

WOMEN AND THE PURCHASING DECISION

Nadira Bessouh¹, Tarik Saidi¹ and Abdelkader Belarbi²

¹Lecturer of Marketing at the School of Management Tlemcen. Meccas Laboratory -
University of Tlemcen-Algeria

²Professor of Economics at Moulay Tahar University -Algeria

ABSTRACT: *It is clear that today, producers and distributors are increasingly interested in understanding the purchasing behavior of women in general and that of married women in particular. Nevertheless, the choice of this subject is motivated by the shortcomings that have been recorded lately on the contribution of gender in family purchasing in Algeria. It is in this perspective that the present research attempts, in its exploratory aspect, to analyze the attitude of a woman towards purchasing a car. A survey was conducted on a sample of 210 married women belonging to the large urban center of the city of Tlemcen (Algeria). The main results of this study should allow us to determine whether the purchase is cognitive or affective. Therefore, we believe that this study should make a significant contribution to the literature on the role of women in the decision-making process. In addition, it should also help manufacturers and car dealers to better understand the needs and expectations of women in order to develop appropriate marketing strategies.*

KEYWORDS: Decision, Making Process, Sustainable Involvement, Algerian Woman, Car.

INTRODUCTION

The family has dramatically changed and evolved over the past century. It has shifted from a patriarchal structure to a group of individuals, in which everyone has more and more a say (Bessouh & Iznasni ; 2016). The new social and economic realities are at the heart of the transformations that the family is undergoing today. American and Western researchers, who specialize in consumer behavior, are getting more and more interested in the study of the family structure and, more specifically, in the contribution of women to the purchasing decision. Most of them assert that understanding the behavior of women in the purchasing process is one of the major interests of any company. It is widely known and accepted that the woman today is no longer considered a mere prescriber or a niche clientele. The women segment has now become the favorite target of corporate managers; it is increasingly attracting the attention of distributors as well. Moreover, the arrival of women in the labor market has certainly changed the roles played by the members within the family and has also changed the habits of the household management (Widgery & Angur; 1997). However, if companies want to make wise decisions, and evaluate their interventions, they should retrace the path taken by women when making a purchase decision (search for information, evaluation of alternatives, and consequences) (Panj & Staelin; 1983).

