in. The $51 + 1$ questions are grouped in six major areas: (A) social-demography, (B) financial resources and general level of consumption, (C) intellectual capital, (D) subjective opinion and lifestyle, (E) cultural consumption, (F) means of info-communication and (mass) media.

Having and usage of the info-communicational devices divide the Hungarian society into two major groups: the winners and the losers of information age. It is relevant to introduce youth group of Budapest, because they are the winners of this age, and they are the real target group of the digital economy. It is important to examine the info-communicational devices, usages, services and the frequency of usage, because on the grounds of this examination we can think of more effective activity of marketing communication in the real as well as in the virtual word.

1.3. The structure of the dissertation

The consumer behaviour is affected the most intense and deepest by cultural factors – according to Kotler [1999]. The author examines the definitions of the culture in the introductory chapter, because there are different aspects of the culture in the casual life and in the scientific sphere (sociology, anthropology), and we can see contrast inside the field of sciences too. The individual is affected by not just culture and subculture, as well as the global culture. The global culture is (1) enough plastic to dissolve the subculture into itself, (2) created consciously, so it makes a huge impression on the members of national-, sub- and counterculture too.

The culture comes through the establishments of the culture broadcast. The candidate regards such establishment the media (and the different info-communication devices and applications), which is defined the fourth part of the authority. The author describes the scientific problem at the end of the first chapter, and presents the advantages and disadvantages of the online survey.

The second chapter of the dissertation is deal with consumer typologies and the trends of consumer behaviour. The candidate assumes that the examined group is a special one, so he advices use another segmentation philosophy, but he accepts the traditional segmentation methods too.

The sociological vision of the youth is read in the second part of second chapter. The candidates analyses a lot of secondary sources and points that there are not a real deep opposite and generation gap between the youth and the previous generations. The reason is: the insurrection of the youth is a downward controlled fashion and commercialized insurrection. The form and the means of the insurrection and the negation of previous generataions' values are well controlled in this situation. The youth accepts the main part of its parents' values and is relation to them – justifies the author with his own survey. The youth is use whatever he/she gets information from the info-communication devices and the primary groups. The youth is over presented regard the usage of the info-communication devices especially in case of youth of Budapest.

The third part of the first chapter shows the main theories of the information society. The candidate thinks that it is practical to change the notion of information society to info-communication society. He designates two reasons: (1) the info-communication devices divided into two groups the society: the winners, and the losers, (2) the messages of the marketing communication are broadcasted by them. The communicational, the sociological and the psychological aspects are shown out of the several aspects of information society in the composition. The come out of the informational and communicational technologies, the growth of the informational economy, the connection among technologies, the spread of the integrated and complex mentality, the new theories and models of consumer and customer behaviour have an effect on marketing communication and its evolution. The author deal with the questions of integrated and mediatised marketing communication in the last theoretical part of his dissertation, outlines the different models of communication and the globalized and personalized messages.

The third chapter represents the quantitative research of the candidate. Analyze of the questionnaire and the verification of the hypothesis can be found here.

The author reviews the major scientific reasons of his dissertation in the fourth chapter. He emphases that the member of the info-communication society has same values as its contemporary in the real world. It is important – the candidate argues – to use the new target- and theme-oriented segmentation philosophy based on personalisation and database.

The practical proposals can be found in the third part of the fourth chapter. The author describes a four-levels practical model, and states the new way of marketing communication. There is not enough to emphasize the consumer and customer centred marketing, it is important to do for it: has to deeply chart the character of the consumer, customer. Afterwards we can create personalized and custom-made offering to the partners, can create and continuously operate communication platforms, and these platforms allow the conversation between person and person, corporate and corporate, person and group, person and corporate, as well as group and corporate. The technical base and background is given, this dissertation would like to approach marketing background.

The candidate believes in the open system, so he designates some research possibilities in the fourth part of the fourth chapter, for example the usage of narrative psychology in marketing.

At the end of the dissertation cold be found the Hungarian and English summary, the bibliography, the appendix and the appreciation.

