

Ryabovolyk Tetiana, PhD in Economics, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Economics, Management and Business, +38(050)087-19-13, ryabovolik@ukr.net, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0345-509X

*Central Ukrainian National Technical University
8, University Avenue, Kropyvnytskyi, 25003, Ukraine.*

Lypchanskyi Volodymyr, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor at the Department of Economics, Management, and Business, +38(067)975-51-35, lindervlad92@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8225-512X.

*Central Ukrainian National Technical University
8, University Avenue, Kropyvnytskyi, 25003, Ukraine.*

CONSUMER DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY: HOW PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) TECHNOLOGIES SHAPE BUYER BEHAVIOR

Abstract. *This article examines the psychology of consumer development and the role of public relations (PR) technologies in shaping buyer behavior. The main psychological factors influencing consumer decision-making, including motivation, perception, emotional reactions, and social influences, are analyzed. Particular attention is paid to modern PR tools such as storytelling, social media, influencer marketing, and crisis communication, which can strengthen trust, loyalty, and consumption habits. The mechanisms by which the information environment influences consumer behavior and the effectiveness of long-term PR strategies are also studied.*

The objective of this article is to examine the impact of PR technologies on the psychological development of consumers and the formation of their behavior. More specifically, it analyzes the main psychological mechanisms determining purchasing decisions and explores how modern PR strategies contribute to building loyalty, trust, and consumption habits.

To achieve this goal, the methods of analysis and synthesis, comparative methods, generalization and systematization, as well as logical and dialectical methods were used.

The study reveals that PR technologies play a key role in shaping consumer behavior by influencing their emotions, trust, and motivation to purchase. Methods such as storytelling, social media, influencer marketing, and crisis communication have been shown to be the most effective in creating lasting consumer habits and strengthening brand loyalty. Furthermore, a personalized approach in PR campaigns has been found to significantly increase audience engagement and promote positive purchasing decisions.

Future research could focus on an in-depth analysis of the neuropsychological aspects of PR technology influence, as well as on studying changes in consumer behavior as a result of digital innovations such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality. Furthermore, a promising avenue of research involves assessing the long-term effects of PR strategies on shaping consumer priorities and the ethical aspects of psychological influence in marketing communications.

Keywords: *consumer psychology, PR technologies, buyer behavior, motivation, influence, marketing communications.*

Рябоволик Тетяна Федорівна, к.е.н., доцент, завідувач кафедри економіки, менеджменту та комерційної діяльності, +38(050)087-19-13, ryabovolik@ukr.net, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0345-509X

Центральноукраїнський національний технічний університет

пр. Університетський, 8, м. Кропивницький, 25003, Україна.

Липчанський Володимир Олександрович, к.п.н., доцент кафедри економіки, менеджменту та комерційної діяльності, +38(067)975-51-35, lindervlad92@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8225-512X

Центральноукраїнський національний технічний університет
пр. Університетський, 8, м. Кропивницький, 25003, Україна.

ПСИХОЛОГІЯ РОЗВИТКУ СПОЖИВАЧА: ЯК PR-ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ ФОРМУЮТЬ ПОВЕДІНКУ ПОКУПЦІВ

Анотація. У статті розглядається психологія розвитку споживача та роль PR-технологій у формуванні поведінки покупців. Проаналізовано основні психологічні чинники, що впливають на прийняття рішень споживачами, зокрема мотивацію, сприйняття, емоційні реакції та соціальні впливи. Особлива увага приділяється сучасним PR-інструментам, таким як сторітелінг, соціальні мережі, інфлюенс-маркетинг та кризові комунікації, які здатні формувати довіру, лояльність та споживчі звички. Досліджено механізми впливу інформаційного середовища на поведінку споживачів та ефективність PR-стратегій у довгостроковій перспективі.