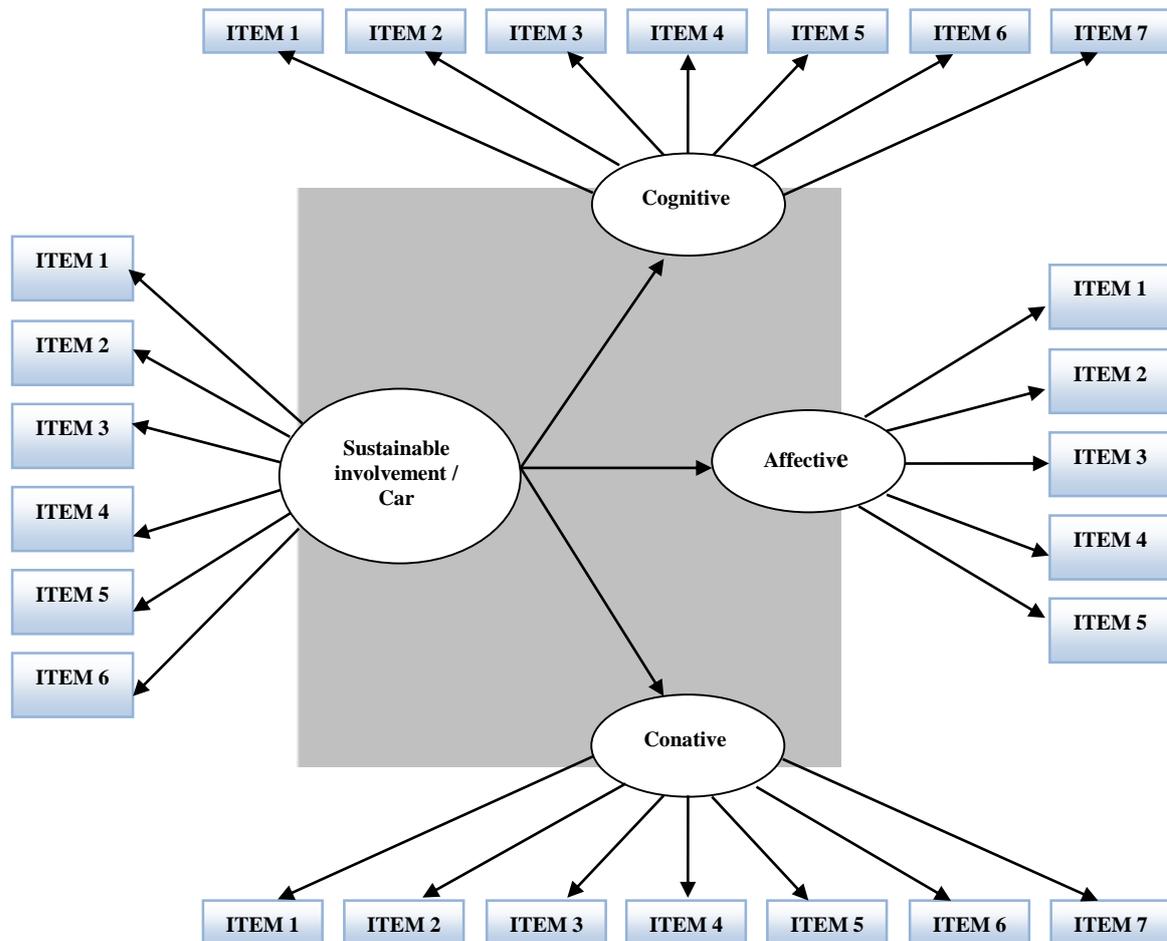
Currently, women buy or influence the purchase of 70% to 80% of all products (Credoc, 2014) because they buy for themselves and for the whole family. Several products that were previously men's business are now bought rather by women (one can cite the case of the car's purchase, which is the subject of our study). Studying the decision-making process with women enables companies to constantly offer new merchandise (innovate their products, develop new

advertising messages, and propose appropriate distribution channels). As a result, research on family purchase decision has given rise to two theories:

The *ideological theory* according to which social and cultural norms determine the roles played by each spouse in the family and the *theory of involvement* which states that the influence of a spouse on a purchase decision depends on his interest and knowledge of the product (Riley, 2012; Ward, 2005).

Based on the abundant literature from the West, it was possible to develop a profile on women's purchasing decisions. Unfortunately, in Algerian, theoretical or empirical studies on the subject of "*Women and the family purchase decision*" are nonexistent. On the other hand, several Western academic studies on women's purchase behavior have shown that women are more sentimental and irrational in their purchases, and are more likely to make impulse purchases. Giraud (2001) pointed out that a woman buys impulsively low involvement products. Haussman (2000) indicated that women are more motivated than men by sensory stimulation and recreational purchase. This means that women are more interested in these cases by a need for distraction and social interactions. Within the same framework of study, Rook and Hoch (1985) found that women are rather attracted by curiosity and playfulness in making their purchases. Moreover, some research suggested that in general men are less impulsive than women. Indeed, from all what precedes, there emerged a divergence of theories relating to the purchase decision-making process according to the cognitive, affective and conative phases, but which do not always follow the same order (Bristor & Fischer; 1993). Different factors (level of consumer involvement, product type, context and situation) can play a decisive role with respect to the order of these phases. This conclusion is particularly close to that made by Giraud (2002). From the above, it becomes necessary to ask the following fundamental question:

How does the Algerian woman make the purchase of a car? Since buying a car, which is the subject of our study, is an important purchase in terms of perceived risk and interest, it is suggested that the choice of the process of buying a car by the woman passes through the sequence shown in Figure 1, while taking into consideration the fact that sustainable involvement is a central concept in the study of family buying.