2. Thesis of dictoral dissertation

1. The analysed group of the info-communication society is not net dependent, it cultivates active social relations in the real world, and the devices and applications help to do it.

2. The regularly used info-communication devices and services have an important function in the socialisation of the analysed group.

3. There is not a sharp difference between the analysed and national youth in perspective some values and life-events.

4. Members of the analyzed group are willing to pay a not unconsidered part of their income for the info-communication utilities, devices and usage.

5. Youth citizens of the info-communication group of Budapest have just basic knowledge about the devices, because they use them, but do not depend on them.

6. The interaction with primary groups has an emphatic function in the decisions of the analysed group for all that the usage of the info-communication devices are the part of the routine.

7. Not all of the members of the analysed group buy via the net, and the e-banking activities and online payment methods are not too important for them.

8. Segmenting the analysed group, it is worth to use the theme specific and target segmentation based on the static and dynamic databases, beside the traditional segmentation methods.

3. Summary of the new results of the research and the major statements

The group examined believes that the e-mail is most suitable for telling someone personal news and for contacting someone we do not know personally. However, the mobile phone is the most appropriate from/platform for quick enquiries, for finding information and for arranging a meeting. Per-

sonal meetings are still considered the best way to keep in touch with friends, relatives and acquaintances, to arrange official matters, to congratulate someone on a special occasion, to ask for advice and help, to announce important events, to get to know someone and last but not least to exchange private opinion. It is confirmed by the fact that they meet their families, relatives and friends in the real world; however, browsing the internet, using computers have also become basic activities of daily routine just like reading books and newspapers, watching TV, listening to the radio and to music. Contacting friends socially is not carried out in discotheques and most typically not in festivals or pop/rock concerts either. It would be a mistake to say that the young citizen of the info-communicational society of Budapest is lonely, as basically they can be categorized as the sociable-outgoing type. However, their cultural activities are highly represented – especially with regard to more sophisticated cultural programmes – e.g. they read books or newspapers more often than others. According to the young citizens of the info-communicational society of Budapest it is easier to arrange official matters in Budapest, because most authorities can be found here, the choice offered in shops is wider, people are more upset, there are more shops, more entertainment facilities, sports facilities and cultural programmes here than in the countryside.

The examined group believes that the quality of products is more important than the price – partly because their financial status is better than that of average people. They would like to meet the standards of certain groups because of their age and the fact that they belong to the info-communicational society, however, they are rather individualistic – when making consumer decisions they cannot be influenced whether their friends, classmates or acquaintances own the product they would like to buy or not. What is more, the – traditional – advertisements do not have an important motivating or activating effect on them either (at least not openly). Although the trade marks got average "marks" when the above mentioned group made a decision, they are

still popular and well-known, especially Canon, HP, Nokia, OTP Bank (The National Savings Bank of Hungary), Panasonic, Pannon (one of the three Hungarian mobile phone companies), Samsung, Sony and T-Mobile (another one of the three Hungarian mobile phone companies). Information, knowledge and having a university or college degree are important for the young citizen of the info-communicational society of Budapest. They are over-represented with regard to having a university or college degree within their age-group: despite being young, every other examined young net-citizen of Budapest has a degree. This means a good basis for choosing a white-collar job, however, the percentage of unemployed people with a degree is rising all over the country. Despite having a university or college degree only every other person is attending or has ever attended a preparatory course for the university/college entrance tests, is or has ever been a member of an amateur drama group, an art or computer study group. This means that such knowledge has been received from other sources. According to their subjective self-evaluation, most of them speak English at intermediate level, followed by German at elementary level. The subjective evaluation of computer skills can be considered acceptable, except for graphic design and database programmes; however, objective evaluation shows a bit different results. Self evaluation shows that they have basic knowledge of marketing, medium-level knowledge of economics, finance and law, and they know very little about the stock exchange.