Метою статті є дослідити вплив PR-технологій на психологічний розвиток споживача та формування його поведінки. Зокрема, проаналізувати ключові психологічні механізми, що визначають споживчі рішення, та розглянути, яким чином сучасні PR-стратегії сприяють формуванню лояльності, довіри та купівельних звичок.

Для досягнення поставленої мети використано методи аналізу та синтезу, метод порівняння, узагальнення та систематизації, логічний та діалектичний методи.

У ході дослідження встановлено, що PR-технології відіграють ключову роль у формуванні поведінки споживачів, впливаючи на їхні емоції, довіру та мотивацію до покупки. Визначено, що такі методи, як сторітелінг, соціальні мережі, інфлюенс-маркетинг і кризові комунікації, є найбільш ефективними у створенні стійких споживчих звичок та підвищенні рівня лояльності до бренду. Також виявлено, що персоналізований підхід у PR-кампаніях значно посилює залученість аудиторії та підвищує ймовірність ухвалення позитивного рішення про покупку.

Подальші дослідження можуть бути зосереджені на поглибленому аналізі нейропсихологічних аспектів впливу PR-технологій, а також на дослідженні змін у поведінці споживачів під впливом цифрових інновацій, таких як штучний інтелект та віртуальна реальність. Крім того, перспективним напрямком є оцінка довготривалого ефекту PR-стратегій на формування споживчих пріоритетів та етичних аспектів використання психологічного впливу в маркетингових комунікаціях.

Ключові слова: психологія споживача, PR-технології, поведінка покупців, мотивація, вплив, маркетингові комунікації.

Problem. In the modern information society, consumer behavior is shaped by a significant volume of marketing communications and public relations. Thanks to the development of digital technologies, companies have vast opportunities to influence consumer decisions through personalized messages, social media, and interactive content. At the same time, consumers are becoming more demanding, expecting not only a quality product, but also an emotional connection and alignment with brand values.

Studying the psychological mechanisms of consumer development and the role of public relations technologies in shaping consumer behavior is essential for developing effective marketing strategies. The relevance of this research is also linked to the growing influence of digital platforms, which are transforming traditional methods of communicating with the public. Analyzing these processes will allow companies to adapt their public relations campaigns to contemporary realities, thus strengthening consumer trust and loyalty, while promoting the development of ethical approaches in the field of marketing communications.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issue of information and communication management in global society, including psychology, technologies, and techniques of public relations, is addressed in the works of Bebyk V. M. [1]. The scientific foundations, methodology, and practice of public relations and marketing communications are studied by Korolko V. H. [2] and Kurban O. V. [3]. Morokhova V. O., Zdryliuk V. B., Lorvi I. F. [4], and Prymak T. O. [7] analyzed the specifics of public relations for managers and marketers. Management psychology, social psychology, and public relations have been studied in the works of Orban-Lembryk L. E. [5; 6] and Harlow R. F. [8], as well as by other renowned researchers.

Purpose of the article. The purpose of this article is to study the influence of public relations technologies on the psychological development of consumers and the formation of their behavior. More specifically, the aim is to analyze the key psychological mechanisms that determine consumer decisions and to examine how modern public relations strategies contribute to the formation of loyalty, trust, and purchasing habits.

Presentation of the main research material. In today's increasingly competitive market, understanding the psychology of consumer development is an essential tool for businesses. Public relations technologies play a key role in shaping purchasing habits and influencing audience behavior. Developmental psychology studies the evolution of human thinking, emotions, and behavior throughout life. Consumption habits are formed in childhood, when advertising and public relations campaigns first attract the attention of future customers.

Figure 1 presents the main stages of consumer development and their impact on product purchasing decisions.