Source: Developed by the authors
Figure 1: Structural model of research

When buying a car, the woman undertakes an active search for information from various personal and business sources. This accumulation of information (cognitive phase) allows her to develop an opinion on the brands involved. Then, she will forge some beliefs and preferences (emotional phase) that will guide her in making a choice and therefore in carrying out the purchase (conative phase).

Theoretical framework

The buying behavior of women has become an area of investigation that is attracting more and more marketing professionals and businesses (Dernovsek, 2000; Divard, 1997). Consumer research has largely ignored women, although some research studies are gender-sensitive. Studies on the roles of spouses within the family reveal that the purchasing behavior differs between couples where both men and women work and couples where only men have a salary (Calas & Smircich; 1992). It then becomes clear that the socialization of the gender role contributes to make a differentiation between the behaviors of men and women, whether within the household or in other structures (Cox 1975; Davis, 1976). Therefore, consumption behaviors are intimately related to the sex of the individual (Lakshmi & Murugan, 2008; Lawrence, 1996). The tastes and needs of men and women are different for many products.

Thus, the gender remains an explanatory variable for the needs and behavior of consumption (toys, clothes, beauty and hygiene products, magazines, etc). These findings reveal that traditional models of decision-making are insufficient to understand women's purchasing decisions and behaviors (Tinson and al; 2008).

Marketing managers have great interest in controlling the different characteristics of women as well as the evolution of their roles in society. In response, a growing number of manufacturers of products that are traditionally for men (car, hi-fi, video, do-it-yourself equipment ...) are currently orienting their products and communications towards women. On the other hand, this field of study is still little explored in the Algerian context, and it is for this reason that we decided to use certain research studies previously carried out in Western countries through an increasingly abundant literature on our subject in order to be able to define the decision-making process of the woman within the Algerian framework.

METHODOLOGY

With regard to the methodology to be followed in this work, it was decided to present the method of data collection, the measurement instruments, the sampling method and the appropriate analytical techniques utilized in this research paper. Thus, our methodological approach is to respond with accuracy to the following objective: To know the approach adopted by women in purchase decision-making (cognitive and / or emotional). The data used as the basis for this research study were collected by means of a questionnaire survey which was administered face-to-face, with a convenience sample of 210 married Algerian women who show intention of buying a car. In order to measure the sustainable involvement of a consumer, Strazzieri's measurement scale "PIA" (1994), which consists of six items was adopted and then was administered in the form of a Likert scale with five positions (strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree). This scale was chosen due to its good internal coherence in most empirical studies, with a Cronbach's alpha which exceeds 0.8. The data collected were then subjected to the statistical processing, which was carried out with the data analysis and visualization Software STATISTICA version 12.0.

Table 1: Using Strazzieri's scale to measure the consumer's sustainable involvement in the purchase of a car

Coding	Formulating items (Sustainable involvement / Car)
VIMP1	- Buying a car is an activity that matters a lot to me
VIMP2	- Buying a car is an activity to which I attach special importance
VIMP3	- I particularly like buying a car
VIMP4	- You can say that buying a car is something that interests me
VIMP5	- I am particularly interested in buying a car
VIMP6	- The simple fact of learning about a car is a pleasure for me

Table 2: List of items selected to measure the cognitive behavior in purchasing a car

Coding	Formulating items (Cognitive / Car)
NCOG1	Generally, I have enough information to make a judgment
NCOG2	Overall, I know what the product looks like
NCOG3	I am well informed about the different brands that are on the market
NCOG4	I am basically well informed on all the features of the car
NCOG5	The information I have on cars gives me a good general idea
NCOG6	I am trying to find out more about the car
NCOG7	I have got an idea about the car

Table 3: List of items selected to measure the emotional behavior in purchasing a car

Coding	Formulating items (Emotional / Car)
VAFF1	I am delighted while buying a car
VAFF2	I prefer the automotive domain
VAFF3	Buying a car is a great passion for me
VAFF4	I love it when I am asked to buy a car
VAFF5	I like buying a car even if it is not for me