Concerning major events of life we can say that they have already gone out in the evening (without the presence of their parents), they have already had a sexual intercourse, they have been travelling around the town alone, yet only few percentage of them have their own child. Every second young citizen of the net is still at school, and yet only every third one has their own flat, half of them have already moved from their parents' house and also half of them have already lived with a steady partner. There is no major difference within the youth, more exactly among those examined, regarding the fact that these

events of life have occurred. Although there are significant differences regarding when they found the first full-time job, went out with friends for the first time, had the first sexual experience and left the house of their parents. The young net-citizen of Budapest considers health, happiness and knowledge the most important values and finds power and money/wealth the least attractive. About four tenths of the examined sample can identify themselves with their parents' view of life and one third of them can partly accept it.

The majority of them spend most of their free time at home or at friends, however at weekends this order is reverse or is supplemented with hiking. During the week they spend most time on surfing the internet, listening to the radio, watching TV as free time activities. At weekends watching TV is the most popular activity, followed by surfing the internet and listening to the radio. The most often watched programmes are feature films, the evening news or other news programmes, as well as nature and educational programmes. They spend almost the same amount of time on cultural programmes that have media content on weekdays and at weekends. Going out at weekends is possible because – typically – they do not have to go to work or to school, or even if they have to go to the latter, on Sunday they can take a rest after Saturday night's social programmes or going out. Summer festivals, which are several days long, are also popular with the youth of the net, so they might also be referred to as "the generation of festivals". The reason why these events are popular is that they create the cultural platform of the possibility for the young to meet the most popular pop or rock groups at a live concert. We cannot talk about info-communicational society without any means of info-communication. The young net-citizen of Budapest owns most of these devices (mobile phone, colour TV, home PC), they use them regularly and are willing to spend money on buying info-communicational devices and for using info-communicational services. The average net-citizen of Budapest is 21.7 years old, started using computers when they started secondary school. They use their PCs mostly for working and for surfing the

internet. Practically each young member of the info-communicational society of Budapest owns a mobile phone, yet their daily usage of mobile phones includes only making phone calls, sending text messages and using the alarm function. They also use the diary function of their mobile phones daily. The majority of the examined group never uses the voice recording function, sends an e-mail, takes photographs, surfs the internet, plays games, sends/receives MMS messages, listens to the radio functions of their mobile phones, they never do roaming, do not use the WAP function or listen to music on their phones.

The average user is most often connected to the internet from home, work or school. The least popular internet access points are e-Hungary points, net-cafés and libraries. The most common speed of home connection is 512 kbps or 1 mbps, which are – more or less – suitable for watching real-time (multi)media content and more than enough for listening to audio files. Of the several uses and services of the internet sending e-mails, surfing the net, finding information for work, for educational purposes or for private use are used most often every day, as well as reading on-line magazines, news. The most common weekly on-line activities are looking for information, reading on-line magazines, using on-line banking services and visiting/reading forums and blogs. The most popular topics that can be found on the internet are news, weather, politics followed by web pages related to work, entertainment, hobbies and studies. Web pages dealing with the latest scientific research and interesting facts are also very popular. From a marketing-communicational point of view it means that web pages offering the above mentioned content are the most often visited ones, the biggest amount of on-line consumers can be reached through these pages. At present on-line shopping facilities are just occasionally used (less often than monthly). On-line gambling and games that are not free of charge, payable on-line media and other payable content are the least popular with the citizens of the net.

Banners, advertisements found in subscribed newsletters, sponsored advertisements of on-line forums, PR advertisements and sponsored web pages/columns are mostly accepted of the forms of communication that make on-line customers purchase different products. Users are the least tolerant with unwanted e-mail advertisements, cursor-following ads, pop-up and pop-under advertisements. However, on-line consumers/buyers are addressed through several (on-line) communicational platforms, only every other member of the group examined has ever tried buying products and/or services on-line. The most popular products include books, CDs, cassettes, music, subscription to newspapers and magazines and hardware. The most often used services are on-line banking, services related to holidays, as well as buying cinema, theatre and concert tickets. Although about half of the internet users that use the net in an economic sense take advantage of on-line banking services, the majority still prefers paying for the products bought on-line in cash upon delivery, and only a few users are willing to give their card number in the virtual environment.

The member of the examined sample visits the on-line pages and portals of the government or the local government on a monthly or yearly basis for arranging official matters, yet – as it has been pointed out earlier – it is still believed that visiting such offices personally is more effective. Distance-working has only been tried by one out of four citizens of the net, most typically just at one occasion or less typically once a month.