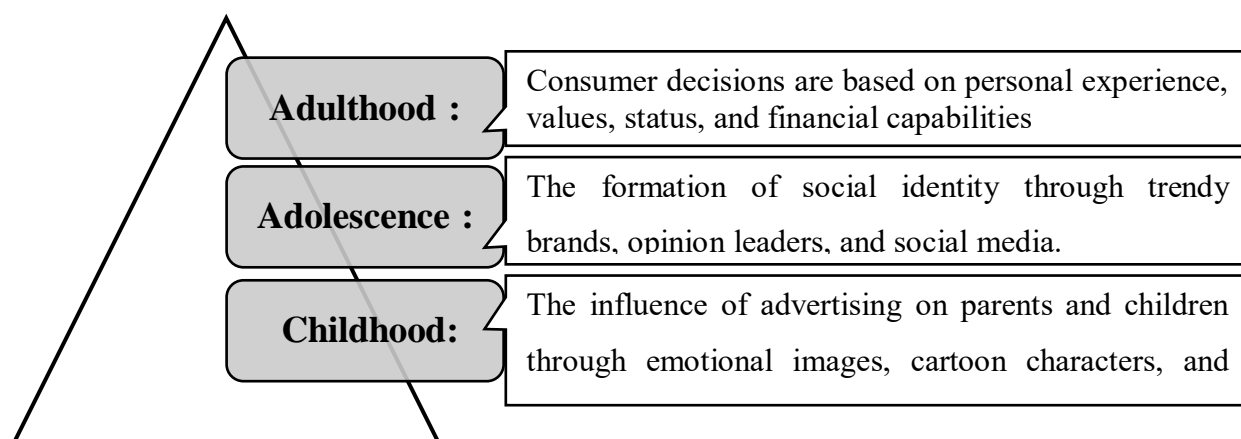


Figure 1 – The Consumer Developmental Psychology Pyramid

Source: Developed by the authors.

During the "Childhood" stage, advertising influences not only children themselves, but also their parents. Vivid visual images, cartoon characters, and animated videos are used to create a positive attitude toward the brand in children. In addition, the involvement of popular bloggers and influencers promoting children's products helps build trust and foster a desire to follow their favorite idols. Interactive advertising campaigns also play an important role, attracting children through games, contests, and social media.

Regarding the "Adolescence" stage, this is a period when a person actively seeks their social identity and wants to be part of a specific community. It is at this precise moment that brands can have a significant influence on the self-esteem and lifestyle of adolescents. Using public relations campaigns, marketers attract young people through social media, where popular bloggers and influencers present products as part of the modern lifestyle. Trendy brands create an image tied to certain values – independence, exclusivity, or freedom of expression. Advertising campaigns often appeal to adolescents' emotional instability, stimulating their need for recognition and belonging to a particular group. The use of interactive methods, such as challenges, contests, and unique content on TikTok or Instagram, helps brands establish their presence in young people's lives.

At the "Adult" stage, consumer decisions become more conscious and rational. They are based on personal experience, established life values, social status, and financial capabilities. Brands seek to attract adult consumers through quality, reliability, and emotional attachment to the product. Recommendations from friends, professional reviews, and corporate social responsibility play an important role. Additionally, marketers use personalized offers and loyalty programs that reinforce long-term brand loyalty.

Recently, public relations specialists have been leveraging insights into consumer psychology and values to create effective marketing strategies through technologies such as emotional connection, social proof, need creation, and fear manipulation. Indeed, people tend to trust brands that evoke positive emotions. For example, charity campaigns or success stories create a sense of belonging, while reviews and recommendations from opinion leaders and users strengthen brand trust. Furthermore, public relations campaigns often use the principles of scarcity and exclusivity to stimulate purchases. Some strategies are based on highlighting a problem and proposing a solution through a specific product or service. Table 1 presents public relations technologies that actively use different psychological mechanisms to influence consumers, shaping their preferences, trust, and behavioral responses.