Table 4: List of items selected to measure the conative behavior in purchasing a car

Coding	Formulating items (Conative/ Car)
VCON1	I intend to make a purchase
VCON2	There is a 99% chance that I will make a good deal
VCON3	There is a 99% chance that I will buy the car
VCON4	I am probably going to make a purchase
VCON5	There is very little chance that I will not buy a car myself
VCON6	It is in my interest to buy a car
VCON7	There is very little chance that another person in my family will make the decision to buy a car.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the relation between the two key concepts of this research, namely the sustainable involvement and the purchasing behavior of women, are presented in order to check the validity of the constructs.

Result of the Factorial Correspondence Analysis (FCA) concerning the purchase of a car by a woman

From the results obtained in Table 5, the Factorial Correspondence Analysis (FCA) performed on the sustainable involvement scale indicates that there are satisfactory correlations with low error scores. The analysis of the internal consistency of scales for the purchase of cars (Table

5) allows us to note that the conditions required to ensure the validity of the four reflexive constructs are guaranteed. Thus, the homogeneity of the scales is sufficient with Cronbach's alpha > 0.8, and KMO > 0.7.

Table 5: Internal coherence of measurement scales for women purchasing a car

Variables	Number of items selected	KMO	Cronbach's α	ANOVA		Bartlett Spherit	Avge	Cov.	Total Variance
				F	Sig				
VIMP	6	0.816	0.926	17.230	0.0	0.000	2.719	1.2255	73.469
VCOG	7	0.852	0.912	69.666	00		2.167	1.1360	65.124
VAFF	5	0.719	0.819	93.183			2.766	1.1239	60.224
VCON	6	0.834	0.878	25.572			2.542	1.1655	64.157
Total	24	-----	-----	-----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Source: Developed by the authors using the Software STATISTICA (N = 210 married women)

The results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the purchase of a car

Table 6: Fit indices of a structural model for the purchase of a car

Absolute fit indices	Values for women
Chi ₂	1953.11
Degree of freedom DF	249
Level p	0000
RMS Standardized residues	0.155
(GFI). Joreskog	0.399
(AGFI). Joreskog	0.276
Population Noncentrality Parameter	15.929
McDonald Noncentrality Index	0.000
Steiger-Lind RMSEA Index	0.260
Population Gamma Index	0.430
Adjusted Population Gamma index	0.313
Incremental Fit Indices	
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index	0.638
Bentler-Bonett Non-Normed Fit Index	0.631
Bentler Comparative Fit Index	0.668
Bollen's Rho	0.599
Bollen's Delta	0.669
Parsimony Fit Indices	
James-Mulaik-Brett Parsimonious Fit Index	0.576
Ch ₂ /DF	7.843

The different Absolute Fit Indices are summarized in Table 6. These measurements evaluate the parsimony of the analysis model by linking the quality of its fitting to the number of estimated parameters.

Table 7: Equation of the measurement model for the variable of sustainable involvement / car / woman

Manifest variables	Equation $vimp\ i = \lambda_i \cdot VIMP + E_i$	T > 1.96	P < 0.05
(VIMP)-->[vimp1]	$vimp\ 1 = 0.776\ VIMP + 0.398$	26.237	0.000
(VIMP)-->[vimp2]	$vimp\ 2 = 0.812\ VIMP + 0.341$	31.616	
(VIMP)-->[vimp3]	$vimp\ 3 = 0.847\ VIMP + 0.283$	38.908	
(VIMP)-->[vimp4]	$vimp\ 4 = 0.895\ VIMP + 0.199$	55.221	
(VIMP)-->[vimp5]	$vimp\ 5 = 0.914\ VIMP + 0.165$	64.666	
(VIMP)-->[vimp6]	$vimp\ 6 = 0.631\ VIMP + 0.601$	14.520	