Based on the internet-attitude research we can say that the young citizens of the info-communicational society of Budapest agree that there are more and more freeware programmes, the amount of SPAM is increasing, they believe that ideas can be published on-line easily and they think that they can be most easily reached by mobile phone. They also agree that the internet saves time and money. The biggest insecurity is caused by the fact that the source of on-line information is not always reliable, there is a high rate of internet-related crime and the internet has become commercialized. They do not

really believe that it is easy to follow on-line activities or that different means of info-communication will make the world a better place.

The group of info-communicational society examined is not addicted to the internet, they have active social relationships in the real world, as such means and applications are not able to substitute personal relationships, they are just alternatives that help building and maintaining human relationships.

Furthermore, it can be stated that users are ready to pay a relatively high percentage of their income for using info-communicational channels and devices; however their knowledge of such means of communication is only superficial, because they only use them and they are not addicted to them.

The usage of only a part of these devices and applications have become acts of daily routine – as it has been mentioned above – however, the most typical internet connection is wired; maybe the age of wireless internet has not started yet.

Means and services of info-communication play an important role in the socialization of young members of the info-communicational society of Budapest, but interaction with primary groups is more important when making consumer decisions – just as it happens to "ordinary" young people.

Present research has proved that it is a mistake to say that members of the info-communicational society have fundamentally different values, or lead a different way of life than other members of their generation do. However, it is partially true that the topics they look for information about are related to the activities they have in the "real world". I did a quantitative research in accordance with the methodology of research used in economics. With the help of this method it is not possible to explore such fine – mostly social psychological – differences that might be able to define the (detailed) relationship between activities of the real world and topics of information searched for on the internet. It would be more expedient to use on-line (narrative) methods of psychology to solve this problem.

It is important for the young citizen of the info-communicational (according to my present approach both information and knowledge-related) society of Budapest (too) that they can continuously reach the necessary, latest news, pieces of information. That is why they like programmes and communicational platforms that provide information, useful knowledge; however, it is more and more difficult to filter content that is important for them, because there is a high amount of media-(content)-noise.

According to their financial position the youth of Budapest are over-represented within the age group of 14-29, and citizens of the information-society are also well-off compared to the average. This is (also) the reason why young members of the information-society living in Budapest find the quality and material of products more important than the price when making consumer/buyer decisions. Although members of the examined group could afford it, only every other person uses the internet for shopping.

Finally, the research has also highlighted that the examined group – partially because of the threefold narrowing – cannot or can hardly be classified into the traditional segments. It is more effective to support segmentation according to purpose, and/or personalisation (tailored marketing) should (rather) be emphasized.

4. Adaptability of the finding

The candidate describes a four-levels model of marketing communication. This model can give an effective help marketing decision makers, because it allows to identify the user, his/her interests, to send personalised messages on every communication platforms, and there is a possibility to record the dynamic data beside the static ones on the fourth level.

If a portal and/or an organisation could motivate their consumer and customer to uncover their behaviours on every level, this organisation would reach many possibilities (and profit of course) opposite the contenders. The dissertation describes how.

5. Publications, papers, lectures and former research

5.1. Publications

5.1.1. Books

2006 **Marketing kicsiknek és nagyoknak** (Marketing for young and elder)
Protokollár Bt. (read), Budapest

2004 **PR és sajtókapcsolatok** (PR and press)
Protokollár Bt. (read), Budapest

5.1.2. Lecture notes

2004 **Reklám- és reklámszöveg kutatás** (Advertising and advertising research)
Protokollár Bt., Budapest

2004 **Hagyományos és elektronikus direkt marketing** (Traditional and electronic direct marketing)
Protokollár Bt., Budapest

2003 **Arculattervezés** (Corporate design)
Protokollár Bt., Budapest

2003 **Reklám és kreativitás** (Advertising and creativity)
Budapesti Kommunikációs Főiskola, Budapest