Table 1 – Modern types of psychological mechanisms in public relations technologies

Public Relations Technology	Psychological Mechanisms
1	2
Emotional Impact and Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using stories that evoke emotions helps create a deep connection between the brand and the consumer. - Narratives that appeal to values, empathy, or nostalgia strengthen audience loyalty. - Using reviews, ratings, and recommendations from influential figures or influencers builds trust in the product. - People tend to imitate the behavior of the majority, especially when it is presented as a positive experience.
Social Approval and Crowd Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using reviews, ratings, and recommendations from influential people or influencers builds trust in the product. - People tend to imitate the behavior of the majority, especially when it is presented as a positive experience.
Scarcity Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited offers (e.g., "only today," "5 left") stimulate fear of missing out (FOMO) and accelerate purchasing decisions.

Personalization and the "proximity" effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using consumer data to create personalized PR messages increases their engagement. - "Friendly" communication and interactive content (quizzes, surveys) create a sense of personal interaction with the brand.
Principle of Reciprocity	Offering bonuses, gifts, or useful content without expecting immediate benefit creates a sense of gratitude, which motivates consumers to respond with loyalty.
Modeling behavior through reference groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public relations campaigns often target specific groups with which consumers identify. - The use of "role models" in advertising (e.g., successful people, experts, representatives of a certain lifestyle) reinforces the desire to imitate their behavior.
Neuromarketing and Sensory Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activating different sensory channels (images, sounds, textures, smells) helps create memorable brand impressions. - Using colors associated with certain emotions (e.g., red for excitement, blue for trust) enhances the emotional impact of public relations campaigns.

Source: Developed by the authors

Applying these psychological mechanisms allows public relations specialists to effectively influence consumer behavior, creating lasting relationships between the brand and its audience. Regular contact with the brand through media, social media, events, and advertising fosters certain consumer habits, such as brand loyalty, the creation of traditions, and automatic choice, among others.

Brand loyalty is formed through a combination of positive experience, emotional attachment, and trust in the quality of products or services. Consumers return to the brand if they receive consistent service, attractive offers, and personalized treatment. Social aspects play an important role – the company's participation in charitable initiatives, its commitment to the environment, and its interaction with customers via social media. The more the brand is remembered by consumers through advertising, promotions, or exclusive offers, the stronger its presence in their minds. Companies also often launch seasonal campaigns that become a traditional part of consumer culture. For example, Christmas promotions, special product releases, or seasonal sales create a sense of expectation among consumers. This fosters repeat demand, as customers associate certain times of the year with specific products or services. Furthermore, brands can use historical or cultural events to create their own traditions, highlighting their uniqueness and encouraging the public to participate in shared celebrations or exclusive events.

A familiar brand often becomes a priority due to its recognition and the trust it inspires, as consumers often choose products and services based on habitual associations and previous positive experiences – in other words, it is an automatic choice. This process is based on cognitive economics – people prefer trusted brands to avoid the complex process of comparing alternatives. Constant informational influence, advertising, and the brand's presence in the media create the "mental availability" effect, where, when a purchase is necessary, a familiar name immediately pops into the consumer's mind. Furthermore, brand trust is built through consistent quality, social proof in the form of reviews from other consumers, and the company's reputation, which strengthens over time.

Conclusion. Understanding developmental psychology helps public relations specialists interact more effectively with the public, shaping their behavior through finely tuned communication strategies. The judicious use of emotional triggers, social influence, and manipulative techniques allows brands not only to attract new customers but also to maintain long-term relationships with them.

Future scientific research in this area could focus on the following aspects:

- analyzing the long-term impact of public relations campaigns on the formation of purchasing habits in different age groups; – the study of the neurobiological mechanisms of decision-making under the influence of advertising messages and public relations strategies;
- the assessment of the ethical aspects of using manipulative techniques in public relations and their impact on consumer trust;
- the study of the effectiveness of personalized public relations campaigns and their impact on customer engagement;
- the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to predict consumer behavior and develop more effective public relations strategies.

This process will contribute to a better understanding of the interaction between developmental psychology and PR technologies, improving customer acquisition and retention methods.

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