Source: Developed by the authors using the Software STATISTICA (N = 210 married women)

Estimation by the model measuring the behavior of women for the purchase of a car

Table 8: Equation of the measurement model for the variable of cognitive behavior / car / woman

Manifest variables	Equation $vcog\ i = \lambda_i \cdot VCOG + E_i$	T > 1.96	P < 0.05
(VCOG)-->[vcog1]	$vcog\ 1 = 0.663\ VCOG + 0.561$	16.529	0.000
(VCOG)-->[vcog2]	$vcog\ 2 = 0.431\ VCOG + 0.814$	7.481	
(VCOG)-->[vcog3]	$vcog\ 3 = 0.948\ VCOG + 0.101$	101.141	
(VCOG)-->[vcog4]	$vcog\ 4 = 0.957\ VCOG + 0.084$	112.992	
(VCOG)-->[vcog5]	$vcog\ 5 = 0.806\ VCOG + 0.351$	31.378	
(VCOG)-->[vcog6]	$vcog\ 6 = 0.880\ VCOG + 0.226$	51.346	
(VCOG)-->[vcog7]	$vcog\ 7 = 0.516\ VCOG + 0.734$	9.915	

Source: Developed by the authors using the Software STATISTICA (N = 210 married women)

Table 9: Equation of the measurement model for the variable of affective behavior / car / woman

Manifest variables	Equation $vaff_i = \lambda_i \cdot VAFF + E_i$	T > 1.96	P < 0.05
(VAFF)-->[vaff1]	$vaff\ 1 = 0.515\ VAFF + 0.735$	9.280	0.000
(VAFF)-->[vaff2]	$vaff\ 2 = 0.837\ VAFF + 0.299$	29.957	
(VAFF)-->[vaff3]	$vaff\ 3 = 0.811\ VAFF + 0.343$	26.754	
(VAFF)-->[vaff4]	$vaff\ 4 = 0.625\ VAFF + 0.609$	13.275	
(VAFF)-->[vaff5]	$vaff\ 5 = 0.604\ VAFF + 0.636$	12.353	

Source: Developed by the authors using the Software STATISTICA (N = 210 married women)

Table 10: Equation of the measurement model for the variable of conative behavior / car / woman

Manifest variables	Equation $vcon_i = \lambda_i \cdot VCON + E_i$	T > 1.96
(VCON)--> [vcon1]	$vcon\ 1 = 0.991VCON + 0.710$	0.000
(VCON)--> [vcon2]	$vcon\ 2 = 0.941VCON + 0.420$	
(VCON)--> [vcon3]	$vcon\ 3 = 0.955\ VCON + 0.238$	
(VCON)--> [vcon4]	$vcon\ 4 = 0.980.\ VCON + 0.297$	
(VCON)--> [vcon5]	$vcon\ 5 = 0.610\ VCON + 0.962$	
(VCON)--> [vcon6]	$vcon\ 6 = 0.724VCON + 0.902$	

Source: Developed by the authors using the Software STATISTICA 12.0 (N = 210 married- women)

All of the factor analyses performed (Tables 7, 8, 9 and 10), to estimate the correlations of the behavioral model of measurement in women, show positive and above-average correlations. The estimation errors are acceptable except for items 5 and 6 of the conative behavior scale (greater than 0.9). This enables us to verify that the indicators specified in the model give an acceptable representation of the constructs.

Correlations of the structural model of car-buying behavior in women The factorial correlations between latent variables of the structural model show satisfactory scores, which means that women are involved in the car buying process. A woman has a rather affective behavior ($\beta_i = 0.825$); the factorial weight for the conative behavior ($\beta_i = 0.731$), and cognitive behavior ($\beta_i = 0.718$) are relatively close, so it is difficult to decide on the hierarchy of effects when the mother purchases a car.