5.1.3. Notes

2006 **Marketing- és reklámügyintéző szóbeli „A" és „B" tételek** (Oral thesis for marketing and advertisement administrator)
Protokollár Bt. (lektorált), Budapest

5.1.4.   Academic papers

2007   **The position of the group culture of young people living in Budapest in the info-communicational and consumer society and the aspects of business-oriented communication**
        In.: NETCOM – Geographical journal on ICTs, networks and information society
        NETCOM Association, Université Montpellier III

2007   **A budapesti ifjúság fogyasztói csoportkultúrája az info-kommunikációs társadalomban, és ennek marketingkommunikációs aspektusai** (The position of the group culture of young people living ins Budapest in the info-communicational and consumer society and the aspects of
        In.: Marketing & Menedzsment
        Marketing Centrum (Országos Piackutató Intézet) – Pécsi Tudományegyetem Közgazdaság-tudományi Kara, Budapest – Pécs

2006   **Eredményes marketing-kommunikáció a nonprofit szférában** (Effective marketing communication in nonprofit)
        In.: Civil Fórum
        Erdélyi Magyar Civil Szervezetekért Alapítvány, Románia

2005   **New tendencies in marketng: the marketing of computer integrated manufacturing and the new consumer**
        In.: Marketing Füzetek V.
        NYME Közgazdaságtudományi Kar, Sopron

2005   **Marketing szemléletmód a humánerőforrás és a tudástőke gazdálkodásban** (Marketing aspect in the HR)
        In.: Humánpolitikai Szemle
        Mont Humán Menedzser Iroda Kft., Budapest

2004   **Politikai marketing az információs társadalomban** (Political marketing in the information society)
        In.: Marketing Füzetek

NYME Közgazdaságtudományi Kar, Sopron

2004   **Színasszociációk** (Colour associations)
        In.: Kommunikáció, Média, Gazdaság
        Budapesti Kommunikációs Főiskola – Századvég Kiadó, Budapest

2001   **Piktogramok emberábrázolása** (Men and pictograms)
        In.: JELKÉP
        Magyar Médiáért Alapítvány – MTA-ELTE Kommunikációelmé-
        leti Kutatócsoport, Budapest

2001   **Metatrendek, majd P-modellek** (Metatrends, P-models)
        In.: Business Online
        Prím Rt., Budapest

1995-2000   **Fundraising, majd marketing-kommunikáció** (Fundrais-
        ing and marketing communication)
        SANSZ
        SANSZ Alapítvány, Budapest

5.2. Lectures

2006   **A digitális marketing lehetőségei a kereskedelmi egységek gya-
        korlatában, és ennek pszichológiai aspektusai** (Possibilities of
        digital marketing in the practice of shops)
        On.: Bevásárlóközpontok jelen és jövője (2006) – nemzetközi kon-
        ferencia (Szlovákia)

2006   **A 100%-os mintavétel lehetőségei a marketing-elemzésekben**
        (100% sample in the marketing analysis)
        On.: Innováció, társadalmi felelősség, fenntartható fejlődés – mar-
        keting meg-közelítésben – Marketing Oktatók Konferenciája, Bu-
        dapest

2004 **A gazdaságkommunikáció kreatív lehetőségei az információs társadalomban** (Creative possibilities of business-communication in the information society)
Új tendenciák a marketingben és oktatásában – Marketing Oktatók Konferenciája, Sopron

5.3. Research

2006 Önértékelés GYELV módszerrel (Self and SWOT)
2005-2006 Egy hét eseményei – naplóelemzés (Events of one week – narrative analysis)
2004 Manufacturing visions
2004 Kreatív szakmák a gazdaságkommunikációban (Creative jobs in the business communication)
2002-2003 Színasszociációk a gazdaságkommunikációban (Colour association in the business communication)
2000 Múzeumlátogatási szokások vizsgálata az információs társadalomban (Analysing of the museum visiting in the information society)
2000 Civilek a Sziget Fesztiválon (Nonprofits on the Island Festival)
1999 Ifjúság a Sziget Fesztiválon (Youth on the Island Festival)
1998 Az internet kommunikációtechnikai szemmel (The communication techniques aspects of the internet)