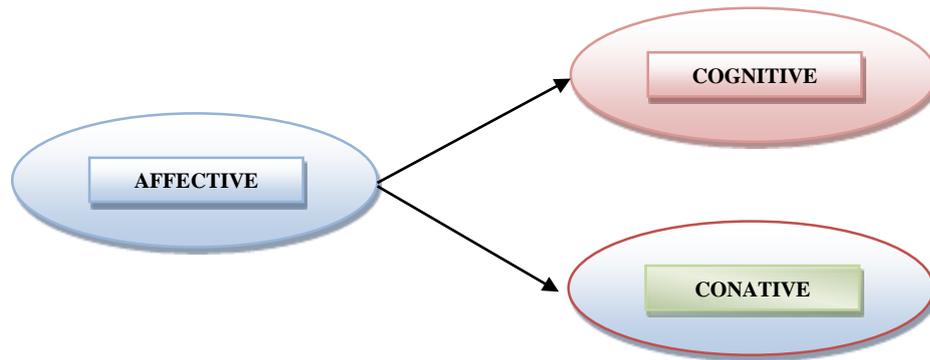
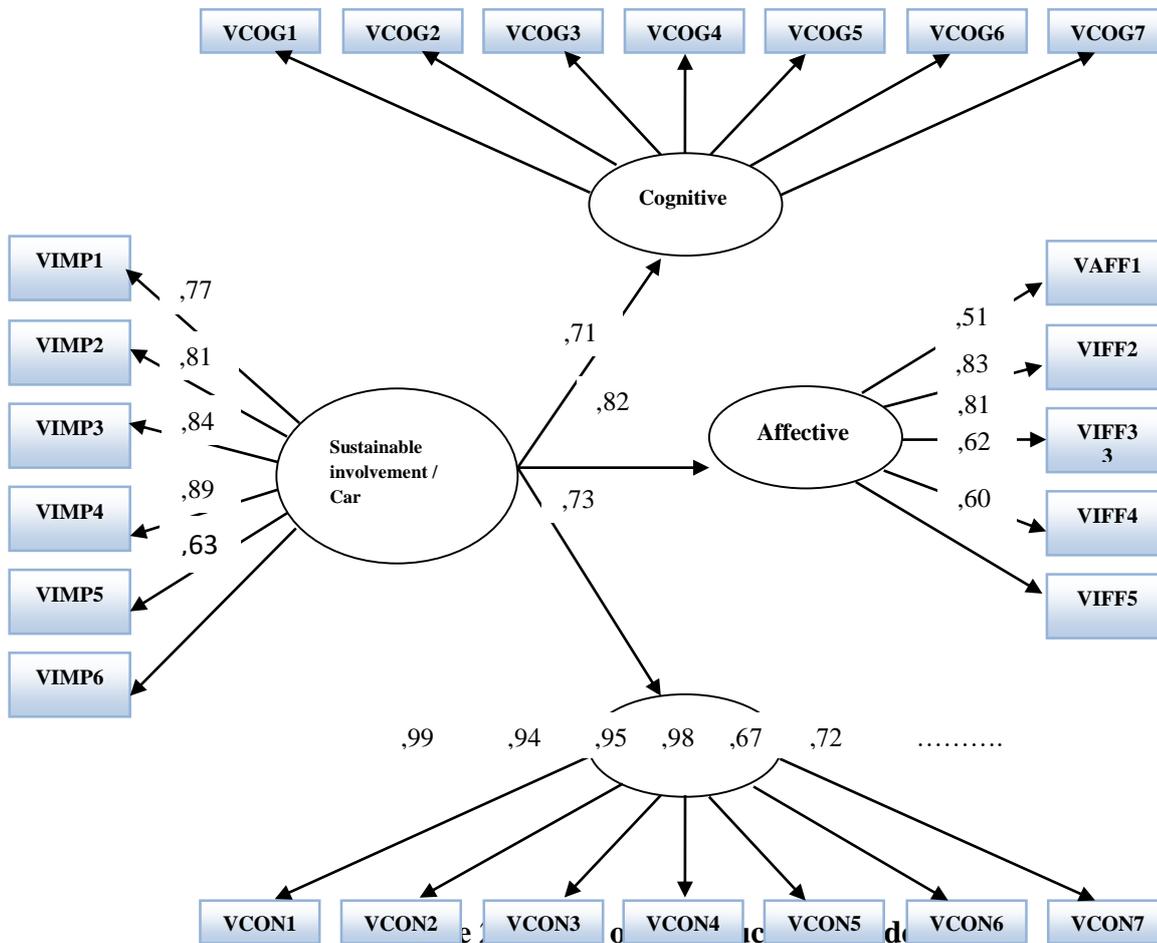


Table 11: General equations of the structural model for the influence of sustainable involvement on car-buying behavior in women

Relationships	Coding and equation of variables	β_i	E_i	T > 1.96	P < 0.05
(VIMP)-->(VCOG)	VCCOG = β_i VIMP + E_i	0.718	0.484	19.533	0.000
(VIMP)-->(VAFF)	VCAFF= β_i VIMP + E_i	0.825	0.319	26.657	
(VIMP)-->(VCON)	VCCON = β_i VIMP + E_i	0.731	0.466	19.773	

Source: Developed by the authors using the Software STATISTICA 12.0 (N = 210 married women)

The results obtained from the factor analysis confirm the impact of sustainable involvement on the car-purchasing behavior in women. These same results indicate a rather affective behavioral tendency, although the cognitive and conative scores are close. This is surprising with regard to the hierarchy of effects of this product in women. In addition, the results of the study confirm the impact of sustainable involvement on the purchasing behavior of women. The principal component analysis (PCA) revealed a good internal coherence of the scales used in the study, which gives good reliability to the structural model. The theoretical model may therefore be accepted. The use of the PCA made it possible to carry out a purification of the behavior scales proposed in the measurement model, and thus to eliminate unreliable items. Regarding the purchasing behavior of women, the buying processes are characterized by a rather affective aspect, a positive feeling towards the purchase of a car, although this category of products follows a reflective process, which is characterized by a search for information and an evaluation of the attributes of each product before buying, given the very implicative nature of the product in question. The results obtained from this study leave no doubt about the important role of involvement in explaining the purchasing behavior of women.



CONCLUSION

The results of our research enable us to clarify the decision-making process for women and to validate the measurement scale of sustainable involvement and its influence on women's purchasing behavior. Indeed, based on the analysis of the data obtained from a sample of married women, representing 210 nuclear families, one can say that the act of purchase among Algerian women is a set of actions which imply the functioning of emotion and rationality. The dimension adopted is in agreement with the one studied and reported in the literature (women are more emotional than rational). Certainly, women choose their cars in the first place according to their impulse. Moreover, they know what they want before they start seeking information about the product.

The results confirm that Algerian women have gained more influence in the different phases of the decision-making process. Women have acquired a more significant influence at the initiation stage and a greater influence in the information-seeking phase and final decision for the purchase of a car. In light of the main results obtained, three main marketing recommendations may be proposed:

- Women should be taken into consideration in the strategic choices of automotive manufacturers so that their companies can ensure growth and survival. This strategic vision must be understood and applied through all the components of the marketing mix
- Dealers must also consider orienting their communication towards the female segment if they want to ensure their credibility and competitiveness
- Automotive manufacturers ought to create happiness and positive emotions for women to better satisfy and retain them, which means integrating experiential marketing as a means to generate more sales. It is worth stating the fact that the current purchaser seeks to experience immersion in extraordinary experiences rather than just to encounter simple products and services.

The limitations of this work constitute avenues for future research. The study of women's purchasing behavior is one of the most promising and exciting research avenues for a better understanding of family buying behavior, while including other factors, such as the duration of marriage, married woman with children or without children, woman's level of education, ... The adoption of international measurement scales enabled us to eliminate a significant number of items during the exploratory and confirmatory phases. It would therefore be desirable in future work to develop exploratory research with the aim of developing measurement scales that may be adapted to the Algerian socio-cultural context.

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